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June 23, 1988

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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One Step Closer

Arkansas Baptist

June 23, 1988

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1988 SBC Annual Meeting
San Antonio, Texas

In This Issue

Cover Story



(BP) photo / Van Payne

One Step Closer 6-14

Warned of the dangers of continued strife, messengers to the Southern Baptist annual meeting decide to continue the "conservative" resurgence.

Editor's Page 3

Speak Up

You'll Be Glad To Know . . . 4

Today's Issues 4

Local & State

Arkansans Graduate 5

Surprise! 5

CP Report 5

Lessons For Living . 15

World

Cooperation Needed 16

Missionary Notes 16

Skip Notice

The *Arkansas Baptist* will not publish an issue of July 7, one of four such weeks each year. The June 30 ABN will contain Sunday School lesson commentaries for both July 3 and July 10. The June 30 ABN also will be a Helpline issue.

IT'S UPLIFTING

Baptist Film Wins Award

TAIPEI, Taiwan—"A Gift of Love," a feature film produced by Taiwan Baptists, has received the Golden Torch award for best religious videotape. The International Catholic Organization of the Cinema and Audio-Visuals in Asia presented the award to film writer-director Christine Mao and Southern Baptist missionary Jerry Clower. "A Gift of Love" tells the story of a rebellious boy who comes to faith in Christ after being jailed for stabbing someone.

MasterLife In Japan

TOKYO—The MasterLife discipleship program has become popular among Japanese Baptists. More than 200 Japanese Christians had been certified in the program by late 1987, with 30 MasterLife groups meeting regularly. Introduced to Japan by Southern Baptist missionaries, MasterLife "seems to be uniquely suited to the Japanese mind and society," said FMB East Asia Director Sam James.

First Women Graduate

GUATEMALA CITY—The first five graduates of the Guatemala Baptist Theological Seminary Women's Program have received their certificates in Christian education. The women's Program was begun as a two-year religious education program for pastors' wives. But other women interested in ministry have joined in the studies, which are directed by Southern Baptist missionary Jean Byrd.

Jail Helps Missionaries

TONINCHUN, Guatemala—Missionaries Wendell Parker and Keith Stamps landed in jail earlier this year, and it helped their ministry. The two weren't arrested. They went to teach a Bible study for a group of 29 Mam Indians being held in connection with murders near the village of Toninchun. Twenty-seven of the prisoners are not Christians. For months the missionaries have been searching for ways to begin a ministry among the Mam people.

GOOD NEWS!

The Christian Commonwealth

Philippians 1:27-30

Williams translated verse 27, "You must practice living lives that are worthy of the good news." The word translated "conversation" in the King James Version originally referred to participation in public affairs. Paul is playing on his reader's pride in Roman citizenship to talk about the duties of citizenship in the commonwealth of heaven. These duties involve:

Undeified living (v. 27)—Since the word "becometh" means "having the same weight as another," Paul is suggesting that one's manner of life ought to weigh as much as the gospel he professes. The Christian's life then supplies evidence of salvation (v. 28), glorifies the gospel (v. 27), and enlarges the kingdom of Christ (v. 27).

Unbroken unity (v. 27)—The image Paul used here is the unified assault against a common foe as the "striving together" of an athletic team. The most thrilling football play I ever saw was years ago in a Southern Methodist University-Texas Christian University game. Doak Walker carried the ball around right end and ran 80 yards into the end zone—but only because the

offensive line held firm and the downfield blockers executed perfectly. Paul was suggesting that the life-giving energy of each Christian be gathered into a single force, directed to one purpose—the truth of the gospel.

Undaunted courage (vv. 28-30)—Undaunted courage becomes the citizen of heaven. It shone in the faces of the three Hebrew children who defied the king; it was reflected in the faces of the apostles who told the Sanhedrin that they must obey God rather than men.

Such courage comes through the ability to look on suffering as a privilege (v. 29). Some great sermons are delivered from the pulpit of suffering.

This courage is sustained by the worthy example of others (v. 30). Paul borrowed again from the vocabulary of the Greek athletic contest as he compared his readers' conflict for the cause of Christ with his own. They are God's athletes, proving what stuff they are made of.

Failure to be intimidated is to the enemy a sign of his destruction, but to the Christian a sign of his security in Christ (v. 28).

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San Antonio SBC

J. EVERETT SNEED

The fear of the "bloodiest" convention in the history of the SBC did not materialize. There were much fewer messengers than anticipated and the those in attendance were much kinder to each other than they might have been. It is evident, however, that deep division exists within the denomination. The most important issue for Southern Baptists now is how to disengage the conflict and get back to the main business of carrying the gospel to a lost world and developing believers.

The controversy started in 1979 when the "conservatives" organized to eliminate what they perceived to be "a liberal drift of the denomination." For several years the "moderates" believed that the "conservatives'" effort would soon run its course and the "denomination would move back to its position of the past." When this did not occur, the "moderates" began to organize on a limited basis.

This year the "moderates" went all out in an effort to regain control of the convention. The "conservatives" retained control, electing Jerry Vines, co-pastor of First Church, Jacksonville, Fla. Vines received 50.52 percent of the vote, while Richard Jackson, pastor of North Phoenix Church, Phoenix, Ariz., received 48.32 percent. This clearly shows that the Southern Baptist Convention has divided into two political parties. A way must be found to disengage both groups.

Fortunately, the rhetoric of the convention messengers was kept under control during most of the convention. This was due, in large measure, to the excellence with which President Adrian Rogers presided. Dr. Rogers made every effort to be kind, fair and accurate in his decisions. We also believe that most of the messengers wished to maintain restraint, for the wellbeing of the cause of Christ and the denomination.

By far the most important question is, "How do Southern Baptists bring the controversy to an end?" The negative effects of the controversy are self evident. Already baptisms are down. There are some who argue that the controversy has not had any bearing on the decline of baptisms. But anything which diverts the energy of pastors and churches will adversely effect our outreach. Controversy also makes our witness less credible to the lost and unchurched.



Mission offerings are also down. Many factors impact individual and church giving, but the controversy has played a significant role in reducing our giving. This is clearly substantiated by threats that have been made by individuals on both sides of the controversy. Mission gifts provide opportunity for the lost to hear the gospel at home and around the world.

If the controversy is to come to an end several things must transpire. First, all Southern Baptists must give President Vines opportunity to be president of all Southern Baptists. This means provide him with opportunity to maintain a depoliticized office. Above all, it should include daily prayer support for him.

Dr. Vines must also work to heal wounds. We concur with him that liberals

and neo-orthodox individuals should not be appointed. But if the controversy is to end, a wide range of Bible-believing qualified individuals must be appointed. Regarding liberalism in the Southern Baptist Convention, Dr. Vines said, "If you are talking about classic liberalism, that's not the real theological issue in our denomination. You're getting closer to the matter when you think in terms of neo-orthodoxy."

Classic liberalism denies the virgin birth, the miracles, blood atonement and the resurrection of Christ. Neo-orthodoxy is based on existential philosophy, which maintains that events are true not because they are historical but because they exist in the mind of the beholders. For example, the bodily resurrection of Christ was not a historical event but simply occurred in the minds of the followers of Christ. There are extremely few who hold to either of these positions in the Southern Baptist Convention. Balanced appointments must be made if the controversy is to end.

There were a number of noteworthy events which transpired during the 1988 convention. The people of San Antonio are to be commended for the excellence with which they hosted the convention. There was a great emphasis on the necessity of reaching the lost.

When Southern Baptists get back to the main objective of reaching the lost, baptizing those whom they have won to Christ and training church members, we believe that the controversy will come to an end. For the sake of the lost around the world, we must get back to our main business. When we have our priorities in proper balance, the Lord will bless us.

