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97-96

WASHINGTON--White House plan on persecution inadequate, evangelicals say.

MISSISSIPPI--Intercom prayer banned in Mississippi school.

FLORIDA--Baptist leaders voice ideas for fighting racism in America.

FLORIDA--Personal stories shared at Baptist racism summit.

FLORIDA--Leaders voice urgency about racism in U.S.

TENNESSEE--SBC Seminary Extension extended for 5 years.

TEXAS--Towel and basin described as true Christian leadership.

TEXAS--Develop network of relationships, Miller urges Christian leaders.

TENNESSEE--Christian schools association awards scholarships to Texans.

TENNESSEE--Correction.

White House plan on persecution inadequate, evangelicals say

By Tom Strode

Baptist Press
6/4/96

WASHINGTON (BP)--Eight evangelical leaders, including Southern Baptist Convention President Jim Henry and agency head Richard Land, have criticized an expected White House plan for confronting the foreign persecution of Christians and have called on President Clinton to appoint instead a commission with adequate authority.

In a letter to the president, the leaders said the administration's intention to appoint an "advisory committee" to examine the federal government's policies concerning religious persecution overseas is "manifestly inadequate" for the growing problem.

Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla., and Land, president of the Christian Life Commission, joined on a letter sent by Don Argue, president of the National Association of Evangelicals. Other signers were Bill Bright, president of Campus Crusade for Christ; Charles Colson, chairman of Prison Fellowship Ministries; James Kennedy, senior pastor of Coral Ridge (Fla.) Presbyterian Church; Diane Knippers, president of the Institute on Religion and Democracy, and Dwight Gibson, North American director of World Evangelical Fellowship.

NAE's Argue was unavailable June 3 and 4 to say if the White House had responded to the letter.

Only a presidential commission will guarantee appropriate attention to the effect of the United States' policies on Christians and others undergoing persecution in other countries, the evangelical leaders said in the letter. Such a commission must have "sufficient independence, authority and resources to do its work properly, and ... its findings should come early enough to allow them to be fully debated during the coming election," they said.

They urged Clinton to "seize the moment to end America's passive and silent responses to worldwide religious persecutions that daily mount in intensity and horror."

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An advisory committee like the one proposed "will have neither the staff nor resources nor expertise nor authority nor mandate nor even the reporting obligations and deadlines necessary to do meaningful work," they wrote. That it would be part of the Department of State rather than the White House "only compounds our concerns" the Immigration and Naturalization Service and other agencies would be excluded from the scope of the committee's review, they said.

The INS has been criticized for failure to handle appropriately Christians who have escaped persecution in other countries.

The May 17 letter followed escalating concern expressed in recent months about worldwide religious persecution. After a January summit of more than 50 Christian leaders, many expressed shock about the extent of the problem and shame over their lack of concern. In their letter to Clinton, the eight evangelical leaders said "the American Christian community has become increasingly seared and galvanized by the rapidly increasing" problem.

Also in January, the National Association of Evangelicals issued a statement calling on the federal government to take the following steps regarding religious persecution:

- "Public acknowledgment of today's widespread and mounting anti-Christian persecution and the adoption of policies condemning religious persecution whether it results from official policy or from unchecked terrorist activity.

- "Issuance by the State Department's Human Rights Bureau and related government agencies of more carefully researched, more fully documented and less politically edited reports of the facts and circumstances of anti-Christian and other religious persecution.

- "Cessation of the indifferent and occasionally hostile manner in which the Immigration and Naturalization Service often treats the petitions of escapees from anti-Christian persecution.

- "Termination of foreign assistance to countries that fail to take vigorous action to end anti-Christian or other religious persecution, with resumption of assistance to be permitted only after a written finding is made by the president that the countries have taken all reasonable steps to end such persecution, and arrangements are made to ensure that religious persecution is not resumed."

