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June 20, 1991

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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Arkansas Baptist



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Vol. 90, No. 13

June 20, 1991



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An amendment to the 1991-92 Cooperative Program at the Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta June 4-6 succeeded in deleting funds for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs by a vote of 65,872 to 6,101, severing a 55-year relationship.

10 Chapman address

Southern Baptist Convention President Morris Chapman, during his presidential address, said the nature of the Scripture "has been settled" for those who believe in the inerrancy and infallibility of the Bible. Morris said Southern Baptists must stand firm in their convictions about the Bible.

14 Arkansan elected second vice president

Ed Harrison Jr., pastor of Dollarway Baptist Church, Pine Bluff, was elected SBC second vice president in a ballot vote. Harrison defeated his opponent, Vander Warner Jr. of Grove Avenue Baptist Church in Richmond, Va., 2,633 to 1,900.

17 Resolutions

Seven resolutions were approved Wednesday morning. Among them were resolutions on: human sexuality, sanctity of human life, endangerment of our religious liberties, government support of obscene and offensive art, restricting alcoholic beverage advertisements, equitable taxation for families, and the use of government funds to encourage immoral sexual behavior. Two other resolutions, one supporting President Bush's plan for parental choice in education, and another commending the President for his leadership during the Persian Gulf War, were passed on Thursday morning, shortly before Bush was to address messengers.

20 President Bush speaks

President George Bush presented the closing address for the Southern Baptist Convention Thursday morning. Bush commended Southern Baptists for their faith and emphasized the importance of prayer to him and his wife. The President concluded the speech saying that no nation better recognizes diversity of faith with unity of purpose than America.

Cover story

SBC photo / Van Payne



Basically peaceful 8

Southern Baptist Convention officers elected during the 134th annual meeting include (from left) Ed Harrison Jr., second vice president, pastor of Dollarway Baptist Church in Pine Bluff, Ark.; Morris Chapman, president, pastor of First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls, Texas; and Nelson Price, first vice president, pastor of Roswell Street Baptist Church in Marietta, Ga.

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1991 SBC Atlanta

J. EVERETT SNEED

The 1991 Southern Baptist Convention manifested the least debate of any convention in many years. This is primarily because the "moderates" chose not to participate in this year's convention. Many of the "moderates" attended the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship which was formed in Atlanta May 11.

There were three important events which transpired at this year's convention. These were the "Call to Prayer for Spiritual Awakening in America," the speech delivered by U.S. President George Bush, and the elimination of all funds being provided for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

"The Call to Prayer for Spiritual Awakening in America" holds the greatest potential of anything which transpired at this year's convention. A booklet was given to each participant as he entered the convention hall on Wednesday evening. After the message delivered by Charles Stanley, pastor of First Church of Atlanta, individuals were called to confession and humility. They were asked to confess sins related to not loving God, not loving others, and of living unholy lives before God and the world that God loves. Messengers were then called to the cross and sacrifice. The event was concluded with a call to celebration and a call to renew our covenant with God.

Numerous individuals participated in the call for prayer. It included Bible reading, biblical exhortation, and testimonies. Among the participants was Arkansas' own Mike Huckabee, pastor of Beech Street First Church, Texarkana.

At the end of each segment, messengers were encouraged to divide into prayer groups in which they asked for God's guidance in relationship to the topic under consideration. Almost all who were present were deeply moved by the service.

Perhaps our greatest disappointment was the severing of relationship with the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. Previously the funding of the BJCPA had been reduced from \$340,000 to \$50,000. This year the messengers voted to eliminate the \$50,000 support which was provided for the convention year of 1991-92. Although the BJCPA is likely to receive more money as a result of this action, it widened the gulf between "moderates" and "conservatives."



The greeting of President George Bush by messengers at the Southern Baptist Convention showed overwhelming support for our chief executive. Almost every point made by President Bush was greeted

with a standing ovation.

Most convention observers were surprised by the re-election of Lee Porter. Porter, who has been registration secretary for 14 years, had been told by the Sunday School Board that he could not run for this office again if he was on the staff of the Sunday School Board.

Last year Porter had talked with students from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary regarding his impressions of the convention. After this had been reported by the *Indiana Baptist*, Porter was demoted at the Sunday School Board and instructed that he must not run for the office again.

Just prior to the 1991 convention, Porter took early retirement so that he could run again for the office of recording secretary. Most observers had felt that he would not be re-elected. He did, in fact, retain the office of recording secretary by 17 votes.

Morris H. Chapman, pastor of First Church, Wichita Falls, Texas, was re-elected president of the SBC by acclamation, as was expected. He is to be commended for his excellent presiding and for the insight

to develop the "Call to Prayer for Spiritual Awakening in America."

Another high point of this year's convention was the report of the Foreign Mission Board. Keith Parks, FMB president, as always gave an excellent and stirring report. He observed how the doors are opening for missions around the world and gave illustrations of how God is at work in the lives of people everywhere. The one negative note in Parks' message was the fact that the Lottie Moore Christmas Offering was down last year. This, of course, means that the Foreign Mission Board will have less funds to present the gospel.

Perhaps the most important question which hung over this year's convention was: Will the Southern Baptist Convention split? It is our prayer that this will not take place. A split, or even a major splinter leaving the convention, will impair the spread of the gospel.

To insure no division takes place, we need to be more inclusive in our appointments. We are not recommending the appointment of individuals who do not believe in the integrity of the Bible. But it is important to include those who have been excluded in recent years.

Second, every effort should be made to remove all political activity from the convention. We agree with Dr. Chapman who said it was his desire to keep theological parameters in place and remove any political parameters.

If our great denomination is to be a mighty force for God, we must be inclusive rather than exclusive. We need everyone who believes in salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ and will work to implement this philosophy at home and around the world.

Arkansas Baptist

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Nelson Wilhelm, Waldron, president; Lane Strother, Mountain Home; Joanne Caldwell, Texarkana; Bert Thomas, Scarey; Lyndon Finney, Little Rock; Phelan Boone, El Dorado; Harold Gately, Fayetteville; and Don Heur, Batesville

DON MOORE

You'll Be Glad To Know

What is next to the Lord in providing security, identity, esteem, encouragement, and stability?

For most of us, it would be our families. There has been a basic assumption that in a society where Christianity has had a great influence, families will always be strong and family members will always come through for their loved ones.

Tragically, we have lived to see that our society is not filled with people who have the kind of commitment. When a couple's offspring is destroyed even before it is born; when children are formally or informally abandoned; when the marriage vow to be "true" to the spouse is abandoned at will, we begin to sense the weakness, shame, and tragedy that has come upon the family. No aspect of our life has escaped the effects of the changing family.

How blessed I am to have had a stable family as I grew up! To have had parents that gave me second and third chances when I didn't deserve them is truly gratifying. To have had brothers and sisters who tolerated me, helped me, and believed in me, this has been wonderful. To have had a wife and children, and now in-laws and grandchildren to enjoy for these years, again is most rewarding.

I recently experienced great trauma with my 94-year old mother with kidney removal due to cancer, and my mother-in-law with a leg amputation due to poor circulation. Situations such as these have thrust our families more into the matter of parenting parents. What a price my wife has paid, as an only child, to see that in her mother's most difficult hours she have the comfort and reassurance of her loving presence.

Strengthened families should begin with leadership. Personal Growth for Ministers and Mates, June 24-25, Immanuel Church, Little Rock, should give our church leaders an opportunity for improving their own families and strengthening their own witness. Every creative force possible should be harnessed to address the crucial need of families. No human force is greater than a spiritual leader who is committed to his family and the families of his church.

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



ERWIN L. McDONALD

The Golden Years

Retirement: time for 'mounting up'

"...they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint" (Isa. 40:31).

It is not by happenstance that this is one of Martha Hairston's favorite verses of Scripture. In a lifetime of following and serving the Lord, this Warren native has found this Bible treasure a prophecy fulfilled in her personal life reaching all the way into her own golden years.

Now that she is officially retired after a lifetime of serving as a Southern Baptist missionary/educator to Brazil, she continues to walk by faith through an abundance of grace provided by her heavenly Father.

Although she has been a cancer patient since mid-1989, Hairston is grateful for health sufficient enough to keep busy. Recently she accepted a new career in retirement as chaplain for the health center at Parkway Village, Little Rock, where she now lives.

She enjoys staying in close contact with her native Brazilian Baptist friends, who now carry on the work on her former mission field in Recife, Brazil, where she was president of the Seminary for Christian Educators for 27 years.

