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Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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June 20, 1985

Arkansas Baptist

NEWSMAGAZINE

RUM
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SBC 1985, Dallas:
steps toward unity



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On the cover



ABN photo/Millie Gill

A sea of messengers crowd the exhibit area of the Dallas Convention Center, many of them moving toward the registration area. By the close of the sessions Thursday afternoon, 45,431 messengers had registered, although four were unseated when the body was told they were not actually members of the church they claimed.

In this issue

8 peace & healing in SBC

Editorial perspective on the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Dallas last week focuses on the prospects for healing and unity.

11 offering falls short

Although the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions recorded the biggest increase ever, it still fell \$1.2 million short of the goal.

'85 SBC takes steps toward healing divisions

by Betty Kennedy and Mark Kelly, ABN staff

Tuesday morning

Messengers to the 128th annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention already had set one record—by number registered—and were on their way to another—for resolutions—by the time they ended the first session Tuesday morning. The registration total shortly after the 9 a.m. call to order was 40,723.

The Tuesday morning figure tops a previous high opening registration of 22,872 at the Atlanta, Ga., meeting in 1978.

The record number of messengers presented problems. The hall where the convention was being held was filled beyond seating capacity when the session was called to order. During the morning, messengers overflowed into the arena in the same building, where the proceedings were on closed-circuit television and the messengers had access to a microphone connected to the main hall.

Only duly registered messengers were being admitted to the halls. Ushers stationed at the doors checked for the pink backing card on their booklet of ballots before admitting persons.

The tight security kept former SBC president Franklin Paschall of Nashville from presenting to the messengers his planned "peace initiative" motion during the miscellaneous business session Tuesday morning.

Paschall had left his ballot cards in his hotel room, so the motion was presented by Bill Hickem of Florida on behalf of Paschall and the presidents of 37 Baptist state conventions.

The motion requested an 19-member committee be named to look into the causes of the current SBC controversies and suggest solutions for reconciliation by the 1986 meeting.

Two dozen other motions were introduced in the opening session, but two were ruled out of order immediately. One called for the messengers to nullify President Charles Stanley's appointments to the Committee on Committees and replace them with state convention presidents and state WMU presidents. That would have suspended the SBC Bylaws, which is not allowed under Robert's Rules of Order.

However, the majority of the other motions called for changes in the way appointments are made to SBC committees and agency and institution boards, including changing the appointment process from resting solely in the hands of the president.

Also ruled out of order was a motion to rescind the 1983 SBC's decision to hold the 1989 annual meeting in Las Vegas. Another motion was then introduced asking the messengers to set aside Robert's Rules of Order and select another site for 1989, even

if it would require the convention to make payments to honor financial contracts already signed for Las Vegas.

Several motions introduced addressed more equitable representation of all Southern Baptists on committees and boards. Several called for limiting the number from any one church, and one would place limitations on the Committee on Committees appointments, such as length of service in a Baptist church or recommendation by the state convention president.

The Committee on Committees is the subject of concern because that group chooses the Committee on Boards, Commissions and Standing Committees, which in turn nominates persons to positions on the committees and trustee boards of the SBC. Currently, the SBC president has sole authority to appoint the Committee on Committees.

Motions were not discussed during the session but were scheduled by the Committee on Order of Business for consideration at a later time or referred to the proper SBC standing committee.

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Other motions called for a new Bible commentary to be published by Southern Baptists; opposed salaried employees of SBC boards, agencies and institutions "taking sides in the controversies within our convention;" and called for the book of reports necessary for the annual meeting be made available to each church at least one month before the convention meets. (A shortage of the books this year prompted comments by several messengers in the course of business.)

Messengers adopted a \$130 million Cooperative Program budget for 1984-85 to finance the denomination's multiple programs of missions, education and other ministries. The budget was a major item of recommendation from the SBC Executive Committee. The 1985-86 budget was the same as that for 1984-85, an effort to bring budget and receipts into closer harmony.

The committee reported that CP receipts for the current year stand at \$5.8 million and are more than \$4 million ahead of the same period last year. However, this is 10.6 percent short of total budget and 1.5 percent short of basic operating budget.

In the annual president's address, Charles Stanley, pastor of First Church of Atlanta, challenged Southern Baptists to put denominational strife behind them and show a wat-

ching world that the message of love and forgiveness they proclaim is authentic.

Stanley, seeking election to a second one-year term, issued the challenge to more than 44,000 messengers just hours before the presidential balloting was scheduled to get underway.

The messengers interrupted Stanley with applause several times as he urged the healing of differences. Stanley granted that Southern Baptists will not agree on everything. "The world isn't looking to see if all Southern Baptists agree," he said, "They're looking to see how we disagree.

He called for love, forgiveness and humility, saying these are not feelings persons have, but are commitments they must make.

Messengers closed the session with a standing ovation after complying with Stanley's request they stand for a minute of silent prayer to symbolize "confession and repentance before God and before the world."

Tuesday afternoon

Tension and expectations mounted Tuesday afternoon as more than 45,000 messengers prepared for what virtually everyone expected would be a decisive—and perhaps also divisive—vote on the direction of the Southern Baptist Convention.

With convention center facilities already strained beyond capacity, messengers continued to file into the complex. Eventually, unregistered guests were asked to give up their seats in a theater to allow more messengers to participate in the convention.

By the time the floor was opened for presidential nominations, after an hour of inspirational singing and an unusual 10-minute prayer time, the aisles in the main hall were filled all the way to the front. Ballots in hand, 45,049 messengers were waiting their opportunity to voice their preference for a presidential candidate.

As expected, the first name placed in nomination was that of incumbent president Charles Stanley, pastor of First Church, Atlanta.

Stanley was nominated by Morris Chapman, a pastor from Wichita Falls, Texas, who had been elected president of the SBC Pastor's Conference only the day before. Chapman called his nominee "one of the most extraordinary men of God in our generation" and said he saw Stanley as a man who stands for his convictions "without compromise."

The second nomination brought to the floor was no surprise either. Winfred Moore, pastor of First Church, Amarillo, Texas, had been rumored for months to be the candidate of choice for persons opposed to Stanley's continued leadership. One month prior to the annual meeting, Moore had announced he would allow his name to be placed into nomination.

Moore was nominated by Milton Cunningham, a pastor from Houston, who pointed to First Church, Amarillo's gifts to the Cooperative Program—\$8 million over the

last 10 years—as evidence of Moore's "absolute loyalty to his Lord and unquestioned cooperation with His people." Cunningham called Moore "a man of absolute integrity... a healer" for the SBC.

After the two nominations, SBC First Vice-President Zig Ziglar called for ballots to be cast, neglecting to check for further nominations or asking for a motion nominations cease, an apparent reflection of the widespread anticipation of the face-off between Moore and Stanley.

While waiting for the record number of ballots to be tabulated by the Tellers Committee, messengers heard another round of resolutions and motions introduced, including one which suggested a tightening of the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message statement on the trustworthiness of Scripture.

Messengers also received the final installment of the SBC Executive Committee report and heard an annual report from Darold Morgan, president of the SBC Annuity Board.

At the end of the afternoon session, messengers were informed they had re-

ected Stanley by a 3,658-vote margin. Stanley polled 24,453 votes or 55.3 percent of the ballots. Moore drew 19,795 or 44.7 percent.

Registration Secretary Lee Porter told messengers they had set at least three records that afternoon. He first informed them only 21 of the 44,269 ballots cast had been invalidated by the Tellers Committee. In addition, he also said the balloting was not only the largest ever taken in an SBC annual meeting, but it also represented the largest percentage of registered messengers actually voting—98.2 percent.