In February, a subcommittee of the House of Representatives International Relations Committee held a hearing on the foreign persecution of Christians. Most of the 12 witnesses cited widespread persecution of Christians, especially under communist and Islamic regimes. Some also testified to the U.S. government's failure to assist believers in escaping such suffering.

At the hearing, the CLC's Land called on Clinton to:

- Deliver a major address making it clear governments seeking to be on favorable terms with the United States must not persecute Christians;

- Appoint a special adviser on religious liberty.

In April, three Republicans in the House wrote the president expressing concern the White House had "backed away" from naming a special adviser. Reps. Chris Smith of New Jersey, Frank Wolf of Virginia and John Porter of Illinois voiced opposition to reports an "ambiguously charged commission" would be appointed instead of an adviser. In order to be effective, a commission would need to be independent and have such members as Land; Colson; Knippers; Richard Cizik, NAE's policy analyst; and Nina Shea, director of Freedom House's Puebla Program on religious freedom, the congressmen said.

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Intercom prayer banned
in Mississippi school

Baptist Press
6/4/96

OXFORD, Miss. (BP)--A federal judge has ruled a northern Mississippi school district violated the separation of church and state by allowing student-led prayer and Bible reading over an intercom system.

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Judge Neal Biggers issued a permanent injunction June 3 ordering the school district not only to halt devotionals over the high school intercom at North Pontoto Attendance Center but also to stop authorizing vocal prayers by elementary classes before going to the cafeteria for lunch and Bible history courses in Pontotoc County schools. Biggers also banned the use in American history classes of three videos, including "America's Godly Heritage" by conservative Christian speaker/writer David Barton.

The case began in December 1994 when Lisa Herdahl filed suit against the school district for allowing such practices. Herdahl and her five children had moved from Wisconsin to the northeast Mississippi town of Ecu.

The trial in federal court was held in early March of this year.

While People for the American Way and the American Civil Liberties Union assisted Herdahl in the case, Southern Baptists at the local and national level supported the school's position. Michael Whitehead began assisting the school district while he was general counsel of the Christian Life Commission and continued to help after becoming a vice president at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo. R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., served as the school district's expert witness by providing testimony.

In his opinion, Biggers said, "The Bill of Rights was created to protect the minority from tyranny by the majority," according to an Associated Press report in The Washington Times.

Whitehead, who could not be reached for comment June 4, said before the trial, "This case is not about teacher-led or school-sponsored prayer. The school does not sponsor student speech just because it permits student speech. What the school sponsors in this forum is freedom."

Christian Life Commission President Richard Land said the decision was "a mix of bad news and good news. Out of the five issues that were in dispute, the school district lost four out of the five, but the one that they won is extremely significant."

Biggers upheld the constitutionality of the school district allowing seventh-through 12th-grade students to meet in the gymnasium before school for prayer and Bible reading, Land said. The judge also said students in kindergarten through sixth grade may continue to attend the same meetings if they have written permission from their parents, Land said.

The significance of that ruling is "with the permission of written parental consent, this would potentially expand equal access from secondary schools all the way down to kindergarten in those large numbers of school districts where the elementary school children and secondary school children are in close physical proximity to each other," he said.

The Equal Access Act allows secondary school students to hold Bible club meetings on school property outside class hours when their school permits other clubs to meet.

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Compiled by Tom Strode.

**Baptist leaders voice ideas
for fighting racism in America**

By Wendy Ryan

**Baptist Press
6/4/96**

ORLANDO, Fla. (BP)--Despite their political and theological differences, Baptist leaders in North America will work together in joint projects to build racial unity in their denominations and across the continent.

In two days of intense discussions, May 30-31, leaders from three North American Baptist groups brought together by the Baptist World Alliance at the First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla., listed various suggestions for fighting the sin and consequences of racism in America.

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Some of the suggestions voiced at the BWA's second Baptist Leaders USA Summit Against Racism include: joint appearances by presidents of the five major Baptist denominations at each others' annual or biennial meetings; jointly produced church school materials for children and adults; and working together on joint housing projects.