One of the things that brought her great joy and satisfaction in her years at the Brazilian training center was seeing a steady flow of young Christians go out each year to win people to Christ and to help form churches and mission stations for the spread of the gospel.

Still another career highlight was accomplishing her own personal desire—the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's goal of turning the seminary administration over to native Brazilian Baptists. This took place in 1981 and freed her to go into the interior, an area desolated by years of drought, and help a church that was in decline become strong again. Martha recalls that when she joined the church, her membership increased the size to 27 members. Since then the church has had a revival as it has grown and helped start a number of other churches and missions.

ABN photo / Millie Gill



Martha Hairston

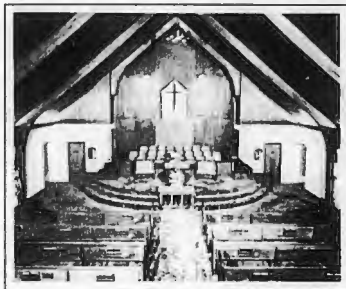
The depth, dedication, and achievements of Martha's life are reflected in the honors she has received across the years. These include an honorary doctorate from her college alma mater, Ouachita Baptist University; having the administration building of the Recife seminary named for her; and being named an honorary citizen of the City of Recife.

In addition to her bachelor's degree from Ouachita, she holds a master's degree from the Woman's Missionary Union Training School, Louisville, Ky., now merged with Southern Seminary.

She gives much credit to family—her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Earl Hairston; older sister Geneva; and brothers Clovis and Hugh—and to Warren First Church for helping her find God's purpose for her life.

Erwin L. MacDonald, editor emeritus of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*, is a member of North Little Rock Park Hill Church.

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balances due, interest rates, payments, how far behind you are, what action the creditor might take and when. Prepare a written budget to guide your spending.

—Make whatever changes are necessary to regain control of your life. Reduce your expenses to just your basic needs. Stop using credit, except for true emergencies. Stick to the budget you have drawn up.

—Set priorities for bill paying. Some bills are more important to your family's wellbeing than others. When you can't pay all your bills, be sure and pay the most important ones first.

—Negotiate with your creditors. Contact the companies to whom you owe money. Describe your situation and offer a partial payment plan you can handle. Stick to the new terms you agree on.

—Use community resources. Every community has information, programs, and services to help families in temporary difficulty. You have paid taxes to provide those programs; take advantage of them now that you need them. Contact local offices of the Co-operative Extension Service, the Department of Human Services, the Employment Security Division, the Social Security Administration, and the Health Department. Contact local churches for information about non-government resources for families in crisis.

—Minimize stress. Money trouble is a leading cause of health and family problems. Recognize the stress caused by your financial crisis and take steps to deal with it. Eat properly. Get plenty of rest. Avoid alcohol and tobacco use. Talk openly and often with family members, close friends, and your counselor.

Coping with money trouble is no simple matter. Getting in is always easier than getting out. The road will be smoother, however, if you agree on priorities, set goals, and get control of your spending. For help in getting started, contact your local office of the Co-operative Extension Service, listed in the blue pages of your telephone directory.

In coming issues

- Credit abuse
- The importance of savings



*You are cordially invited to attend the
Dedication of the Worship Center at the
Arkansas Baptist Assembly, Siloam Springs
on July 10, 1991, at 11 a.m.*

Dr. Don Moore, Executive Director

LOCAL & STATE

Churches sponsor area crusades

Southern Baptist churches in Benton are sponsoring an area wide crusade July 14-18 in the Benton High School auditorium.

Services will convene each evening at 7:30 p.m. with Angel Martinez of Fort Smith as evangelist and Steve Taylor of South Carolina as music director.

Sponsoring churches are Calvary, Congo Road, First, Highland Heights, Ridgecrest, Salem, Trinity, and Temple.

Nurseries will be open at both Highland Heights and First Churches.

An area wide crusade will be held June 23-28 in the Greers Ferry area. The crusade will be conducted in a tent provided by the ABSC Evangelism Department.

Shelby Bittle, pastor of Brownsville Church, will be evangelist. Clarence Hill of Hot Springs will direct music.

Berryville centennial

First Church in Berryville is observing its centennial anniversary this month with programs that began June 16 and will conclude June 30.

Pastor Ray Edwards reported "Old Fashioned Day" was celebrated June 16 when Former Pastor Rich Kincl, now pastor of Central Church in Magnolia, was guest speaker.

The 100th birthday of service will be observed June 23. Services will feature testimonies shared by approximately 15 former staff members, including Former Pastor W.O. Taylor, who recently celebrated his 100th birthday.

"The Lord, Our Shepherd—1881, 1991," celebration theme has been emphasized in a centennial quilt that will be unveiled at the close of the 11 a.m. service. This will be followed by a fellowship potluck meal and an afternoon program, featuring the placement of a time capsule.

Don Moore, executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, will launch the church's second century of service June 30.

Couple goes to Macao

An Arkansas couple was among the 21 people recently named by the SBC Foreign Mission Board to work overseas through its International Service Corps (ISC) program.

Gene and Ann Highfill were assigned to Macao for six months. He will be a business manager worker.

Highfill considers Siloam Springs his hometown and is a graduate of the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville.

Mrs. Highfill, who also considers Siloam Springs her hometown, will be serving as a church and home outreach evangelism worker.



Basically Peaceful

The absence of many 'moderates' resulted in a mostly peaceful convention

[This coverage provided by J. Everett Sneed, editor of the *Arkansas Baptist*, and Baptist Press writers.]

ATLANTA—Many of the "moderates" chose not to participate in the 134th session of the Southern Baptist Convention. With the absence of many "moderates," the convention was basically quiet. Very little debate took place during the June 4-6 convention, which was held at the Georgia World Congress Center.

Several positive events were registered during the convention. Excellent evangelistic results were reported with 324 professions of faith being recorded in Atlanta as a part of the evangelistic activity prior to the SBC annual meeting.

On Wednesday evening a service entitled "Call to Prayer for Spiritual Awakening in America" was conducted. Many who participated in this intensely emotional and inspirational service believe that it will bear fruit not only within the Southern Baptist Convention, but beyond. Most who were present in this service felt the impact of prayer for themselves, others, the nation, and the world.

Registration for the Atlanta convention was the lowest in many years. The unaudited registration for the 1991 convention was 23,564. This compares with a registration in 1990 of 38,478.

Tuesday morning

There were 17,536 messengers registered at 8:45 a.m., registration secretary Lee Porter announced. Porter had estimated an attendance of 20,000 to 22,500 a few weeks before the meeting.

The Home Mission Board report was in the uncharacteristic position of being one of the first items of business Tuesday morning. The HMB report, traditionally a major portion of the Wednesday evening session, was moved to the new time with a shorter length to make way for the "Call to Prayer for Spiritual Awakening in America," which this year dominated Wednesday evening's activities.

Larry Lewis, who reported, "God is blessing Southern Baptists," mentioned the following highlights of 1990 for the HMB: —Baptisms of 385,031, an increase of 9.7 percent from the previous year and the

largest increase in a decade;

—New missions totaling 1,206, a 29 percent increase in missions starts from 1989;

—Missions personnel of 4,573, which is 765 more than in 1989 and a record;

—634 new chaplains, totaling a record of 2,271;

—A record of 62,809 volunteers;

—An Annie Armstrong Easter Offering record of \$35,679,669, an increase of 8.14 percent from 1989.

Paul Powell, president of the Southern Baptist Annuity Board, spoke on the National Soul-winning Encounter for 1995. The outreach effort will include simultaneous soul-winning campaigns and revival meetings as well as enlistment and training of SBC, state convention, associational and church leaders and lay persons.

Each person will be asked to commit to witness to one person per day for the 60 days between January 9 and March 9, 1995, Powell said. Each agency head has committed to participate in the outreach and will announce his intention during his report, Powell said.

Powell accepted responsibility for directing the effort when Carlos McLeod, evangelism director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, died earlier this year.

The Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission is reaching about 25 per-

cent of all Americans through telecasts on American Christian Television Service (ACTS) and the recently acquired FamilyNet, said Jack Johnson, president of the agency.

James Griffith, executive director of the Georgia Baptist Convention, welcomed messengers to Atlanta.