With Stanley officially declared the winner of the contest, the floor was then opened to nominations for first vice-president.

Bill Weber, a pastor from Dallas, renominated Zig Ziglar, a layman from First Church, Dallas, and the incumbent in that office. T.L. McSwain, a pastor from Louisville, Ky., nominated Louisville attorney Henry Huff.

Then, in a surprising move, Ray Allen, a pastor from Blacksburg, Va., came to the platform to nominate Winfred Moore for the position. Allen explained it had suddenly occurred to him that Moore's election as first vice-president would suit the theme of peace-making and reconciliation Stanley had voiced earlier in his convention sermon.

Wanting to be sure Moore was willing to have his name placed in nomination, Stanley called the Texas pastor to the platform. Moore, who had been besieged near the

(BP) photo / John McIvry

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Winfred Moore (left) shares the platform with newly re-elected President Charles Stanley as Moore is being nominated for first vice president of the convention. He had challenged Stanley for the presidency.



platform by camera crews after election results were announced, stood at the podium next to Stanley, who asked him if he would allow his name to be placed in nomination.

Moore placed his arm around Stanley's shoulders and replied, "Let me ask you if you are asking me to do that." An obviously-surprised Stanley answered he intended to do everything he could next year to bring the denomination back into the mainstream of missions and evangelism and indicated he would welcome Moore's nomination.

Messengers cast their ballots for first vice-president and moved on to the report of the Committee on Boards. At least three challenges to the report were known to be planned, but only two were brought to the floor before the previous question was called and the report was adopted as presented. Both amendments were defeated on a show of ballots.

Messengers closed the Tuesday afternoon session singing "Glory to His Name" as they inched toward the exits.

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Tuesday evening

Messengers continued the process of electing officers on Tuesday evening, and long-time Arkansas pastor W. O. Vaught was one of six persons nominated for second vice-president. He received 6,730 votes (36 percent) but faced a runoff ballot against Henry Huff, a Louisville, Ky., layman, who had received 2,998 votes (16.15 percent).

Dr. Vaught, pastor emeritus of Little Rock's Immanuel Church, had been nominated by James Bryant, pastor of Grand Avenue Church in Fort Smith. Others nominated were Mrs. Russell Begaye of Arlington, Tex.; Dan Yeary, a pastor in Coral Gables, Fla.; Mrs. Earl Johnston of San Antonio, Tex.; and Oliver Wolfenbarger, a pastor from Knoxville, Tenn.

In other business in the session, motions were introduced to direct the Christian Life Commission to promote a Sanctity of Human Life Sunday, to change convention bylaws, to have books of reports for the annual meeting for order prior to the meeting and to assure equitable representation by state on boards and committees. All were referred to committees for study.

Motions scheduled for later discussion by the messengers dealt with denominational leaders who take sides in controversies and suspending the rules to consider changing the 1989 annual meeting from Las Vegas.

Several resolutions also were introduced in the session. All were referred to the Resolutions Committee for a later report to the body.

Messengers heard reports from the Baptist Sunday School Board and the Foreign Mission Board in the session. The Sunday School Board presentation included a testimony on BSSB ministries to local churches by Steve Stege of Grand Avenue Church in Fort Smith.

BSSB President Lloyd Elder called it a "report from the churches to the churches." In the Foreign Mission Board's report, FMB President Keith Parks cautioned Southern Baptists against tampering with either the Bible or missions, which he said are both basic to "our origin, our convictions, our present and our future." "They are so interwoven that to tamper with either one distorts the true picture of who we are," he said.

Parks used the metaphor of weaving to show how Baptist have "sat at the loom of love and the fabric we weave is missions." The report included testimonies from missionaries, as well as audiovisual presentations. Parks pledged to maintain Southern Baptist's bold commitment to both God's Word and God's world.

The FMB head also pledged he and the Board will support SBC President Charles Stanley. "Though we may have our differences," Parks said at the beginning of the report, "we are not in disagreement."

The report included a tribute to Baker James Cauthen, former president of the FMB, who called on Southern Baptists in 1979 to hold to the mandate for missions and do it cooperatively. Cauthen's death in April was

the occasion of Parks issuing a statement denouncing attacks on the cooperative missions approach, which he said harmed missionaries.

Cauthen's widow was welcomed to the podium with a standing ovation. She urged Southern Baptists to remember what Baker James Cauthen had said.

Wednesday morning

With their numbers apparently reduced by two-thirds, messengers to the annual meeting overwhelmingly adopted a plan for a 22-member "Peace Committee" charged with the responsibility of studying the causes of the controversy within the SBC and recommending possible solutions.

Membership on the committee, which was proposed by the presidents of 37 state Baptist conventions, consisted of a carefully negotiated balance between persons of varying viewpoints within the convention.

Before its adoption, the proposal was amended twice. The first change added the names of two women to the list: Christine Gregory, a former first vice-president of the convention and former president of the Woman's Missionary Union, SBC, and Jodi Chapman, wife of Morris Chapman, the Wichita Falls, Texas, pastor who had earlier nominated Stanley for the SBC presidency.

A second amendment also was approved: the addition of SBC First Vice-President Winfred Moore as an ex officio member of the committee. Ector Hamrick of Petersburg, Va., proposed the amendment "in the spirit of what happened here yesterday." Hamrick referred to Moore's spontaneous nomination and landslide election as vice-president.

Convention president Stanley already had been proposed as an ex officio member of the committee with full rights.

In adopting the peace proposal with virtually no opposition, messengers apparently affirmed former SBC President Frank Paschall's declaration that "peace cannot come by war." Paschall had told messengers the players in the SBC conflict had been "pitting power against power" and "no matter who wins, we all lose."

Elected to the committee were: Charles Fuller, Roanoke, Va., chairman; Harmon Born, Rex, Ga.; Doyle Carlton, Wauchula,

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Presidents of 37 state conventions held a news conference Monday to present their peace proposal for the Southern Baptist Convention.

ABN photo / Mark Kelly



Fla.; Bill Crews, Riverside, Calif.; Robert Cuttino, Lancaster, S.C.; Jim Henry, Orlando, Fla.; Bill Hull, Shreveport, La.; Herschel Hobbs, Oklahoma City, Okla.; Albert McClellan, Nashville; William Poe, Charlotte, N.C.; Ray Roberts, Columbus, Ohio; Adrian Rogers, Memphis, Tenn.; Cecil Sherman, Fort Worth, Texas; John Sullivan, Shreveport, La.; Dan Vestal, Midland, Texas; Jerry Vines, Jacksonville, Fla.; Ed Young, Houston; and Charles Pickering, Laurel, Miss.

Arkansas Baptist State Convention President Jon Stubblefield saw the overwhelming of the peace proposal as evidence "messengers want to see a solution to the problems which divide us so we can move forward in . . . missions and evangelism without further delay."

Stubblefield also said he believed the SBC presidential election revealed the deep division within the SBC but expressed "hopeful confidence" Moore's election as vice-president would be a first step toward peace in the convention.

Messengers also heard a challenge to the



ABN photo / Millie Gill

Dallas' largest convention ever at times overwhelmed downtown with crowds and traffic.

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report of the Committee on Committees. That group, appointed by the president, recommends to the convention a slate of nominations to the Committee on Boards, Commissions and Standing Committees. That committee, in turn, makes nominations the following year to SBC committees and trustee boards of SBC agencies and institutions.

When Committee on Committees chairman George Schroeder, a layman from First Church, Little Rock, brought the slate of nominations for the Committee on Boards, James Slatton, pastor of River Road, Church, Richmond, Va., rose to challenge the report.