The leaders agreed to form a committee of the North American Baptist Fellowship, one of six BWA regional fellowships, to fight racism. The North American Baptist Committee against Racism will be led by Harold Carter, pastor of New Shiloh Baptist Church, Baltimore.

Whatever they do, Baptist leaders said prayer would lay the foundation for their actions.

"We need to do something bathed in love and prayer," Carter said, while attorney G. Elaine Smith, president of the American Baptist Churches USA, the first African American woman to hold that position, said,

"Prayer must be a continual focal point in our struggle."

The Baptist leaders agreed they must act now, give a clearer and more commonly understood definition of racism, heighten awareness of its consequences and engage in patient, prayerful, consistent action to combat racism.

"Our stance against racism has to permeate who we are as a denomination," Smith said. "It needs to be lived constantly."

"Baptists in the United States should be a tremendous force against racism," said Denton Lotz, BWA general secretary who convened the BWA North American anti-racism meetings.

"We need not ask, 'Are you Democrat, Republican, liberal or conservative?'" Carter said. "The question is, 'Do you see the need and can we come together in the name of Jesus?'"

Unanimously, leaders who represented the Southern Baptist Convention, the American Baptist Churches USA and the Progressive National Baptist Convention said yes, and they called on other black and white Baptist groups not represented in the meeting to join the reconciliation effort.

"Racial reconciliation must be one of the primary, determining characteristics of what it means to be a Baptist," said Jack Kwok, director of cooperative ministries for Southern Baptist and National Baptists in Arkansas, while Daniel E. Weiss, general secretary of the American Baptist Churches USA, said, "Racism must be viewed as heresy."

From his ministry in Arkansas, Kwok urged Baptist leaders to focus on points of agreement, develop national and community goals in racial reconciliation and do it "one rung at a time."

Bennett Smith, president of the Progressive National Baptist Convention, proposed Baptist churches choose one Sunday where pastors would lead their congregations in a commitment "to reject racism and actively attack it as a practice wherever and whenever we encounter it."

Smith also proposed leaders of five key Baptist denominations -- the Southern Baptist Convention, American Baptist Churches USA, National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., Progressive National Baptist Convention Inc. and the National Baptist Convention of America, Inc. -- give greetings at their annual or biennial meetings as a sign of their unity in Jesus Christ.

Host pastor Jim Henry, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, advised pastors "to involve laypeople in the decision-making process" whenever a church confronts a situation of racial prejudice.

"Train young people," said Ronald Bobo, pastor of the Westside Missionary Baptist Church, St. Louis, and president of the Baptist World Alliance's youth department, recommending Sunday school lessons that deal with race, reconciliation and liberation. "We need to raise up a generation who understand racial reconciliation," he said.

"Educate, evangelize and execute," said Elaine Smith, noting much work needs to be done to help people grasp "racism is alive, well and thriving." She urged leaders to "avoid finger-pointing and weighing of pain. There is no way to assess individual pain," she said, "and there can be no one-sided reconciliation."

Smith said a "clearer explanation of racism is needed." Some people see it as "a societal blight, corporate malignancy or personal sin," she said. "A common definition will help us to identify it."

"Any definition of racism must address economic justice," said Tyrone Pitts, general secretary of the PNBC. "The issue for the church is here. Racism started as an economic condition."

Racism, he said, is "prejudice plus power."

"You are racists when you have the economic power to implement your prejudice," said Bennett Smith.

"Begin to mobilize in public policy on issues of justice which are right," Weiss recommended. He also urged denomination leaders to invest their money in minority banks and to "use their investments to speak for justice."

"Teach, preach, love and live," urged John W. Peterson, pastor Alfred Street Baptist Church, Alexandria, Va., and vice president of the North American Baptist Fellowship.

Peterson said an essential component of racial reconciliation is helping communities to provide adequate jobs for young people. "Our youth need help," he said.