Executive Committee

A 1991-92 Cooperative Program allocation budget of \$140.7 million was adopted as presented by messengers, but action on the SBC operating budget stalled when a ballot vote was called on an amendment to delete the \$50,000 allocation to the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

The amendment to delete funding of the BJCPA passed by a vote of 6,872 to 6,101, 52.97 percent to 47.03 percent, apparently severing a 55-year relationship. Debate on the Cooperative Program allocation budget was continued Tuesday afternoon.

The Washington-based religious liberty organization, representing 10 Baptist bodies including Southern Baptists, has been the subject of debate and funding questions in recent years. Funding for the BJCPA was reduced by more than 85 percent in the 1990-91 budget, from about \$340,000 to \$50,000.

"The Baptist Joint Committee does not

SBC photo / Van Payne



More than 22,000 messengers gathered to conduct business on opening day.



SBC officers elected during the annual meeting include (left to right) Ed Harrison Jr., second vice president, pastor of Dollarway Baptist Church in Pine Bluff, Ark.; Morris Chapman, president, pastor of First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls, Texas; and Nelson Price, first vice president, pastor of Roswell Street Baptist Church in Marietta, Ga.

represent Southern Baptists," said Fred Minix, pastor of Good News Baptist Church in Alexandria, Va., who proposed the amendment to delete BJCPA funding. "In my opinion, they (BJCPA) better represent Norman Lear's organization, People for the American Way."

James Dunn, executive director of the BJCPA, noted that Southern Baptists, along with Northern (now American) Baptists and National Baptists helped to establish his organization in 1936.

"It would be a sad day if the official relationship of one of the three founding bodies of the Baptist Joint Committee were terminated," said Dunn. "I appeal for you to maintain a relationship rather than eliminate it."

Ronnie Floyd of Springdale, Ark., chairman of the business and finance subcommittee of the SBC Executive Committee which recommended the operating budget, said the BJCPA allocation "was based on information the Executive Committee received. Whatever the convention chooses to do, it is able to do."

However, Executive Committee Chairman Sam Pace of Lawton, Okla., said, "I think we are mistaken to try to change the budget here on the floor." He said the Executive Committee is willing to be instructed on budget allocations for future years.

The 1991-92 Cooperative Program allocation budget which allocates funds to convention boards, agencies and institutions represents an increase of 2.46 percent from the 1990-91 budget.

The Christian Life Commission, the denomination's religious liberty and moral concerns agency, received the largest percentage increase, 6.3 percent.

In related action, messengers approved a recommended bylaw change for the Executive Committee to delete the Public Affairs Committee, a standing committee which has addressed religious liberty issues while also serving as Southern Baptist representatives on the BJCPA.

Messengers also approved a change in the charter of the Christian Life Commission, allowing the current members of the PAC to become trustees of the CLC until their terms end. The action temporarily would enlarge the number of CLC trustees.

A recommended bylaw change was adopted to clear up ambiguities concerning the report of the Committee on Nominations which nominates people to serve on boards of trustees to agencies, institutions, commissions and standing committees.

The change specifies that amendments to the report may be made only one person at a time.

Another recommendation, adopted without discussion, requires that all members of SBC committees be members of Southern Baptist churches.

During the Executive Committee report which represented the first business to come before the convention, several messengers sought to bring points of order, protesting that they were not recognized at a microphone, or to raise concerns ruled unrelated to business at hand.

SBC President Morris Chapman urged messengers "to be courteous and kind. We are here to do business. We are also here to do the Lord's business. It is the desire of the chair to be fair in every way."

Motions made

Among the motions made Tuesday morning were two motions concerning the parliamentarian for the annual meeting. One recommended that the SBC employ a Southern Baptist parliamentarian. The second suggested the SBC affirm the parliamentarian, C. Barry McCarty, who is not a Southern Baptist.

All of the motions were referred to the committee on order of business. Danny Watters, pastor of Beulah Baptist Church in Douglasville, Ga., was chairman of the committee.

Bennett to retire

Harold C. Bennett, SBC Executive Committee president, announced his retirement effective Oct. 1, 1992, during the 1991 Southern Baptist Convention. Bennett has held his present post since 1979 and will continue as a consultant to the Executive Committee until October 1, 1993.

"It is my hope that I have been a faithful servant of the Lord," Bennett said. "I have worked diligently at being helpful, providing complete information, and being fair. I know there were times when I failed, but my desire was to be a good minister-leader."

Bennett, only the fourth man to head the Executive Committee, was executive secretary-treasurer of the Florida Baptist Convention from 1967-1979. Earlier, he served on the staffs of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, the Home Mission Board, and the Sunday School Board. He was pastor of churches in North Carolina, Kentucky, Louisiana, and Arkansas.



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Chapman address

The 12-year debate among Southern Baptists over the nature of Scripture "has been settled" for those who believe in the infallibility of the Bible, Southern Baptist Convention President Morris Chapman said Tuesday.

SBC photo / Mark Sandlin



Morris Chapman

However, for those who do not accept the Bible's infallibility and inerrancy "this issue will never be settled," stressed Chapman during his presidential address.

Chapman, pastor of First Baptist Church, Wichita Falls, Texas, said Southern Baptists cannot afford to compromise their convictions about the Bible. Evangelical Christians from all over the nation are "applauding our stand upon the Bible," he added. "Agreement will not always be reached on matters of biblical interpretation," he continued, "but agreement must be reached on biblical authority."

"I call upon every denominational employee, every pastor and every person in the pew to join in this endeavor of everlasting consequences."

Regarding home missions, Chapman said he wanted Southern Baptists to "jump start" 1,000 new churches next Easter Sunday and to double their gifts to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering.

Chapman said he believes God is calling Southern Baptists to pray for revival.

"We need a fresh touch from God," he said. "We need to set our hearts ablaze with his glory."

Tuesday afternoon

Messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention heard music from a variety of musical groups and church choirs prior to the opening of the business session Tuesday afternoon.

Messengers also took time from their afternoon session to answer questions for

a demographic survey conducted by Martin Bradley, director of the corporate planning and research department of the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville.

Motions made

Seven motions were made Tuesday afternoon for messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention to consider during their annual meeting in Atlanta.

The motions were added to 28 motions made Tuesday morning. All motions were considered by the Committee on Order of Business before being discussed by messengers.

Resolutions

Numerous resolutions were received from the floor by the SBC Resolutions Committee which were considered during its all-day meeting on Tuesday. The Resolutions Committee has the authority to report resolutions exactly as presented, alter resolutions, or dismiss them from consideration, unless two-thirds of the messengers request consideration.

Motions referred

Of the 28 motions made by messengers to the SBC annual meeting Tuesday morning, 24 were referred to SBC agencies or committees and four were ruled-out of order.

Motions for the SBC to "totally dissolve itself" from the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and to prohibit the BJC from having exhibit space at SBC annual

meetings were referred to the SBC Executive Committee. A motion to investigate any BJCPA funds that may be held by the Southern Baptist Foundation was referred to the foundation.

Four motions were referred to the Annulity Board for consideration. The motions concerned unemployment compensation for fired ministers and denominational employees; providing an "opt out" for maternity coverage for people past child-bearing years; lowering the medical insurance co-payment; and considering whether Annulity Board President Paul Powell has a conflict of interest in also serving as chairman of the board of regents of Baylor University.

Motions concerning the Baptist Sunday School Board were referred to that agency. They included requests that promotion day be moved to early September, quarterly literature be issued at different dates, January Bible study material be available at SBC annual meetings, and the annual letter include a place to report professions of faith in addition to baptisms.

Other motions referred to the SBC Executive Committee included:

- A method for messengers to vote in SBC business if they do not attend the annual meeting.
- The parliamentarian be a Southern Baptist.
- The SBC conduct an image-building campaign.
- Pre-school activities be provided during pre-convention meetings.

Brotherhood Commission photo / Jim Burton



Among the Baptist Men who participated in feeding Atlanta's street people prior to the convention were Arkansans Boyd Margason, Mountain Home (left) and John McAllister, El Dorado.



More than 600 volunteers went door to door during Crossover Atlanta, visiting more than 6,000 homes. This effort resulted in 154 professions of faith.

— Sites of future annual meetings be listed in the Book of Reports.

— Colleges, universities and seminaries not related to the SBC not have exhibit space at the annual meeting.

— SBC committee members, officers and board members be members of churches that contribute at least 5 percent of their undesignated funds to the Cooperative Program.

Two motions were referred to the six Southern Baptist seminaries. One calls for all books removed from seminary libraries by seminary trustees to be donated to the Richmond Theological Seminary.

Motions concerning abortion and affirming the parliamentarian were referred to the Resolutions Committee.

