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Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

6-23-1983

June 23, 1983

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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SBC 1983 report
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June 23, 1983

Arkansas Baptist

NEWMAGAZINE

Tuesday, June 14

PITTSBURGH—Southern Baptists constituted their 126th annual meeting Tuesday morning with a determined commitment to find common ground in a setting dominated in recent years by theological controversy.

The convention messengers voted to adopt an agenda for the three-day meeting that included as its theme "Unity in the Spirit in the Bond of Peace." From the opening prayer, there was a call for peace.

"May there be no fundamentalists, no moderates and no liberals here," prayed Roy DeBrand, Americus, Ga., to open the convention. "May there be unity of the Spirit in the midst of our great diversity."

The annual session was called to order by convention president Jimmy Draper, pastor of First Church of Eules, Tex, with 10,620 messengers registered.

Messengers were welcomed to the convention site by C. Edward Price retired business executive of Pittsburgh, who later in the day was elected second vice president.

Continuing the theme of unity, Joel Gregory, professor of preaching at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary at Fort Worth, Texas, gave a theme interpretation from Ephesians 4.

Gregory likened Baptists' search for unity to their struggle to establish their Sunday School Board in 1891, when they had to weigh their freedom of choice against their commitment to cooperate.

Gregory drew applause when he said Baptists would find unity with God's help. But he insisted it would be the work of God alone.

A motion to add Canadian Baptists as messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention was one of four motions introduced Tuesday.

The other motions called for requiring a three-fourths majority vote for passage of convention resolutions and for a nominees to serve on convention boards or standing committees to have been a member of a Southern Baptist church for at least five years.

The fourth motion made by Chairman John T. Dunaway of the SBC Executive Committee, called for an Executive Committee study of the number of persons serving on the convention boards and commissions in an effort to hold down costs of these regular meetings.

Bill Hogue, pastor of Eastwood Church, Tulsa, Okla., asked that the SBC Constitution's Article II on "Purpose" be changed to add the words "and Canada" to the statement of purpose. If revised, the wording would read: "It is the purpose of the Convention to provide a general organization for

This article reports in chronological form the events of the Southern Baptist Convention at Pittsburgh and were written by Southern Baptist journalists who covered the convention as volunteers and Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine staff members.

Baptists in the United States, its territories and Canada..."

Members of Baptist churches in western Canada for some years have been affiliated with the neighboring Northwest Baptist Convention, whose churches send messengers to the annual national meeting. But the Canadian churches, under present bylaws of the convention, cannot send messengers to

Resolutions. He asked that this constitution bylaw be amended by adding at the end: "A resolution requires for its passage three-quarter majority vote." At present, only a simple majority is required for such passage.

Leroy Fenton, pastor of First Church, Waxahachie, Texas, asked in his motion to amend Bylaw 16 on "Election of Board Members, Trustees, Commissioners, or Members of Standing Committees." At present the lengthy bylaw makes no stipulation on how long a person must have been a member of a Southern Baptist church.

Dunaway said he was introducing his motion for study of the size of convention boards, commissions and standing committees in light of the increasing and potential future increase in membership of such groups.

Messengers adopted without debate a 1983-84 Cooperative Program allocation budget of \$125 million Tuesday morning but delayed action on a capital needs budget which includes funding for a new building to house the Executive Committee and six agencies.

Jack Bettis, a messenger from Oak Cliff Church, Fort Smith, moved that the \$8 million allocation for the new SBC building in Nashville be voted on separately from other items in the \$31.7 million capital needs budget for 1983-88.

After a vote by show of hands that was ruled too close to call, a ballot was taken. Results were not announced before the noon adjournment.

"I see in this an increasing bureaucracy in the Southern Baptist Convention," said Bettis. "I'm not convinced Bold Mission Thrust (Southern Baptists' plan to share the Gospel with the world by the year 2000) requires an increased bureaucracy." He questioned the need for more space when the executive committee only meets twice a year in Nashville.

Rodney Landes, chairman of the SBC building long-range study committee and a layman from El Dorado, said, "I frankly would admit I was one of those it took approximately 12 months to be convinced there was a need the Southern Baptist should meet."

However, he added, "Due to the growth of the convention it is a very crowded building. We have already passed an operating budget (for the agencies that will occupy the building) and this building will give them the efficiency and effectiveness to do their work."

In addition to the Executive Committee, the new building would house the Southern Baptist Foundation, Christian Life Commission, Education Commission, Historical Commission, Stewardship Commission and

Photo by Don Rutledge



CONVENTION OFFICERS — Messengers to the annual meeting of the SBC in Pittsburgh reflected, from left, President James T. Draper Jr., pastor of First Church, Eules, Texas, and First Vice President John Sullivan, pastor of Broadmoor Church, Shreveport, La., and elected Pittsburgh layman C. Edward Price as second vice president for the coming year.

vote at this annual session.

The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board voted at its May meeting to ask the convention to refer the motion to the Executive Committee, the Home Mission Board and the Foreign Mission Board for study, saying such change in the makeup of the convention would have international ramifications on work in countries where Southern Baptist have work overseas.

Warren Hultgren, pastor of First Church, Tulsa, Okla., introduced the motion to amend Bylaw 22 on the Commission on

News from the Southern Baptist Convention, Pittsburgh, 1983

Seminary External Education Division.

The \$125 million Cooperative Program allocation budget is an increase over the 1982-83 total of \$106 million. It includes basic operating funds for all agencies of the convention except the Sunday School Board and Woman's Missionary Union which do not receive Cooperative Program funds.

In other action, messengers approved a Southern Baptist Convention operating budget of \$2.4 million and adopted a 1979-82 Bold Mission Thrust report characterized as "both good news and bad news."

The report cited gains in church growth, number of missionaries money given for missions, but not all goals set for the three-year period were attained.

Messengers also approved contingency reserve fund ceilings for Southwestern, Southern, Midwestern Baptist Theological seminaries, Christian Life Commission, Home Mission Board and Historical Commission.

Southern Baptists are a "people of deep beliefs" which make them "special" in the world, James T. Draper Jr. said in the annual president's address to the convention.

Southern Baptists have "been on the cutting edge of missions for many years," he claimed. "We have led the battalions of those carrying the light of the gospel and seeing the darkness of unbelief retreat.

"We have been used of God to impact the world because of our firm commitment to our beliefs," he added. "We shall continue to make an ever-increasing impact as long as we hold consciously and firmly to these basic, foundational beliefs."

Draper outlined six such beliefs, a list he labeled "not exhaustive," but vital: the "full humanity and full deity of Jesus Christ"; the "lostness of mankind"; the doctrine of "substitutionary atonement"; "justification by God's grace through faith"; and "urgency of missions".

"Lost mankind is dying without the

Saviour, and we must preach the gospel to every person," he declared. "Any theology or supposed belief that does not thrust us into all the world to witness and preach is heresy."

Southern Baptists should never forget that they are in the world on a "mission for God," Draper concluded.

"Let us press on in our task. We're on a bold mission for our Lord, and we will succeed for his glory, in his power, by his spirit."

Tuesday afternoon, June 14

Funds to construct a new \$8 million Southern Baptist Convention building in Nashville were approved by a 2-1 vote Tuesday afternoon, along with a 1984-88 capital needs budget of \$23.7 million.

The ballot vote to allocate the money for the building to house the Executive Committee and six agencies followed earlier action Tuesday morning to separate the building item from the rest of the capital needs budget.

Capital needs items not including the SBC building passed without debate.

Debate on the SBC building centered around whether the expenditure of \$8 million would further the causes of evangelism and missions and whether the SBC building long-range planning committee had given messengers enough information about the need for the building.

"Building this building, in my opinion, will not hamper missions. It will help us do better what we are already doing," said John Sullivan, of Shreveport, La., chairman of the business and finance subcommittee and first vice-president of the convention.

Jack Bettis, Oak Cliff Church in Fort Smith, said "It has not clarified in my mind that an \$8 million outlay is justified for evangelism and missions. However, in the spirit of unity, I am ready to be persuaded to vote differently."

Jim Strickland of First Church of Cartersville, Ga., said, "I trust that our committee

has done its work. I think that our convention needs to trust the people to whom it has given responsibility of this nature.

"I also believe, intentionally or not, that this committee did not complete its work by giving us adequate information. We do not want to be presumed upon as a convention."