Jere Allen, executive director for the Baptist Convention of Washington, a convention of black and white churches, offered the housing suggestion, among others.

"We should target 20 cities in which to build 1,000 low-income houses with 1,000 interracial teams," Allen proposed to tremendous support.

Ernest Mosley, executive vice president of the SBC Executive Committee, who answered many questions about the SBC apology to blacks a year ago for not opposing slavery, said his denomination was working to include minorities at every level of denominational life to reverse their racial history.

"I believe the SBC will respond to racial reconciliation initiatives," Mosley said. "Pray for us, encourage us, share ideas and appropriate expressions with us," he said.

"We have the potential to make a difference," said Gary Frost, pastor of Rising Star Baptist Church, Youngstown, Ohio, and second vice president of the SBC.

"The solution will come as the Spirit of God brings people together," Frost said. "We are in need of a supernatural visitation of God that transcends the political process. There is power in the blood of Jesus Christ.

"God has an agenda, while everybody else has a plan," Frost said.

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Personal stories shared
at Baptist racism summit

By Wendy Ryan

Baptist Press
6/4/96

ORLANDO, Fla. (BP)--For Baptist leaders, black and white, at the second Baptist Leaders USA Racism Summit, racism was a personal issue reflected in the stories they shared, many times with tears.

"Let me tell you why racism is a sin," said Bennett Smith, president of the Progressive National Baptist Convention Inc. "For the first 12 years of my life as a boy from Oklahoma, I was angry with God because I was born black. I despised every day I was born black. This is what racism has done to 100 percent of blacks who grew up in the South. Racism is seared into their consciences."

"It is a rare black person who does not have some vestiges of self-hatred," Wallace Charles Smith, pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church, Washington, said at the Baptist World Alliance-sponsored sessions, May 30-31 at First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla.

"No white person can possibly know what it means to be black in America," said Daniel E. Weiss, general secretary of the American Baptist Churches USA, and president of the North American Baptist Fellowship. "I feel very deeply about this issue, but I don't know what it is like."

Bennett Smith also explained why black and white Christians can believe the same thing theologically but be so different politically, especially on the role of government.

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"Those who have been victimized by racism the most have historically looked to government, specifically the United States government, to bring relief to their oppression," Smith said. "This is why blacks want more, not less government."

Like Bennett Smith, others shared personal stories and gave practical examples of how they had dealt with racism.

Jim Henry, host pastor and president of the Southern Baptist Convention, told of calling his church together when the Freedom Fighters came to Mississippi to discuss how the church would respond, and the congregation decided anyone could come to their church. "This was because I involved everyone in the decision," Henry said.

"The SBC has come worlds from where it's been under your leadership," Bennett Smith told Henry, who will conclude two one-year terms as SBC president this month. "It will be a sad day for all of us black people when you leave."

Wallace Charles Smith, who also serves as chair of the BWA Special Commission Against Racism, shared the pain he felt over the Million Man March last October organized by Muslim leader Louis Farrakhan.

"I looked into the faces of people who love Jesus but who could not care less about reconciliation," Smith said, "and this was a terribly troubling place to be. I felt I was on the wrong side of the issue."

"Not at all," said Harold Carter, pastor of New Shiloh Baptist Church, Baltimore. "I refuse to see Jesus Christ apart from the sense of the whole. I see Jesus Christ as the fullness of the Godhead bodily, for the whole person."

Carter, who worked as an aide to Martin Luther King Jr. in Alabama, said the civil rights movement was "an evangelical revival of the deepest level," and "the world has done us a disservice by separating this."

"The nation has voided the Judaeo-Christian context of King," Carter said.

Denton Lotz, BWA general secretary, commended Bennett Smith who refused to participate in the Million Man March and was roundly criticized by other religious leaders.

"I march only under the banner of the Lord Jesus Christ," Smith said.

Baptist leaders appealed to each other to come together under the lordship of Jesus Christ.