Slatton moved that the slate presented be replaced in its entirety by the presidents of the state conventions and state WMU organizations. He called for the convention to turn in the name of peace to such a group of persons, saying the slate presented by Schroeder's committee was "under a cloud."

The power of the Committee on Boards to nominate trustees has made it a focal point of the struggle in the SBC. Slatton said much of the distrust of recent years has stemmed from the suspicion of some that errantists have stacked committees which nominate trustee candidates.

Approval of his proposal, he said, would remove that suspicion by naming persons who have been trusted enough to be voted into leadership roles in state Baptist conventions, free from the controversy which has dominated recent SBC elections.

Convention Parliamentarian Wayne Allen of Memphis, Tenn., ruled, however, that Slatton must make his challenges one at a time, position by position. Although that ruling was sustained by the chair, continued calls from the floor for a vote by the messengers to confirm the ruling resulted in a floor vote on the matter.

When a standing vote proved too close to call, Stanley called for a ballot. By a vote of 12,576 to 11,801, messengers refused to accept the ruling that the substitutions must be considered position by position. Further consideration of the matter was scheduled for the Wednesday evening business session.

Messengers also received a report on a ballot taken earlier in the morning between Louisville attorney Henry Huff and former Little Rock pastor W.O. Vaught in a run-off for second vice-president.

With 16,636 messengers voting, Huff was elected 9,302 to 7,334. The vote represented less than 37 percent of registration. Huff succeeded Don Wideman, a North Kansas City, Mo., pastor who did not seek re-election.

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Messengers also heard reports from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, the SBC Stewardship Commission, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, the Christian Life Commission, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, the SBC Foundation and the Canada Planning Committee.

In the annual convention sermon, Charles Fuller, pastor of First Church, Roanoke, Va., and chairman of the newly-elected Peace Committee, admonished messengers to return to "purity and fairness of spirit" or lose the spiritual power which has characterized Southern Baptists.

Fuller noted the strategies that have been employed by players in the SBC controversy in recent years but warned no strategy would be blessed by God if it was "conceived by minds which are bitter, arrogant or presumptuous."

Fuller thanked SBC President Stanley for the opportunities for prayer he had provided for messengers during the sessions. "This is not so much a time for prayer as a time for prayer and fasting," he said.

Wednesday evening

Messengers got back to the most disputed item of business of the meeting on Wednesday evening. After having the afternoon off, they came back to deal with a motion to amend the report of the president-appointed Committee on Committees.

At issue was the Committee on Boards slate, which the Committee on Committees nominates to the convention. The 1986 Committee on Boards has two members from each state, and they nominate to the convention all persons for committees and boards.

In the Wednesday morning session, the body had refused to sustain, by a vote of 12,576 to 11,801, President Stanley's ruling that messengers cannot amend the report of the Committee on Committees in its entirety.

On Wednesday evening, Stanley ruled, on advice of Parliamentarian Wayne Allen, that SBC Bylaw 16 prevents amending the Committee on Committees' report. He said it must be either accepted or rejected by messengers.

Stanley immediately called for a vote by show of ballots, then by standing, and eventually by ballot. The report was adopted by a vote of 13,123 to 9,851, though the process was clouded by charges of voting irregularities.

Registration Secretary Lee Porter revealed to the body as he announced the vote that numerous members of the Tellers Committee had told him of ballots being passed out outside the hall and in the parking garage. Porter explained he had to say no process exists for him to do anything about any irregularities.

"The integrity of the balloting system depends on the integrity of local churches and individual messengers," Porter said.

Messengers also dealt with several motions at the session. One opposing salaried denominational employees "taking sides" in SBC controversies was ruled out of order on grounds it violated Article 7 of the SBC Constitution. That article dictates that all officers of agencies, institutions and commissions be subject to the direction and control of their trustees.

The body also refused to suspend Robert's Rules of Order to again consider the 1983 decision to meet in Las Vegas in 1989.

Messengers approved another motion offering support for the SBC president.

Order of Business Committee chairman Morris Chapman also reported on motions referred to other entities. A motion calling for a second Scripture version to be added to Vacation Bible School materials was referred to the Baptist Sunday School Board.

Referred to the convention's Executive Committee were motions to hold the vote for SBC president prior to the annual President's Address; change the formula for determining entitlement to messengers by a church; and require disclosure of church giving and baptism ratios of any nominated or appointed to an SBC position.

Also sent to the Executive Committee were motions to allow missionaries to vote by mail prior to the annual meeting of the SBC, schedule meetings of the convention outside the South and East; investigate simultaneous satellite meetings for the SBC; and automatically refer to the Executive Committee

any motions to change the SBC constitution or bylaws.

Chapman reported discussion on a motion to delete two words from the *Baptist Faith and Message* statement were scheduled for Thursday morning.

The committee chairman then read into the record five motions which he said the Committee on Order of Business was accepting for consideration. Chapman revealed little about the substance of the motions or who was submitting them but did say that they would not be printed in the daily convention bulletin for messengers to consider.

Normally, the person submitting a motion introduces it in a business session and the committee announces a time for its consideration by the body.

Chapman also reported his committee had referred to the Executive Committee a motion to require that all motions and resolutions be compiled at the beginning of the annual meeting and printed so messengers could consider them before time for voting. The motion also prohibited consideration of any motion or resolution that had not gone through this process.

That motion had not been introduced publicly prior to the referral.

Prefacing their report with the explanation they were bringing resolutions which they hoped would aid in healing, the Resolutions Committee introduced three resolutions. The usual resolution of appreciation to the host city, the planners and the convention officers was amended to include SBC agency heads.

A resolution affirming the priorities of evangelism and missions was changed to add education as a priority. A third resolution called on churches and individuals to pray for spiritual awakening.

In miscellaneous business, Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Church in Memphis, was named to bring the annual sermon at the 1986 meeting in Atlanta. Homer L. Lindsay Jr., co-pastor of First Church in Jacksonville, Fla., was named alternate.

Messengers took an offering for world hunger, following through with a motion passed earlier in the day, and collected \$77,428.12.

Using the parable of the Good Samaritan, Home Mission Board President William G. Tanner, told the messengers the confused and searching people in our nation are our responsibility.

The Home Mission Board's report, entitled "Spreading God's Love through Ministry" was given five standing ovations as Tanner and others related the agency's work.

Thursday morning

Frustration over Wednesday's parliamentary wranglings spilled over into Thursday morning's business session, disrupting the orderly conduct of business until two prominent pastors came to the platform to plead for an end to the harassment.

Messengers had heard and received without event a string of seven reports from



ABN photo / Mark Kelly

SBC and other Baptist agencies and institutions, ranging from the Radio and Television Commission to the Baptist World Alliance. When the final report of the Resolutions Committee came to the floor, however, a determined contingent of protesters stood ready at the floor microphones.

Eight resolutions were scheduled for debate during the hour, but when the floor was opened for discussion on the first one, SBC President Charles Stanley found himself faced with messengers lined up at the microphones. Each time he called on a microphone for discussion on the resolution at hand, the messenger in line raised a point of order regarding the fact Stanley had ignored the protests of messengers the previous day in calling for the ballot on the Committee on Committees report.

Points of order, when raised, are supposed to take precedence over items of business at hand. Stanley had ignored repeated cries of "Point of order!" on Wednesday evening after Parliamentarian Wayne Allen had ruled the attempted amendment of the Committee on Committees report out of order. Stanley had forced through a vote on the report, despite the protests of messengers scattered across the floor.

On each of the first four resolutions presented Thursday morning, messengers at the microphones repeatedly challenged Stanley's actions of the previous day. Each time, Stanley refused to acknowledge the points of order they raised, insisting he would hear only discussion and motions dealing with the resolution at hand. He ruled out of order all comments and motions not dealing with the resolution on the floor.