A motion requiring a comprehensive report of the survey of messengers taken at each annual meeting was ruled out of order because the survey results are printed in the annual report.

Motions to hold the SBC annual meeting in Salt Lake City, and to honor a man who has attended 50 consecutive SBC annual meetings were ruled out of order because messengers previously had acted on the business.

Three additional motions were introduced at the close of the Tuesday afternoon meeting.

Presidential election

Morris H. Chapman, 50-year-old pastor of First Baptist Church, Wichita Falls, Texas, was elected without opposition Tuesday to a second one-year term as president of the

15-million-member Southern Baptist Convention.

Chapman was nominated by Fred Wolfe, pastor of Cottage Hill Baptist Church, Mobile, Ala., who characterized Chapman's first term as president as one of compassion, commitment and consecration.

Wolfe said Chapman "has led us on a high road of compassion. He has held fast to his conviction while at the same time being loving and kind in his relationships."

Wolfe said Chapman also "led upon the high road of consecration. He has called us to prayer for spiritual awakening to reach this world with the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Executive Committee

The amended 1991-92 Southern Baptist Convention operating budget was adopted Tuesday afternoon by messengers completing action begun in the first session to defund the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs but leaving unanswered the question of the use of the \$50,000 originally allocated to the BJCPA.

Harold Bennett, president and treasurer of the Executive Committee, said, "In my opinion, the \$50,000 stays in the budget, and the decision about its disposition will be made by the Executive Committee."

The SBC operating budget for 1991-92 is \$4,023,121 compared to \$3,646,434 for 1990-91.

After adopting charter amendments for three agencies, messengers voted to adopt in one vote 10 remaining recommendations from the Executive Committee. In that

vote, messengers decided to hold their 1998 convention meeting in Salt Lake City, Utah, and to meet in Orlando, Fla., in the year 2000.

They also adopted the 1985-90 Bold Mission Thrust report and the report of the SBC Liaison Committee which included eight recommendations about building unity among SBC officers, state executive directors and others.

A resolution of support for retiring Brotherhood Commission president James H. Smith was adopted, along with a resolution of congratulations to the Sunday School Board which is celebrating its centennial.

Program statement revisions for the Sunday School Board and Stewardship Commission were adopted, along with a revision in the 1995-2000 Bold Mission Thrust emphasis plan. A charter revision for New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary also was approved.

Committee on Nominations, CLC

Messengers approved without change the report of the Committee on Nominations Tuesday afternoon.

The committee nominated trustees who set policy and approved budgets for the denomination's agencies and executive committees.

Richard Land, executive director-treasurer of the SBC Christian Life Commission, Nashville, Tenn., said the commission has worked this past year to "challenge and to energize Southern Bap-

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tists to engage our culture through informed and committed involvement with moral, social and public policy issues."

First vice president

Nelson Price, pastor of Roswell Street Baptist Church, Marietta, Ga., was elected first vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention by acclamation Tuesday afternoon at Georgia World Congress Center.

Dwight Reighard, pastor of New Hope Baptist Church, Fayetteville, Ga., nominated Price, identifying him as a statesman and leader in a variety of areas.

Roswell Street church, where Price has served for 25 years, is among the top five Southern Baptist churches in Georgia in baptisms and contributes 10 percent of its offerings to the Cooperative Program, Reighard reported.

Price will succeed Douglas M. Knapp of Gainesville, Fla., as the second leading officer of the convention.

Tuesday evening

On Tuesday night, messengers elected as second vice president the pastor of a church averaging 65 in Sunday school, defeated an attempt to open discussion of an Annuity Board insurance matter on the convention floor, heard reports from three convention-related agencies and received a report on Bold Mission Thrust, a strategy for sharing their faith.

Second vice president

Ed Harrison Jr., pastor of Dollarway Baptist Church, Pine Bluff, Ark., was elected SBC second vice president in a ballot vote. He defeated Vander Warner Jr., pastor of Grove Avenue Baptist Church, Richmond, Va., 2,633 to 1,900.

Harrison was nominated by David Rogers of Bartlett, Tenn., who said Harrison would represent "the point of view from people who never spoke on the platform of the Pastors' Conference" or an evangelism conference. He said Harrison's

church gives 15 percent of undesignated offerings to missions and Harrison "preaches the inerrant word of God and . . . is a soul winner."

Warner was nominated by Padgett Cope of Birmingham who said Warner had been president of the SBC Pastors' Conference and had spoken to that group three times.

Photo / Tim Yarbrough



Adam Sullivan, a member of Salem Church in Benton, served as a page during the convention.

Proceedings and reports

Roy Barnhill of Fayetteville, N.C., narrowly lost his bid for convention discussion of a motion asking the SBC Annuity Board to consider reducing medical copayments for individuals to \$1,000 for individuals and \$2,000 for families, but less than two-thirds of the messengers supported his request. The issue was referred to the Annuity Board.

Registration Secretary Lee Porter reported the convention was the sixth largest, with 22,903 messengers registered. Messengers received convention-related organization reports from Denton Lotz, general secretary-treasurer of the Baptist World Alliance; James H. Smith, president of the Brotherhood Commission; A.R. Fagan, president of the Stewardship Commission; and Dellanna O'Brien, executive director of Woman's Missionary Union.

Ernest E. Mosley, executive vice president of the SBC Executive Committee, gave a report on Bold Mission Thrust, the Baptist attempt to take the gospel message to all the world by the end of the century. Mosley said Bold Mission Thrust is denominational lingo, but it "speaks more of the responsibility of 15 million points of light in a dark world, 15 million salt shakers, 15 million witnesses to the grace of God."

Foreign Missions report

Doors of opportunity now open around the world may slam shut unless Southern Baptists provide resources to share the gospel, R. Keith Parks, president of the

Weekly Early Education Workshop

August 1-2

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10:00 Conferences begin
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12:20 Adjourn

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Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, Richmond, Va., warned in an address Tuesday night to Southern Baptist Convention messengers.

"Missiologists say that once an opportunity comes, there's usually a five-year window, and if that opportunity is not acted on, that opportunity passes by and seldom reappears," Parks said.

The report cited the start of missionary work in six countries and 176 cities, introduction of activity with 23 new people groups; appointment of 216 career and associate missionaries, bringing the missionary force total to 3,863 — an increase of 83 from the previous year; and baptisms of more than 200,000 believers.

However, despite the successes, Parks told Southern Baptists of one failure. He revealed final receipts of the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions fell almost \$6 million short of the goals and \$853,000 short of what was given to the previous year's offering. This is the first time in 54 years that Southern Baptists have not given as much to the offering as in the previous year.

"Unless we provide the resources, the door will slam shut, and God will march on," he said.

Wednesday morning

Agency reports

A special task force studying the accreditation of Southern Baptist colleges and seminaries found no evidence that regional accrediting bodies have prevented those schools from fulfilling their spiritual

purpose, task force member Bob R. Agee told Southern Baptist Convention messengers Wednesday.

Regional accrediting agencies, have allowed Southern Baptist educational institutions to be "as Christian and Baptist" as school leaders want them to be, despite misunderstandings created by accreditation reviews conducted at some institutions, said Agee, president of Oklahoma Baptist University.

Concern about accreditation of seminaries and colleges has increased in the wake of disputes between staff, faculty and students at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., that have put that institution's future accreditation into doubt.

Some Southern Baptists have expressed fears that agencies such as the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and the Association of Theological Schools in the U.S. and Canada represent external forces that might try to pressure Southern Baptist seminaries and colleges to change their evangelistic or theological emphases under threat of loss of accreditation. Others charge that some schools already have drifted from their original religious purpose toward secularism and should be overseen by a Southern Baptist accrediting body.

Seminaries, PAC

The presidents of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary reported to the messengers, pledging their personal

SBC photo / Monte Abernathy



Messengers to the 134th session raise their ballots to register their support of a motion introduced during one of the convention's business sessions.

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and institutional commitment to the "Here's Hope—Share Jesus" evangelistic campaign scheduled for 1995 and urged messengers to get involved in the effort.

New Orleans Seminary President Landrum Leavell reported that his seminary's new Center for Evangelism and Church Growth is to open in the fall. The center will benefit seminary students, Leavell said, but will focus on helping pastors and lay church members interested in evangelism and church growth.

Midwestern Seminary President Milton Ferguson reported that the Midwestern family of faculty and students has not been divided by the SBC theological wars.