"I am a fundamentalist," said Jack Kwok, director of cooperative ministries with National and Southern Baptists of Arkansas. "I am so fundamental I squeak when I walk and yet I can agree to work with others."

John Peterson, pastor of the Alfred Street Baptist Church, Alexandria, Va., and a vice president of the North American Baptist Fellowship, urged Baptist congregations to come together in worship, fellowship and joint projects. He attended the meeting with Gary Hollingsworth, pastor of First Baptist Church, Alexandria, who he invited to demonstrate their commitment to work together after their churches split into black and white 193 years ago.

Hollingsworth described his pilgrimage and the "defining moments" in his life that led him to "a passionate commitment to racial reconciliation."

"I resolved after the SBC vote to do something spiritual and practical," Hollingsworth said. He also described his "conviction" after attending a meeting of Promise Keepers.

"I pray we will be able to model reconciliation after we split 193 years ago," Hollingsworth said.

Gary Frost, second vice president of the SBC and pastor of Rising Star Baptist Church, Youngstown, Ohio, described the change in his heart after he started praying with a "white Pentecostal minister."

"After we prayed together and I saw into his heart and he saw into mine, our racial differences disappeared," Frost said.

Pressed into recounting the SBC apology last year to blacks regarding slavery, Ernest Mosley, executive vice president of the SBC Executive Committee, gave his personal response "as one who began a personal pilgrimage of trying to understand issues of racism 60 years ago."

"Sitting on the platform, I was proud when the apology was overwhelmingly accepted" at the SBC sesquicentennial in Atlanta, Mosley said.

Mosley described two baptisms, one white, one black, that took place after the apology "as a time of overwhelming awe and wonder." When a black pastor conducted his first baptism and baptized his teenage son, "people jumped to their feet and applauded," Mosley said. "It had happened among us.

"What came to my mind," Mosley said, was "the bread is in the oven. You could smell the aroma. It is not baked yet, it is not finished, but if you never get it in the oven, if you are never willing to take time for the process, you will never have the joy of the finished product."

Mosley said since the resolution was passed, SBC leaders "have wrestled with what to do. We have prayed and pushed to move the process," he said.

Mosley asked other Baptist leaders to pray and share ideas with them.

"I believe the SBC will respond to racial reconciliation initiatives," he said, "but they will not respond if pushed or cajoled. Pray for us, encourage us, and appropriate expressions will occur."

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Leaders voice urgency
about racism in U.S.

By Wendy Ryan

Baptist Press
6/4/96

ORLANDO, Fla. (BP)--"Racism is a monstrous problem with incredible implications, and the average white person does not understand the daily, routine, constant expression of racism that African Americans face," said Dan Weiss, general secretary of the American Baptist Churches USA and president of the North American Baptist Fellowship, a group of 10 Baptist denominations in North America representing more than 30 million Baptists.

Weiss spoke at a Baptist Leaders USA Summit Against Racism, May 30-31, sponsored by the Baptist World Alliance and hosted at First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla.

This was the second time Baptist leaders in the United States met to talk about racism. The first meeting was held last December after the Oct. 16 Million Man March led by black Muslim leader Louis Farrakhan and the results of the O.J. Simpson trial which showed how polarized black and white Americans are.

Since that time, "we have seen black churches burned and many other instances of racial injustice," said BWA General Secretary Denton Lotz.

"We are in the best of times and the worst of times," said Harold Carter, pastor of New Shiloh Baptist Church, Baltimore.

While "Jim Crow" laws have been wiped off the books because of civil rights initiatives and black and white Baptist leaders can meet out of a common concern for racism, Carter said, "the beloved community" of which Martin Luther King Jr. spoke has not been realized.

"Leaders do not talk about community anymore; there is no sense of healing in the nation," Carter said.

"The situation in the African American community is critical; we are in the intensive care unit," said Bennett Smith, president of the Progressive National Baptist Convention.

