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**Chinese church raised up  
in memory of Lottie Moon**

**By Marty Croll**

**Baptist Press  
11/7/96**

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--One of the most vivid memorials fashioned to honor foreign missions heroine Lottie Moon stands in Charlottesville, Va.

It's an eternal memorial -- a growing body of Chinese Christians. They worship in the fellowship hall of First Baptist Church, the very church whose pastor brought the young Lottie Moon face to face with Jesus Christ in 1859, before she became a missionary to China.

Many of these modern-day Chinese believers came to the United States as communists and intellectuals -- and found Jesus. Frequently they return to China or move elsewhere, taking the gospel with them.

Freddie and Dorothy Sun, products of the ministry of Lottie Moon and her colleagues and survivors of brutal repression in communist China, began building this memorial several years ago.

In China, Freddie Sun worked as a research geologist for the Chinese Academy of Sciences. His own people led him to Jesus in 1955. "That was a year of great persecution in China," he says. "Communists closed churches and arrested many pastors. It was very scary."

In China, his research work took him into remote areas. The church dove underground and met in houses. Communists controlled registered churches. "They could not teach Genesis, and they could not teach Jesus was coming again, because communism was going to take over the world."

Dorothy's parents, a product of American missionary work, taught her Christianity from childhood. In 1960 she was forced into a labor camp. While studying dentistry at Beijing Medical University, her faith had come into conflict with the communists.

"I was not a preacher or anything," she remembers. "I was not even a strong Christian, but I just didn't deny my Lord's name. The communists weren't satisfied. They wanted young people to worship (Chinese leader) Mao Tse Tung as if he was God. And I refused to do that."

At one point, Dorothy came close to death and lost her left lung from near starvation and long, hard hours of labor.

Freed 20 years later after Mao's death, she landed a job with associates of the United Nations World Health Organization and then came to North Carolina as a medical scholar. Later she moved to Charlottesville.

"My parents say my first step when I get to America: Join a Baptist church.

"First Baptist Church is the only church I came to when I moved to Charlottesville," she says. "I joined the choir. Praise the Lord I can still sing even without the lung."

The Suns were drawn to pastor Joel Jenkins. "He is world missions-oriented," Dorothy says. In Kings Mountain, N.C., his church housed a Laotian congregation. His church in Salisbury, N.C., was sponsoring a Vietnamese congregation when he came. During his tenure it formed an African congregation, too.

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Dorothy got a vision to start a Chinese Bible study fellowship. "The Lord gave me one word: cook." The Suns started a group from her kitchen. "We would eat, then we would talk about the Bible. It kept growing and growing and growing."

The church organized in 1992. As it matured and its needs grew, Jenkins suggested it meet at First Baptist, where it now worships directly under the sanctuary. Parents share the church's nursery facilities and program.

This year Revival church called its first pastor, Michael Zhu, who came to America about four years ago through the influence of Ron Winstead, a Southern Baptist English teacher in Shanghai.

Zhu encountered Jesus when he called on a student (who later became his wife). The student wasn't there, but her grandmother was. "The grandmother said: 'Teacher, have you heard of Jesus Christ?' She began to tell me wonderful testimonies," Zhu recalls.

Zhu became pastor of Revival church because of its missions character. "We see the bigger picture. Scholars go back home to China -- and to do evangelism there. We prepare (God's) to go back to their homeland. Like a fish goes back to water, Chinese always have a heart for saving their people."

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(BP) photos (two horizontal) mailed 11/7/96 to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Outline posted in SBCNet News Room.

**Church not deterred by attacks  
for opposing homosexual measure**

**By Ken Walker**

**Baptist Press  
11/7/96**

LANSING, Mich. (BP)--A Southern Baptist pastor who helped defeat a pro-homosexual referendum Nov. 5 in Lansing, Michigan's state capital, said various attacks on the church only strengthened members' resolve to fight the issue.

John Harrison of Bethany Baptist Church said anonymous people left threats and hate mail inside the church's doors during the campaign. But the most overt action concerned the church's tax-exempt status.

Members of the homosexual-oriented "Equal Rights Taskforce" threatened to visit the Internal Revenue Service to get Bethany's tax exemption revoked if the church circulated petitions calling for a city council ordinance to be placed on the ballot, Harrison said.

"They were bluffing and we knew it," the pastor said. "We voted to circulate the petitions. It was a motivation instead of intimidation."

City council passed a civil rights law outlawing discrimination in employment, public accommodations and housing on the basis of several factors, including sexual orientation. The petitions calling for a citizen vote prevented the ordinance from taking effect.