Arkansas Baptist NEWSMAGAZINE

VOLUME 87 NUMBER 23

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DON MOORE

You'll Be Glad To Know



The Southern Baptist Convention may be vulnerable but it is not fragile. You are reading this after the annual meeting in San Antonio. I am writing it one week before the convention. Am I playing "prophet?" No. I have no idea what will transpire in the meeting at San Antonio. My statement is not based on a predicted outcome. I am saying whatever the outcome, the convention will still stand.

This is not an arrogant boast borne out of denominational pride. It is an affirmation based on historic principles that have served to preserve us through depressions, wars, internal strife, social upheaval, imperfect leaders, poorly motivated movements, inadequate funding and less than harmonious fellowship. The convention is not so fragile that an action of any type in San Antonio will destroy it. This is not to say that the actions taken there are insignificant. It is to say that we are so structured that we should not panic about whatever the result may be in San Antonio.

By structure, I mean convention affairs are kept in the hands of the people. From the local church to the association to the state and national conventions, each entity is controlled by representatives from the churches. Neither elected nor employed leadership can long lead indifferent to the will of the people. This means that excesses in one direction or another will be checked in time. The tide is constantly going in and out. A volcano may erupt in the Pacific, but the tide keeps going in and out. The tide may be heightened by the volcano, but it will not be stopped.

The autonomy and freedom we enjoy, that makes us vulnerable, also secures for us the assurance that no one, no movement can long bind a people who know themselves to be free. Moral outrage stirs Baptists to check movements that threaten either autonomy or freedom.

Let me encourage you. Whoever wins or loses, the convention is not so fragile that it will collapse. Let's stick together and pray that our level of love, trust and commitment may bind our hearts to our Lord and his calling to us.

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

BOB PARKER

However one might label or classify him or herself during the current tendency to label folks in regard to their Christian faith, diligence should be exercised not to evidence "Polly Parrot" faith. That's the type of faith that is second-hand or passed down primarily by the influence of other human beings rather than from God.

Our Christian faith and action must be the result of strong convictions gained by a sincere personal relationship with Jesus Christ, not from personal admiration and manipulative power of charismatic, golden-tongued religious

Today's Issues

Polly Parrot Faith



and political leaders.

Really effective Christian faith must come from basic *agape* love for God and neighbor plus daily, prayerful study of the Word of God. This thorough consideration of the Bible absolutely must take place. We must consider that verbal application of its teaching is much more important than the emphasis descriptive adjectives often

ascribed to the Word of God.

The future judgment of God will be determined by the way we responded to human spiritual and physical needs, not to theological or political leadership. The Polly Parrot is a remarkably interesting bird, but not to be compared to the high soaring eagle who flies above the pressures and influences of others as do chickens and turkeys. Let us rise up like the eagle, not the low, seldom flying Polly Parrot in our desire to accomplish the holy will and purposes of God!

Robert A. Parker is director of the Christian Life Council.

Summer Sing

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Ouachita Baptist University
for folks 55 and up

Bring a group or come by yourself and enjoy a time of musical activity (choir, music classes, ukelele band, and handbells), worship, storytelling, fellowship, recreation, crafts, tours, and much more!

— *Two musicals will be performed* —

A complete program is available for the spouse who is non-musical.

Program personalities:

Martha Clancy, Shreveport, La. Carbon Sims, OBU
 Les Frazer, Lamar.

Contact your Music Director for details, or call the Church Music Department, 376-4791.

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Arkansans Graduate

Thirty-six Arkansans graduated from Southern Baptist seminaries and bible schools this spring.

Two students were awarded degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., on May 20. James Richard Veazy of Stuttgart received the master of arts degree and Michael Stuart Lee of Warren received the master of divinity degree.

Two Arkansans received degrees at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisiana on May 21. Lester Mitchell Jeffers from Fountain Hill was awarded the associate of divinity degree and Gary V. Gregory from Paragould received the master of divinity degree.

Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., graduated one Arkansan on May 7. David Ellis Collier of Fort Smith received the master of divinity degree.

Ten persons with Arkansas ties were among the 124 individuals who received degrees during May 28 commencement ceremonies at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo.

Receiving the master of divinity degree were: Robert Keith Byrd, Norfolk; James L. Duffel Jr., Ft. Smith; Rick Seaton, Springdale; and Larry Thacker, Hot Springs.

Among the first graduates in the seminary's master of divinity-correlated program were Harold Thomas, Little Rock; and Richard Hartley Wootton, Hot Springs.

Doctor of ministry degrees were awarded to Bobby Joe Harper, Sheridan; H. Herbert Sennett, Black Oak; Martin

Thielen, Hot Springs; and James L. Thomason, Little Rock.

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, graduated 19 Arkansans during its May 13 commencement of 520 persons.

J.R. DeBusk of Heber Springs received the doctor of ministry degree. He is pastor of First Church, Augusta.

Receiving master of divinity degrees were: Keith Douglas Brickell, Batesville; Timmy M. Cypert, Marshall; Allan R. Greer, minister of education, Baring Cross Church, North Little Rock; John Linden Harris, Berryville; Randy Paul Johnson, Jonesboro; Larry D. Killian, Forrest City; Rex Pilcher, Little Rock; Robert C. Scott, Fort Smith; Ken F. Shaddox, Little Rock; James E. Sinclair, Traskwood; and Roy Wayne Thompson, North Little Rock.

Receiving the master of arts in religious education were: Mike Alan Hart, Little Rock; Wilma H. Heflin, Monticello; Jonathan Charles Reichman, Diamond City; and Waina Kaye Sickels, Little Rock.

Hal Elgin Henson III of Fort Smith received the master of divinity and religious education degree.

Elizabeth A. Wood of Jonesboro was awarded the master of arts in church social services.

Ronnie O. Malone of Leachville received the associate of divinity degree.

Two students from Arkansas received degrees from the Boyce Bible School, an extension of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Receiving a diploma in Christian ministry were Richard Lynn Morrow and Charles K. Martin, both of Benton.

May Cooperative Program Report

Received \$956,625.97
Budget \$1,072,525.00
Under \$115,899.03

Year-to-date
Under \$46,695.14

Same time last year
Over \$99,166.05

For the first time this year, our year-to-date Cooperative Program gifts have dropped below the budget requirements. Through May, Arkansas churches have given 99.13 percent of budget needs through the Cooperative Program.

May receipts totaled only 89.19 percent of budget. As we face the summer months, every church is encouraged to be faithful in Cooperative Program giving. Many programs and ministries are affected by these gifts.

Why not consider having a "Missions Advance 87-89" speaker during the summer months? This will bless your church as well as challenge it in the area of missions support. Call 376-4791 for more information.—**Jimmie Sheffield, associate executive director**

Pastor's Right Hand

Not enough time to get everything done? The newly recommended Missions Development Council may be able to help!

Priority officers to be elected:
— Church Missions Development Director
— Missions Survey Director

New materials available from the Baptist Book Store:

- Missions Development Manual
(one for each Council member)
- Missions Development Council Workshop
(one for each church)
- Church/Community Needs Survey
(booklet free from state office)

For more information about Church Missions Committees or Church Missions Development Program, contact your director of missions or Floyd Tidsworth Jr., Church Extension, P.O. Box 552, Little Rock, AR 72203; 3776-4791.

Surprise!—Although a lot of planning went into Rogers First Church's celebration of Ben Rowell's 40th anniversary ministry, one thing he had not planned on was being asked to sing a solo. But when the time came for the congregation to sing Rowell's favorite hymn, "Victory in Jesus," Music Minister Tim Logan surprised his pastor by asking him to sing the first verse solo. Rowell complied, much to the delight of the congregation. The June 5 anniversary celebration included a Saturday night reception, special testimonies during the morning worship service, dinner on the grounds, and an afternoon tribute. Rowell preached that morning from Amos 4:12, the same text he used for his first sermon 40 years earlier.



SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

(BP) photo / Stanley Leary

One Step Closer

Warned of the dangers of continued strife, messengers decide to continue the 'conservative' resurgence.

Tuesday, June 14

SAN ANTONIO, Texas—Despite repeated warnings from their preachers and Bible teachers, messengers to the 131st annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention decided by a narrow margin to continue the efforts of "conservatives" to re-direct the nation's largest non-Catholic denomination.

Although their numbers fell short of predictions, more than 31,000 messengers from all 50 states and the District of Columbia gathered in the Henry B. Gonzales Convention Center in San Antonio, Texas, June 14 to cast their ballots for presidential candidates who were running on platforms directly related to the denomination's 10-year-old controversy over allegations of liberalism in SBC institutions and agencies.

From the outset, they were warned that continued division and strife would do irreparable harm to their witness and might result in God's abandoning the denomination as a tool for winning the world to Jesus Christ.

Messengers had hardly settled into their seats when Roy Fish, professor of evangelism at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, delivered the first warning in his interpretation of the convention theme, "Pour Out Revival."

Fish said he believed a deep movement of God's Spirit was, in fact, the "heart hunger" of those gathered for the annual meeting, but he told messengers their failure to meet the conditions for that revival could result in God's writing 'Ichabod' over all the convention's work.

Southern Baptists must first be willing to "come clean" before God, confessing the sins of anger, resentment, and bitterness which have characterized the strife, Fish said. "If we cannot live in harmony here on earth with those with whom we will one day share heaven, it is nothing short of arrogant presumption and biblical ignorance for us to claim that we are right with God," he declared.

People who tend to fight over what the Bible means are less inclined than any other people to do what it says, he observed. Reminding messengers that "Calvary came before Pentecost," Fish said Southern Baptists' second great need was a sacrificial commitment to the lordship of Jesus Christ.

Finally, Fish said, the cleansed and committed must become channels for God's love to be poured out to others.

In this regard, Fish said he was "extremely frightened" for Southern Baptists, since the success of Christian ministry depends on unity in the body. "The acceptance or rejection of Jesus by a lost world is dependent largely on the degree to which the



Jerry Vines, co-pastor of First Church, Jacksonville, Fla., was elected SBC president at the 131st convention.

church models unity and harmony," Fish said. "Nothing negates the powerful witness of the church like division and a destroyed unity."

Fish told the messengers he believed God wanted to use their meeting in San Antonio to "commission Southern Baptists afresh," and he warned this opportunity "could be his last offer unless we straighten up our act."

"One side or the other may win a few battles, but all of us could end up losing the war," Fish asserted. "There are several business sessions scheduled for this convention, but if we do not do business with God while we are here, we may see 'Ichabod' written over virtually everything we accomplish."

After Fish's dramatic message, messengers turned their attention to recommendations from the SBC Executive Committee. They adopted a \$145.6 million budget for 1988-89 which included an average 4.25 percent increase for SBC entities. Two items received reductions: Planned Growth in Giving, the denomination's effort to encourage churches and individuals to adopt a regular schedule of percentage increases in Cooperative Program gifts, and the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, a Washington, D.C.-based agency which represents Southern Baptists and eight other Baptist groups in church-state matters.

Messengers defeated a motion to restore \$48,400 cut from the

BJC budget in February and give the agency the 4.25 percent average increase. The issue provided the first test vote of the annual meeting. It not only showed the relative strengths of the two sides embroiled in the controversy, but it also was the first opportunity to test a system of counting votes in six different locations to determine the outcome of votes by a show of hands.

After adopting a third recommendation, an expansion of Bylaw 11 which outlined the qualifications and selection process for SBC parliamentarians, messengers received 27 resolutions and heard 24 motions made from the floor. Then SBC President Adrian Rogers turned the gavel over to First Vice-President Jack Stanton of Bolivar, Mo., and prepared to deliver his final President's Address.

Preaching on "Saltless Saints in a Sick Society," Rogers told messengers Jesus warned of three types of leaven.

The leaven of the Pharisees, Rogers noted, was legalism, an external form of religion which omits the "weightier matters" of love, faith, and justice. "I am an inerrantist, but not a legalist," Rogers declared. "I am as much afraid of legalism as I am of liberalism. They are heads and tails of the same coin."

Liberalism is the leaven of Sadducees, who were known for their disbelief in the resurrection and angels, Rogers continued. He denounced "modern-day Sadducees" who "call themselves theologians... but do not know either the 'theos' nor the 'logos.'" He asked, "Why should they call themselves theologians? They're like grape nuts, neither grapes nor nuts."

Rogers said Baptists have a responsibility to insure that their theology teachers "represent our cherished, biblical, and Baptist beliefs" and asserted that, while he would not try to force his beliefs on another, being forced to underwrite the opinions of a seminary professor with whom he disagrees amounts to having the professor's opinions forced upon him.

"Unity in diversity is the Baptist way, and I like it," Rogers declared. "But denominational cooperation through doctrinal compromise is neither Baptist nor biblical."

Rogers told messengers, however, that Southern Baptists have something worse than either legalism or liberalism in their midst, worldliness, which he called "the leaven of Herod."

"Saltless saints" are the problem in the world today, Rogers asserted. Pointing to the fact that it takes 40 Baptists to win and baptize one convert and that 7,244 Baptist churches reported

no baptisms last year, Rogers warned that Bold Mission Thrust, the Southern Baptist goal of taking the gospel to every person by the year 2000, has become "a tired slogan."

"What is God going to say to us if we don't forget this bickering and silliness and come together in love for our Lord, love for his Word, and love for the lost, and get on with Bold Mission Thrust?"

David C. Brown, pastor of Desert Hills Baptist Church, Las Vegas, Nev., closed the morning session with prayer.

Tuesday Afternoon

As in recent years, most messengers stayed in their seats during the lunch period, mindful of the crowds which would jam the convention center for the afternoon presidential election. After a long break, the tedium of waiting was broken with an hour of music presented by Southern Baptist evangelistic singers.

When the messengers turned again to business at 2:15 p.m., the main arena and five remote halls were standing room only. Messengers lined the walkways and sat in the stairwells in anticipation of the 2:30 election which had brought them to San Antonio.

After receiving another flurry of motions and resolutions, SBC President Adrian Rogers declared the floor open for nominations, and the following 15 minutes put an end to speculation about whether Southern Baptists would pursue the struggle for control of the denomination or opt for a "peace" candidate independent of the two political parties.

As expected, the first two names brought to the platform were the announced candidates for the office. Jerry Vines, co-pastor of Jacksonville (Fla.) First Baptist Church, was nominated by Ralph Smith of Austin, Texas. Richard Jackson, pastor of North Phoenix (Ariz.) Baptist Church, was

nominated by George Harris of San Antonio. Vines was the candidate of the "conservative" organization; Jackson was backed by a coalition between the "moderate" organizations and others who believed the time had come to disengage from the conflict in the denomination.

In a break with previous years, two other persons were placed in nomination. James Craig, a layman from Tulsa, Okla., was nominated by Robert Maples of Roswell, N.M. Anniece Shorosh, a full-time evangelist from Mobile, Ala., nominated himself.

Messengers cast their ballots for the presidency and moved on to the report of the Committee on Nominations.

Chairman Joseph Knott III presented the committee's report to messengers for their consideration, and immediately a request to present a minority report came from committee member Raymond Boswell.

Boswell, of Shreveport, La., had indicated earlier he intended to present such a report, based on allegations that the selection process had been influenced by political considerations. President Adrian Rogers ruled that messengers would have to vote to hear the 17-name slate of substitute nominations. When a show of ballots proved inconclusive, Rogers called for ballots to be cast, and the convention moved back to the main report while waiting for results of the balloting to come from the five remote locations.