The vote to approve funds for the SBC building was 5,991 in favor and 3,449 opposed.

In addition to the Executive Committee, the building will house the Southern Baptist Foundation, Christian Life Commission, Education Commission, Historical Commission, Stewardship Commission and Seminary External Education Division.

Messengers Tuesday also decidedly rejected two attempts to replace two trustees being nominated by their committee on boards.

Citing inadequate geographical representation, messengers from New Mexico and Tennessee asked the convention to make substitutions in the committee on board's trustee nominations for the Public Affairs Committee and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Francis Wilson, pastor of First Church, Alamogordo, N.M., moved to replace Albert Lee Smith of Birmingham, Ala., with Billie Holder of Alamogordo as a member of the Public Affairs Committee, the SBC panel affiliated with the Washington, D.C.-based Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

Wilson and Baptist New Mexican editor J.B. Fowler of Albuquerque contended that Baptists west of the Mississippi River were underrepresented on the 15 member public affairs panel in violation of the SBC bylaw's call for geographical representation "insofar as possible."

Jack Prince, pastor of West Hills Church in Knoxville, Tenn., also sought to use a geographical argument in asking messengers to substitute Oak Ridge pastor Dillard Mynatt for Memphis pastor Wayne Allen on Southern Seminary's board.

Arkansas Baptist NEWSMAGAZINE

Arkansas' Third largest publication,
meeting the information needs of Arkansas Baptists

VOLUME 82 NUMBER 25

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Copies by mail 50 cents each.

Deaths of members of Arkansas churches will be reported in brief form when information is received not later than 14 days after the date of death.

Advertising rates on request.

Opinions expressed in signed articles are those of the writer.

Member of the Southern Baptist Press Association.

The Arkansas Baptist News Magazine (USPS 031-290) is published weekly, except the third week in April, at July 4 and Dec. 25, by the Arkansas Baptist News Magazine, Inc., 525 West Capitol Ave., Little Rock, AR 72201. Subscription rates are \$6.36 per year (individual), \$5.40 per year (Every Resident Family Plan), \$8.00 per year (Group Plan) and \$15.00 per year (no foreign address). Second class postage paid at Little Rock, AR. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Arkansas Baptist News Magazine, P. O. Box 582, Little Rock, AR 72203.

The committee on board's nomination of Allen, Prince argued, would "mean that all three trustees of Southern Seminary from Tennessee would be from one area of our state, the Jackson-Memphis western division."

Without objection, the messengers accepted the report of the committee on committees which named the committee on boards to serve at the 1984 session in Kansas City, Mo. Composed of two representatives from 26 state conventions, this committee will nominate trustees to the Southern Baptist boards, agencies, commissions and institutions next year.

Charles G. Fuller, pastor of First Church, Roanoke, Va., was named chairman of the 1984 committee on boards.

President Draper ruled out of order a motion that would have required nominees to reveal their connection to the Moral Majority.

The motion, one of three introduced at the Tuesday afternoon session was out of order because it questioned the motives of a messenger, Draper said.

Ernest L. Harris, pastor of Sandy Creek Church in Amelia County, Va., said he had read in the *Religious Herald* Virginia's state Baptist paper, that Charles Stanley, chairman of the Committee on Boards, was a member of the executive board of the Moral Majority, a New Right religious political organization.

His motion had asked that all convention nominees requiring vote by messengers be required to state whether they had a relationship with Moral Majority.

Other motions introduced Tuesday afternoon seek to change the name of the SBC to "United Baptist Churches" and to provide free child care for messengers. Both were referred to the Executive Committee.

James T. Draper Jr. was re-elected president Tuesday afternoon.

Draper, pastor of First Church, Euless, Texas, was opposed. He was nominated by O.S. Hawkins, pastor of First Church of Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., who praised Draper as a leader who "has done what he said he would do, with openness, honesty and integrity."

First vice president John Sullivan, pastor of Broadmoor Church in Shreveport, La., also was re-elected without opposition. The nomination came from Warren Hultgren, pastor of First Church of Tulsa, Okla., who nominated Sullivan at the 1982 convention.

Three persons were nominated for the position of second vice president: C. Edward Price, a layperson from First Southern Church in Pittsburgh who retired as a senior vice president from Westinghouse Corporation last year; Dorothy Sample, a layperson

from Flint, Mich., and president of the Woman's Missionary Union; and Fred Wolfe, pastor of Cottage Hill Church in Mobile, Ala.

Price was chosen in a run-off election over Wolfe 4,515 to 3,586. Sample having been eliminated on the first ballot.

Co-chairman of the local arrangements committee for the three-day SBC meeting, Price is a member of Lakeside Church in Pittsburgh.

Wolfe was outgoing president of the Southern Baptist Pastors' conference which ended a two-day meeting here Monday.

The convention followed recent tradition

ways in which the Southern Baptist Convention can take a more visible, positive stance against abortion and make a report to the next convention."

Barry Lovett, pastor of Favorite Hills Church in Pique, Ohio, moved that in future conventions the SBC plan to accommodate messengers with hearing impairment. He said this convention's special section to the side of the platform was inadequate for persons who need to see people's faces.

A person was signing for the group at the sessions.

Wednesday morning, June 15

In less than two hours, messengers to the SBC heard six of their institutions and agencies report on the work of the last 365 days.

The series of reports, most supplemented by colorful, multi-media presentations, were given during the Wednesday morning session.

They included the unveiling of a new pension plan for staff members of Southern Baptist churches and employees of denominational institutions. The retirement benefits program, to be administered by the SBC Annuity Board, had been recommended by a special Church Pension Study Committee.

Annuity Board president Darold H. Morgan of Dallas said the program is scheduled to be in effect by Jan. 1, 1988. The plan's purpose is to upgrade both the level of benefits and the level of participation, Morgan explained. The report noted that the average annuity check for a retired Southern Baptist pastor is only \$150 per month.

Other reports were given by Southern, Southwestern and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminaries, the Brotherhood Commission and the Education Commission. A seventh presentation was made by Alice E. Ball, general secretary of the American Bible Society.

The messengers voted with little comment to refer three motions to the Executive Committee for study.

Included were motions by Warren Hultgren of Tulsa, Okla., to require a three-fourths majority vote to approve convention resolutions and by Leroy Fenton of Waxahachie, Texas, to require five years' membership in a Southern Baptist Church before a person could be nominated for convention boards or standing committees.

The third motion by John Dunaway, chairman of the Executive Committee, authorized that committee to study the number of persons serving as trustees of each of the boards, institutions, commissions and standing committees of the convention.

Hultgren said that requiring a three-fourths vote would strengthen the resolutions and assure that they reflect a "signifi-



by re-electing three other SBC officers: Martin B. Bradley of Nashville, Tenn., recording secretary; Lee Porter of Nashville, registration secretary; and Harold C. Bennett of Nashville, the executive secretary-treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee, treasurer.

Tuesday evening, June 14

Messengers from Indiana and Ohio introduced motions Tuesday asking for a stronger stance against abortion and urging better provision for the hearing-impaired at future Southern Baptist Conventions.

Rudolph C. Yakym Jr., member of Southside Church, South Bend, Ind., and trustee-elect to the Christian Life Commission, introduced the motion on abortion. He asked that the Executive Committee and the Christian Life Commission trustees "study

cant concurrence' of the voting body.

Fenton said he concurred with referral of his motion. Under present bylaws, he said, there is no guarantee against persons who might be new church members or new from other denominations being nominated for key convention committees or boards.

Southern Baptists' love for one another must come before "orthodoxy of belief," Texas pastor James L. Pleitz told messengers Wednesday afternoon.

Pleitz, pastor of Park Cities Church, Dallas said during the annual convention sermon he fears Southern Baptists have forgotten the most important biblical imperative — Jesus' commandment "to love one another as I have loved you."

True orthodoxy, Pleitz said, "must first have an orthodoxy of spirit — which is love — before it can truly have an orthodoxy of belief. The first test of our orthodoxy is in reality a test of love."

Pleitz explained that he had "some real misgivings" that Southern Baptists, marked by controversy in recent years over scriptural authority and control of denominational institutions, are "departing from our orthodoxy."

"I don't think by this that we don't believe the Bible to be the word of God. I honestly don't know a preacher that does not believe that every single word of the Bible is the word of God."

"But I'm concerned that we've forgotten about a new commandment that you love one another as I have loved you."