After repeated protests from messengers, Second Vice-President Winfred Moore and Shreveport pastor John Sullivan came to the platform and made a plea for an end to the protests. Sullivan made a motion to that effect, and Moore seconded, saying, "We are on the way toward healing. Let's do it, and let's do it now."

Stanley called for a vote on the motion, and it passed overwhelmingly. The remaining resolutions were then adopted with a minimum of resistance.

Messengers adopted resolutions which affirmed the Cooperative Program on the oc-

casions of its 60th anniversary, urged Southern Baptists to educate themselves on implementing new Equal Access legislation in their communities, advocated increased efforts by local churches to resettle refugees and took a strong stand against proposals for a national lottery.

Other resolutions called for Southern Baptists to protest laws which would classify churches as political action committees if they address political/moral concerns, urged Congress to reject any tax reform plan which limits deductions for charitable contributions and challenged congregations to influence local public policies to eliminate the availability of all forms of pornography.

A final resolution deplored "the proliferation of all homosexual practices" and reaffirmed the biblical condemnation of such practices. It further opposed attempts to extend affirmative action protection to homosexuals as a minority. However, the resolution did note the Bible "also teaches forgiveness and transformation, upon repentance, through Jesus Christ."

Three items of miscellaneous business concluded the morning session. William E. Shoulta, a messenger from Kentucky, moved that a resolution he had presented earlier dealing with secret tape recordings be brought out of the Resolutions Committee, which had recommended no action.

Shoulta explained to messengers he had intended the resolution as an effort to restore integrity, which he saw as a pre-requisite to building trust in the convention. He said he wanted the world to know that, "although Southern Baptists may be a divided people, we are not an unethical people."

Resolutions Committee chairman Larry Lewis replied the committee had passed over many resolutions because of the divisive feelings associated with them. Messengers voted to leave the resolution with the committee.

Messengers also rejected an appeal from Morris Chapman, chairman of the Order of Business Committee, for the convention to suspend the bylaws and accept the introduction of five motions after the deadline.

Chapman had personally introduced the motions Wednesday evening and only later discovered the requirement motions be introduced by the persons making the motion.

Since the Wednesday evening deadline for the introduction of business had passed, Chapman asked messengers to suspend the rules and allow the motions to be introduced and referred to the Order of Business Committee. Messengers refused the request by a show of ballots.

Another item of business which had not been reported out of committee was an amendment to the *Baptist Faith and Message* offered by Anthony Scotto of Florida. The amendment would have removed the words "mixture of" from the third sentence of the BFM statement on the Scriptures: "It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter."

Messengers soundly defeated the amendment after a strong statement from Herschel H. Hobbs, chairman of the committee which drafted the 1963 statement of faith.

Hobbs noted the statement had been drawn from the New Hampshire Confession of Faith of 1833 and observed Southern Baptists had unanimously reaffirmed the wor-

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ding at the 1981 convention in Los Angeles. He also pointed out inerrantist leader Paul Pressler of Houston recently had expressed his unqualified support of the phrasing.

Thursday afternoon

The 1985 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention was closed on a more harmonious note with reports but no resolutions or motions. Thursday afternoon's session included the introduction of fraternal messengers and reports from the American Bible Society, Woman's Missionary Union, the SBC Historical Commission, the Committee on the Denominational Calendar, and the denominational press.

An amendment to the denominational calendar was discussed but rejected by the messengers. The amendment would have renamed and changed the date for a Sanctity of Life Sunday, set for the third Sunday in January. If changed, the day would have been called Concern for Life Sunday, to be observed the first Sunday in April.

The secretary of the Credentials Committee appeared before the body in the closing minutes of the meeting to recommend the messengers vote to unseat four messengers who registered from a church of which they are not members. The motion was adopted.

The messengers also voted to commend Registration Secretary Lee Porter and his staff for their work in registration and balloting.

Adjournment and the final benediction came at 3:50 p.m.



It has often been said that, "The Southern Baptist Convention is a rope of sand with the strength of steel." However, this can be true only when trust exists among Southern Baptists. Trust is essential if we are to have healing from the division which has occurred within the Convention.

In the first portion of the 1985 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, it appeared that healing would take place. But on Wednesday a cloud formed over the apparent efforts to unify the convention. Steps toward healing were the election of both Charles Stanley and Winfred Moore as president and first vice president, the activation of a Peace Committee, the good work of the Resolutions Committee and the record attendance of messengers.

In an excellent address, President Charles Stanley outlined steps to be taken in the healing process of "a family." Stanley said the same steps should be used in healing a spiritual family, such as the SBC, as are used in a physical family.

Stanley said healing must first grow out of a willingness to forgive, just as Christ forgave our sins. Second, he said that this must be accomplished by a commitment to love other persons. Finally, he emphasized that we must show a spirit of humility.

"Before you make a decision," Stanley said, "let me remind you of what we have at stake here. We know we will not always agree on many things. The world isn't looking to see if all Southern Baptists agree. They are looking to see how we disagree.

"They are not going to be impressed by our budgets, our buildings, our large churches and our numbers," he continued, "What is going to impress them is how you and I respond to each other."

Stanley emphasized that forgiveness, love and humility are not feelings we have "but commitments we make." We agreed with Dr. Stanley that, if healing is to take place, each person must adopt these guidelines for himself, but not for others. And it is imperative these principles be used by all messengers at the Southern Baptist Convention.

Perhaps, the greatest chance for long-range healing for the SBC can come from the peace or reconciliation committee. The committee has several strengths. Among these are: (1) it will provide opportunity for various sides or groups within the convention to discuss differences in a constructive fashion; and (2) it will provide opportunity to look at issues, so they can be dealt with, eliminated or cleared up.

The Peace Committee is a balanced committee. Everyone on the committee has been accepted by both sides or groups within the convention. While this may not have been the best way to structure the committee, it did assure adoption by the messengers. Great strength was added by the addition of Winfred Moore to the committee. President Stanley was already a member by virtue of his re-election as president.

The record high attendance of more than 45,000 messengers to the 1985 convention is a very healthy sign. This means that more grassroots Baptists are becoming involved in the business process of our denomination. The more Southern Baptists understand our world missions enterprise, the easier it will be to gain involvement in finances, prayer and healing.

The state presidents are to be commended for the guidelines laid down for this committee. The committee is to deal with the sources of controversy within our convention and to use the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message statement regarding theological issues as a guideline. The committee is to work with and through the trustees of boards and agencies of the Southern Baptist Convention in determining the validity of the problems and in the process of clearing them up.

This committee should provide an opportunity to deal with the accusations of liberalism in the Convention. Less than 10 seminary professors have been accused of liberalism. Some of these are no longer employed by any of our seminaries. We have approximately 550 seminary professors. If 10 are bad, this would be about two percent.

This editor knows, personally, approximately 100 seminary professors on a first name basis. Every one of these is doctrinally sound. If there are any who are doctrinally or morally unsound, they should be dealt with. If, however, the accused are doctrinally and morally sound, they should receive an immediate apology. We certainly should never practice guilt by association. This committee should provide opportunity to clear the air. It needs to study and recommend however, not try to be the judge, jury and final appeals court—all rolled up in one.

The Resolutions Committee deserves the praise of all Southern Baptists. This committee did the best job of any committee in years in presenting pertinent but non-controversial resolutions. The guidelines adopted by this committee should be permanent guidelines for resolutions committees of the future.

The cloud over the healing process occurred when a challenge was made to the Committee on Boards, Commissions and Standing Committees. The process works as follows: The president appoints a "Committee on Committees, composed of two members from each qualified state and the District of Columbia . . . in conference with the vice presidents, one of whom shall be designated as chair person" (Bylaw 21). The Committee on Committees nominates the Committee on Boards (Bylaw 16).