A motion to amend the report was offered, and a vote was taken by show of ballots. Again, because of the delay involved in getting results from the remote halls, the convention moved on to the next item of business while waiting for results.

At 3:35 p.m., messengers took up the remainder of the Executive Committee report. Twelve recommendations were adopted, including proposals which:

— set a standard of 25 percent of registration to constitute a quorum at annual meetings

— amended the charters of five SBC entities

— revised program statements for three entities

— expressed appreciation for Woman's Missionary Union, SBC, on the occasion of its 100th anniversary

— resolved appreciation for Foy D. Valentine for his 28 years of service with the SBC Christian Life Commission.

The revision of the Christian Life Commission's program statement deleted language which directed the agency to work "through the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs office in every way possible in matters of government contact



(BP) photo / Tim Fields

A messenger voices his opinion.

in Washington. Even when it feels it should make direct contact, it should do it with the knowledge and counsel of the staff of the Baptist Joint Committee."

At 4:30 p.m., Registration Secretary Lee Porter brought messengers the results of their presidential balloting. He reported that 32,436 had been registered when the vote was taken and that 31,291 ballots were cast. Porter announced that Anniece Shorosh had received 82 votes (.21 percent), James Craig 276 votes (.88 percent), Richard Jackson 15,112 votes (48.32 percent), and Jerry Vines 15,804 (50.53 percent).

News of Vines' victory brought his supporters to their feet. Cheering, shouting, and clapping wildly, they hugged each other and raised their fists in triumph, while Jackson's supporters sat in silence or politely applauded.

After the celebration died down, President Rogers declared Vines' election official, and the congregation rose to sing "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name" before moving on to other business.

Committee on Order of Business chairman Tom Elliff read into the record an additional batch of resolutions presented by messengers and brought to the floor for action an earlier motion asking the convention to pray for rain across the drought-stricken South. Messengers approved the request.

Two efforts to amend the report of the Committee on Committees were made when it was brought to the floor. Both attempts failed on show of ballots, and the report was adopted as presented.

Messengers were asked whether they wanted to consider a motion made earlier in the day to stop the impending sale of the ACTS network by the SBC Radio and Television Commission. Since the motion dealt with the internal affairs of an agency, bylaws required it to be referred to that agency's trustees for study. The request failed to gain the two-thirds majority necessary for messengers to consider the matter.

Registration Secretary Porter informed messengers they had balloted against hearing the minority report offered earlier by the member of the Committee on Nominations by a vote of 14,978 (53.2 percent) to 13,175 (46.8). He also said the motion to amend had failed. President Rogers called for a vote on the committee's report, and it was adopted as presented.

The floor was then opened for nominations for the office of first vice-president. Two names were brought: Darrell Robinson of Mobile, Ala., and James Pleitz of Dallas, Texas.

After ballots were cast, Rogers then recognized Dan Moon of Georgia, who in turn presented Kwang Suk Yoo, president

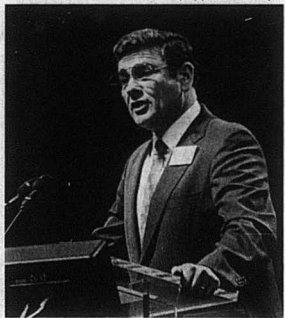
of the Korean Baptist Convention, who thanked Southern Baptists for their mission work among Korean people and invited them to attend the upcoming Baptist World Alliance Congress in Seoul, Korea.

Neal J. Myers, director of missions for Sierra Association in Reno, Nev., closed the session in prayer.

Tuesday Evening

In news conferences immediately prior to the evening session, Jerry Vines and Richard Jackson expressed their views regarding the controversy in the Southern Baptist Convention.

(BP) photo / Van Payne



Charles Fuller delivered the Peace Committee's final report to messengers.

According to a Baptist Press report, Vines said neo-orthodoxy, not classical liberalism, is the problem in the denomination. The "conservative" organization which elected Vines has justified its efforts over the past 10 years by reference to a "liberal drift" in SBC institutions and agencies.

Asked to name five liberals in the SBC, Vines responded: "If you're talking about classical liberalism, that is not the real theological issue in our denomination. You're getting closer to the matter when you think of neo-orthodoxy."

Vines defined "neo-orthodox" persons as those who "use our vocabulary but not our dictionary." He did not name any individuals employed by SBC entities who hold neo-orthodox views.

Vines also affirmed his intention to appoint persons sympathetic with the "conservative" movement to SBC boards. "I will seek to appoint the very best Southern Baptists I can possibly find," he said. "I am committed to appointing those who fall within the Baptist Faith and Message Statement concerning Scripture. I just could not

look Southern Baptists in the face and appoint people who believe there are errors in the Bible."

He would not say whether he would be willing to appoint his opponent, Richard Jackson, whose theological views are as conservative as his own. "I would be glad to take a look at that when the time comes," Vines said.

According to a Baptist Press report on a separate press conference, Jackson insisted that leadership style, not theology, is the issue dividing Southern Baptists, and he encouraged Southern Baptists to offer support and prayer for Vines.

"Pray that Dr. Vines will be so fair in representing Southern Baptists that we would rejoice to re-elect him by acclamation," Jackson said. "Let Jerry Vines be president of the convention. Let him give leadership."

Jackson also offered two pieces of advice to those who supported him: Don't panic and don't give up on the Southern Baptist Convention. "Hang tough," he said. "God was sovereign this morning when I got up. He'll be sovereign when I go to bed tonight."

The third session of the annual meeting convened at 6:30 p.m. with music provided by the choir and orchestra of Sagemouth Baptist Church, Houston, Texas. An opening prayer was brought by Lloyd Nielson, pastor of Nellis Baptist Church in Las Vegas, Nev.

At 7:10, Registration Secretary Lee Porter announced that Darrell Robinson of Alabama had won the election for first vice-president. With 32,491 registered, 21,302 votes were cast. Robinson polled 12,633 votes (59.46 percent), compared to James Pleitz's 8,612 (40.54 percent). Four names were then brought to the floor for the office of second vice-president—Rudy Hernandez, Robert Witby, Dorothy Sample, and Emile A. Rousseau Jr.—and ballots were cast.

The second interpretation of the week's theme was delivered by Ruffin W. Snow, pastor of Eastwood Baptist Church in Tulsa, Okla. Preaching on the topic, "Pour Out Revival in My Home," Snow identified four steps to revive the spirit of a family: consistent family worship; renewed emphasis on friendship, adventure, and romance; making family recreation a priority; and promoting a missionary spirit.

The balance of the evening focused on reports from SBC entities.

Harold Bennett, president of the SBC Executive Committee, presented a report on Bold Mission Thrust. The report noted that gifts to home missions through the Annie Armstrong Offering have almost tripled since 1977 and that foreign missions gifts have more than doubled.

Woman's Missionary Union presented its annual report, which emphasized activities surrounding the WMU Centennial Celebration in Richmond, Va., May 13-14. It also included a missionary testimony by Debra Owens Hughes, a new missionary to Brazil, and an overview of the goals WMU has set for its second century.

Charles Fuller, chairman of the SBC Peace Committee brought a four-part report to the floor.

He first commended the denomination's agencies and institutions for "making good progress in their serious efforts" to implement the report brought by the committee to last year's annual meeting in St. Louis.

Fuller then offered the committee's observation that the "conscious disregard" of that report's political recommendations has "contributed to the escalation of the conflict" in the SBC. "Organized political activity is not going to cease, nor substantially decrease, until individual Southern Baptists, on all sides, turn a deaf ear to those who would have us engage in divisive, destructive politics," he said.

Third, Fuller urged Southern Baptists to resist the temptation to isolate themselves among those who agree with them. Such isolation only increases alienation, Fuller

observed, and he encouraged continued communication among those who disagree.