Two slightly different versions of the measure ultimately wound up on the ballot. Both lost, by margins of 53-47 percent and 56-44 percent.

A half-dozen Bethany members aided the petition drive and the church hosted twice-a-month prayer meetings called by a citizen group formed to oppose the law, Harrison said.

A group of approximately 50 pastors against the measure also ran a half-page newspaper advertisement two days before the election. Besides Bethany, SBC pastors signing the ad came from Immanuel Baptist, Cedar Street Baptist and Cornerstone Community Church, Harrison said.

However, he said the driving force behind the proposal's defeat was the church members who supported the citizens committee named MOST (Majority Opposed to Special Treatment).

When one person complained not enough pastors were involved, Harrison replied, "You want men and women of the church doing this. When they get involved, people sit up and take notice. Don't be afraid or intimidated. The blessings of standing for right outweigh the risks."

Bernie Meissner, MOST chairman and a member of the independent South Baptist Church, said the victory showed him the importance of prayer and staying centered on Christ.

"I learned you can't do anything by yourself," said the lumber company employee. "You have to depend on God. That was our foundation, guiding and ending principle. We tried to keep our testimony for Jesus Christ and not get consumed in politics."

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Defeating the measure proved to be a David-versus-Goliath-type struggle, he said. While numerous volunteers aided in the petition drive, MOST's steering committee only had five members.

By contrast, he said, high-profile supporters of the legislation included two local TV stations, the Lansing State Journal, United Auto Workers, Michigan Education Association, the mayor and a majority of the city council.

MOST also had to overcome complicated political and legal maneuvering, Meissner said. After collecting 7,500 signatures -- 3,500 over the requirement -- a court invalidated them because they didn't attach a copy of the ordinance to each page of the petition, he said.

When MOST gathered enough signatures a second time, the city council rescinded one ordinance and passed another to cause confusion, Meissner said.

He said he called for the prayer meetings after seeing the spiritual battle would be too strong to continue the fight on their own.

Homosexuals attended those meetings several times, Meissner said, adding he never identified them to others present. Instead, he said, he wanted the homosexuals to tell their own community what was happening -- that their prayers included intercession for homosexuals.

The prayer was part of MOST's insistence on openly retaining its Christian identity in literature it distributed to registered voters. That resulted in name-calling, but despite being labeled "hatemongers," "liars," "bigots" and "right-wing religious fanatics," Meissner said God continually encouraged them.

"He always gave us what we needed when we needed it. He never let things get too bad. We learned you can't do battle with these people on their terms. We saw the only way to achieve victory was prayer.

"I wasn't getting into this as a secular political fight," Meissner added. "I wouldn't put this much effort and work into a secular battle. We kept it focused on Christ."

Considering the many other Michigan cities that already have sexual-orientation laws, Harrison said the defeat in the state's capital is very significant.

Although those who oppose homosexuality are often branded as hateful, the pastor said his church and MOST's stance was based on morality.

"Our concern was for the community," he said. "The behavior behind (homosexuality) is sinful. We would have endorsed what the Bible describes as a sin. We never had a doubt going into it and the Lord sustained us through it."

Still, Harrison said he believes the fight will continue.

"We don't think this is the end of it. We expect them to come back again."

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### **Annuity Board trustees vow more aid to needy retirees**

**By Thomas E. Miller Jr.**

**Baptist Press  
11/7/96**

DALLAS (BP)--Challenged by their president and the chairman of the Endowment Development Council of the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, trustees of the SBC agency voted Nov. 5 to commit themselves as individuals and trustees to respond to the plight of retired Southern Baptist ministers or their widows living in poverty.

At a luncheon meeting Nov. 4 in Dallas, trustees heard board President Paul W. Powell share the personal commitments he and his wife, Cathy, have made to the board's "Adopt An Annuitant" ministry and his support for the ministry assignment given the Annuity Board in the "Covenant for a New Century" restructuring of the SBC.

Powell introduced William A. Willis of Little Rock, Ark., chairman of the volunteer Endowment Development Council, who told trustees the council has identified a need for \$12 million in the next three years in support of the third part of the Annuity Board's SBC ministry assignment: "To provide a channel through which Southern Baptists can extend systematic financial help to Southern Baptist ministers or widows of ministers who are in need (and) interpret the channel to Southern Baptists for the purpose of eliciting financial support."