The Committee on Boards is the most powerful committee in the Southern Baptist Convention. This is where the power is vested, since they nominate the trustees for all agencies and institutions. This committee has the ability to change institutions in the Southern Baptist Convention by nominating individuals who agree with their particular ideas. It is evident that the composition of many of the boards of the Southern Baptist Convention has been changed over the past few years.

A motion was made from the floor that the Committee on Boards be changed, for this year only, by substituting the presidents of state conventions and the state WMU presidents. The parliamentarian first ruled this would have to be done position by position. The individual who placed the motion said he was prepared to do this but preferred to do it all in one vote. The chair ruled this could not be done. A vote was taken in which the chair was not sustained.

In the evening session, the parliamentarian ruled that there could be no changes to the committee since the bylaw says, "The Committee on Boards, Commissions, and Standing Committees shall be composed of two members from each state, who shall be nominated to the convention by the Committee on Committees." He maintained the word "shall" eliminated any possibility of changing the report, the only possible action of the convention being either to accept or reject the report of this committee, according to the ruling.

If the parliamentarian's ruling was correct, then the bylaws of the Southern Baptist Convention contradict each other, since Bylaw 32 says, "The adoption of recommendations contained in reports to the convention shall not bind the convention on any other matter in the body of the report; but the convention reserves the right to consider and amend the body of all reports."

We have talked with 15 good parliamentarians, all of whom believe the ruling was in error. We believe this was an honest mistake by Parliamentarian Wayne Allen, who said the matter

should be considered by the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention. But messengers always become frustrated when they feel their right to speak out has been taken from them.

We feel the messengers who conducted themselves in a disorderly fashion were out of order in terms of Christian conduct. However, this is not without precedent. In the 1970 convention discussions dealing with the Broadman Commentary and the Christian Life Commission, certain conservatives felt their rights had been taken from them. They were as upset then as the brethren on the other end of the spectrum were this year.

If the use of state convention presidents and state WMU presidents were permanently structured into the bylaws of the Southern Baptist Convention, it would violate Baptist polity. Each entity in Baptist life is separate without any direct connectional relationship to any other. This procedure would be inverted connectionalism, where the state conventions were given a major voice into the Southern Baptist Convention. The adoption of this procedure for a single year, however, would not have violated Baptist polity.

The large number of messengers who left the convention frustrated need to know the two processes that should be followed. The matter of the body's right to deal with the report of the Committee on Committees should be dealt with, carefully studied and clarified by the SBC Executive Committee. It also should be brought to the attention of the Peace Committee.

We are grateful to John Sullivan and Winfred Moore for the motion to restore order to the convention and proceed with the business in orderly fashion. This motion assisted President Stanley in carrying on the convention just as he protected the presidents of agencies and messengers who were addressing the convention.

We believe that peace and healing can take place. There is far more that unites Southern Baptists than separates us. All Southern Baptists believe in missions and evangelism. We should all pray for our president and vice presidents during the coming year. Healing cannot take place unless we are willing to pray for our convention leadership and follow the Holy Spirit's guidance.

ABN photo / Mark Kelly



More than 45,000 messengers jammed the Dallas Convention Center June 11 for the first day of the 1985 Southern Baptist Convention. The attendance set a record that far exceeded any previous annual meeting.

Don Moore

You'll be glad to know...

This is being written before the convention, so I have absolutely no idea who will have been elected president. Nor do I know what other actions may be taken. But there are some things I do know will be true whatever takes place in Dallas.



Moore

(1) All of our people will still have the freedom of their conscience and their relationship with God.
 (2) All of our churches will still be autonomous.
 (3) All of the promises of God will still be intact. None of them will have changed. Even Romans 8:28 will be true of situations that may exist after the convention that didn't meet with our approval.

(4) The church will still be God's plan, with all of its imperfections (Eph. 3:10).

(5) The Great Commission will be even more imperative.

(6) The Word of God will stand unscathed and un tarnished by the fracas.

(7) The Holy Spirit, though likely grieved and sometimes quenched, will remain God's abiding reality in our hearts.

(8) The world will still be basically lost, according to I John 5:19.

(9) The gospel will still be God's dynamite to blast away unbelief and to regenerate dead spirits.

(10) The churches and pastors will need to devote themselves to their specific local responsibilities and not look back.

(11) We will still need each other.

(12) The grace of God will be available to enable us to be gracious in victory or defeat; to forgive where forgiveness is needed; to love when it isn't easy; to trust when we cannot see; and to cooperate when we would like to protest.

(13) And Jesus Christ will still be Lord! Amen!

Don Moore is executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

More to come on SBC 1985 events

More reports on the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Dallas are planned for the June 27 issue of ABN, focusing on pre-convention and auxiliary events.

Starts WMU
 Evangelists Musi
 DALLAS (BPT) - Different
 Forum DOMs Cam
 DALLAS (BPT) - The
 home and par-
 ticipate
 1985

'Herein is love'...
 (1 John 4:10)
Pray for Arkansas' Brazil partnership

by Millie Gill / ABN staff writer

people

Rick Stevens is serving as pastor of Calvary Church, Lepanto. He is a graduate of Southern Baptist College and has attended Arkansas State University. Stevens and his wife, Marcia, have two daughters, Melissa and Kayla.

Gary Parker is serving as pastor of Meadowview Church near Pine Bluff.

John Finn of Little Rock is serving as interim pastor of Highland Heights Church, Benton.

Bill Hutchings has resigned as pastor of Success Church to become pastor of Emmanuel Church in Piggott.

Lynn Gober is serving as pastor of First Southern Church in Redfield.

Quenton Middleton is serving as pastor of Omaha Church.

Boyd Tannehill has resigned as pastor of Parthenon Church.

Roy Crossland has resigned as pastor of White River Church at Oil Trough.

Ray Taffar has resigned as pastor of Northside Church at Batesville to continue his studies at Southern Baptist College.

Leslie Willis observed his fifth anniversary June 2 as minister of music for Brinkley First Church.

M. L. Faler has resigned as pastor of Watson Chapel Church at Pine Bluff to become pastor of Woolmarket Church in Biloxi, Miss.

Jason Henderson has been selected to receive the Certificate of Distinction Award for Outstanding score on the National Scholastic Aptitude Test. He is a member of South Highland Church in Little Rock and is the son of Orland and Sharon Henderson.

Paul Fox died June 1. A retired Southern Baptist minister, he had served as pastor of Van Buren First Church, Pine Bluff Emmanuel Church and Little Rock Calvary Church. He has also served churches in Alabama, Mississippi and Kentucky. He is survived by his wife, Edyth Humberd Fox; a daughter, Mrs. William Abel of Chattanooga, Tenn.; two sisters; a brother and two grandchildren.

Pete Ramsey has resigned as minister of religious education at Fayetteville First Church to begin serving July 1 as a staff member at First Church, Katy, Texas. While in Fayetteville, he has been involved in the Chamber of Commerce and Arkansas Baptist Religious Education Association, serving as president in 1984. He currently is serving as president of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

Stewart Pickle has resigned as pastor of Trumann First Church to return to the Foreign mission field.

Billy Barnett is serving as pastor of Coroners Chapel at Trumann.

Wes Searcy of Louisiana and **Dana McDaniel** of Charleston have joined the staff of Fort Smith Grand Avenue Church. Searcy is serving as assistant to the youth minister and McDaniel is serving for one year as activities and youth intern.

John Binkley of Poteau, Okla., is serving as pastor of Lone Church at Booneville.