Finally, Fuller brought a recommendation from the committee. In the belief that the "momentum for correction" is under way in the denomination and that the time for healing has arrived, Fuller asked messengers to discharge the committee from its obligation.

Messengers approved Fuller's request and gave him a standing ovation to show their gratitude for the committee's work during the past three years. President Adrian Rogers told Fuller, "My vocabulary is inadequate to express the love and respect we have for you." He paid tribute to Fuller's "sterling character, impeccable fairness, and genteel spirit."

Before the final report of the evening, Registration Secretary Lee Porter took the podium to report on the balloting for second vice-president. With 32,557 registered, 10,792 ballots were cast, Porter said. Rudy Hernandez was elected with 5,399 votes (50.18 percent). Dorothy Sample polled 3,636 votes (33.79 percent), Robert Witty 1,402 votes (13.03 percent), and Emile A. Rousseau Jr. 332 votes (2.99 percent).

Cooperative Program dollars provided a healing touch to 600 needy, retired ministers and widows in 1987. The Annuity Board distributed \$653,281 to people who needed help paying for utilities, doctor bills, prescription medicine, rent and other expenses. An additional \$193,655, provided by direct donations, was distributed through the Annuity Board's **Adopt An Annuitant** program, which dispenses monthly supplements to retired ministers and widows whose incomes are inadequate. Contact John Bloskas, director of the Endowment Department, for information about how you and your church can touch lives with love.



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With that announcement, messengers began streaming toward the exits, and the crowd dwindled steadily until time for the report of the SBC Home Mission Board.

The Home Mission Board report featured testimonies from four home missionaries: Lyman Alexander, who starts black churches in Los Angeles; Dolores Thomas, a church planter in New England; Alejandra Villasenor, a medical missionary who works in Texas' Rio Grande River Valley; and James Meek, a church starter in Steamboat, Nev.

HMB President Larry L. Lewis closed the Tuesday evening session with a dramatic challenge to reach the United States for Christ.

Southern Baptists are responsible to be light in a nation that is both morally and spiritually dark, Lewis said. He pointed to

Arkansans Speak

SAN ANTONIO, Texas—Two men who are relative newcomers to Arkansas preached back-to-back messages at the SBC Pastors' Conference Monday morning, June 13.

Ron Herrod, pastor of Fort Smith First Church, opened the morning session with a sermon about how Southern Baptists could clarify the denomination's intent to a confused world.

"Beloved, we had better get back to preaching some old-fashioned, bedrock doctrine to our people," Herrod said. "We need to get back to prayer and soul-winning."

"It takes Southern Baptists longer and longer to win fewer and fewer to faith in Christ, because Southern Baptists have left our first love."

"I believe God is saying to Southern Baptists in these challenging days, 'Remember what made you great, repent of your sins, and get back to the basics in your lives and in your churches.'"

Ronnie W. Floyd, pastor of Springdale First Church, challenged the pastors to be "God's man for the hour."

"God's purpose has always been redemption," he said. "I challenge you today to return to the purpose of God."

"The greatest question of this conference is will you be God's man for the hour in your church and in your city," he challenged. "If you will stand, we will build the greatest churches since Pentecost."

Touching Lives With Love

On Annuity Board Sunday, June 26, 1988, Southern Baptist churches will recognize the relief ministries of the Annuity Board.



the nation's billion dollar pornography industry and the estimated 4 million young people who will be destroyed by drugs and declared, "There has never been a time when we so desperately needed revival as today."

If they are willing to be used by God, Southern Baptists can light the fire of revival that will bring the nation to Christ, Lewis asserted. He challenged them to commit themselves to starting new congregations as the method of winning the nation.

Lewis closed the message with an altar call, and scores of messengers moved down the aisles to the front of the arena, where they knelt in prayer. Others who could not make their way to the front knelt where they were.

Jon L. Sapp, missionary to Zambia, pronounced the benediction.

Wednesday, June 15

Messengers were slow to fill the meeting halls after Tuesday's marathon schedule.

The choir and orchestra of Travis Avenue Baptist Church, Fort Worth, Texas, blessed the messengers who were energetic enough to arrive on time at 8:30 a.m. Then Monte Nichols of Peachtree Baptist Church, Atlanta, Ga., led in several lively choruses, and Robert G. Holmes, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Henderson, Nev., opened with prayer.

Messengers routinely re-elected Martin Bradley recording secretary of the convention, and Lee Porter also was unanimously re-elected registration secretary.

O. Damon Shook, pastor of Champion Forest Baptist Church, Houston, Texas, delivered the third interpretation of the convention theme.

Addressing the subject, "Pour Our Revival on the Household of Faith," Shook told messengers that the words of Jesus to the seven churches of Asia Minor, recorded in the book of Revelation, offer insight into the matter of reviving churches.

Those churches were criticized as loveless, lax in doctrine, lifeless, and lukewarm, Shook observed. The Lord called upon them to remember how they had once walked with him and to repent of their sins. And failure to repent meant their ruin.

"We can call ourselves a church, but it is worthless to be called a church unless there is the life and power and the dynamic of God's Spirit in our midst," Shook declared. "We need to ask God to cleanse us and to pour out upon us a fresh renewing of his Holy Spirit." And in words reminiscent of Roy Fish's opening message, he added, "Our Lord will write 'Ichabod' across our churches if we do not repent."

He observed that the "heart-wrenching" words of Jesus, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock..." were addressed not to lost souls, but to the churches of Asia Minor. "We need to open the doors of our hearts and let Jesus bring revival to our churches," he concluded.

As he returned to the podium, President Adrian Rogers voiced his agreement. "The bottom line is not elections, but revival," he told the messengers. "We need to pray for authentic revival. God can be trusted, and we need to get our hearts and lives in order with him."

Messengers then received a series of six reports before turning their attention to the first report of the Resolutions Committee.

(BP) photo / Stanley Leary



Messengers enjoy a meal at the Rivercenter mall in San Antonio.

The Sunday School Board report highlighted the fact that the plan of salvation will begin appearing at least quarterly in all Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and devotional material by fall. It also noted that 165,000 persons in 10,000 churches have been trained in discipleship through the MasterLife process. MasterLife material has been translated in 52 languages and is being used in 110 countries. Ninety percent of the Baptist churches in Hungary are discipling their members with the material.

Following the Sunday School Board report, President Rogers showed messengers a plaque which the board had prepared to present former missionary Bertha Smith in honor of her approaching 100th birthday. A missionary in China and Taiwan for 42 years, "Miss Bertha" had

died June 12, prior to the opening of the annual meeting.

Rogers read the plaque to messengers and then raised it high overhead, as if to present it to her where she was, in the presence of God. Rogers then called messengers to a time of prayer, thanking God for Bertha Smith's life and ministry. He closed with the request that God would send revival to Southern Baptists, "that our victories would not be of this side or that side," but victories for the gospel of Jesus Christ.

After prayer, messengers returned to the business of receiving reports.

Arthur Walker, secretary-treasurer of the SBC Commission on the American Baptist Theological Seminary, noted that great cooperation had allowed significant strides to be made in theological education for American blacks, despite the social turmoil of recent years. He noted that Southern Baptists provided \$157,300 in scholarships and \$110,000 in operating expenses for the seminary during 1987, but emphasized that needs still are great.

Lynn May Jr., executive director of the SBC Historical Commission, showed messengers a series of pamphlets released during 1987 which deals with 10 areas of Baptist heritage and the people who shaped them. He said six new tapes will look at Baptists in America from 1640 to the present day.

Jimmy Allen, president of the SBC Radio and Television Commission, informed messengers that the agency is celebrating 50 years of work. He presented Joel Gregory of Fort Worth, Texas, and Ed Young of Houston, Texas, as the new preachers for the "Baptist Hour," a radio program produced by the commission and distributed nationwide. Allen also explained the factors which led to the commission's recent decision to sell its ACTS network to a private concern able to provide the capital needed to make the network successful.