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Willis, a retired insurance executive and former trustee, including two terms as chairman, reviewed the history of the relief ministry and pointed to a need for increased aid to poor retirees. Trustees were challenged by Guy Morton, an Ohio pastor and trustee, and chairman of the board's relief committee, to make it possible to increase income guidelines for relief eligibility and increase the amount of grants for those eligible.

Powell referred to a pledge to ministers suggested by the first Annuity Board president, William Lunsford, as he addressed the Southern Baptist Convention in 1923: "Give yourself whole-heartedly to the work. ... We will stand back of you. If you fall in the work, we will care for you. If you die, we will not permit your family to suffer. If you grow old in it, we will comfort your declining years."

"In the fulfillment of this promise," said Powell, "let us each and together:

"1) Resolve that no retired minister or his widow should live in poverty.

"2) Identify those in need.

"3) Design communications to interpret the need and provide a channel of assistance.

"4) Vigorously promote the Cooperative Program and appeal for increased funds for relief that can be given to eligible persons even if they were never enrolled in Annuity Board programs.

"5) Through all appropriate means, inform and inspire persons to make gifts to the Adopt An Annuitant Fund and the Retired Ministers' Support Fund to supplement the assistance provided through the Cooperative Program.

"6) Endorse and personally support the volunteer work of the Endowment Development Council and the Retired Ministers' Support Corps and provide the staff and program structure to carry out the noble goals of these loving, loyal Southern Baptists."

On Tuesday, Nov. 5, when Morton made the report of the relief committee to the board's trustees, he moved that trustees adopt the Powell challenge as an official trustee commitment and response to need. Trustees unanimously approved the motion.

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**Annuity Board trustee actions  
include look for next president**

**By Thomas E. Miller Jr.**

**Baptist Press  
11/7/96**

DALLAS (BP)--Trustees of the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention met in Dallas Nov. 4-5 and, among other actions, began a presidential search process. The meeting included reports of a new record in benefits paid and amendments to the Protection Section of the Church Annuity Plan that will result in major increases in disability and survivor benefits.

Budgets for the 1997 retirement and insurance programs were approved, and preparations that could have led to converting Annuity Board investment funds to registered mutual funds were stopped, in light of a new federal law.

In other actions, trustees approved reports from the president, treasurer and five standing committees, including the relief committee decision to make 44 new relief grants to needy retired ministers or their widows, heard reports of legislative relief at the federal level and responded to two motions referred from the Southern Baptist Convention.

Board chairman Richard C. Scott named Texan J. Ray Taylor to chair an eight-member committee to conduct a national search for the next president and chief executive officer of the Annuity Board. Paul W. Powell, who became president in 1990, will be 65 in December 1998. No date was suggested for the committee to report its recommendation.

In addition to Taylor, Scott named T. Jack Colvin of Mississippi, Alton L. Fannin of Oklahoma, Thomas A. Shaw of Oklahoma, David C. Sheppard of Missouri, J. Kirk Thompson of Arkansas, S. Glenn Weekley of Tennessee and Donald H. Wills of Texas to serve on the committee. The board chairman will be an ex-officio member.

In making his announcement, Scott said, "The search committee will have total independence, all the time and resources they need, and just one mandate: find the best chief executive officer in Southern Baptist life for this job."

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Powell, in his closing remarks to trustees, said he felt no pressure, no anxiety, in announcing his retirement. If trustees decide on a new president before his retirement date, Powell said he would accept an early retirement package or serve as a consultant under contract.

Thomas D. Elliff, a trustee by virtue of his office as SBC president, was the speaker for a Monday night dinner in the Annuity Board conference center. Guests included former SBC President W.A. Criswell, Baptist General Convention of Texas President Charles Wade of Arlington, BGCT Executive Director William M. Pinson, retired Annuity Board President Darold H. Morgan and pastors of several Dallas metroplex churches.

In his treasurer's report on Monday, Harold D. Richardson said total assets of the board reached \$5.5 billion on Sept. 30, reflecting a gain of \$513 million since Sept. 30, 1995. Total benefits paid to retired participants in nine months reached \$155 million, a 6.2 percent increase over the same period in 1995 and a trend leading to total benefits exceeding \$200 million for the year.

The rise in benefits resulted partly from a permanent 5 percent increase that began last Jan. 1 for annuitants with benefits established for five years or longer. Trustees were told actuarial valuation of the Defined Benefit Fund, from which all annuity benefits are paid, indicated there is not sufficient margin to grant a similar increase Jan. 1, 1997. Increases were given in four of the last seven years.