Wednesday afternoon, June 15

The relationship of Southern Baptists in the United States and Canada was left in the hands of a select 21-member committee Wednesday night by messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention.

Messengers voted 4,306 to 2,568 in favor of a motion to refer the seating of the Canadian Baptists at the SBC annual meeting to a special committee which will report back to the convention next June.

The Canada Study Committee will be appointed by convention president, James T. Draper Jr.; first vice-president John Sullivan; second vice-president C. Edward Price and SBC Executive Committee secretary-treasurer Howard Bennett.

The committee will be composed of four persons each from the Foreign Mission Board, Home Mission Board, Executive Committee and Northwest Baptist Convention and five at-large members. Funding will be provided for by the Executive Committee.

The motion to create the special committee was proposed to messengers earlier in the day by Perry Sanders, pastor of First Church in Lafayette, La. It headed off a mo-

tion to seat Canadian Baptists at the SBC annual meeting by Bill Hogue, pastor of Eastwood Church in Tulsa, Okla.

Hogue proposed a change in Article II of the SBC Charter which would designate the purpose of the convention to "provide a general organization for Baptists in the United States, its territories and Canada." Presently only the United States and its territories are included within the purpose as defined by the charter.

The effect of Hogue's motion would have been to allow participating Canadian Southern Baptists to become messengers and vote at the SBC meetings.

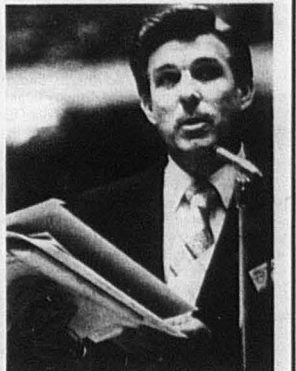
Prior to the convention, officials of the SBC Foreign Mission Board Richmond, Va.,

recommended to go to Las Vegas centered around the opportunity for Baptists to make a witnessing and missions impact in the city while opponents contended Baptists should not hold a convention in a city where gambling is the main industry.

(The Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine invited writers on both sides to present the issues in the ABN issue on May 17.)

In other action, messengers approved without debate holding their 1990 convention in New Orleans, approved stringent convention site and housing guidelines and debated a recommendation concerning residency requirements for future nominees to the Committee on Committees before referring it to the Executive Committee for

ABN photos / J. Everett Sneed



Former East Side Fort Smith pastor Jack Bettis, right, who was a messenger from that church, questioned an outlay of \$8 million for a new building to house the SBC Executive Committee and six agencies, but messengers upheld the plan nearly two to one. Arkansas Rodney Landes of El Dorado, left, spoke in favor of the building plans.

had gone on record against such a move. They cited potential conflicts with English-speaking Baptists in other countries who might wish to be seated at the convention and the confirmation of a current negative view of the SBC as "an empire on the march" as arguments in support of their view.

Officials of the SBC Home Mission Board, which oversees the convention's domestic mission program, said they would abide by the will of SBC messengers.

Messengers to the 126th Southern Baptist Convention agreed Wednesday night to hold their 1989 convention in Las Vegas, Nev., after beating back two efforts to move the site to Los Angeles, Calif., and Louisville, Ky. Support for the SBC Executive Commit-

tee further study.

In presenting the Las Vegas recommendation, W. LeRay Fowler, chairman of the convention arrangements subcommittee from Houston, Texas explained "We never intended this to be an emotional issue. We felt this was an opportunity to make an impact for Bold Mission Thrust as we approach the end of this century."

"There is the gambling, but we felt the impact Baptists can make in Nevada far outweighs the disadvantages."

Following Fowler, Ernest Myers, executive secretary of the Nevada Baptist Convention, said, "We look at this as an invitation to do mission work in a state where 85 out of 100 persons voice no religious preference. I hope you will make your vote on the basis

of coming to help us."

John Click of Wichita, Kan., said the 1989 convention should be held in a western state and Baptist should support mission efforts, but he urged the messengers to move the site to Los Angeles because Las Vegas is "too controversial."

Messengers refused to suspend the rules to vote on Louisville and referred to long travel distances and traffic problems in rejecting Los Angeles. The vote to go to Las Vegas passed by a heavy majority.

Three other motions were introduced at the close of the long business session.

Don Taylor, pastor of Central Church, Alameda, Calif., asked that evangelist Billy Graham be invited to speak at a Wednesday evening service related to the 1989 Las Vegas convention as part of an evangelistic rally similar to that held in Houston, Texas, in 1979.

A motion requesting the Annuity Board to seek ways to relieve the growing Social Security burden on Southern Baptist ministers was referred to the Annuity Board.

Another motion concerning the date for World Hunger Sunday was referred to the Committee on the Denominational Calendar.

Two previously introduced motions were referred to the Executive Committee. They were a motion urging study of ways the convention can take a more visible, positive stance against abortion and another urging better accommodations for the hearing-impaired at future convention.

Thursday, June 17

Messengers adopted seven resolutions during their Thursday morning session, including a moderately-worded statement on religious liberty and a qualified endorsement of mutually verifiable nuclear disarmament.

Retreating from action at last year's New Orleans convention endorsing President Reagan's proposed constitutional amendment for state-written prayers in public schools, messengers in Pittsburgh declared "Their confidence in the United States Constitution, and particularly in the First Amendment, as adequate and sufficient guarantees" to protect both free exercise of religion and establishment of religion.

In addition, the resolution opposes tuition tax credits and other efforts to provide public funds to sectarian institutions and calls on government to avoid making "unwarranted attempts . . . to define 'church.'"

The statement also rejects efforts to "use governmental institutions and processes to promote the particular interests of a religious constituency or by favoring those who believe in no religion over those who have

a faith commitment."

The latter clause is likely to be interpreted as an endorsement of legislation such as that endorsed by U.S. Senator Mark O. Hatfield, R-Ore., declaring the right of public high school students to gather voluntarily for religious purposes on school premises.

Rejected was a proposed amendment to put the convention on record as objecting to a recent U.S. Supreme Court decision upholding the IRS for revoking the tax-exempt status of Bob Jones University. SBC president Draper ruled the move out of order for parliamentary reasons.

Also adopted after lengthy debate was a resolution endorsing nuclear disarmament

"provided it would in no way compromise the security of our nation by being less than fully verifiable." That language, proposed by Robert F. Simms, a Charlotte, N.C. pastor, came in the form of an amendment to the committee-approved statement.

Rejected was a separate move by another Charlotte messenger, J. Donald Keen, who sought to put the convention on record favoring an immediate freeze on the development and deployment of new nuclear weapons by both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.

Despite the unsuccessful freeze effort, the resolution as adopted supports a "program of mutually verifiable nuclear disarmament"

ANB Photo / by Kevin Jones



THE SITE OF THE MEETING—The Steel City provides background for messengers flocking to the Pittsburgh Civic Arena for the 126th annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention. By the end of the third day of the meeting registration was unofficially just under 14,000.

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from the Southern Baptist Convention, Pittsburgh, 1983

in order to slow the "relentlessly continuing pursuit of the nuclear arms race."

Also adopted was a resolution advocating Christian stewardship of the earth's resources.

On a subject frequently addressed in Baptist resolutions, a strong statement on alcoholism and drunk driving was adopted without debate. Past years' statements, however, had not dealt with concern about drunk driving.

Longest among the 16 statements adopted was one on freedom and responsibility in Southern Baptist seminaries. Four proposals concerning Southern Seminary professor Dale Moody's views on apostasy and the end of his teaching career were presented to the committee. Instead of agreeing with any of them, the panel brought a statement largely the work of Verlin Kuschwitz of Louisville. As passed, the resolution affirms both the "primacy of scripture" and the "liberty of conscience" as "necessary foundations for believing with freedom and teaching with responsibility."

Notable for its absence at this year's convention was a potentially explosive resolution supporting Israel. Tabled by messengers at last year's annual meeting in New Orleans after opposition from the Foreign Mission Board, the statement had been expected again in Pittsburgh.

But at a pre-convention meeting of the resolutions panel, June 10, Draper told members of the committee he had asked Paige Patterson, president of the Criswell Center for Biblical Studies in Dallas, to persuade two men who had planned to reintroduce the statement not to do so. The pair, Edward McAteer, founder and president of The Roundtable, a New Right organization of religious leaders, and Norris Snyder, chairman of last year's resolutions panel, complied with the request, Draper said.