A dramatic monologue featuring the apostle Paul introduced a presentation from Southern Baptists for Las Vegas and Nevada, 1989. The actor portraying the first-century missionary reflected on the corruption and worldliness of Corinth and its need for the gospel. As he left the stage, he commented, "No city can be left for Satan."

HMB President Larry Lewis then challenged messengers to see their 1989 annual meeting in Las Vegas as an opportunity to reach the city with the gospel of Jesus Christ. He outlined plans for a massive evangelistic emphasis, called "Here's Hope. Jesus Cares For You," which will accompany the annual meeting. Plans for the event include several days of "saturation prayer" for through the Las

Vegas telephone listings, 15,000 door-to-door visitors, and 25 new church starts. "Let's go to our Corinth in the power of God's Spirit to have an impact for Christ that will last for eternity," he urged.

Lewis also delivered the report of the SBC Canada Planning Group. The Southern Baptist Convention of Canada now consists of 96 churches, and 75 more are planned by 1994. The convention opened its first seminary last year, and now has in process its first three candidates for foreign missions.

The arena had gradually filled all morning long, and when the time to discuss the report of the Resolutions Committee arrived, it was nearly full, with messengers once again lining the walls and filling the stairwells.

Five of the 22 resolutions in the report were discussed and adopted during the session. Three which passed rather easily dealt with the importance of prayer, condemned the New Age movement, and noted the problem of conflict and power struggles in local churches.

A resolution on the necessity of salvation was discussed at length and amended slightly before being adopted. It affirmed the belief that conversion is essential to salvation and that those without a personal commitment to Christ "will be consigned to a literal hell, a place of everlasting separation God." It urged Baptists to give renewed efforts to reaching all people with the gospel.

A fifth resolution, entitled "On the Priesthood of the Believer," drew considerable debate and passed over strong

opposition.

The resolution stated the doctrine "has been used to justify wrongly the attitude that a Christian may believe whatever he so chooses and still be considered a Southern Baptist" and added it "can be used to justify the undermining of pastoral authority in the local church." It called on Southern Baptists to affirm that, while it is a biblical doctrine, it still does not justify denying the biblical witness to the supernatural or undermining the "biblical understanding of the role, responsibility, and authority of the pastor."

Later that resolution was the focus of a public protest. Randall Lolley, pastor of First Baptist Church, Raleigh, N.C., and about 200 other messengers demonstrated their disapproval of the resolution by turning in their ballots and marching to San Antonio's Alamo, where Texas liberty was born in a massacre more than 150 years ago. There the crowd tore up copies of the resolution, which Lolley called "the most non-Baptist document I have ever seen."

It was to such anger that Joel Gregory addressed himself when he delivered the Convention Sermon at the close of the morning session.

Gregory, pastor of Travis Avenue Baptist

Church in Fort Worth, Texas, told the messengers that the years of bitter controversy had brought the denomination to a "flashpoint." "We cannot survive many more months of personal animosity in our midst," he declared.

He likened the denomination to an abandoned Irish castle which was being gradually dismantled by local peasants in

(BP) photo / Mike Bonner



Missionary Bertha Smith

need of building materials. When the owner heard of the plight of his property, he ordered a wall built around it. Years later, he went to visit the castle, only to discover it was not behind the wall. The castle's stones had been used to build the wall.

Southern Baptists must not tear down their castle in an effort to build a wall of orthodoxy around it, Gregory warned. And he suggested that both castle and wall might be saved if those embroiled in the strife changed their conversation and attitudes and began to imitate God's divine kindness.

And forgiveness also must occur, if Christians are to receive God's forgiveness, Gregory added. He told messengers, "The Bible does not say, 'Forgive one another unless you're involved in a world-class, epic theological battle—then you're excused.'"

He noted that individuals on both sides of the controversy had bragged to him about their long memories. "When you stand before God on the final judgment, the last thing you are going to want to hear him say is, 'I have a long memory,'" he said. "You'd better start suffering from some holy amnesia before you stand in his presence."

Wednesday Evening

The annual report of the SBC Foreign Mission Board highlighted the Wednesday evening session.

Messengers returned from an afternoon filled with seminary luncheons and sightseeing to hear the Cathedral Quartet of Nashville, Tenn. Then after congregational singing led by music evangelist John McKay of Keller, Texas, the fifth session of the annual meeting was opened with prayer by Jim McLeRoy, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Las Vegas, Nev.

Bobby Welch, pastor of First Baptist Church, Daytona Beach, Fla., delivered the last of the convention's four theme interpretations.

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Welch told messengers that if revival will be poured out on America, Christian leaders and believers must first reject the "prosperity gospel" for servanthood. He said the "prosperity gospel" is a false one because it is meaningless outside the affluent western world and because it cannot be found in the life of Jesus.

Welch also said revival awaits believers realizing they are called to be saints, "set apart" from the immorality of the world. Christian leadership is suffering today because it has failed to "come out of the sinful ways of the world," Welch said.

Finally, Welch concluded that Christian leaders and believers must remember that they are called out as lambs among wolves. "The greatest revival ever to burst open the flood gates of heaven and be poured out on man began when the obedient Lamb of God gave his life among wolves that the lost might be saved," Welch said. "Revival now waits to be poured out upon lambs who are willing to be obedient, even to giving their lives among wolves."

Following Welch's sermon, messengers took up the matter of electing the convention preacher and musician for the 1989 annual meeting. They approved the nomination of Morris Chapman of Wichita Falls, Texas, to preach the Convention Sermon. David Miller, director of missions for Little Red River Association, Heber Springs, Ark., was elected Chapman's alternate. John McKay was re-elected as convention music director.

Messengers also heard a report from Cecil Ray, national director of Planned Growth in Giving. Ray told the assembly that more than 4,000 churches have participated in the program and indicated success. He challenged messengers to think seriously about their stewardship commitment and "pray that Bold Mission Thrust will not come to an untimely end simply because we were unwilling to pay the price."

By 8:30 p.m., when the report of the Foreign Mission Board finally rolled around, the arena was packed to the rafters.

The highlight of the report was a first-time event for an annual meeting; the appointment of 35 candidates for the foreign

mission field.

All the trustees of the Foreign Mission Board were gathered on the platform. As the congregation sang several hymns, the mission candidates moved in procession into the arena and joined the trustees on the platform. Among the candidates were three Arkansas couples: Mark and Jane Baber of Arkadelphia, headed for South Africa; John and Katherine Dammon of Baytown, Texas, headed for Austria; and Gerald and Catherine Taylor of El Dorado, headed for



Resolution protested
Senegal.

All of the missionary candidates in turn took the podium to share testimonies of their conversion and call to missions. Mark and Jane Baber told messengers that Ouachita Baptist University, where he serves as director of the Baptist Student Union, had provided the "perfect environment" for them to hear God's call to missions. The Taylors called their appointment as missionary associates the fulfillment of a lifelong dream and recounted their 36

years of seeking God's will for foreign mission service.

FMB President R. Keith Parks addressed himself to the candidates, telling them God has sent them out as watchmen on a wall to warn people of the destruction that will come if they continue in sin. He cautioned them that many will try to distract and deceive them, but that they must be faithful to their calling.

Parks then told messengers God was saying to Southern Baptists, "If you will go with me, I will take you to the world, but if not, I will go without you."

He said that if the watchmen called Southern Baptists were placed along a 100-mile wall, 95 percent of them would be crowded into the first five miles, with 19 watchmen for every mile of wall. The remaining 5 percent of the watchmen would be stretched out one every 19 miles. "If God had complete control of 14 million Southern Baptist bodies, do you believe he would group them in that first five miles?" Parks asked. "Would he spend 96 cents of every dollar on 5 percent of the population?"