Paul D. McDaniel has resigned as pastor of Pleasant Grove III Church at Waldron to serve as pastor of Trinity Church in Heavener, Okla.

James Young has resigned as pastor of Shiloh Church at Black Fork.

Carl Huddleston is serving as interim pastor of Flippin Church.

Jeff Houston is serving Harrison First Church as interim music director.

David Masterton began serving June 16 as pastor of East End Church at Hensley, coming there from Amity First Church. He has also served as pastor of churches in Indiana and Illinois. Masterton and his wife, Marla, have two sons, David and Daniel.

Rissa Burchfield has joined the staff of Parkway Place Church in Little Rock as youth minister.

Paul Parker has resigned as pastor of Nall's Memorial Church in Little Rock.

Dick L. Cayce is serving as pastor of Royal Church at Hot Springs, moving there from London First Church. A native of Texas, Cayce has served as pastor of other Arkansas and Texas churches. He has been serving, for the past two years, as Dardanelle-Russellville Association director of church training activities.

Kenneth McClenny is serving as interim pastor of Crossett Second Church.

briefly

Oak Cliff Church in Fort Smith celebrated its 25th anniversary June 14-16 with activities that included a noteburning service, ice cream fellowship, worship services and an old-fashioned dinner on the grounds. Speakers were Rick Ingle, Jack Bettis, Pat Campbell and Murl Walker. Paul Heisner and R. C. Meadows directed music.

Delta Association will dedicate Stevenson Hall at Wolf Creek, the associational camp site, July 6. The new conference center, named for Bryan Stevenson, will be dedicated at 6:30 p.m. Recreation and a hamburger supper will precede this service, with activities beginning at 2 p.m.

Siloam Springs First Church ordained Jim Allison to the ministry June 16.

Park Hill Church in North Little Rock mission team has returned from Bluffton, Ind., where they worked with the North Oaks Church in constructing a 2,300 square foot building. The team will work in Brazil in September, according to pastor Cary Heard.

Hackett First Church ordained James Jones and Gary Thomas to the ministry June 16. Ordained as deacons were Larry and Ronnie McBride.

Augusta First Church youth recently raised \$350 for world hunger through fund raising projects and sacrificial gifts. Girls in Action and Royal Ambassador missions organizations assisted.

Faulkner Association is sponsoring a senior adult retreat June 28-29 at Cold Springs Retreat Center on Acklin Gap Road near Conway. Program personalities will include Bill Kreis, associational director of missions, Buford Francis, Anna Allison, Donna Spurrier, John Birdsong, Irene Prince, Floyd Tidsworth, Red Baker, Jay Miller and Troy Prince.

Union Avenue Church at Wynne ordained Danny Glover to the ministry June 2. Glover, who is serving as minister of youth at Forrest City Second Church, is attending Southern Baptist College, where he was recipient of the president's scholarship and Arkansas Governor's scholarship.

Maston to receive Brooks Hays Award

T.B. Maston, retired professor of Christian ethics at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, has been chosen to receive the Brooks Hays Award for Christian Citizenship by Little Rock's Second Baptist Church.

The presentation will be made at the church June 30 in the morning worship service, with James Dunn as the speaker. Dunn, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, is a former student of Dr. Maston's.

The announcement of Maston's selection

was made by Billy White, pastor of Second Church. The award is presented annually as a memorial to the Arkansas congressman who twice served as president of the Southern Baptist Convention. Hays was a member of Second Church and taught a Sunday School class which still bears his name.

Maston, like Hays, is a layman. He is a prolific writer on ethics issues and holds earned advanced degrees from several universities, including Yale, where he received his Ph.D.

Lottie misses 1984 goal but shows record increase

RICHMOND, Va. — Final receipts for the 1984 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering showed the biggest dollar increase ever, but fell \$1.2 million short of the \$66 million goal. When the books closed May 31 the total was \$64,775,763.83 or 98.1 percent of the goal.

Although gifts fell short of the goal, the 1984 report was full of good news, noted Carl Johnson, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board treasurer. "You have to be pleased when an offering increase comes close to being three times the rate of inflation," he said.


The increase came during a period when world hunger and relief gifts also reached a new high. Southern Baptists gave a record

\$7.2 million for overseas relief in 1984 and have already given more than \$5 million in the first four months of 1985.

The Lottie Moon increase of \$6.75 million was more than 50 percent larger than the 1983 increase, said Johnson. Some field capital requests based on the \$66 million goal will have to be cut, he added, but the cuts will not be as severe as last year's.

Southern Baptists have an excellent opportunity of reaching the 1985 goal for the first time since 1975, less than 10 percent increase—8.07 percent—will be needed to reach the goal. The 1985 goal is \$70 million.

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Your state convention at work

Christian Life Council Rare opportunity

Arkansas Baptists and others seriously interested in preserving religious liberty and separation of church and state have a rare opportunity to re-examine these important concepts June 27-28.



Parker

Robert Maddox, executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, and Lee Boothby, his chief legal advisor, will come from Washington, D.C., to be a vital part of this conference. It will be held at Immanuel Church in Little Rock.

Several Baptist pastors in our state will be on the program. There will also be an opportunity to hear United States District Court Judge William Overton. Those who opposed or favored his ruling on creation science will be interested in hearing him speak.

This conference is co-sponsored by the Cooperative Ministries with National Baptists and the Christian Life Council departments of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

Whether you can come or not, please encourage others to attend. Join others in being better informed about issues which should concern every Christian citizen. — **Bob Parker, director**

Evangelism Small Church Conference

A very helpful conference for rural and small church pastors and people is planned for July 22-24, 1985. The Henry Roe



Shell

Evangelistic Association will be conducting this conference at Southwest Baptist College, Bolivar, Mo. Jack Stanton states, "Henry Roe has been in rural evangelism for 15 years and we are proud to have a man of his experience and love for the rural and small churches

helping in this event".

There will be many individual seminars all focused on helping the pastor and workers in the small churches. Some of the seminar teachers will be Ken Carter from the Home Mission Board; Jerry Don Abernathy, director of evangelism for Oklahoma; Ernie Perkins and Earl Long from Capitol Association in Oklahoma City; Clint Watson, Parker-Palo Pinto Association in

Texas. Charles Chaney will conduct the Bible studies and Stanton will bring a message. The keynote speaker for Tuesday night, July 23, is S. M. Lockridge from San Diego, Calif.

You may contact Stanton at (417) 326-5281 or Henry Roe at (214) 729-2627 for additional registration information. Lodging and meals are available on campus for a nominal fee. We are hoping that several of our pastors in Arkansas will take advantage of this conference. — **Clarence Shell, director**

Missions Watch the models

Reports of excellent progress are coming from the missions serving as models in Arkansas. I believe the Lord's hand has



Tidsworth

been on this project from the beginning. Some outstanding things are happening that can only be explained by the leadership of the Spirit.

One church missions committee member of First Church, Marion, observed after a training session with them, "Even though we had no training, we have done what the Southern Baptist materials say to do. Both must be lined up with the Spirit."

We are furnishing the best guidelines for each model. An experienced, trained consultant is related to each model.

Two publications and a slide set will be produced for future use from the models. Watch for shared information in the *News magazine* about the models. Please continue to pray for the models and other missions starting in Arkansas. — **Floyd Tidsworth Jr., church extension director**

Sunday School Nominating committee

One of the most important responsibilities of any church is the task of the nominating committee. Believing that a church grows through the Sunday School and that the work of the nominating committee has a direct effect upon the Sunday School, I want the nominating committee to do the best job possible. Amen? Amen!