Earnings of \$411.2 million for the first nine months of the year were the second-highest in Annuity Board history, surpassed only by the \$621.8 million mark in 1995. The board's four investment funds each recorded nine-month earnings rates exceeding their respective benchmarks. The Variable Fund's 14.68 percent beat the S&P 500 Index of 13.49 percent; the Balanced Fund's 8.49 percent was above the board's benchmark of 6.93 percent, measured 50 percent by the S&P 500 and 50 percent by the Salomon Brothers Broad Index. The International Equity Fund had earned 8.23 percent through September, compared to 4.39 percent for the Morgan Stanley Capital International Europe, Australia and Far East Index. The Fixed Fund credited 4.77 percent in nine months, compared to a 4.53 percent yield on three-year treasury bills.

The Protection Benefit Fund was valued by actuaries to have excess reserves, and trustees approved a recommendation by staff to increase supplemental disability benefits and survivor benefits from this pool of money funded by Baptist state convention matching contributions to the Church Annuity Plan. Eligible participants in the Church Annuity Plan receive up to \$35 each month in matching funds, and \$17.50 of that amount pays for what is known as the Protection Section that provides the supplemental disability and survivor benefits. The other \$17.50 goes to the participant's retirement accumulations account.

Effective Jan. 1, 1997, the Protection Section benefit for disabled participants will increase 33.33 percent, meaning the maximum benefit will rise from \$300 to \$400 per month. In addition, a contribution of up to \$35 per month will continue to go to the retirement account of the disabled participant. The survivor benefit will rise on the same date from a schedule maximum \$67,500 and minimum \$5,000, depending on age, to a new schedule of \$100,000 to \$10,000.

Powell said, "This benefit change, which must be ratified by each state convention, is absolutely wonderful. While the Protection benefits were never meant to take the place of our disability and life insurance products, they are an enormous blessing to those who need help. The survivor benefit is especially helpful when tragedy strikes a young participant. This change means any participant, age 35 and under, who dies with full coverage, will leave a survivor with an Annuity Board check for \$100,000. Even those age 71 or over, who are still active contributors to the Church Annuity Plan, can have a survivor benefit of \$10,000."

Another action by trustees establishes a procedure for annual review of the assets of the Protection Benefit Fund to determine whether state convention billing credits should be extended for another year. By prior action, trustees had approved billing credits through the year 1999. Following the new review procedure, the billing credits were extended through the year 2000. The effect of billing credits is to allow state conventions to anticipate alternate uses for funds they would have been obligated to pay for the Protection Section in years 1997-2000.

The approved 1997 operating budgets will be totally self-funded from earnings on assets, with no Cooperative Program funds used in operations. All Cooperative Program money received by the board is used in the Relief Ministry, one of three ministry assignments approved by the Southern Baptist Convention. The \$29.7 million retirement operating budget is an increase of 3.73 percent, while the \$8 million insurance operating budget has no increase. Each of the budgets has separate accounting.

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Trustees reacted to a new federal law by approving a staff recommendation to discontinue the board's mutual fund project while proceeding with an announced 1997 investment fund restructuring as unregistered investment funds. For more than two years, staff and consultants had been working toward registering the board funds as mutual funds. A new federal law, the National Securities Market Improvement Act of 1996, signed by President Bill Clinton Oct. 11, grants exemption from state and federal securities laws for church pension funds.

Despite the exemption from securities laws, the new customer record system and its 13 new investment funds will result in major increases in information going to participants. Daily valuation, already applied to the four present investment funds, allows participants maximum control of their asset allocations and daily fund transfers using a touch-tone telephone. With the record keeping system already in place, anticipating the regulatory requirements that would have been imposed by registering the funds, the board will send written confirmation of every transfer, send quarterly accounting statements to all participants, and note expenses for all 13 investment funds.

In other legislative matters, trustees were briefed on other new laws affecting Annuity Board plans and programs. Working through the Church Alliance, an organization of 29 mainline denominational pension boards, the Annuity Board helped secure passage of parts of the Church Retirement Benefits Simplification Act which were attached to the minimum wage bill passed Aug. 5 and signed into law Aug. 20. The new law clarified for the Internal Revenue Service that no Self Employment Tax (SECA tax) is due on that portion of a retired minister's pension that is a properly designated minister's housing allowance. In 1995 the IRS had issued guidelines to its auditors to claim the SECA tax when auditing retired ministers' tax returns. The new law also clarified that chaplains and self-employed ministers can participate in a church pension plan. Another section of the bill established a special foreign missionaries rule that exempts, from taxation, employer contributions to foreign missionaries' pension plans.