"The most important thing happening this year and this decade was a covenant renewal between the faculty, the administration and the trustees" of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., President Roy L. Honeycutt told messengers.

Honeycutt said the April 1991 agreement included a commitment to be "especially sensitive to conservative points of view with regard to faculty representation."

Meanwhile, Russell Dilday, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, said despite five years of enrollment declines, with 4,500 students, Southwestern is "still the largest seminary in the world of any kind and probably the largest in Christian history."

Dilday noted the accreditation of the seminary recently had been affirmed by the Association of Theological Schools, and

Christianity Today magazine named Southwestern the No. 1 seminary in the United States.

Lewis Drummond, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., said the administration has submitted final reports to ATS. He appealed for prayer by messengers "that God will use these reports to give us a good, clean bill of health."

Southeastern has been under investigation by ATS since the 1987-88 academic year.

In other business, Chairman Albert Lee Smith made the final report of the Public Affairs Committee, which is being merged with the Christian Life Commission as a result of action Tuesday by convention messengers.

Nine former SBC presidents were introduced to messengers during the session.

Porter re-elected

Lee Porter of Nashville, Tenn., was re-elected to a 15th term as registration secretary of the Southern Baptist Convention, defeating James W. Richards, a Baton Rouge, La., pastor by 17 votes.

Porter received 4,523 votes and Richards, 4,506 votes in the most spirited election of the convention.

Tommy Knotts, associational director of missions in Belvedere, S.C., and a member of the Credentials Committee for 10 years, nominated Porter, recalling his efforts to reduce the waiting time to register and to assure honesty and integrity in the process.

Richard Lee, pastor of Rehoboth Baptist

SBC photo / Van Payne



Lee Porter

Church, Atlanta, Ga., nominated Richards, pointing to his denominational service as chairman of the Committee on Nominations and trustee on the Christian Life Commission.

Richards, pastor of Southminster Baptist Church, "holds those conservative truths we hold so dearly," Lee said.

David W. Atchison of Nashville, Tenn., was elected to his second one-year term as recording secretary without opposition.

Arkansan elected

Ed Harrison, pastor of Dollarway Church in Pine Bluff, was elected second vice-president of the Southern Baptist Convention on June 4-5. He is one of only three people from Arkansas to serve as an SBC officer in the last 50 years.

A letter was read during the convention reflecting the involvement of small churches, prompting Harrison's nomination by David Rogers, who had attended Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary at the same time Harrison did.

Dollarway is fairly typical of small churches throughout Arkansas. It has a Sunday School enrollment of 99 and averages around 65 people each Sunday.

Harrison said he hoped that "I'll be able to have an input representing the small churches, sharing something with the convention that needs to be shared: that we're all collaborators together. In my opinion, there are no big churches or little churches. There are only churches of Jesus."



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Action on motions

Nine motions were referred to Southern Baptist agencies and committees, two motions were ruled out of order and 14 new motions were introduced during the Wednesday morning session.

A motion for reduced insurance premiums for staff members at small churches and another motion to provide support for pastors' wives whose husbands divorce then were referred to the Annuity Board.

A motion about the length of time pastors in mission areas receive financial assistance was referred to the Home Mission Board.

Motions referred to the SBC Executive Committee include one to provide a recycling bin at annual meetings, another to allow mission churches to send messengers to the annual meeting, a third to study whether the Annuity Board can declare itself a self-perpetuating, independent board and a fourth to make more hotel rooms available near future convention sites.

A motion to support the historical facts of the canonization of the Bible was referred to the resolutions committee.

A motion to include the pledge of allegiance to the American flag in annual meetings was referred to the committee on order of business. A related motion was introduced, calling for the program to in-

clude the pledge of allegiance to the Bible and the Christian flag.

A motion for a study of abortion policies of Baptist hospitals was ruled out of order because no hospitals are entities of the Southern Baptist Convention. Also ruled out of order was a new motion calling for more advance notice about speakers on the Pastors' Conference program. SBC President Morris Chapman said the SBC has no control over what is done in pre-convention meetings.

Other motions introduced Wednesday morning called for:

—A study of the pros and cons of disassociating from secular accreditation agencies and moving to self-accreditation.

—Acquiring or forming a SBC insurance company to cover church staff members, church property, SBC church members, and the general public.

—Changing location of future meetings scheduled for Atlanta due to the high cost of renting meeting space.

—Voting on motions and resolutions by mail so all Southern Baptist churches could participate.

—Increased support for establishing and supporting crisis pregnancy centers.

—Encouraging churches which offer Christian day schools.

—Offering student discounts at Baptist bookstores.

—The plan of salvation to be presented

prior to President George Bush's address to the annual meeting for the benefit of visitors attending the session who may not be Christians.

—The SBC president to refrain from insulting people who disagree with him in his presidential address.

—Southern Baptists to stop using the labels liberal, conservative and moderate and instead refer to themselves as "Holy Spirit filled Christians, followers of Christ or Christians."

Two motions were introduced to schedule reports from the Foreign Mission Board and Home Mission Board in more prominent places on the program.

Action on resolutions

Seven resolutions were approved Wednesday morning by messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention on topics ranging from human sexuality to religious liberty to alcohol.

Several amendments were offered from the floor, but only one passed. All of the resolutions proposed by the resolutions committee were adopted.

The seven resolutions adopted were:

(1) — On Human Sexuality

The SBC resolution said sex is to be confined to marriage relationships between "a man and a woman." It cited biblical condemnation of premarital sex, adultery, rape, incest, pornography, promiscuity, prostitution, and homosexuality.

In drafting the resolution, committee members said they worked to present "a positive view of biblical sex." Members agreed they wanted to uphold a strict biblical standard but did not want to appear to be prudish.

(2) — On Sanctity of Human Life.

Although Southern Baptists have spoken to the abortion issue in previous years, this year's resolution focused on more than calling for legislation against legalized abortion.

It specifically opposed "the testing, approval, distribution, and marketing of new drugs and technologies which will make the practice of abortion more convenient and more widespread." The controversial abortion pill, RU-486, was specifically cited.

Further, the resolution supported the current ban on federal funding for "any transplantation of tissue from induced abortions for purposes of experimentation and research."

Nancy Blackmon of Sanford, N.C., offered an amendment to call on all Southern Baptists "to work with equal fervor to compassionately encourage" women with unplanned pregnancies to carry their pregnancies to term. The amendment was adopted.

SBC photo/ Jim Vaneman



New officers of the Southern Baptist Conference of Associational Directors of Missions elected in a pre-convention meeting are (front row, from left) Larry Martin, first vice president, Boston, Mass.; Glenn Hickey, president, Little Rock, Ark.; A. Kenneth Chadwick, second vice president, Salt Lake City, Utah; Kenneth Glass, editor, Galveston, Texas; (back row, from left) James Abernathy, 1992 host pastor, Indianapolis, Ind.; and John Dent, treasurer, Seneca, S.C.



(3) — On Endangerment of Our Religious Liberties.

This resolution spoke specifically to the 1990 Supreme Court decision *Employment Division vs. Smith*, which changed the way courts deal with religious liberty cases. Previously, the state was required to show a "compelling interest" in denying such liberties to enforce other laws.

As a result of this 1990 ruling, governments could conceivably enforce equal employment opportunity laws without regard to the religious beliefs of churches acting as employers.

(4) — On Government Support of Obscene and Offensive Art.

This resolution specifically called on President George Bush to fire John Frohnmayer, chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, and replace him with someone "who will stop funding obscene, morally repugnant and sacrilegious art."

The NEA has been a source of frustration for many evangelical Christians for the past two years. NEA Chairman Frohnmayer has continued to approve federal grants for projects some Christians deem obscene and sacrilegious. For example, one NEA-

funded project depicted a cross submerged in urine.

(5) — On Restricting Alcoholic Beverage Advertisements.

This resolution addressed legislation pending in Congress that would require such advertisements to carry warning labels like those currently required on cigarette advertisements.

(6) — On Equitable Taxation for Families

This resolution claimed that current U.S. tax laws place a disproportionate burden on families. This burden contributes to weakening family structures by necessitating mothers to work outside the home, the resolution contended.

(7) — On the Use of Government Funds to Encourage Immoral Sexual Behavior.

Carrying on the theme of the NEA resolution, this resolution criticized a Centers for Disease Control grant of \$25,000 to a gay and lesbian health conference.

The resolutions committee made a second report Thursday morning.