Draper announced months ago he was altering procedures of the resolutions process by having the 10-member committee begin its work in advance of the annual meeting. He also asked repeatedly that Southern Baptists intending to attend the Pittsburgh convention submit their resolutions before the committee convened.

An unprecedented 44 pre-convention proposals were submitted to the panel, which met initially May 10-11 in Nashville to begin its spade work. Part of the task was to invite executives of the SBC agencies to express views on sensitive topics to come before the messengers in Pittsburgh.

A second set of pre-convention meetings came June 10-11 in Pittsburgh.

When the convention convened June 14, only 34 resolutions were officially presented by messengers and referred to the committee. From these emerged the 16 to be

debated and disposed of by messengers Thursday.

The issue of women's ordination surfaced Thursday afternoon but messengers refused to make it a convention decision.

By a narrow margin they turned down an attempt by the wife of a former convention president to amend the resolution on women. The resolution was then approved with no mention of women's ordination.

Joyce Rogers, wife of Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Church, Memphis, Tenn., a former convention president, tried to add these at the end of the resolution:

"Be it finally resolved this resolution should not be interpreted as endorsing the ordination of women."

Mrs. Rogers was opposed by a woman pastor, Dianne Wisemiller, one of four pastors at National Memorial Church Washington, D.C., on the grounds that such questions as women's ordination for the pastorate should be left to the local church to decide.

After Wisemiller attempted to amend Mrs. Rogers' amendment, a convention parliamentarian ruled the Wisemiller amendment out of order. A standing vote was taken on Mrs. Rogers' amendment, and president Draper ruled the amendment had lost.

When a request was made for a written vote, messengers balloted and the amendment lost 1,841 to 1,784.

Discussion of the resolution on the role of women consumed more than an hour of the afternoon business session. It was one nine resolutions approved during the session, and followed approval of seven resolutions at the morning session.

After the results were announced on the ballot on Mrs. Rogers' amendment, Wisemiller stepped to the platform microphone and moved for a vote on the original motion without amendments.

Mrs. Rogers' husband, Adrian Rogers, challenged Wisemiller's efforts to make such a motion. He said the vote had been "right down the middle" and that Wisemiller had no right to make the motion because she had earlier attempted to amend his wife's amendment.

But Draper, with advice from platform parliamentarians, ruled Wisemiller had the right to call the question.

The messengers approved the resolution by a fairly hefty majority.

As approved, the resolution expressed gratitude for contributions made by women in various forms of ministry, and paid tribute to homemakers. It also called on employers, including Southern Baptist churches, institutions and agencies, "to seek fairness for women in compensation, benefits, and op-

portunities for advancement."

Although it contained no reference to ordination, the resolution encouraged "all Southern Baptists to continue to explore further opportunities of service for Baptist women, to ensure maximum utilization of all God-called servants of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Other resolutions addressed pornography, gambling, personal witnessing, black and ethnic participation in SBC life, ministries at the Summer Olympics, Year of the Bible, forced termination of ministers, the Reader's Digest condensed Bible and appreciation to those who contributed to the effectiveness of the annual meeting.

President Draper received standing applause at the end of the session for handling the resolutions process with "patience and love."

James M. Dunn, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, defended his agency's stance on school prayer against challenges from Southern Baptist Convention messengers Thursday afternoon, insisting a proposed constitutional amendment on prayer would violate principles of church-state separation.

In his report to the annual convention, Dunn called on Southern Baptists to stand by their historic commitment to the separation of church and state.

"Baptists who are Baptist still believe in separation of church and state," he said. "If we were ever to stop believing in separation of church and state we would that day cease to be Baptists."

Foy Valentine, executive director of the Christian Life Commission, fielded questions Thursday afternoon, on abortion and the religious right from messengers after declaring that the task of his agency is to "help changed people to change the world."

In response to a question from Gerald Lunsford, a messenger from First Church in Choctaw, Okla., Valentine called the new religious right "a tool of the old religious right" in exploiting civil religion concerns.

On abortion, Valentine told messenger Lewis Garrett of Prince George, Va., "We hold a very conservative position. We do not view it (abortion) as an acceptable means of birth control. I believe life begins at conception."

In addition, messengers heard reports from all their boards, agencies and institutions and a closing message by Charles Colson, founder and president of Prison Fellowship, based in Washington, D. C.

Editor's Note: Next week a list of Arkansas people elected to boards, agencies and standing committees and reports from the auxiliary meetings which were held prior to the convention will be published.



The overall spirit of the 1983 convention was excellent. This was due in large measure, to the work of President Jimmy Draper who deserves the applause of Southern Baptists. The anticipated struggles over Southern Seminary's action on Dale Moody, the funding of the Baptist Joint Committee and the resolution for support for Israel did not materialize. A lengthy discussion took place over the construction of a new Executive Committee building, due in large measure to a poor presentation.

President Draper, pastor of First Church, Euless, Tex., has done an outstanding job in healing the wounds within the Convention. A few ultra conservatives seem to feel that he has deserted their cause, while some of the moderates still distrust him. The vast majority of Southern Baptists are grateful for the bridge-mending which has taken place under Dr. Draper's leadership. His good natured presiding helped to keep the convention moving smoothly and harmoniously. He was ably assisted by Vice Presidents John Sullivan and Gene Garrison.

Based on several widely disseminated statements, it was believed by many that it was inevitable for dissension to arise over several issues. Among these was Southern Seminary's handling of the Dale Moody issue. The problem centered around his belief in apostasy. The seminary refused to renew his 1985 contract. But a few felt that stronger action was needed and had threatened to bring the matter to this year's convention.

Other issues which could have been harmful and divisive were the threat to attempt to withhold the Southern Baptist Convention's portion of the funding of the Baptist Joint Committee and the presenting of a resolution of support for Israel. There were, likely, two factors which prevented these harmful discussions from taking place: (1) the public and private efforts of President Draper; and (2) the prayers of many people.

An issue which drew major discussion was the effort to keep the SBC Executive Committee from constructing a new building. Based on numerous trips to the present facility, we are convinced that the new building is needed. When the Executive Committee is in session there is not enough room for all who should be present to enter the conference room. The offices of the employees are small and inadequate. It would cost almost as much to remodel the present building as to construct the new one. And it would be difficult, if not impossible, to enlarge the present facility to meet all the needs.

The discussion on whether to construct a new Executive Committee building took place, primarily, because the presentation was not clearly made to the messengers. Had the presentation been made with the same preciseness to the messengers as it was to the Executive Committee, it is likely that the messengers would have adopted the motion with little discussion. Some other portions of the Executive Committee's report lacked clarity and sharpness. Reports to a body as large as our Southern Baptist Convention should provide adequate information in a clear and concise

manner.

The inspiration of the convention was outstanding. Particular commendation goes to Joel Gregory, professor of preaching at Southwestern Seminary, Ft. Worth, Tex., who made the theme, "Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace" come alive. He used past controversies to show that disagreement does not need to produce division. Gregory said, "Unity can not be organized. It can not be synthesized. It is a work of grace that comes from within...unity makes us a people of diligence. We do not attain it. We must maintain it." Gregory's theme interpretation in each session did much to set the tone of the convention.

Others who presented excellence in inspiration were President Draper and James L. Pleitz, pastor of Park Cities Church, Dallas, Tex., who delivered the annual sermon.

One of the positive actions of the convention was the passing of a change in bylaws which will assure that the Committee on Boards, Trustees, Commissions or Standing Committees will release its report "no later than 45 days prior to the annual meeting of the Convention." The new bylaw, also, "encourages" anyone challenging a report to make known "the nature of their challenge in advance of the annual meeting." This should help in informing Southern Baptists and in keeping down controversy. A similar proposed bylaw on the Committee on Committees was returned to the Executive Committee. So both bylaws will probably require additional study. But we believe that soon all committee reports will be shared with Baptists at least 45 days in advance of the annual meeting.

A progress report on the Bold Mission Thrust was given. While there were both positive and negative aspects of the report, it is evident that significant progress is being made. The setting of measurable goals is assisting us greatly in carrying out our task of evangelizing and congregationalizing.

The messengers are to be commended for their congenial spirit. Although many had motels far removed from the convention center the messengers conducted themselves in a courteous manner.