The board's relief committee considered 59 relief requests. They approved 32 two-year monthly grants, 10 two-year expense grants, two one-time grants, and returned three applications for additional information. Twelve requests were declined for being outside the guidelines. The Relief Ministry is funded by the SBC Cooperative Program Allocation Budget and supplemented by the board's Retired Ministers' Support Fund. Treasurer Richardson reported Cooperative Program receipts of \$863,447 through September, a 2 percent increase over 1995. The total spent for relief year to date is \$1,008,814.

The Relief Committee approved 62 new recipients for Adopt An Annuitant benefits, a special Annuity Board program that pays \$50 each month to annuitants with inadequate benefits. Trustees were told funding is now available to pay 2,795 of these benefits funded by direct gifts of individuals, churches and organizations.

Responding to a motion referred from the Southern Baptist Convention, trustees unanimously declared the Annuity Board "... eager to receive applications for retirement plan participation and insurance plan participation for teachers, administrators and other employees of Christian schools owned and operated by or affiliated with entities eligible for participation in our plans."

A second motion by a messenger to the SBC, requesting the Annuity Board to forward proxy-voting privileges to the SBC Christian Life Commission, was declined, also by unanimous vote, because of legal and fiduciary constraints.

The next scheduled meeting of Annuity Board trustees will be Feb. 24-25 in Dallas.

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**Exemption from securities law  
stops Annuity Board preparation**

**By Thomas E. Miller Jr.**

**Baptist Press  
11/7/96**

DALLAS (BP)--Backed by a new federal law exempting church pension funds from securities laws, trustees of the Southern Baptist Convention Annuity Board voted to discontinue preparations for changing the board's investment funds to registered mutual funds.

After more than two years of staff and consultant work designed to avoid possible legal problems associated with pension and securities laws, trustees celebrated the passage of the National Securities Markets Improvement Act of 1996 which was passed by Congress and signed by President Clinton on Oct. 11.

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Two business trusts approved by the SBC Executive Committee in February 1996 would have been the legal mechanism for using registered mutual funds for the board's investment activities. Those trusts will be terminated and dissolved. The Committee on Nominations for the Southern Baptist Convention will be notified it is not necessary to make nominations for the business trust directors (trustees) in 1997. Annuity Board President Paul W. Powell said each 1996 nominee for "disinterested" trustee will be notified of the board action that makes their service unnecessary.

In the lengthy process leading to SBC Executive Committee approval of the business trusts, both the Executive Committee and the Annuity Board sought to reassure all parties that nothing in the process was a threat to ultimate control of the Annuity Board by the SBC. Both entities had their own legal staff and external legal consultants go over every detail of the plan, and discussions and reports were made back and forth.

"We could not have had better cooperation from Executive Committee President Morris Chapman and the Executive Committee lawyers," Powell said. "The Executive Committee's subcommittee leadership extended every courtesy to us to help all of us reach the best decision possible, given the facts as they existed. Now, the Congress has relieved us of some very thorny potential problems, and we are free of some serious threats to our ministry.

"Many church pension boards were facing the same issues we were," Powell said, "and are now relieved to be able to avoid the regulatory and reporting requirements associated with registered mutual funds. The future savings from what we will not have to produce for the federal and state regulators represents a significant potential impact on earnings for our participants. A few basis points (one 100th of 1 percent) on billions of dollars turns out to be an expense you would avoid if you could. Now we can avoid the expenses of registered funds, and we're very glad our participants won't have to pay these."

Gordon Hobgood, chief operating officer, noted much of the preparation for converting the investment funds to registered funds will contribute to better participant service and information. "We have always emphasized that our restructured investment program, from four to 13 funds, would be implemented Jan. 1, 1997, regardless of the decision on registering. Our participants needed and deserved more choices and more personal control of their assets. Some of the very same reporting requirements for registered funds were anticipated for our new funds," he said.

With the advent of daily valuation of investment funds in October, written confirmation of each fund transfer is generated. The board's toll-free telephone service is integrated with the voice information processing service (VIP Service) to enable participants to hear daily valuation of their accounts and make fund transfers at the close of any business day by using a touch-tone telephone.

Beginning in 1997, all participants will receive quarterly accounting statements, and statements of expenses for each of the 13 new investment funds will be published.