Convention sermon

An Oklahoma pastor used a familiar Scripture in the annual Southern Baptist

Convention sermon Wednesday to ask Christians "What do you do when you can't get back to God?" Tom D. Elliff, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, Okla., then reminded Southern Baptists that the well-known 23rd Psalm in the Bible reads, "He restores my soul."

In support of his conviction, Elliff said, "God designs our lives so we might prosper."

Prosperity, however, carries with it a commitment to produce for Christ, he added. Complacency can destroy a Christian's ministry, he warned. "Is your desire to get some place bigger so you can do less?" he asked.

"It's one thing to believe the Bible is the inerrant and infallible word of God," said Elliff, "but it's another thing to go to the well of God and let him restore your soul."

Wednesday evening

Action on motions

Messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting elected Lewis Drummond to preach next year's annual sermon.

Drummond is president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. Elected as alternate preacher for the annual sermon was James W. Jones, evangelism and Brotherhood director of the Baptist State Convention of Michigan. Jack Price from Garland, Texas, was elected convention music director. He was also convention music director this year.

Messengers agreed to discuss two motions Thursday morning. Other motions made during the annual meeting were referred to SBC agencies or committees or were ruled out of order.

Forum dissolves

Participants at the seventh annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Forum voted to dissolve the organization and give its assets to the newly formed Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. About 200 people attended this final meeting; 2,400 people had attended the first meeting in 1984.

Several participants expressed concern about discontinuing the annual meeting prior to the SBC. "I'm from a church that's going to continue to send me to the SBC," one pastor said. "It's going to be mighty lonely if there's not some type of forum (for moderates)."

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Messengers also voted to change the name of Associational Emphasis Week to Associational Mission Week and to delete the week of planning by church organizations and leadership training from the calendar emphasis in June.

Prayer service

Disease, violence, evil leaders and a spirit of confusion are among the ways in which God judges a nation, Baptist pastor Charles Stanley told Southern Baptist messengers Wednesday night during a call to prayer for spiritual awakening in America.

"We cannot separate what's happening in this nation from God," Stanley, pastor of First Baptist Church of Atlanta, Ga., said. "We are the ones who have chosen evil leaders to rule our nation and our cities."

Congress is the example he used to illustrate a spirit of confusion.

"When you read what goes on in Congress, you have to ask yourself, 'How could people be so confused?'" he said.

"We desperately need a fresh encounter with God," Stanley said. "We desperately need spiritual awakening."

"It's not going to happen in Washington, D.C. It's going to happen in my heart and in your heart. In my church and your church. A little here. A little there."

"America is under the judgment of God, and only God's grace can bring this nation out from under the judgment," he said.

God judges a nation only after many things have happened, Stanley said — after many warnings, when people cease to fear him, when he sees no other remedy, when a nation profanes his name, and when the ministry becomes corrupt.

More than 20,000 Southern Baptist messengers were on hand for Stanley's address, which opened the prayer service.

Morris Chapman, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, told messengers that Christians in more than 171 countries were making allowances for time differences and joining them in prayer for spiritual awakening within the convention. Members of 23 denominations also were enlisted to pray.

Messengers stood while banners bearing the names the Bible used to describe Jesus were paraded into the convention hall.

Prayer, both by individuals and in small groups, dominated the almost three-hour session.

As testimonies were given to illustrate sins related to not loving God, not loving others and living unholy lives, nails were driven into a large wooden cross that had been erected on the platform.

Thursday morning

Agency reports

Two days after his agency lost the last of its Southern Baptist Convention financial support by vote of SBC messengers, Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs chief James M. Dunn promised those who voted for or against funding that he would continue to fight for separation of church and state.

"Baptists will not remain silent during the destruction of the wall of separation," Dunn declared. Keeping that wall intact, he said, "may well be the most distinctive and peculiarly Baptist contribution" Baptists can make to the nation.

Dunn, who has inspired both ardent support and vitriolic attacks from Southern Baptists during his tenure as executive director at the Washington, D.C.-based Baptist religious liberty group, staunchly

defended the agency's work.

Dunn also reported that despite the SBC's official defunding of the BJCPA, Southern Baptists gave more money to the agency in 1990 than in any previous year through various support channels.

During the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's report, outgoing President Lloyd Elder highlighted the conclusion of the board's year-long centennial celebration, which included the introduction of a new Baptist hymnal, a new Bible commentary series, and new literature with more Bible content. He also noted the approach of the National Convocation on the Bible, to be held next April 21-23 in Nashville and a new program called Great Commission Breakthrough designed to help Southern Baptists become more effective.

Williams to head Brotherhood

James D. Williams unanimously was elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Brotherhood Commission during a called meeting of the agency's trustees Wednesday, June 5.

Williams will assume his duties as the sixth chief executive officer of the 84-year-old missions education agency Sept. 15, replacing retiring president James Smith.



Williams

Williams is currently executive vice-president of the Sunday School Board, Nashville, Tenn. Prior to this, he served for 22 years as a teacher and administrator at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Tex.

Williams is a graduate of Southern Illinois University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Williams wants the Brotherhood to continue its mission: "I want the Brotherhood Commission to move forward, building strength upon strength, recognizing that until Jesus comes again our Great Commission task is not complete."

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tive in evangelism. The Sunday School Board also helped provide New Testaments and Bible study materials to military chaplains and soldiers during the Persian Gulf War.

During the question period, one messenger asked how the Sunday School Board could justify the hefty financial package promised to Elder as part of an agreement Elder reached with board trustees to retire this year. SSB Trustee Chairman Bill Anderson responded that the trustees, carrying out the responsibility given to them by Southern Baptists, had acted "wisely, judiciously, and compassionately."

During his report, new Baptist Press chief Herbert V. Hollinger compared Southern Baptists to a family scattered around the nation and the world. "If we're a family, we've got to communicate," he said, and the denominational press served that purpose.

Messengers also heard reports from the Southern Baptist Foundation, Canadian Southern Baptists, and the Southern Baptist Historical Commission.

New national WMU president

Carolyn D. Miller of Huntsville, Ala., was elected national president of Woman's Missionary Union during the annual pre-convention session of the Southern Baptist Convention.

She was elected to a one-year term and may be re-elected to up to five consecutive one-year terms. Miller is the 15th woman to hold the office since the WMU organized in 1888.



Miller

Miller, a member of First Baptist Church, Huntsville, previously has served as WMU president of Alabama. She also has served on the SBC Executive Committee, the Executive Board of the Alabama Baptist State Convention, and the Executive Board of the Alabama WMU.

Martha Wennenberg of De Funiak Springs, Fla., was elected national recording secretary for WMU during the session. She previously has served as president of Florida WMU and has worked on the Alabama state WMU staff. She is a member of First Baptist in DeFuniak Springs.

Resolutions

Just an hour before President George Bush was to speak to the Southern Baptist Convention about "equity in parent day-care choice" Thursday, messengers voted on a resolution supporting the President's plan for parental choice in education.

The resolution, titled "On Parental Choice in Education," was among seven resolutions proposed to messengers.

Another resolution, "On Operation Desert Storm," commended Bush for his leadership in the Persian Gulf War.

These two resolutions commending the President were in contrast to resolutions passed Wednesday that were critical of Bush.

The proposed parental choice resolution called for Southern Baptists to encourage tax incentives for parental choice in education within the bounds of the First Amendment of ban on governmental establishment of religion.

The Desert Storm resolution says "the cause of freedom, democracy and peace was advanced by the diligent and courageous performance of duty throughout all segments of our armed services."

The five other resolutions passed were on prayer for release of hostages, appreciation for the convention's host city, the American Bible Society, the 50th anniversary of the SBC Chaplains Commission, and the importance of Bible reading.

Baptist Hour

As a part of the Baptist Hour's 50th Anniversary, Joel Gregory, pastor of Dallas First Church and Baptist Hour speaker, preached a live message from the convention for the radio and television program.

His text was John 12:32. As requested by messengers, Gregory presented the plan of salvation in his sermon.

President Bush's address

With all the business completed, the convention was closed with an address by President George Bush. The President started his message by saying that it appeared that "American values are ascendant around the world."

Bush commended Southern Baptists on the nearly 200 chaplains who participated in Desert Storm. He said that well over 200 conversions among service men and women were registered as a result of the work of Southern Baptist chaplains. This statement, like many others, was greeted with thunderous applause by the messengers of the convention.

Bush further commended Southern Baptists on their faith. He said, "You've held the faith where others have lost it, gained in numbers where others haven't, made a difference where others couldn't. You've proved the flower of faith can blossom anywhere."