"It is a rare black person who does not have some vestiges of self-hatred," said Wallace Charles Smith, pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church, Washington, and chair of the BWA global Special Commission of Baptists Against Racism.

White leaders, meanwhile, said most white Americans who are against racial prejudice of any kind have no idea of the breadth and depth of the problem.

"Most white people would say racism is wrong," said Elaine Smith, president of the American Baptist Churches, USA, "but they do not realize the things they do to perpetuate racism. There is a great deal of anger that exists and we need to be able to deal with this."

"No white person can possibly know what it means to be black in America," Weiss said, "and this itself is at the heart of the crisis."

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**SBC Seminary Extension
extended for 5 years**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention seminary presidents have decided to continue the Seminary Extension program for five years while "conducting a thorough review" of the program.

The Council of Seminary Presidents also expects to name a director for Seminary Extension, now housed in the SBC building in Nashville, Tenn. Currently, retired director Doran C. McCarty is serving as interim head of the program while a search for his successor is begun.

R. Albert Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., and a spokesman for the six seminary presidents, said the extension of the program "is intended to assure Southern Baptists that the current program of Seminary Extension will continue for the next five years and that any changes in the program thereafter will come as a result of strategic planning designed to improve, update and enhance the program."

"The six seminaries of the SBC are committed to a program of theological education by extension as a complement to the residential theological education programs which are the core of the seminaries' mission," Mohler said.

"We intend to make certain that Southern Baptists are served by a Seminary Extension program that is fully open to the technological innovations which are reshaping the delivery systems for education. At the same time, we want to make clear our commitment to stay the course and to retain all the strengths of the current program."

McCarty, saying he was pleased with the presidents' action, said, "Seminary Extension needs a strategic study to incorporate new technologies to deliver theological education in the 21st century. We are reaching a defining point and need to add to the present systems. Adding new delivery systems could increase Seminary Extension's enrollment substantially beyond its 7,500 level in three to five years."

Seminary Extension, created in 1951 by the seminary presidents, employs eight full- and four part-time people.

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**Towel and basin described
as true Christian leadership**

By Linda Lawson

Baptist Press
6/4/96

EULESS, Texas (BP)--Head tables have replaced the towel and basin as a symbol of leadership in many churches today, an author and pastor told participants of a "Jesus on Leadership" seminar, May 30-31 at First Baptist Church, Euless, Texas.

Missing in the secular model of leadership is the "attitude of servanthood" rooted in the life of Jesus Christ, said Gene Wilkes, pastor of Legacy Drive Baptist Church, Plano, Texas, and author of a new interactive coursebook, "Jesus on Leadership: Becoming a Servant Leader." The book is published by the Baptist Sunday School Board's discipleship and family development division.

Wilkes warned servant leadership "doesn't work if you're running your church like an institution in the society in which we live."

Jesus turned the world's definition of leadership upside down, he said.

Instead of aggressively seeking to move up the ladder of success, he said "servant leaders humble themselves and wait for God to exalt them." They "follow Jesus rather than seek a position."

"If you're going to be great in this crowd (church), you've got to be willing wait on tables. You don't sit at the head table. You set the head table. This does make sense in a world driven by titles and positions," Wilkes said.

Christians can take the risk to serve others because they know and trust that God is in control of their lives, he said.

When Jesus was in the upper room with his disciples just before he was betrayed by Judas, he set an example of true leadership by undertaking the most menial task washing their feet, Wilkes said.

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"If we really do trust we've been given all power, (that we) come from God and will be returning to God, what is there to lose by going to one another and washing their feet?" he asked.

"In servant leadership, where's the power? Where's the strength? Where's the leadership in the servant part?" he asked. "Part of leadership, although we have the towel of servanthood around our belts, is revealing the need before we meet it."

Noting Jesus washed the feet of all 12 disciples, including Judas, Wilkes said "one of the greatest tests of servant leadership is to wash the feet of those you know will soon betray you. Is there power in that? I think so."

Servant leaders also share their power and authority, multiplying their leadership, he noted.