The Resolutions Committee, under the leadership of Tal Bonham, executive director of the Ohio State Convention, is to be commended for its excellent work. The guidelines laid down by the committee served well. They determined: (1) not to restate any resolution passed in recent years unless there was a substantive reason; (2) not to be involved in the commending or the condemning of any person; (3) not to present any resolution that would interfere in the autonomy of any church, association, or state convention; and (4) not to present any resolution that would present any problem for any of our foreign missionaries. The committee presented excellent resolutions which stated traditional Southern Baptist views.

The convention closed on a high note of unity which should do much to heal many of our wounds and to encourage us to carry out the Bold Mission Thrust. Unity is essential if we are to reach, baptize, and teach people. May God help us to continue in unity.



The Southern accent

D. Jack Nicholas/President, SBC

When, where and how may we worship?

Although the First Amendment prohibits both the establishment of religion by the state and interference with the free exercise thereof, the amendment is being employed more and more today to silence and restrict religion.

William Bently Ball states, "Fundamentally in relation to personal liberty, the Constitution was aimed at restraining the state. Today, in case after case relating to religious liberty, we encounter the bizarre presumption that it is the other way around; that the state is justified in whatever action, and that religion bears the burden of proof to overcome that presumption.

There appears to be a disturbing increase in governmental interference with the free exercise of religion. Lynn R. Buzzard and Samuel Erickson in their recent book, *The Battle for Religious Liberty*, cite the following examples of such interference.

"In Los Angeles, Christians meeting in two different home Bible study groups were told "cease and desist" because residents had not been zoned for "church purposes."

"In Atlanta, a zoning official stated that individuals who held a regular home Bible study that included nonresidents would be issued a citation for using their home for worship services without a use and occupancy permit."

"In New Jersey, an Episcopal congrega-

tion of 20 people was meeting in the pastor's family room until the city closed them down for violating local zoning laws."

"In California, a number of Romanian refugees who fled their country to escape religious persecution formed a church and purchased an old house in which to meet in the neighborhood where they lived, since many of them didn't drive. The city went to court seeking a restraining order on grounds that the religious use of the property violated the zoning ordinance of the city."

"In a town near Boston, the building commissioner notified a clergyman that inviting more than four people to his home for a Bible study was violation of the home occupations ordinance."

The above examples are sufficient to warrant the concern that the government whose documents prohibit interference with free exercise of religion is beginning, with increasing frequency, to impose restraints on when, where, and how people may worship.

My next article will deal with similar interference by government in the various ministries a church may provide in expression of its beliefs.

Jack Nicholas is president of Southern Baptist College at Walnut Ridge.

by Don Moore

You'll be glad to know . . .

... Foreign Mission report is encouraging.

Our 3,217 Foreign Missionaries in 96 countries baptized 140,844 in 1982. They were helped by 6,000 volunteers that went to the field at their own expense. Church membership overseas increased by a net of 74,500. They started 13 new churches each week with 700 new churches for the year. Eight hundred new requests came for missionaries. Only 406 new missionaries were appointed. Out of 223 nations in the world, we only have missionaries in 100 countries. The unfinished task is greater than what has been done.

Baptisms on the foreign field averaged one to each 11 church members for the year. Here at home the average was one to 34 church members.

Support for Foreign Missions has come 41.8 percent from the Cooperative Program and 46.5 from the Lottie Moon Christmas offering. You see how important these are to world missions.

It seems that churches in established areas, whose growth potential is limited and whose debt is being paid off, should strongly consider a larger share in the world mission needs. With the United States having 36,000 churches and pastors plus scores of other ordained ministers, it seems that 437 preachers for the other 222 countries is hardly right, fair or honorable. Southern Baptists must have more financial and man power resources than any Christian group in the world. We must likewise expect to bear the heaviest responsibility for getting the gospel out to all the world. May God help us to have the vision, generosity and dedication to fulfill this divine expectation.

Don Moore is executive secretary/treasurer of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

Central American seminaries unite
TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras — A coalition of theological institutions in Central America and Panama has been formally organized and a Southern Baptist missionary installed as the first director.



Moore

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by Millie Gill/ABN staff writer

Danny Lee Johnson

of Monticello was selected to receive the Opal G. Cox Award for scholastic excellence at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Seminary trustees selected 1983-84 scholarship recipients on the basis of outstanding academic achievements and effective service in Christian ministry. Johnson has served as pastor of the Yorktown Church at Star City.



Johnson



Terrell

Lajuana Terrell

has joined the staff of Hughes First Church as fulltime minister of music/youth. A native of Magnolia, she is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University.

Mike Russell

of Pine Bluff joined the staff of Marshall First Church June 12 as minister of music/youth. He and his wife, Brenda, have two children, Jonathan and Matthew.

Karen Gross

of Hope was in Birmingham, Ala., recently to attend the second annual writers' conference sponsored by Woman's Missionary Union, auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention.

William W. Fowler

will begin serving July 3 as pastor of the Bearden First Church, going there from the Wilmar Church. He and his wife, Marilyn, have one son, Bill.

Don Harbuck

has resigned as pastor of El Dorado First Church, effective June 27 to become pastor of the First Church of Chattanooga, Tenn.

Frank Hamilton

was honored June 19 by Prairie Grove First Church as a part of Father's Day activities. Hamilton, age 93, was recognized as one of the oldest members of both the church and community.

Jerry Wright

has resigned as minister of music/youth at El Dorado Second Church, effective June 26 to join the staff of the First Church of London, Ky.

Mary Purselley

was recently honored by Harrison First Church in recognition of her services as church organist.

Larry King

has resigned as director of recreation at Immanuel Church in Little Rock to join the staff of the First Church of Houma, La. His resignation is effective Thursday, June 30.

Coy Camp

resigned June 19 as pastor of Altheimer First

Church to become pastor of the Central Southern Church of Paoli, Ind.

D. C. McAtee

is serving as interim pastor of the Colt Church near Forrest City. He is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Ron Bohannon

has resigned from the staff of Lakeshore Drive Church in Little Rock to continue this education at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

Brent Martin

joined the staff of Ward First Church June 12 as minister of music/youth. He attended the University of Arkansas and Oklahoma Baptist University. Martin and his wife, Tina, moved to Ward from Springfield, Mo.

briefly

Hope Calvary Church

dedicated a prayer room June 19.

Fayetteville First Church

will hold its fifth annual June Bible Study, June 26-29. Harold Bryson, professor of preaching and chairman of the division of pastoral ministries at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, will be teacher.

Ridgeview Church

at Fayetteville observed its 10th anniversary June 19 with Doyle Wesson as speaker.

Geyer Springs First Church

in Little Rock will host a Truth concert June 27 at 8 p. m. This contemporary Christian recording group features seven vocalists and an eight-member band.

buildings

Park Hill Church

in North Little Rock broke ground June 19 for phase one of a master building program. An adult education building and activities center are to be built at an estimated cost of \$2.2 million.

youth

Crossett First Church

youth have returned from Edinburg, Ind., where they assisted the Eastside Church with Vacation Bible School. Pastor Al Sparkman assisted them with a June 5-10 revival. Gary McKean, minister of music/youth, coordinated the trip.

South Side Church

in Pine Bluff youth will do Nevada summer mission work July 20-Aug. 2.



Photo by Ennes

Second Church in Hot Springs and minister of music Loren Hancock were host to 336 youth church musicians as they participated in the state music tournament. Winners were: Jr. Hi. hymn playing: Traci Page, First, Cabot; Sr. Hi. hymn playing: Sheila Marlin, Walnut St., Jonesboro; Jr. Hi. vocal solo: LeAnn Foust, First, Forrest City; Sr. Hi. vocal solo: Lendell Black, Second, Conway; 7-8 gr. inst. solo: Thomas Clary, First, Star City; 9-10 gr. inst. solo: Ron Ennes, Geyer Springs, LR; 11-12 gr. inst. solo: Mandy Draffen, First, Paragould; handbell solo: Carole Ann Clark, First, Camden; inst. ens.: Immanuel, Ft. Smith. Ensemble jubilee winners were: Jr. Hi. small: duet, First, Monette; Sr. Hi. small: Seeds of Joy, First, Monette; Sr. Hi. large amplified: Chara, First, Mt. Home (pictured); Jr. Hi. large unamplified: Living Free, Beech St., Texarkana; Sr. Hi. large unamplified: B.A.S.I.C., First, Forrest City. Solo winners received a full scholarship to Music Arkansas.