The President emphasized the importance of prayer to him and his wife, Barbara. With emotion in his voice he said, "I wanted to thank you all, and to ask that you keep us in your prayer."

Referring to the founding fathers, the President said they had been careful about the role of religion and government in our society. He said the First Amendment guaranteed freedom of speech, of press, of assembly, of petition, and of religion.

Bush referred to a fifth grader, Monette, who read her Bible under the shade of a tree at school during recess. Other children then joined in with her in the reading of

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President George Bush addressed messengers on Thursday morning.

the Scripture. The school officials told her it was illegal for her to read the Bible on school property. Bush said, "The day a child's quiet prayer during recess becomes an unlawful assembly, something's really wrong. . . . Let's put people first and allow them the freedom to follow their faith."

The President indicated that vouchers for child care had just become the law of the land. He indicated this would help low income families in choosing where their children would have daycare. He said, "I want to extend this concept of choice to include schools. Every family should have the freedom to choose a school for a child."

The President also indicated he wanted to make the streets a safe place to walk and to eliminate the fear of drugs. He said he had challenged Congress to come up with a tough bill in 100 days to keep the streets safe.

The President indicated that another

issue of importance was that of abortion. He said, "Since 1981 the Federal Government has determined that taxpayer funds should be used for abortion in only the most narrow of circumstances."

Concerning prayer in the public schools Bush said it was his goal to restore voluntary prayer in the school room so everyone could pray according to the dictates of one's own conscience.

In conclusion, Bush said no nation better recognizes diversity of faith with unity of purpose than America does.

After the thunderous applause ceased, President Morris H. Chapman declared that the 1991 Southern Baptist Convention was concluded. He admonished the messengers to remain in their seats until after the closing prayer was concluded and President Bush had left the platform. The closing prayer was led by Ron Phillips, pastor of Central Church, Hixson, Tenn.

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LESSONS FOR LIVING

Convention Uniform

Called to be faithful

by Richard Maness, Immanuel Church, Fayetteville

Basic passage: Ezra 9:2-3, 10-11; 10:9-13

Focal passage: Ezra 9:2-3; 10:9-13

Central truth: God requires those who serve him to demonstrate the quality of faithfulness in their daily living.

Our study of Ezra has focused on the principal character of the book, namely, Ezra, the scribe. This session deals with Ezra's religious reforms.

A thorough study of Ezra reveals the character qualities that make Ezra a great leader. We must not assume that Ezra, the Old Testament post-exilic scribe, is "just like" the scribes of Jesus' day. His courageous stand on a sensitive issue of marriage merits our admiration. His call for reform based on God's laws previously given to Israel required great personal risk. How many "scribes" or "prophets" of today are willing to call for righteous reform among God's people with regard to God's ideal for marriage and family. Our tendency to categorize others won't work with Ezra.

It took a faithful leader to accomplish the return of the Jews from Babylonian captivity and the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem. Ezra instituted religious reforms among the inhabitants following their return and re-establishment in Jerusalem. It is one thing to endure the demands of a building program, but to remain after its completion and call for reform on the part of leaders and people reveals a courageous faithfulness to God's calling. Faithfulness is the greatest test of a leader.

Ezra courageously faced the test of being faithful to God on one hand and offending the priests, Levites, and people on the other. All had been guilty of intermarriage with the inhabitants of the land which had been forbidden by God's law (v. 2). He identified with the people in their sin even though he was not guilty of the specific disobedience. He humbled himself in confession of sin on behalf of the people. He called for repentance and reform and the people responded in acceptance of the required separation (v. 12). God requires faithfulness on the part of those who answer his call. Ezra demonstrated an unwavering faithfulness to God and his Word. Our part is to be faithful. God will take care of the rest.

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Life and Work

Being a Christian warrior

by Joseph Jones, First Church, Prairie Grove

Basic passage: Ephesians 6:10-18

Focal passage: Ephesians 6:10

Central truth: We are to be an advancing army for Christ.

The Christian life is a life of warfare. We have an enemy, Satan, who is real and wants to destroy us. Jesus tells us (Jn. 10:10) that Satan wants to steal, kill, and destroy. But, God has not left us defenseless. He has given to us his power and authority so that we need not fall prey to Satan's methods.

We are instructed to put on the whole armor of Christ in order to stand up against the devil; note that Paul said to put all of it on. Christianity is not a smorgasbord religion where you go down a serving line and choose only that which you want. In fact, in spiritual warfare, you must take it all or receive none.

With all the armor intact, we can stand against the devil. 2 Corinthians, 11:13-15 gives us a clue to his methods. Most people imagine Satan as an openly wicked being who is out to trick you into hell. Actually, according to 2 Corinthians he can look like a very nice guy. Satan never misses church; he'll encourage you to work in the church (although not accept Christ); and you would probably want him to teach a Sunday School class because he looks and sounds so good. He's the master at mixing a little lie into the truth, thereby deceiving many.

Paul tells us that this armor is for spiritual, not physical, warfare. Some churches and individuals try to use the armor against each other. Some take the Word of God and swing it like a sword at others to advance their own causes rather than use it to teach in common faith. Paul said that it's not flesh and blood that we war against, but spiritual wickedness. Fighting against each other is a very effective method that Satan uses to destroy a fellowship of God's people.

This armor is not for us to hold a defensive position. The Christian warrior is to charge the strongholds of Satan, advancing the cause of Christ and freeing those held captive by Satan's lies. Jesus said in Matthew 16:18 "that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." This signifies that we are an advancing army and not just "holding out 'til the end" as some believe. We will win spiritual battles on our knees.

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Bible Book

Hidden motives

by J. Troy Prince, First Chapel, Jonesboro

Basic passage: 2 Samuel 24:10-12, 15-18, 22, 24-25

Focal passage: 2 Samuel 24:1-10, 17, 24-25

Central truth: God forgives when we confess our sins.

Joab was not the last person to object to taking a census—it seems to be a natural human aversion.

David called on Joab and his commanders to count the people from Dan to Beersheba. Joab voiced his objections and reluctantly set about the assignment which was never finished. However, he did bring a report almost 10 months later that revealed that 1,300,000 "valiant men who drew the sword" had been found (2 S. 24:9).

Taking the census lent validity to the fact that David was intent on further change in the military and national structure. Joab and other national leadership objected to what they understood as a subtle attempt to initiate a military draft. Previously, the military was made up of volunteers and a strong contingent of mercenaries. Faced with this opposition, David's "heart smote him" (2 S. 24:10) and he confessed his wrongdoing in demanding the census.

David was given a choice of punishment for his sin. He threw himself on the mercy of God. His plea on behalf of the people (2 S. 24:17) reveals the "true" David.

2 Samuel closes with David's purchase of a site on which to construct the temple. Events surrounding the purchase of Araunah's threshing floor are used to direct attention toward the building of the temple during Solomon's reign. David prepared the building site and gathered materials for Israel's worship center.

The study of 2 Samuel gives an insight into the life of David. His role as a father and his style as a national leader cannot be forgotten. In each of these relationships he is pictured as a person of intense love, loyalty, and compassion. At times, his love for family kept him from acting decisively.

One negative quality hounded him throughout his life: self-will. He wanted to "do his thing." David's uncontrolled self-will brought him repeatedly to political shame and personal humiliation. His one redeeming quality was his willingness to accept responsibility for his sin and to confess it to God.

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Convention Uniform*Planning, participation*

by Lane H. Strother, First Church, Mountain Home

Basic passage: Nehemiah 1 and 2

Focal passage: Nehemiah 1:4; 2:4-8, 17-18

Central truth: Prayer, preparation, planning, and participation are essential ingredients for accomplishing God's purpose.

There are four things that can be learned from Nehemiah, cup-bearer to King Artaxerxes, rebuilders of the walls of Jerusalem: (1) Nehemiah had compassion and concern for his kinsmen; (2) Nehemiah began his service for God by seeking God's direction through prayer; (3) Nehemiah planned and prepared for his task carefully; and (4) Nehemiah involved the hurting people in the project.

To understand Nehemiah, it is helpful to know what had happened to God's people. The Northern Kingdom, Israel, had fallen captive to the Assyrians. Later, the Babylonians conquered the Southern Kingdom, Judah, destroyed the temple and the wall around Jerusalem, and took some of the people of Judah into exile. The people of Judah were decimated and disgraced. Their faith was shaken. Not only had the house of their God been destroyed, but they, the people of God, had been taken away from the land of their God.