Many pastors make the mistake of holding "the empowerment of ministry to ourselves. The job doesn't get done until you empower others to do it with you," he said.

For the leader who can share both authority and responsibility, the benefits are less stress and greater satisfaction among the followers, Wilkes said.

He said he hopes the five-week study will help address the leadership crises being experienced in virtually every Southern Baptist church.

We must "look to the people in our churches to help lead and do ministry," he said.

"Leadership is a team sport," Wilkes emphasized. "It is more like being a member of a soccer team than being a pro golfer." A servant leader committed to team ministry will focus on four qualities: togetherness, empowerment, accountability and mentoring.

"A person who does the team's work alone is not a servant leader," Wilkes said. "You don't call people together to watch you work."

A leader cannot effectively empower a team to accomplish its task by writing a memo, making a phone call or even calling a meeting, he said. "Empowerment takes time, sitting down with them, doing ministry with them."

Acknowledging accountability is a popular, sometimes-overused word, Wilkes said accountability in team ministry is "the ability to account to the rest of the team for who you are and what you have done. Team members are accountable to one another for reaching the goal."

To be an effective servant leader, a person must have a mentor and be willing to be a mentor for others.

"A mentor is a guide. Mentors say, 'Mimic me. Walk beside me and do what I do.' Servant leaders need a mentor, a partner and a protege," he said.

In his church, Wilkes said he is introducing the study first with people already seen as leaders in the church and then with potential leaders.

"We want to make servant leadership a permeating idea throughout our leadership," he said.

The seminar at First Baptist Church, Euless, Texas, was jointly sponsored by the BSSB, the Baptist General Convention of Texas and Dallas and Tarrant Baptist associations. "Jesus on Leadership" resources are available from the Baptist Sunday School Board's customer service center or through Baptist Book Stores. In addition to the course book for participants, a resource kit is available including a leader's guide, video clips for group sessions, an audiocassette of the member's book that may be duplicated and a computer disk for making session handouts. A Spanish edition of the member's book will be released in October.

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Concepts included in the discipleship course, "Jesus on Leadership: Becoming a Servant Leader," by Gene Wilkes and published by the Baptist Sunday School Board's discipleship and family development division, are posted in the SBCNet News Room under "Leadership."

**Develop network of relationships,
Miller urges Christian leaders** **By Linda Lawson**

EULESS, Texas (BP)--Too many Christian leaders crash and burn from loneliness and trying to do everything themselves, Calvin Miller told participants at a servant leadership conference.

Ministers need to build a caring, nourishing network of relationships, said Miller, professor of communication and ministry studies at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas. Miller, who was a speaker at the May 30-31 Jesus on Leadership conference held at First Baptist Church, Euless, Texas, is author of "The Empowered Leader: 10 Keys to Servant Leadership," published by the Baptist Sunday School Board's Broadman & Holman imprint.

"Burnout is a high, high issue right now. There's a lot of pain, a lot of loneliness out there," Miller said. "The loneliness pastors suffer is something I never did get used to."

He cited three imperative relationships for every Christian leader: 'I-Thou,' the Christian with God; 'I-Them,' the Christian with friends; and 'I-She (He),' the Christian with spouse.

The foundation of a leader's network has to be a relationship with Jesus Christ Miller said. "The God who saved you is saying, 'Come on, you need to spend some time with me.'"

Choose friends carefully, he urged.

"The whole purpose of networking in leadership is finding a force that nourishes you. You don't have time for an infinite number of relationships. Pick them very slowly," he said.

The Southern Baptist leader's network should include people who are not Southern Baptists, he suggested.

"You need to get a network and serve it," Miller said. "If it's not costing you it won't be there when you need it. If it doesn't cost you, it's not friendship. It's beautiful when people in a network gather at 2 a.m. to help one of their members through a crisis."

With one's spouse, the leader must not take the relationship for granted but must give it high priority and work at a growing relationship, he said.