Playing the game

Sportscasters use a tired cliché when they see one of the players limping. "He is a great and courageous athlete. He plays hurt, but you can never tell it by his performance." Athletes do not have a monopoly on people playing hurt. There is a team in these United States that numbers about 22 million members, all of whom play with some kind of hurt. It is known as the Sixty-Five and Over Fraternity. You can bet your bottom dollar they know about performing with pain.

Do you remember some of the wonderful characters created by Clarence Buddington Kelland and Albert Peyson Terhune in the "American" magazine, or *Saturday Evening Post*? I would like for you to meet a lady much like one of those delightful people. She is Drue Van Landingham.

She was born June 18, 1895, and for 23 years has lived alone. She still does her own housework ... cooking, cleaning ... the whole bit. Every potluck dinner at the church she brings her generous portion. In parenthesis, let me tell you that she makes old-fashioned teacakes like I remember 70 years ago. Big round ones, sugar sprinkled.

A delightful trait of Drue's is her quick wit and razor sharp repartee. Sometimes you get the notion that she thinks them up ahead of time. Her keen sense of humor has served her well and long.

One Sunday morning as she was coming down the aisle before Sunday school, she was holding a brown paper bag in one hand. I greeted her with, "Well, I see you are going on a picnic." Without even looking at me she quipped, "No, I heard you were going to preach this morning, and I knew I'd get hungry before you got through, so I brought my lunch." The fact is she had brought someone a bag of those cookies. Last Sunday morning as she came in she handed me something wrapped in a paper napkin. Says she, "A teacake for you to munch during the service."

How often my telephone rings, at home or the office and a voice says, "Did you know Bessie was in the hospital?" I didn't,

and was grateful that she called. Whatever the need, and they are varied, Drue is usually the first to know. She is a standing telephone committee and information clearing house. How many, many things she does for other people.

So what? A lot of older people do things like that. From a wheelchair? She has for a long time. Being a person of hard-nosed independence it is difficult for her to avoid being testy when someone tries to help her in any way. Of course she knows about physical discomfort, and is aware of her physical limitations, but you forget them when you see what she accomplishes in spite of them.

For and about



senior adults

She makes no attempt at impressing you about her religious stance, but the streams of her faith run deep. A few years ago I taught her Sunday school class on an Easter Sunday. We were aware of his presence that morning. I'll not forget the glorious look on her face and the feeling in her voice as she said, "You'll never get any closer to heaven than we did this morning, without making the trip." She has no hesitancy in rolling her wheelchair boldly into the throne room, and addressing its occupant with complete confidence.

There are many problems that confront a person like Mrs. Van Landingham and her circumstances. (I asked her to read this manuscript and asked her permission to use

it. At this point — about her circumstances — she said, "They don't amount to a hill of beans.") There are many who are acquainted with her problems. Horace L. Kerr in his book on ministering to Senior Adults says, "Old age has been characterized by loss: physical, economic, status, role, family, spouse, friends, home and freedom" (p. 22).

We can vouch that the person in this vignette has faced most of these and has handled them in a remarkable way. If she can do it, a lot of others can too.

J. Lowell Ponder is associate pastor at First Church, Fayetteville, working primarily with senior adults.

Reflections OF FAITH



HAROLD C. BENNETT

REFLECTIONS OF FAITH is an inspirational interpretation of Southern Baptist beliefs and practices. Contains fifteen pastoral stories or sermons including "Walking by Faith," "A Glance Toward Tomorrow," and "Reaching People Through Love." A motivational sermon resource, Harold Bennett's personal reflections could help you focus upon the true meaning of your faith.

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Harold C. Bennett is executive secretary-treasurer, Executive Committee, Southern Baptist Convention, Nashville, Tennessee.



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BROADMAN

Cooperative Program report: May

Summary for May 1983

	Year	January-May gifts	
		Over (under)	% increase
Budget	1978	(\$ 28,221.93)	9.50%
Received	1979	(\$ 75,923.82)	9.59%
Over (under)	1980	\$ 81,152.33	14.41%
	1981	\$ 89,949.31	13.17%
	1982	(\$ 125,584.80)	6.88%
	1983	(\$ 36,860.03)	12.41%

During the last 11 years, Cooperative Program gifts exceeded budget requirements five times. Shortages occurred six times. Gifts for May 1983 reflect commitment to ministries as we gave 94 percent of the budget which is 12.41 percent above giving at this point last year. — James A. Walker, director

International

Deborah: Israel's first lady

by D. C. McAtee, member, First Church of Forrest City.

Focal passage: Judges 4:4-9, 14-16; 5:1-3

Focal passage: Judges 4:4-9

Central truth: God uses both men and women to do his work.

1. Deborah's background. Deborah was the wife of Lapidoth, an obscure man. According to the rabbis, she was a keeper of the tabernacle lamps. If so, it is significant that she became such a bright and shining spiritual light in the life of Israel. Little by little she rose to prominent heights of service and influence. From counselor to her people, she rose to judge in their disputes and then became their deliverer in time of war.

2. Deborah receives the battle plan from God.

Judges 4:4-9. Deborah shares the battle plan with Barak that she has received from the Lord. It is interesting that she has or does become the fourth judge and Barak the fifth judge. In vv. 8 and 9 an agreement is worked out so that Deborah will go with Barak to battle.

3. The battle plan.

The battle plan was that Barak was to march to Tabor and take ten thousand men from the sons of Naphtalin and Zebulun. Then God would draw out Sisera, the commander of King Jabin's army, and, with God's help Barak would destroy Sisera, which he did. From Josephus, the Jewish historian and from the fifth chapter of Judges, it seems that God sent a sleet and hail storm upon the armies as they fought. The hail and sleet fell in the face of Sisera's army, and they were at such a disadvantage that they fled, and their iron chariots bogged down and God gives the battle victory to Barak vv. 14-16. Deborah prophesies in v. 9 that God will give Sisera into the hands of a woman. In v. 21, we note that is true. Surely God does have some important and prominent work for some women to do.

4. God gets the glory.

Judges 5: 1-3. To celebrate this great victory, the Ode of Deborah was written. Then she and Barak sang it. This song vibrates with the faith of Deborah. It is said that Israel had 40 years of peace after this.

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Life and Work

A man grappling with God's mercy

by Clyde Glazener, Calvary Church of Little Rock

Focal passage: Jonah 4:1-11

Central truth: God's desire is that every person come to repentance and be restored to fellowship with God.

Jonah has preached of God's wrath upon Nineveh's wickedness and of the judgment to come upon that city. The folks in Nineveh have responded to Jonah's preaching and have repented of their wicked ways. God's reaction to their repentance is to grant them mercy and grace.

1. Verses 1-4. Jonah didn't want to see the people he despised experiencing God's mercy and grace. Therefore, he rehearsed to God the fact that the likelihood of God's mercy upon a repenting Nineveh was the very reason he didn't want to go there in the first place.

The Lord's next question should have gotten Jonah's attention. Jonah had surely overstepped his rights. We can easily become like Jonah when we try to evaluate the fairness of life's events and then lay the responsibility for any injustice at the feet of God.

2. Verses 5-8. God acted in history to demonstrate for Jonah that Jonah's problems were a function of his warped sense of values. Jonah celebrated the presence of a plant which God caused to appear overnight, and then he sank into deep despair when the Lord caused a worm to destroy the plant.

We can learn a great deal from God's lesson to Jonah. Many of us can become excited to a point of delirium because some desire has been met. The outcome of a ballgame, getting a good deal at a sale, material prosperity, even good weather for a fishing trip are all reasons some celebrate excessively. When these are not given us, or are taken away, we often respond in despair, like Jonah.

3. Verses 9-11. God answered Jonah with a lesson about God's values. God loves all those he has called into being. He desires that they each come to repentance and faith. God does not have to be the enemy of our enemies in order to be our God. Conversely, we must learn to love our enemies because our God loves them with an incomprehensible love.

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Bible Book Series

God's Judgment on Ahab

by Allen D. Thrasher, First Baptist of Booneville

Focal passage: 1 Kings 20: 28, 42-43; 21: 16-18, 20; 22: 15-17, 37

Central truth: "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required." (Luke 12:48)

To some it might appear that the Lord was especially harsh in his judgment of King Ahab. "After all," some might reason, "did not King Ahab show mercy in releasing the king of Syria; and how could Ahab have known that Jezebel would kill Naboth and take his vineyard?"