"Not on your life!" he thundered. "The God who is not willing that any should perish would scatter his people and money all over the earth."

"If we are willing to be what God wants us to be, we can penetrate every part of the earth. But it will cost us some martyrdom. We have everything we need to reach the world but the one thing God can't give us, the willingness to die to self."

"I also believe God won't wait much longer," he added. "And then not only will our opportunity be lost, but so will the lost multitudes of the world. I don't want their blood dripping from my hands. How about you?"

When the invitation was extended, individuals in the congregation began to leave their seats. Some made their way to the exits, where they handed commitment cards to foreign missionaries standing there. Others made their way to the front for counseling. At the conclusion, messengers joined hands across the vast arena and went before God in a prayer of dedication to missions.

Thursday, June 16

The convention's final day opened with music from the choir and orchestra of First Baptist Church, Euless, Texas, James Carey, pastor of Lackland Baptist Church, San Antonio, brought the invocation.

At 9:00 a.m., the first order of business was the 17 resolutions remaining in the Resolutions Committee's 22-item report. Eight resolutions were adopted readily, dealing with a range of issues from homosexuality and civil rights to the

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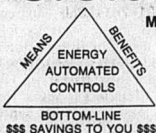
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persecution of Christians and encouragement for foreign missionaries. Nine resolutions were adopted as a group without debate. They addressed school based clinics, ministerial integrity, bivocational ministry, and the family, among other things.

Messengers heard reports from 10 entities: Midwestern, Southeastern, Golden Gate, and New Orleans seminaries; the Stewardship, Christian Life, Brotherhood, and Education commissions; the Southern Baptist Foundation; and the SBC Annuity Board.

Fred Lackey, chairman of the SBC Christian Life Commission, called the agency a "small but sturdy ship" and told messengers trustees are committed to a "careful, thorough search" for a successor to former executive director Larry Baker, who resigned to accept a pastorate in Pineville, La. In response to a question from the floor, Lackey said no dismissals of other CLC staff members have been discussed by trustees.

The morning session closed with prayer offered by Jack Schmid, pastor of Village Parkway Baptist Church, San Antonio.

Thursday afternoon

The final session of the 131st annual meeting arrived not a moment too soon for the tired messengers who still remained.

Flight delays prevented Newsong, a musical group from Atlanta, Ga., from arriving, and music director John McKay filled in for them with a brief spontaneous concert of his own.

Following prayer by Ruben Hernandez, a San Antonio-based evangelist, messengers received a report from the Committee on the Denominational Calendar and turned their attention to a report from the SBC Public Affairs Committee.

PAC Chairman Sam Currin of North Carolina told messengers he believed "it has never been more important" that Southern Baptists, as the nation's largest non-Catholic denomination, take a leadership role in the defense of religious liberty and religious freedom. Currin promised messengers the PAC will be careful never to misrepresent Southern Baptist views, will speak with integrity and credibility, will pledge to work cooperatively with SBC agencies and other "like-minded" groups, and will strive to exercise the highest standards of professionalism.

Al Shackelford, vice-president for public relations for the SBC executive committee, brought the annual report on the denominational press. He noted that the convention's news service, Baptist Press, released 1,213 articles to 480 media outlets in 1987. He called the state conventions' 36 state papers the "best voice" Southern Baptists have for communicating who they

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Hickey Elected—Glenn Hickey (front row, right), director of missions for Arkansas' Pulaski Association, was elected second vice-president of the Southern Baptist Convention Directors of Missions Conference during its 27th annual meeting June 12-13 in San Antonio, Texas. Others pictured are (front row, from left) F. Russell Bennett, Kentucky, first vice-president; Mack H. Smoke, Texas, president; (back row) Robert Wainright, North Carolina, treasurer; Paul L. Camp, Georgia, editor; A. Lawrence Clegg, Louisiana, secretary; and David F. Meacham, Nevada, host director for 1989.

are and urged messengers to support their respective papers as they struggle with postage increases.

Shackelford was questioned from the floor about whether a member of the Executive Committee from Houston, Texas, had threatened his job during an Executive Committee meeting Tuesday afternoon.

In that meeting, Houston Judge Paul Pressler made a four point motion asking that Baptist Press be directed: (1) to recognize a responsibility to be fair to all Southern Baptists, (2) to respond in writing to correspondence and questions asked by members of the Executive Committee concerning Baptist Press reporting, (3) to represent the SBC positively and fairly to the secular media, as well as to Baptist publications, and (4) to recognize the need for admitting error and apologizing when mistakes are made.

The Executive Board approved a motion to table Pressler's motion after committee member Frank Ingraham noted that "criticism to the point of looking for problems is a very difficult thing to respond to." In February, an Executive Committee subcommittee declined to investigate the news agency's reporting and a public relations workgroup affirmed the news service

and urged greater restraint in reporting controversial issues in an effort to promote peace in the denomination.

Shackelford responded to the question from the floor: "I would not consider what was said to me to be a threat to fire me."

Five reports remained on the afternoon schedule: Southern and Southwestern seminaries, the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, the Baptist World Alliance, and the American Bible Society.

Southern Seminary President Roy Honeycutt told messengers the school desires to fulfill the purpose for which it was founded, that it wants to be a place of excellence in preparing men and women to serve Southern Baptists, that it wants to be the kind of institution that will please God. He called upon Southern Baptists to continue extending trust and promised the seminary would be accountable to the convention.

Southwestern Seminary President Russell Dilday noted that the \$8.1 million Cooperative Program contribution to the seminary's operation is surpassed only by the monies invested in home and foreign missions. He echoed Honeycutt's statement in saying that Southwestern's 192 faculty members and 5,066 students believe that

investment is worthwhile because the seminary continues to remain faithful to the purposes for which it was founded.

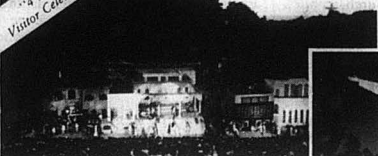
James Dunn, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, said Southern Baptists should be proud of their important role in the BJC's work. He noted that Southern Baptist trustees hold the three top positions on the BJC board and that all staff members of the BJC are Southern Baptists. Dunn also noted substantial progress in the previous year in restoring religious references to school textbooks, in human rights concerns, and in questions regarding the tax-exempt status of churches.

In response to a question from the floor, Dunn noted that the \$48,400 cut from the Southern Baptist contribution to the BJC set the agency back to its 1983 level of funding. "I know none of you would like to have to live on your 1983 budget," he quipped and added, "This means we will need to receive more than pledges, prayers, and warm fuzzies from our supporters."

The 131st annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention adjourned early with prayer offered by Ronnie Floyd, pastor of First Baptist Church, Springdale, Ark.

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LESSONS FOR LIVING

Convention Uniform

God Is The Lord

by Randel Everett, First Church, Benton

Basic passage: Exodus 5:1-11:5

Focal passage: Exodus 5:1-7; 11:1-5

Central truth: God's ultimate success is guaranteed by his power.

God is the Lord. He does not need to be reminded by Moses about the cries of the sons of Israel, or about the bondage of the cruel Egyptians, nor about the covenant he made with Abraham.

He is El Shaddai. He is Yahweh. His name is, "I AM WHO I AM." He made the covenant. He remembers it. He will bring it to pass. He does not need the cooperation of Pharaoh, or even the eloquence of Moses. He has chosen the nation of Israel and he will take them to the land of promise.

But the Pharaoh was overwhelmed by his own importance. "Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, and besides, I will not let Israel go." But within the next six months he would learn much about the Lord and he would let the children of Israel go. The Pharaoh, his magicians, and even the plethora of Egyptian gods would be no match for Yahweh.