The passage of the securities amendments of 1996, while granting exemption from securities laws, did impose some additional requirements on church plans. James T. Herod, general counsel for the Annuity Board, noted the new law "ERISA-fies" to some extent Section 403(b)(9) retirement plans maintained by the Annuity Board. Herod was referring to the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, from which church plans are generally exempted. Herod said, "We still don't have all the reporting burden of ERISA, but the exemptions granted in the National Securities Markets Improvement Act of 1996 are available only to a church plan described in section 414(e) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, if, under such plan, no part of the assets may be used for, or diverted to, purposes other than the exclusive benefit of plan participants or beneficiaries. This is the same as a part of ERISA regulations designed to protect the interest of private retirement plan participants."

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**Layman elected president  
of Missouri convention**

**Baptist Press  
11/7/96**

COLUMBIA, Mo. (BP)--Messengers to the Missouri Baptist Convention annual meeting Oct. 28-30 elected Springfield layman Arthur Mallory president and defeated motions to remove the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs as an exhibitor and to require trustees and committee members to affirm the inerrancy of the Bible.

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Mallory defeated Jeff Barnes, a Blue Springs pastor. Mallory and Barnes had served this past year as second vice president and first vice president, respectively, making it the first time in seven years the current first vice president was not elected president.

Mallory received 728 votes, or 52 percent, and Barnes received 673, or 48 percent.

The 162nd annual meeting attendance -- 1,883 messengers and 1,050 guests -- was up from the 2,697 registered participants in last year's meeting in Kansas City.

Bob Webb, pastor of Memorial Baptist Church, Columbia, was elected first vice president; Wendell Page, pastor of First Baptist Church, Lee's Summit, second vice president; and Dawn Phillips, member of First Baptist Church, Chillicothe, recording secretary.

For the second consecutive year, a motion to require people serving on Missouri Baptist Convention committees, agency boards and commissions to acknowledge the inerrancy of the Bible failed to garner enough support to pass.

Messengers also defeated a motion to ban the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs from exhibiting at the annual meeting and another to study the possibility of again offering child care to messengers.

A motion to instruct MBC staff to discontinue the practice of forwarding designated contributions from churches to non-Missouri Baptist Convention- or Southern Baptist Convention-related causes was referred to the MBC executive board.

One bylaw amendment was approved -- that the names of Missouri Baptist ministers who die in the previous year be read during a memorial service at the annual meeting.

The motion to deny exhibit space to the Baptist Joint Committee was made by Roger Moran, a messenger from First Baptist Church, O'Fallon. It was defeated on a 498-456 vote.

Messenger Robert L. Garringer, pastor of First Baptist Church, Memphis, took a different tack than last year, when his motion said people serving the MBC had to "believe and affirm that God inspired the writers of the Bible so that they were kept free from writing any kind of error." His motion to the 1996 annual meeting said those serving "shall be persons who adhere to the Baptist Faith and Message."

In debate on the motion, Garringer pointed out the convention's newsjournal (Word & Way) editorial policy cites the Baptist Faith and Message in holding the editor responsible for any departure from the Scriptures. He said Missouri Baptists should expect the same from all who represent the state convention.

Among those arguing against the motion was messenger John Owen, pastor of First Baptist Church, Cape Girardeau. He asked who would have the authority and power to judge other Baptists.

For decades Missouri's local churches have determined who is worthy of service, Owen noted, and judgment should be left in their hands.

As an amendment to MBC bylaws, the motion required a two-thirds majority to pass. The vote, by a show of ballots, appeared to be against the motion by a small margin.

David Tolliver, pastor of Oak Hill Baptist Church, St. Louis, made the motion on forwarding of designated contributions. Before permitting debate on Tolliver's motion, presiding convention president Doyle Sager announced he was planning to refer the motion to the MBC executive board because the board's business and finance plan states the board shall be the disbursing agent for churches.

Tolliver said his motion was prompted by an awareness the MBC forwards money designated by churches to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship -- a practice he became aware of through the listening sessions Sager and MBC Executive Director Don Wideman conducted earlier this year.

"I will defend your right to support the CBF, however, you do not deserve the blessing -- if you would, the amen -- of the Missouri Baptist Convention," Tolliver declared.

Wideman told messengers the policy was studied and ratified in 1991. The MBC and other state Baptist conventions forward funds to various causes -- which Wideman said have included Mid-America Baptist Seminary in Memphis, Tenn., and a National Baptist college in Kansas City along with CBF -- as a service to churches.