Hinkson

The nominating committee must understand what the Sunday School is all about (reaching and

teaching people). The committee needs to understand and believe in the laws of Sunday School growth and have a working knowledge of Flake's formula for growing a Sunday School. When the committee has a commitment to growth (and that may not always be numbers, though in most cases it will), then they are better prepared to seek leadership who will be used by the Lord to cause growth to happen, for it does not just happen.

In a departmentalized Sunday School, the nominating committee should serve as a clearing house as the department directors recommend their department staff.

The booklet *How to Discover, Enlist, and Train Sunday School Workers* by James A. Chatham would be of help to your nominating committee. This booklet is available at the Baptist Book store. — **Ed Hinkson, associate**

Woman's Missionary Union A mother's perspective

Deep inside the shell of this woman beats the heart of a GA. I am looking forward to my third GA Mother-Daughter Camp so that I can be a GA for 24 hours... playing games, making crafts, singing silly songs, hiking and, best of all, learning about missions with my daughter. For this short time, I have quality time with my only daughter.

This same GA inside me sees the new GA Mini-Camp as a time to help young girls enjoy themselves and blossom into servants of our Savior. It is a time when the new Christian can grow and hidden creativity can be released. Selfishly, my experiences at camp will make me a better mother and a better leader.

GA Mother-Daughter Camp is for 1st-3rd grade girls and their mothers or a mother substitute. The last GA Mother-Daughter Camp is June 28-29. GA Mini-Camp, July 3-5, is for mothers or leaders and 1st-4th grade girls. For information about these mission education camping opportunities, contact the state WMU office, P. O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203. — **Pat Glascock, GA/Mission Friends director**

Family and Child Care 'Reach out and touch'

"It is more blessed to give than to receive." These words of Jesus were illustrated in the joy that a group of Baptist Home girls found in going to the local nursing home to sing and share with the senior citizens there.

Directed by Mrs. Mary Davey, the girls presented a group of songs that they had practiced in choir at the Home, and then led in a sing-a-long for those who wanted to join the singing.

One elderly lady knew every song and later shared with the girls that she was the widow of a minister of music. In fact, her

husband had suffered a stroke while leading the music and she had received comfort in the fact that he was happy in what he was doing when the Lord called him home. The need to share joys and sorrows spanned the age gap in our fellowship together.

The home-made cookies and cokes at the Armstrong home topped off the evening. The young people decided that it is very good to "reach out and touch" someone, and that does not apply to long distance only! — **Eula Armstrong, director of special activities, Arkansas Baptist Home for Children**

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Woman's viewpoint

Jeanne E. Richards

'We have had enough!'

Pornography is more than pictures of a naked woman. To say that it treats women as sex objects is an understatement. It is full-color film destined to undermine the holy institution of marriage. These merchants of filth peddle wares straight from the corridors of Hell.

Children are the victims. They are the ones who suffer most at the hands of child molesters and sexual deviants who feed on a steady diet of perversion. Who hears the little ones cry?

Snuff movies are a type of pornography that not only sexually abuses children but actually murders the child on film to add that realistic touch. For every child appearing in a pornographic movie, you have a victim of child abuse, both physical and sexual. What children are not murdered are left to face life abused, both emotionally and physically. What chance do they possibly have?

How many readers can recall waking in

the night and crying out for your mothers? Did she not always come to your rescue? Who comforts the children who fall prey to the flesh peddlers?

Pornography is not a problem restricted to the large metropolitan cities. It may be in your town. Convenience stores and gas stations may be selling obscene material in your own neighborhood.

There is much that we as Christian women can do. Numerous organizations are springing up across this state to help turn back the tide of porn in our state. Local prosecutors are beginning to take action by enforcing state obscenity laws. These elected officials need to be encouraged to continue the fight. It is time for God's people to stand up and say, "We have had enough."

Jeanne Richards, legal counsel for the Christian Civic Foundation, directs the Freeway drug education program.



One layman's opinion

Daniel R. Grant

The sad claim to fame for Hoxha

In a little-noticed news story recently, the death of Enver Hoxha, 76-year-old communist ruler of Albania, was reported. I must admit that the headline made little impression on me because I could not have told a Trivial Pursuit questioner the name of the Albanian ruler, nor even where Albania is, except somewhere in the general area of Italy, Yugoslavia and Greece. For some reason, my eyes lingered on the story, and I discovered it was a sad story indeed.

Hoxha had ruled Albania for 42 years, longer than any other communist leader in any country. His heroes were Josef Stalin and Mao Tse-tung, and he never forgave the ones who downgraded those ruthless leaders. In addition to crushing all political opponents, he closed all churches and mosques and converted them into government buildings, warehouses and even stables. He outlawed private automobiles, and restricted foreign travel more severely than in any other European country. Living standards today are well below European standards, and few imported products are available in Albania.

I was especially struck by two statements in the news report. It was said that, "He made Albania a fortress of his own views!"

Then the reporter added that Hoxha claimed with considerable pride that his was "the only truly atheist nation in the world." What sad epitaphs for a man's tombstone!

There is one sense in which we all spend a lifetime building a fortress "to our own views." One might even accuse Baptist preachers, or Baptist college presidents, of trying to do that. Let us all hope and pray that "our views" are in reality the mind of Christ, just as closely as we can make them. But Mr. Hoxha was hard at work during a 42-year reign trying to build "the only truly atheist nation in the world." Whatever happened to all those people who used to say, "It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you are sincere"? Communist ruler Hoxha was sincerely breaking his hammer on God's anvil.

I hope I can work as hard as Mr. Hoxha (though not as long!) at the task of strengthening Ouachita as a truly Christian university. What wasted zeal, drive, enthusiasm and leadership for Mr. Hoxha, and what a twisted, wasted life.

Daniel R. Grant is president of Ouachita Baptist University.

A NEW LOOK AT AN



OLD NEED

OBSERVE
ANNUITY BOARD SUNDAY
JUNE 23, 1985

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SERVING THOSE WHO SERVE THE LORD

International

The Lord's complaint

by Stephen P. Davis, First Church, Russellville

Basic passage: Micah 6

Focal passage: Micah 6:1-8

Central truth: Our religious activities are not acceptable as substitutes for our sinful attitudes and actions.

In Micah 6, the people were on trial for bad religion. They practiced injustice, forgot God's saving acts in their history and thought that some expensive gifts could please God and make everything they had not done or had done that was sinful all right.

God's complaint was that he had long ago told them what he wanted from them, namely the practice of love, love of covenant fidelity, and the discipline to walk carefully with God.

It is possible for us today to spend so much time being "religious" that we have little time being Christian. Our religious activities can be a good means for the expression of our faith and commitment. However, these deeds are not sufficient to make us acceptable to God. God's focus is first of all on what we must be, before what we must do.

Three words in Micah 6:8 form one of the best summaries of true Christianity to be found in scripture or anywhere: justice, mercy and humility. Each is important, but incomplete unless balanced with the others. They belong together.

Justice, as defined in the Bible, has two dimensions. One concerns the setting right of that which is wrong; the other concerns fairness in daily life and personal relationships.

God asks not only that we be just, but also that we be kind. Kindness is said to be the child of love and is godlike. So, to love mercy is to be tenderhearted, really sensitive to the needs and suffering of others. To love mercy is to help the weak, handicapped and underprivileged.

We are to live dependent on God. This requires humility. We cannot nourish our conceit and walk with God. Humility keeps us close to God. It also makes us teachable because it creates a joyful, willing submission to God's will. Humility keeps us from being arrogant and condescending toward others. God's complaint is that we don't practice these three attitudes as we know to do.

This lesson treatment is based on the International Bible Lesson for Christian Teaching, Uniform Series, Copyright International Council of Education. Used by permission.