Moses was overcome with his own inadequacies. "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh?" "What if they will not believe me, or listen to me?" "Please Lord, I have never been eloquent." "O Lord, why didst Thou ever send me? Ever since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Thy name, he has done harm to this people, and Thou hast not delivered Thy people at all."

But the Lord would tell Moses, "I am the Lord. I will deliver them out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I will redeem them with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. I will be their God."

D.L. Moody was quoted as saying, "Moses spent 40 years on Pharaoh's court thinking he was somebody, 40 years in the desert learning he was a nobody, and 40 years showing what God can do with a nobody who found out he was a nobody."

The sons of Israel were overpowered by their own infirmities. Their trouble was so severe that they could not hear or believe the unchanging promises of God.

Yet in spite of the arrogance of Pharaoh, the reservations of Moses, and the disbelief of the Hebrews, God overcame and accomplished what he wished.

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Life and Work

The Indispensable Link

by Ross Woodbury, Lakeshore Drive Church, Little Rock

Basic passage: Romans 15:15-16, 24-27, 30, 32

Focal passage: Romans 15:24

Central truth: The Roman church's assistance of Paul in hospitality, finances, and prayer would be an indispensable link in his progress.

Rome was the only church which Paul had not previously visited before writing. As in 1:10-11, Paul states again in 15:23-24 his desire and intent to visit them as soon as possible. He genuinely wants to encourage and bless them, but he honestly hopes for their support of his ministry in hospitality, finances, and prayer. Clearly, their support would be an indispensable link in his goal of reaching Spain with the gospel. The apostle reveals several guiding principles of ministry support:

First, the stakes in Christian ministry are high, making support all the more crucial. In verse 16 Paul says that what is at stake is nothing less than the offering of the Gentiles as an offering acceptable to God.

Second, those personally receiving support for ministry should personally contribute support to ministry. In verse 25 Paul explains that he can't come to Rome at that time because he is personally involved in supporting the ministries of others—the impoverished Jerusalem church. In addition to promoting and delivering the Jerusalem offering, surely Paul also personally contributed to it.

Third, Christians should support ministry even if some degree of doubts, disagreements, or unresolved issues exists. Modern readers may not be able to fully appreciate the magnitude of verse 26—Macedonia and Achaia (Greek Gentile culture) were pleased to help Jerusalem (Palestinian Hebrew culture). Surely there was some degree of doubt or prejudice, both on the part of those giving and those receiving, toward the other. Yet there was no call for uniformity of culture or belief before the support was sent.

Fourth, meaningful prayer is the most vital form of ministry support. No wonder that Paul, in verse 30, urged the Roman brothers to pray meaningfully ("join me in my struggle") for his ministry future.

Finally, prayer and other ministry support will renew the one doing ministry with joy and freshness—verse 32.

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Bible Book

Believing the Supernatural

by Rich L. Kincl, Central Church, Magnolia

Basic passage: Matthew 13:53 to 14:36

Focal passage: Matthew 14:15-21, 25-33

Central truth: Believing in Jesus means we will praise and trust him to meet our needs.

You and I may be a lot like the disciples were during Jesus' earthly ministry. Oftentimes, they seemed to have a difficult time believing in Jesus. What causes this lack of faith on the part of Christian people?

It is a subtle thing. When everything seems to be going pretty good we are enjoying life. Then when we are faced with great difficulty we begin to concentrate on the problem and lose faith.

We take our focus off of Christ and worry about circumstances, people, or problems. Peter was doing fine and even walking on the water to Jesus until he took his eyes off of the Lord (v. 30a). Then he began to sink!

We begin to sink and feel overcome with our problems when we doubt the power of God. We must guard against a lack of faith which borders on unbelief. Unbelief can block much of the supernatural from our daily living.

Even though some of Jesus' miracles were in direct response to personal faith, the majority of them were done regardless of any specific expression of an individual's faith. All his miracles were done to strengthen the faith of those who believed in him; although God can perform miracles where there is no belief, he chose not to perform them where there was hard and willful unbelief. Unbelief became a barrier to divine blessing (13:58).

The Christian may not reach that point of unbelief, but doubting Jesus will certainly cause us to not grow spiritually as we ought (14:31).

When we do find ourselves in a position of great need because of a lack of faith, we must call on the Lord (14:30b). Jesus will sense our need, and respond—often very quickly (14:31a).

Let's be different than the disciples. When Jesus met their need (14:31), they worshipped him (14:33). Let's practice doing it the other way around. Be in a continuous attitude of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord for what he has done, and will do, as you trust him to do the supernatural in your life.

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WORLD

Cooperation Needed

by Mark Wingfield

SBC Home Mission Board

ATLANTA (BP)—Unless Southern Baptists adopt a more cooperative attitude, Bold Mission Thrust will fail, an expert on world evangelism has warned.

Jimmy Maroney, senior consultant for evangelism and church growth for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, made the statement at a forum on urban evangelism sponsored by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board in Atlanta.

Bold Mission Thrust is the denomination's plan to present the gospel to every person on earth by the year 2000.

Conservative estimates place the number of unevangelized people on earth at more than 3 billion by the year 2000, Maroney said. Witnessing to each one will require 1 million new evangelistic encounters every day beginning today.

That task is too big for any one mission agency or denomination to do alone, Maroney said.

If forced to choose one other denomination that has the best chance of winning the world, he said, "I'd put my money on the Pentecostals." Southern Baptists could learn from the Pentecostals' successful planning, use of music and understanding of emotion, he added.

He cited three things Southern Baptists must do to keep Bold Mission Thrust from failing.

First, they must network with other denominations. This was the intent of Bold Mission Thrust's planners, but has been lost in denominational pride, he said.

"Has anyone ever seriously considered the magnitude of the task Southern Baptists took on?" he asked.

Second, Southern Baptists must develop a closer relationship between the Foreign Mission Board and the Home Mission Board for Bold Mission Thrust to succeed, Maroney said.

Bold Mission Thrust calls for a new way of thinking about global missions, he said. "Missions may have reached the point where it can be described as a tradition more than a conscious action.

"The way missions has been practiced is over," he said, predicting a new type of missionary will emerge, either by design or necessity.

Third, Southern Baptists must "stop spending vast sums of money on well-established areas" if Bold Mission Thrust is to succeed, Maroney said.

World population is increasing fastest among the poor in rural areas outside the United States, but Southern Baptists still spend most of their resources on

themselves, he said.

"A revolution must occur within the culture of the church if world evangelization is to take place. What is seen as Christianity today is not dynamic enough to cause the world to make a U-turn."

In a question-and-answer period, Maroney discussed three ways the two boards could work together more: using foreign missionaries' language skills in home mission work, developing joint urban projects and evangelizing international students in the United States who will return to their countries with the gospel.

The increasing role of the laity will also impact this, Maroney said. Committed laypeople are "dynamite" that will "change the face of the church."

Maroney also suggested Christians should be held accountable for commitments they make corporately: "When we set goals and fail, why can we be off Scot-free just because we're a Christian organization? Why can't we be held accountable?"

If Southern Baptists held themselves as accountable for their goals as major corporations do, they would be more serious about winning the world to Christ, he predicted.

Missionary Notes

Donald and Elise Brown, associates to Israel, have arrived on the field to begin their first term of service (address: Baptist Village Mobile Post, Central Sharon 45,875, Israel). He was born in El Dorado. The former Elise Ward, she is a native of Mississippi. They were employed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1987.

Dub and Salle Fite, missionaries to Brazil, have arrived in the States for furlough (address: 4314 Panola, Fort Worth, TX 76103). He was born in Mena, and she is the former Salle Taylor of Texas. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1950.

Steve and Sharon Ford, missionaries to Burkina Faso, have completed furlough and returned to the field (address: Mission Baptist, BP 580, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso). He is a native of Magnolia, and she is the former Sharon Curtis of Memphis, Tenn. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1983.

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