Messenger Timothy Faber, pastor of Santa Fe Trail Baptist Church, Boonville, made a motion to appeal the chair's decision to refer the motion. The motion failed on a show of ballots and the motion was referred to the executive board.

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Resolutions were approved commending members of Congress who voted for the ban on partial-birth abortions; supporting Christian civic responsibility; congratulating the Missouri Baptist Foundation in its 50th anniversary and to the Word & Way for its 100th anniversary; and in appreciation of Wideman, who is retiring next year.

Messengers extended the convention partnerships with Belarus and Wyoming through 2000 and adopted a \$15.5 million Cooperative Program budget for 1997, an increase of \$200,000 over 1996.

Cooperative Program distribution percentages remained the same as in 1996: 35.75 percent, or \$5,541,250, for Southern Baptist Convention causes; 6 percent, or \$930,000, for causes that mutually benefit Missouri Baptist and Southern Baptist Convention causes; and 58.25 percent, or \$9,028,750, for MBC causes.

Messengers also passed the only other recommendation to receive significant discussion, that the annual convention in the year 2000 be held Oct. 30-Nov. 1 at the Tan-Tar-A Marriott Resort on Lake of the Ozarks in Osage Beach.

Bob Stevens, layman from Ballwin Baptist Church, questioned the association of the Marriott chain with Mormons. "I don't believe we as Southern Baptists should support Mormons financially," he said.

Administrative committee chair Fred Fishel responded the convention mandates the convention move around the state. At the Lake of the Ozarks, he said he believed Tan-Tar-A is the only Lake of the Ozarks hotel to meet guidelines for hosting the MBC annual meeting.

Voting by ballot, messengers approved the executive board's recommendation to meet at Tan-Tar-A by 730-555.

A special offering on the final two nights of the convention for mission work in MBC's partner state, Wyoming, totaled \$3,118.

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### **Virginians defeat proposal to permit church incorporation**

**By Robert Dilday**

**Baptist Press  
11/7/96**

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Virginians narrowly defeated a proposal on the Nov. 5 ballot to permit churches in the state to incorporate.

The proposed constitutional amendment, one of five statewide votes, drew 973,138 votes in opposition and 955,232 in favor, a statistical dead heat. All but four precincts had reported by Nov. 7.

The amendment was designed to allow churches to structure themselves as nonprofit corporations, as they can do in 48 other states.

Opponents of the proposal warned incorporation would give state government regulatory power over churches, since incorporated churches would have to file papers and annual reports with the State Corporation Commission, a state agency.

Proponents maintained incorporation would protect church members and officials from liability in civil suits.

But ignorance rather than principle may have been the deciding factor in the amendment's defeat.

Roger J. McClure of Fairfax, Va., the member of the Virginia House of Delegates who sponsored the amendment, said he didn't think the proposal was controversial enough to warrant a campaign to educate voters. Consequently, "people were left to make up their minds on a fairly complicated issue" in a vacuum, he told the Richmond Times-Dispatch.

The anti-religious read the amendment as allowing churches to get involved in business, while the religious saw it as a conspiracy by the state to take over churches and synagogues, McClure said.

Neither of those would have resulted if the amendment had been adopted, the delegate said.

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## Seminary trustee puts emphasis on soul-winning

By Debbie Moore

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--At the rate Southern Baptists currently are working, the pastor noted, the SBC would need 450 years to finish getting the gospel out to Americans -- that is, 450 years if no one else were born and if no one else were to die.

At their same rate of telling people about Christ, the pastor continued, Southern Baptists would need more than 6,000 years to get the word out to all the world, again if no one else were born and if no one else died.

"But out of the world of statistics, in real life, more than 90 millions babies are born every year around the world, and one person dies every second," said Morris Anderson, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pigeon Forge, Tenn., and a trustee for New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Anderson was chairman of the search committee which selected Charles S. Kelley Jr. to be the eighth president of New Orleans Seminary.

Speaking to students during an Oct. 30 chapel session, Anderson said Southern Baptists must be soul-winners.

"When should a person begin to be a soul-winner? Well, when does a candle begin to give off light?" Anderson asked.

"A person should begin to be a soul-winner the moment he or she gets saved," he said, "just as a candle begins to give off light as soon as it's lit."

Anderson, who has taught personal soul-winning classes more than 20 years, said he found out the hard way that "you don't start off by asking someone, 'Are you saved?'" which leads people to respond either, "From what?" or "Huh?"

Anderson also doesn't start off asking people, "Are you a Christian?" because that statement leads people to respond, "I live in America; of course I'm a Christian."