Nehemiah was a Hebrew who understood God's greatness. When he heard of the plight of God's people, he went to God in prayer. The plight of God's people today is very similar to the plight of his people in 445 B.C. There are hurting people, hungry people, disillusioned people, and disgraced people. When we meet these people in our daily walk, how do we respond to them? Nehemiah had compassion. His heart and his face were saddened. Are ours?

Nehemiah did not stop with compassion and prayer. Nehemiah made careful preparations for the task before him. He made arrangements through Artaxerxes to get the materials to rebuild the walls and to arrange for his safe passage to Judah. Once there he announced to the people that together they would rebuild the wall. Nehemiah encouraged the hurting people to participate in the project.

Prayer, planning, preparation and participation by all concerned are essential for accomplishing God's purpose!

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Life and Work*God's preparation*

by Jim Files, Windsor Park Church, Fort Smith

Basic passage: 1 Kings 17:1-24

Focal passage: 1 Kings 17:3, 7, 9, 22

Central truth: God cuts away self-reliance and pride from those he uses.

Elijah was a prophet that God used to call his people away from the worship of idols and back to faith in him. In the darkest times God always raises up a servant to stand for him and call his people to repentance. Elijah proclaimed to Ahab that nothing would happen except at Elijah's command. When God boldly uses a man like this, he closely guards him against pride and presumption.

To represent God in a perverse generation, God had to train Elijah to totally depend on him. After God called Elijah, he sent him into the desert to the Brook Cherith (v. 3), but the brook dried up (v. 7)! Elijah was right in the center of God's will, but the brook dried up. Cherith means "cutting," and God was cutting away Elijah's dependence upon anything but Him.

God then sent Elijah to Zarephath (v. 9), which means "place of refining." After God cuts, he refines. In order to stand before kings, Elijah had to humble himself before the weakest and not be proud. God arranged for a widow to care for Elijah. She was preparing to die because she did not have enough for her and her son, much less Elijah. God's Word is for widows and orphans as well as for kings. As God humbled Elijah he provided for the poor and the needy. For a man to stand before kings, he must depend upon the least of the brethren and not forget to minister.

The end of the chapter records Elijah raising the widow's son from the dead (v. 22). God confirms his calling of Elijah by this miracle. Resurrection power is needed to bring life to the dead and revival to an idolatrous people. God is the only one who raises the dead, and without him we can do nothing. Thus, the training of Elijah to totally depend upon God, so that God could work his works through him.

God sent John the Baptist with "the spirit and power of Elijah" (Lk. 1:17). In our day and time we also need the same authority and power that Elijah demonstrated. Cutting and refining are necessary steps before the dead are raised and idolatrous people turn back to God. It must begin in his servants before it spreads to his people.

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Bible Book*The anointing of a king*

by Marck Gibson, First Church, Jacksonville

Basic passage: 1 Kings 1:28-30, 38-40; 2:2-4, 10-12

Focal passage: 1 Kings 1:28-30, 39; 2:2-4

Central truth: The heavenly Father anoints his children as kings.

Solomon was anointed king of Israel. God says that, as those who have committed their lives in faith to Christ, the children of God are anointed, chosen as kings (Re. 1:6). The three kinds of anointing were common; applying perfume oil, medical, and sacred. Sacred anointing was for dedicating things or persons to God. It is the kind of anointing that Solomon and other kings received. This is the anointing the Christian receives at his conversion (2 Co. 1:21).

Since this parallel is true, we can make applications from the anointing of Solomon to our own anointing.

First, notice that the one anointed is selected by another, as Solomon was chosen by David. Our heavenly Father selects to be kings those who believe in Christ. Adonijah (Solomon's brother) could not make himself king; neither can man anoint himself as a son of God (Jn. 15:16).

Second, Solomon is anointed king using the olive oil which had been compounded by Moses and placed in the sanctuary tent at Ophel. The oil used was symbolic of the work of the Holy Spirit. The believer is anointed and sealed by the Holy Spirit (1 Jn. 2:27, Ep. 1:13). Thus his anointing signifies intimate relationship with God and immediate power and vitality from God conveyed on the new king.

Thirdly, as anointed king, Solomon was to "prove himself a man." David, with the force of a man stating his last will and testament, charged Solomon to keep God's covenant, to walk in God's way, and to keep all God's statutes, commands, judgments, and testimonies. Christians are to prove themselves by walking worthy of the Lord: to be faithful (keep God's covenant), to be godly (walk in God's way), and to be obedient (keep his laws and will).

Finally, the anointing of the Lord, who live like those anointed, can count on God's faithfulness in his prospering their service for him, in his blessing their walk with him, and in his guarding their future in him.

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ETHIOPIA

Missionary family reunited

by Craig Bird
SBC Foreign Mission Board

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia (BP)—A new government and Ethiopian Airlines made it possible for Southern Baptist missionary Rob Ackerman to fly his children out of violence-wracked Ethiopia June 8.

But an Ethiopian Christian provided the emotional release.

Ackerman, of Wheaton, Ill., and his three daughters—Bethany, 9, and 6-year-old twins Melody and Krista—were on one of the first flights out of Ethiopia June 8 when the international airport in Addis Ababa reopened two weeks after being closed by fighting.

The father and daughters were sealed in the Ethiopian capital when soldiers of the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front ended a 30-year civil war in May by taking control of Addis Ababa, the capital. Other Southern Baptist missionaries in the city at the time were Sam and Ginny Cannata, John and Mary Lou Lawrence and Jerry Bedsole.

Patty Ackerman, Rob's wife, and Rosie Bedsole were in Nairobi, Kenya, for a conference when the TPLF unexpectedly made the final push to the very edges of Addis Ababa, isolating the capital for two weeks. Mrs. Bedsole was on the first flight back into Addis Ababa from Nairobi June 9, but the Ackermans decided to reunite in Nairobi.

Last March the U.S. Embassy advised all American citizens to leave Ethiopia when it became obvious it was only a matter of time before the anti-government coalition would achieve military victory. But hundreds of American missionaries remained since rebel leaders insisted they had no desire to capture the capital. Most Baptist mission work was continuing, and Addis Ababa exhibited a surface calm that belied the threat of violence.

Ackerman and other missionaries also had to struggle with how Ethiopian Christians might react if they felt they were being abandoned when things really got tough.

"But when we heard the airport might open, one of the men who had walked through the battle lines to attend a Bible school at the mission offices came to me and said it was OK," Ackerman said. "They understood we needed to reunite our family and had seen we were willing to stay beside them even in danger."

Ackerman said none of the missionaries were threatened during the rebel occupation of Addis Ababa. For unknown reasons looters stayed away from the Baptist compound—even while looting the government military hospital across the

road and another missionary compound less than a quarter-mile away.

Ackerman first heard the airport might reopen at church services at the International Evangelical Church. He began calling the airport every day and was told the first flight would leave June 7. He made reservations, but the flight was delayed until June 8. He could not get confirmation that the reservations were still good, so he and his daughters showed up at the airport that morning. After a tense wait, their names were called.

Two flights left for Nairobi within minutes of each other and two other flights left for other international destinations.

In Nairobi, Mrs. Ackerman was told the flight had been postponed again, but she went to the airport anyway. For three hours she and Kenya missionary Linda Allen "walked around and around and on every circuit we'd stop and ask if they had any information," she said. "Finally they confirmed the flight was in the air and that Rob and the girls were on the passenger list. We went to the observation deck and almost immediately saw the plane. I started crying even before I saw them get off."

She even got past the security guard in the customs area when she "grabbed the first girl I came to and started sobbing I think he could tell by the look in my eye I was going to get to my family no matter what he said."

Earlier, a generous stranger provided the last link in reuniting the family. On arrival in Kenya, Ackerman was confronted by an immigration official who told him he had to come up with \$40 in cash for the visas necessary to enter the country. "He looked at my credit cards, reminded me it had to be cash and gave me a hard time for not having the foresight to have gotten the visas in Ethiopia or at least bring U.S. dollars with me," Ackerman said. "He wasn't impressed by the fact all bank accounts had been frozen and we had no way to get money out."

A man in line behind Ackerman decided the missionary looked trustworthy. "He worked for the World Bank and was headed home to Ohio but he handed me \$40 and said I could mail him a check later," Ackerman explained. "I said I could do better than that—I had my checkbook from my American bank with me."

The Ackerman family hoped to return to Addis Ababa around June 19 if conditions allow.

"The girls don't seem to need a vacation right now," Ackerman admitted. "But Patty and I sure do."