On the surface, these questions would seem plausible; but when one considers the responsibility entrusted to the king of Israel, the questions lose their force.

Those who take upon themselves great responsibility shall be held accountable for their stewardship of it by the Lord himself.

The Lord condemned Ahab to death because he did not cooperate in the "utter destruction" of King Benhadad (20:42). Ahab released the notoriously wicked king. Furthermore, he made a covenant with Benhadad.

Ahab should not have released nor covenanted with the king of Syria; rather, he should have incarcerated, tried and punished Benhadad, the adversary of God and the people of God. Such a course of action is never easy, but leaders of government bear the responsibility of upholding justice.

Ahab did not take responsibility for his office, in that he allowed his wife, Queen Jezebel, to use his high office to dispose of Naboth (especially through the use of his seal, 21:8).

Perhaps Ahab did not know about Jezebel's plan against Naboth, but he did know that she was a wicked woman, capable of such tyranny.

There is no hiding from the judgment of God.

Ahab made an elaborate attempt to avoid God's judgment (foretold by Micaiah the prophet, 22:17), but to no avail (22:30,34). (Incidentally, one should note Ahab's general disdain for the true prophets of God. He hated Micaiah, 22:8, and considered Elijah to be his enemy, 21:20. This is characteristic of wicked men.)

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Your state convention at work

Sunday School

Growth principles

The ratio of workers to enrollment and the degree of commitment the workers show toward their task affects the ability of your Sunday School to grow. The overall ratio of workers to enrollment should be one to eight. However, the degree of commitment shown by workers is also very important. There must be a high degree of commitment if the Sunday School is to grow. Workers who, even though they may be faithful in attendance, do not have a commitment to growth will hinder the ability of the church to grow.

How do you develop commitment among your workers? Be committed yourself, sold-out without a doubt to building a great Sunday School. Teach workers what the Bible says about the lostness of mankind and about the absolute hopelessness of man without God. Stress to workers the urgency of the task of reaching people. Call the names of lost or unreached persons during your prayer time on Wednesday evening. Be a visitor and a soul winner in front of your people.

One visible sign of workers who are committed to growth is the setting and working towards an annual enrollment goal. So far this year, 492 of our 1260 churches have set and reported an enrollment goal. This is about 39 percent of our churches. The total enrollment increase projected by these 492 churches is 21,741. This shows a high level of commitment to growth. Does your church have an enrollment goal? How much of the Great Commission will you attempt to achieve this year? — **Freddie Pike**



Pike

Church Training

Get ready for Baptist Youth Day!

How about spending a day with thousands of excited, energetic youth, riding the Roaring Tornado, listening to youth choirs and just having a great time? Sounds like fun, doesn't it? Over 8,700 Baptist youth were involved in just such a day last year and are looking forward to it again this year.

I'm talking about Arkansas Baptist Youth Day, Saturday, September 10 at Magic Springs in Hot Springs. Baptist Youth Day is sponsored by the Church Training Department, Arkansas Baptist State Convention, and is an exclusive day for Arkansas Southern Baptist churches.

Although the day is obviously loads of fun, it also has a special focus. The theme of the day will center around youth living and growing in discipleship. An afternoon rally will feature Christian recording artist, Cynthia Clawson, and Bob Norman, pastor of Northway Church in Dallas, Texas.

Your church youth choir, ensemble, puppet team, drama team or other special group is invited to perform during the day. A special "meet a missionary" pavillion will be set up in the park, with farloughing missionaries available to share about their work.

A special ticket price will be available for churches purchasing tickets in advance (before August 29). For ticket information and/or information about your group performing, contact the Church Train-



Clawson

Central American seminaries unite

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras — A coalition of theological institutions in Central America and Panama has been formally organized and Bobby B. Compton, director of the Center of Theological Studies of

Costa Rica, was installed as director. The coalition will be called the Theological Community of Central America and Panama and will meet annually.

There were four seminaries involved with

ing Department, Arkansas Baptist State Convention, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, 72203, phone 376-4791. — **Bill Falkner, associate**

Evangelism

The call to commitment

We are convinced in evangelism that if we are going to win our state, win our communities, win our friends to Christ it will be as lay people go day by day and share the Lord Jesus. God has called you from sin to salvation to his service. He will use you.

You will remember, as Jesus began his earthly ministry, he called men to share with him. As he walked on the shores of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew and then later James and John. He spoke to them and said, "Come follow me and I will teach you to become fishers of men. I will make you fishers of men". The Bible says, "Immediately they forsook their nets and followed him."

There must be a commitment from the personal worker to the lost person. In this commitment, there is a recognition that all people without Jesus are lost. The Bible says, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God". The Bible also says, "The wages of sin is death". As Christians, we are the only people alive who really care about the spiritual condition of the lost. A commitment to a lost neighbor or friend or family member will assure them of our interest and desire to see them saved.

I hope that you know today that God has called you to share Christ. I hope that you will never believe again that it's only the preachers or the staff or the deacons job to share Jesus. It is not always your ability that God uses. It is your availability. Would you right now, as you read this article, say, "Lord, I am available". — **Clarence Shell, director**

Family and Child Care

Give it now or give it later — but give!

People often say when asked to give that they just don't have the money to give right now. They may wish to give but feel they cannot. Well, they may make provision to give later through their estate plan.

Often people with assets that consist of real estate, stocks or other appreciated property need an option that will allow them to provide for family, save on long-term capital gains tax and income taxes and also give to charity.

The government encourages people to carry through on their charitable giving by providing tax savings as an added incentive. Appreciated real property, stocks, etc., may be used to fund an annuity trust, a Charitable Remainder Unitrust, or Lead Trust. The donor may realize an income for himself and/or family members, save the capital gains tax, receive an income tax deduction and provide a sizable gift to charity.

Hopefully you will feel led to make such a contribution to Arkansas Baptist Family and Child Care Services. If so, contact: Homer W. Shirley, Jr., P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203, Phone 376-4791. — **Homer W. Shirley Jr., director of development**



Shell



Shirley

IRS delays rule on clergy housing

by Larry Chesser

WASHINGTON (BP) — The Internal Revenue Service has delayed the June 30 effective date of its ruling eliminating the double tax benefit for ministers buying their own houses.

May 31 the IRS put off until Jan. 1, 1985, implementation of Revenue Ruling 83-3 which disallows ministers a federal income tax deduction for any portion of mortgage interest or real estate taxes for which they received a tax-exempt housing allowance.

A delay date until 1988 had been urged by Southern Baptist Annuity Board President Darold H. Morgan in a letter to IRS commissioner Roscoe L. Egger Jr. and by representatives of several religious groups during a recent meeting with Treasury Department officials.

The new effective date applies only to ministers who owned and occupied or had a contract to purchase a house before Jan. 3, 1983, the date IRS announced the revenue ruling. Ministers who purchased or purchase residences after Jan. 3, 1983, will remain subject to the original June 30 effective date.

Baltimore is one of five "Mega Focus Cities" for 1983, a Home Mission Board effort to help metropolitan Baptist leaders plan strategies and pinpoint resources for ministering in the inner city.

The seven consultants for the laser live in from five states and stayed the week. Besides the Koreans, the consultants made contacts in the Spanish, Caribbean, Vietnamese, Chinese, deaf and Filipino communities.

"What is exciting about the laser is we can see results almost immediately. We will probably have five missions come from the laser," said Rodney Webb, HMB assistant director of ethnic church growth.

A successful laser requires a lot of pre-planning, gathering and organizing of people, places and things. Craig Wilson, director of Christian Social Ministries for the Baltimore Baptist association, provided consultants with a notebook, complete with city and county census tract maps for their particular ethnic group, a list of ethnic organizations, restaurants, service agencies, newspapers, churches, businesses, grocers and stores.

Days started as early as 7 a.m. and often did not end until midnight. Armed with in-

formation a census taker would envy, consultants and drivers blanketed the city.

After a day of knocking on doors and ringing bells, the consultants convened later into the evening, meeting with Webb, discussing their reception by residents and completing reports. It was during these night meetings that consultants exchanged information and planned strategies for reaching their constituents the next day.