Life and Work

Fidelity in economics

by Nelson Wilhelm, First Church, Waldron

Basic passage: Malachi 2:17-3:12

Focal passage: Malachi 3:2-10

Central truth: Economic views reflect the heart's spiritual condition.

God always moves in a redemptive direction. God wants things to get better and moves people toward his will. The words "refine," "purify," "fuller's soap," and "purge" all indicate a better condition is expected.

The passage opens with a forecast of discipline in the hope of causing the people of God to give evidence of him in all they are and do. Our relationship to God will show itself in personal values, social relationships and cultural standards.

Their problem was that they had willingly left God and his ways. Returning to God would not just happen by itself. A real symptom of their ungodliness was their self-serving way with financial things. A person who causes everything to flow toward himself will harm all those who are around him. He will not mind stepping on those he needs to step on to fulfill his greedy heart.

It is a sad commentary on the hearts of our people when we have to have stewardship drives for giving. The problem is that the heart does not view Christ as Lord.

Isn't it interesting that when God wants to get our attention, he can quickly do so by touching either our health or our finances. Economic erosion, inflation and recession are easy for God to control. People tithe because they are spiritually responsible to God in all areas of their spiritual lives. God certainly does not need our money; we need to give to show his lordship. There is a very deep principle behind Jesus' comment about the widow at the Temple giving all she possessed.

So much of the prophet material deals with the area of ethics—how we ought to feel and behave. At the heart of this word from God is the examining of our values and principles of life.

The passage closes with the encouragement to get our hearts right, and blessings will come.

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Bible Book

Jesus on the Cross

by Ben J. Rowell, First Church, Rogers

Basic passage: Luke 23:26-49

Focal passage: Luke 23:33-47

Central truth: Jesus suffered ridicule and died on the cross in order to provide salvation for all people.

Simon of Cyrene was seized by a guard as he passed by and was ordered to carry the cross of Jesus. What a tremendous blessing, but I am sure he did not think so at the time. A great company of people followed him up that hill. Only Luke's gospel mentions this episode.

The crowd, mostly of women, bewailed and lamented him. They were beating their breasts and crying. The Lord, with all of his wonderful compassion, ministered to them and said, "Weep not for me, weep for yourselves and your children." Our Lord knew what was ahead for them and, again, because he loved them so, even during his terrible ordeal, he continued to minister unto their needs. He knew the awful calamities soon to come upon them and their cities.

They now came to Calvary and crucified Jesus. The literal meaning of this word, "Calvary," is "a skull." The place is also called Golgotha. This is a Hebrew word. If you travel to Jerusalem today, opinion is divided on the real location of Calvary. Some say Calvary is at the church of the Holy Sepulcher, and others have the opinion it is Gordon's Calvary. I believe it is at Gordon's Calvary, because it was outside the wall of the city where the executions took place.

They crucified him between two malefactors, making him the central figure, which in that day meant he was the greatest criminal of the three. Again his great divine love was shown when he said, "Father forgive them." This was done as they were crucifying him. It was as if for a few moments he forgot all about his pain and suffering and thought only of them.

During this time, the soldiers are casting lots to see which would receive his raiment. One of the thieves then says to him, "you are the Messiah, aren't you? Well then, save yourself and us."

Praise God one of the thieves turned to him for forgiveness. Even to the very end of his earthly life, Jesus ministered. Then, he did a very significant thing. He said, "Father into thy hands I commend my spirit." He then dismissed his spirit as a voluntary act.

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Supreme Court strikes down prayer law

WASHINGTON (BP) — The U. S. Supreme Court struck down an Alabama law June 4 requiring the observance of moments of silence "for meditation or voluntary prayer," but suggested strongly that more generally worded "silence" statutes do not violate the Constitution.

Acting on the most publicized of seven church-state cases considered during the current term, the court ruled 6-3 that the Alabama law—passed in 1981—violated the Constitution's ban on an official establishment of religion because it "had no secular purpose."

In an opinion written by Justice John Paul Stevens, the court majority upheld contention of agnostic Ishmael Jaffree of Mobile, Ala., that enactment of the silent prayer statute advanced religion and infringed on the rights of his three school-age children. Jaffree contended throughout his lengthy challenge to the Alabama law that his children were held up to ridicule by other pupils and teachers critical of his action.

Stevens' opinion relied heavily on the testimony of the bill's primary sponsor, state senator David Holmes, that the legislation was an "effort to return voluntary prayer" to public schools. The law was one of three passed in quick succession between 1978 and 1982 by Alabama's legislature and designed to circumvent the Supreme Court's historic 1962 and 1963 decisions forbidding state-written and state-prescribed religious exercises in public schools.

Besides the challenged law, a separate 1978 statute set aside one minute at the beginning of the school day as a period of silence, without specific mention of prayer. That law was not challenged by Jaffree.

The third statute—challenged along with the silent prayer law—gave classroom teachers authority at their discretion to lead students in an oral prayer written by the son of then-governor Fob James. Although the law was upheld by U. S. District Court Judge Brevard Hand, it was struck down by the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, a decision affirmed unanimously by the Supreme Court last year.

On the same day it affirmed that decision, the high court agreed to review the silent prayer statute.

In assessing the law, Stevens wrote: "The legislative intent to return prayer to the public schools is, of course, quite different from merely protecting every student's right to engage in voluntary prayer during an appropriate moment of silence during the school day. The 1978 statute already protected that right, containing nothing that prevented any student from engaging in voluntary prayer during a silent minute of meditation."

By specifying the period was for prayer, Stevens said, "the State intended to

characterize prayer as a favored practice. Such an endorsement is not consistent with the established principle that the Government must pursue a course of complete neutrality toward religion."

Two justices in the majority filed concurring opinions. Justice Lewis F. Powell Jr. wrote he would have voted to uphold the law "if it also had a clear secular purpose." But he added, "Nothing in the record before us... identifies a clear secular purpose, and the State also has failed to identify any non-religious reason for the statute's enactment."

Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, who joined the majority in its judgment but exercised the option of issuing a separate opinion setting forth her own reasons for voting to strike down the law, wrote: "Nothing in the United States Constitution as interpreted by this Court or in the laws of the State of Alabama prohibits public school students from voluntarily praying at any time before, during, or after the school day.

But three justices dissented, two of them bitterly. Chief Justice Warren E. Burger, who in 1971 came up with the "secular purpose" test used by the majority to strike down the Alabama law, labeled the result "ironic" and "bizarre."

Addressing the majority's principal finding that the fatal flaw in the Alabama law was its specific mention of prayer, Burger declared: "To suggest that a moment-of-silence statute that includes the word 'prayer' unconstitutionally endorses religion, while one that simply provides for a moment of silence does not, manifests not neutrality but hostility toward religion."

He added: "... our responsibility is not to apply tidy formulas by rote; our duty is to determine whether the statute or practice at issue is a step toward establishing a state religion."

That same point was discussed in detail by Justice William H. Rehnquist, who in a lengthy dissent suggested the court reassess all its church-state decisions of the past 40 years in light of what he described as the nation's founders' intent that the establishment clause do no more than forbid establishment of a national church or favor one Christian sect over another.

Rehnquist specifically attacked Thomas Jefferson's metaphor of a wall of separation between church and state as an inadequate basis for the court's church-state rulings.

Rehnquist declared: "It is impossible to build sound constitutional doctrine upon a mistaken understanding of constitutional history, but unfortunately the Establishment Clause has been expressly freighted with Jefferson's misleading metaphor for nearly 40 years. Rehnquist concluded: "There is simply no historical foundation for the proposition that the Framers (of the Constitution) intended to build the 'wall of separation...'"

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