In other sessions, Miller emphasized the importance of vision and a healthy self-perception to be a successful Christian leader.

He warned many Christian leaders today are confusing image and vision.

"I don't find many people talking authentically about vision," he said. "What they're talking about is image. Vision is real. It gets something done. Image gets nothing done."

Christian leaders must live their vision as well as teach it, he said. "If you wait for absolute endorsement before you do anything, you will never do anything. I believe people will forgive you for a bad vision, but they will not forgive you for no vision at all."

Vision is best when stated simply, Miller said, adding: Vision needs room to grow. Vision generates enthusiasm and tenacity on the part of those working to achieve it. Vision unites followers and it inspires greatness.

The guiding principle for self-perception can be summed up in three sentences, he said. "God made me. I am who I am. Were I any less than I am, the world would be less than it is."

The primary credential for being a leader is the call of God, Miller said, noting, "I'm doing this because God picked me out to do it."

Using the biblical story of David's ability as a young boy to stand up to the giant and slay him with a slingshot, Miller said effective Christian leaders must seek balance in three areas: keeping the giants outside your life, maintaining the capacity for outer celebration and balancing aggression and anxiety.

"Great leaders charge into life. They're aggressive, but they should not be abusive. You've got to learn to answer anxiety with aggression," he said.

Miller cited three steps for Christian leaders to achieve success in a hostile environment, beginning with "always rate your task in terms of God's power." Also Christian leaders must "live above traditional thinking" and learn not to "be immobilized by criticism."

The conference was sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board, the Baptist General Convention of Texas and Dallas and Tarrant Baptist associations.

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Concepts included in the discipleship course, "Jesus on Leadership: Becoming a Servant Leader," by Gene Wilkes and published by the Baptist Sunday School Board's discipleship and family development division, are posted in the SBCNet News Room under "Leadership."

Christian schools association
awards scholarships to Texans

Baptist Press
6/4/96

BRENTWOOD, Tenn. (BP)--Two high school seniors from Texas were awarded \$1,000 scholarships and 10 others across the nation were named Outstanding Scholars by the Southern Baptist Association of Christian Schools.

According to John R. Chandler, executive director of the association, the winners were from Southern Baptist Christian schools in five states.

Awarded \$1,000 scholarships to the college of their choice were Greg Holt, Hyde Park Baptist (Church) Schools, Austin, Texas, and Julia Smith, Lake Country Christian School, Fort Worth, Texas.

Ten students were recognized as Outstanding Scholars by the association: Lauren Board, Lake Country Christian School; Wesley Childers, Curtis Baptist High School, Augusta, Ga.; Stephen Holliman, Northwest Christian Academy, Miami, Fla.; Amy Orthober, Highview Baptist School, Louisville, Ky.; James Page, The First Academy, Orlando, Fla.; Christopher Pate, Lake Country Christian School; Timothy Penrose, Southern Baptist Educational Center, Olive Branch, Miss.; Robert Price, The First Academy; Alyson Wagner, Hyde Park Baptist School; and Kevin Wilkins, Southern Baptist Education Center.

Criteria for their selections, according to Chandler, include SAT and ACT scores, grade point average, Christian character, student activities, church activities and leadership. The purpose of the association's program, he said, was to discover and recognize students in Southern Baptist Christian schools who demonstrate high scholastic achievement, leadership qualities and Christian character.

Chandler said the association also sends information about each participant to all Southern Baptist colleges and universities "so that those schools may recruit and offer additional scholarships to students whose interest matches their school programs."

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CORRECTION: In (BP) story titled "SBC Cooperative Program jumps 25 percent in May," dated 6/3/96, please change the second figure in the fourth paragraph to \$2,333,613. The new paragraph should read:

At the end of eight months of the SBC fiscal year, receipts totaled \$98,927,932, which is \$2,333,613 more than the same period a year ago of \$96,594,318, or an increase of 2.42 percent.

Thanks,
Baptist Press

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