Like their laser counterparts, the probe group was well-prepared to hit the streets of Baltimore city and county. Under the guidance of James E. Willey, director of missions for the Baltimore association, coordinator Ron Wilcoxson of Georgia, and a city demographer, the group identified two of the fastest growing communities in the county, White Marsh and Owings Mills. Each consultant was assigned an area of the city to analyze.

"There are several reasons why we need to build new churches. Old churches plateau after 10-12 years, losing 15 percent of their membership through death, transfers and those who drop out of the church," Wilcoxson said.

"In addition, changing communities force us to change the way we work in our churches and there is a need for different kinds of churches," he said.

Early reports from the consultants indicate new churches are needed in the steadily growing suburbs while Bible study groups and outreach ministries are needed in main areas of the inner city, as well as a commitment to work with existing churches in the city.

The 1983 revenue ruling revoked a 1962 ruling which specifically allowed ministers to deduct mortgage interest and property taxes even though they received a tax-exempt housing allowance. IRS said reversal of the 1962 position was part of an effort to apply consistently the tax code's provision disallowing double tax breaks.

Meanwhile, legislation introduced in the House to exempt ministers from the revenue ruling has 75 cosponsors from both parties, but apparently faces an uphill battle in winning approval from the Ways and Means Committee.

An aide to Rep. Stan Parris, R-Va., who introduced H.R. 1905, said sponsors are

confident of House approval if they can get the bill out of committee.

That may be a tall order, according to a Ways and Means staff person who called the IRS position on the ruling "entirely correct" and suggested "there would be no overwhelming interest on the part of the tax writing committees to take the legislation up."

In addition to the double housing benefit for ministers, the 1983 ruling also eliminated double breaks for veterans and scholarship students. In a letter to House colleagues, Parris warned if IRS "is successful in taking this benefit from clergy, military personnel may find themselves subject to a similar ruling in the near future."

While the Annuity Board has no official position on the revenue ruling or the pending legislation, Morgan said, "If Southern Baptists have strong feelings about revenue ruling 83-3, denying ministers tax deductions for interest and real estate taxes, they need to let their congressmen and IRS Commissioner Roscoe Egger know of their views."



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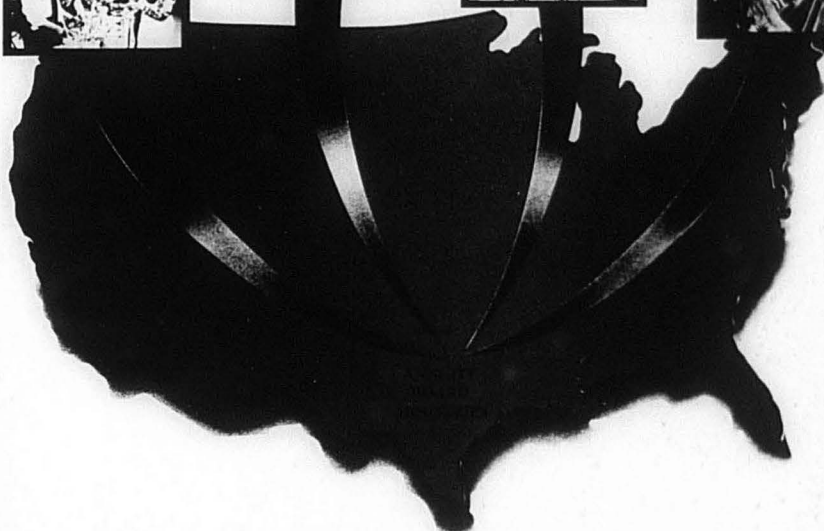
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Bob Jones ruling yields 'agonized ambivalence'

by Stan Hastey

WASHINGTON (BP) — The Supreme Court's decision upholding the denial of tax exemption to religious schools which discriminate on the basis of race is neither the awful calamity some in the religious community say it is, nor is it the absolute victory for righteousness others claim it to be.

It has, in fact, left many religious leaders with a sense of what James M. Dunn of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs describes as "agonized ambivalence."

What is not in doubt is the decisiveness of the 8-1 ruling supporting the 13-year policy of the Internal Revenue Service to deny tax exemption to all private schools whose admissions policies discriminate

benefit of tax exemption, the decision must be applauded.

All nine justices, including the lone dissenter, William H. Rehnquist, agreed Congress may condition the granting of tax exemption upon compliance with "fundamental public policy." As Burger put it in the majority opinion, "not all burdens on religion are unconstitutional . . . The state may justify a limitation on religious liberty by showing it is essential to accomplish an overriding governmental interest." That one statement knocked the props from under the arguments of religious leaders that not even Congress, much less the IRS, has the authority under the Constitution to deny tax exemption when the beneficiary claims sincerely held religious views, however repugnant they may be.

Interestingly, not many of those religious leaders have quarreled publicly with the court's clear language that the First Amendment does not give absolute freedom for such views.

What many of them have criticized is the court's view that IRS may deny tax exemption to religious institutions with views contrary to established public policy, even if Congress has not given the tax collecting agency specific authority to do so. They agree with Rehnquist's position that Congress had not so authorized IRS with respect to the policies of schools such as Bob Jones University and Goldsboro Christian Schools.

On this significant point, the church leaders deserve to be heard. They are understandably worried about the decision's long-range effect, in part because they know the sorry history of IRS abuse. They remember, for example, the twin legal proceedings of the late 1960s when a blatantly politicized IRS took both the National Council of Churches and Billy James Hargis to court seeking to strip those polar opposites of their respective tax exemptions for the same reason: both were criticizing Richard Nixon's Vietnam policy.

Now, in light of the Bob Jones result, legal experts representing religious groups

ranging from the National Council to the evangelical Christian Legal Society are saying the justices went too far in giving IRS such broad statutory authority.

Does the ruling mean, they ask, that IRS at some future date may strip tax exemption from a church that opposes prevailing public policy on nuclear arms or refugee resettlement? Does it mean that opposing the prevailing view that a woman is entitled to seek an abortion endangers the tax exemptions of churches whose own theology denounces that view and whose members seek to have it overturned?

Although he has been accused by some commentators with fence straddling on this key issue in the Bob Jones ruling, Justice Lewis F. Powell Jr., considered by most lawyers to have the finest legal mind on the court, put his finger on the best solution to the dilemma. His concurring opinion, agreeing with the outcome, nevertheless suggests the burden of limiting IRS authority rests upon Congress.

He is right. For although members of both parties on both sides of Capitol Hill breathed a collective sigh of relief when the decision was announced, they should now be reminded an unfettered IRS is like the proverbial bull in a china closet. It is clearly the lawmakers' obligation to make unmistakably clear the high court's ruling in Bob Jones be limited to the fundamental public policy of eliminating race discrimination.

If Congress fails to act, the Supreme Court will in all likelihood be faced again with resolving disputes between religious groups whose views on public policies run afoul of those declared to be of fundamental importance to the nation by IRS bureaucrats.

Congress can head off this grim prospect by rising above its normal inertia and passing legislation reining in IRS. By doing what it ought to do, Congress can dissolve the "agonized ambivalence" hanging over the nation's churches and their leaders in the post-Bob Jones era.

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against blacks. The high court, led by Chief Justice Warren E. Burger, was apparently determined to issue a forceful ruling leaving no doubt that such discrimination will not be rewarded with tax exemption. Throughout the history of the Supreme Court, such momentous rulings have been written by chief justices, and Burger, despite critics' views that he has not exercised such decisive leadership often enough, was clearly in charge this time.

Insofar as it makes plain racial discrimination will no longer be tolerated, not just in public educational institutions, but in private and religious schools which enjoy the

SBG enters 100th country

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — The reassignment of Jonathan and La Homa Singleton from one Windward Island to another — St. Lucia — places Southern Baptist missionaries in 100 overseas countries.

The Singletons moved south just a little more than 100 miles from the island of Dominica in order to begin the new work. They had been stationed in Dominica since missionary appointment in 1979.

The Caribbean nation of St. Lucia is a former British colony which has enjoyed full independence since 1979. Baptist work

has been limited primarily to the capital, Castries, and surrounding area. The predominant religion of the island's 140,000 people is Roman Catholic.

The beginning of work on St. Lucia coincides with the transfer June 1 of missionaries to Angola, Swaziland and Netherlands Antilles.

The achievement of the 100-country milestone this year puts the Foreign Mission Board well ahead of the pace it must maintain to reach its Bold Mission Thrust intention of having missionaries in 125 countries by the year 2000.