Instead, Anderson has found much more effective the presentation question from Evangelism Explosion: "Have you come to the place in your spiritual life that, if you were to die right now, you know you would go to heaven?" People know exactly what you're talking about when you ask them that question, Anderson said.

He told seminary students of children in his congregation who are being diligent soul-winners, despite their age. Nine-year-old Michael Frye led one of his classmates to Christ while he and his friend sat together on a bus on the way back to school after a field trip. When his mother asked him how he did it, he replied, "Well, I've heard pastor Anderson do the invitation that way every Sunday for years!"

In mid-October middle-schooler Andrew Whaley started an after-school Bible study each Tuesday. So far, he has led 67 classmates to Christ through his simple yet devoted efforts.

"You can't win them all, but you can win some," Anderson said. "But we're not going to win any if we don't even try.

"Soul-winning -- who ought to do it?" he asked.

"Everybody."

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## Southwestern D.Min. undergoes leadership transfer, changes

By Bryan McAnally

Baptist Press  
11/7/96

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Many parents hope their child someday will be called "doctor." That makes Jimmie Nelson a dream-maker. Since 1972, the associate dean for the doctor of ministry program at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary has taught, counseled and mentored nearly 600 students working toward the doctoral degree.

Southwestern's doctor of ministry program, initially an extension of the master of divinity program, had been under Nelson's care from its beginning in 1972. Last June, Nelson handed responsibilities over to Harry Hunt, professor of Old Testament.

Nelson stressed he was not retiring but will continue as professor of preaching. "I've been teaching throughout my work as associate dean, but I'm planning on staying primarily in the classroom for at least three more years."

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Nelson himself initiated the leadership change.

"I wanted to have somebody in harness so there would be no gap in the D.Min. program when I do retire. I'm happy Harry is the new associate dean. He has worked long hours to help reorganize this program. He comes well-qualified and is very knowledgeable."

Hunt said under Nelson's leadership, Southwestern has built "the greatest D.Min. program" in the world.

"I love it -- I'm sold on it," Hunt exclaimed. "There are two types of D.Mins. in this world. The first covers 'hot topics,' while the second is academic. Southwestern's D.Min. is academic, but we hit the key issues. We don't just try to draw a crowd with the issues, we try to give them something they can use tomorrow, too."

Since 1977, when Nelson became chairman of the professional studies committee, he has shaped and changed the program, making it more practical and broadly applicable to those who enroll in it.

"We've always been a supporter of both the practical and the applicable when supplying top-quality Baptist theological instruction," he said.

Among the most recent changes are a per-semester-hour fee, rather than a fixed fee structure. The new plan provides flexibility in offerings, Hunt noted. "Now students can take classes in one, two or four-week blocks."

The program will branch out to Southwestern's Houston campus this fall. Hunt expects an enrollment of five to eight students, with classes being offered Tuesdays and Thursdays.

"We believe we can operate this satellite campus without the additional responsibilities being more difficult than what we're currently doing," he said.

Southwestern D.Min. grads currently fill key leadership positions in various Baptist institutions and in countless associations and churches around the country and overseas.

The inaugural class of D.Min. candidates graduated in December 1973 and included John Sullivan, executive director/treasurer of the Florida Baptist Convention.

"I was in the first batch," Sullivan noted. "Nelson had just joined the faculty -- most of us were older students -- and it was an interesting journey. I have never regretted doing the D.Min. It was perhaps the best education journey in my ministry. Nelson put us through the mill and made better men of us."

Others who completed the program agree.

Ed Rogers, director of the Human Welfare Coordinating Board for the Baptist General Convention of Texas, credits the D.Min. program for being the launching pad for a life of dynamic Christian service.

"It's not just coincidental that during and immediately following my time at Southwestern my church went through one of the greatest developmental periods in its history. I look upon my D.Min. experience as being a turning point in my life and ministry," he said.

According to Gene Mims, vice president of the Baptist Sunday School Board's church growth group, his tutelage under Nelson provides assistance on a daily basis.

"I recently completed strategic planning for the church growth group and thought about how his teaching and mentoring influenced me in my first attempts at setting goals and writing action plans," he said.

Sometimes the best advice Nelson ever gave was in telling students to wait before enrolling in the D.Min. program.

"The memory is still vivid of my first meeting with Dr. Nelson 16 years ago," said Jay Gross, pastor of Memorial Baptist Church in Houston. "I was a fresh M.Div. graduate and ready to jump into the doctoral program. His advice was, 'Go start pastoring, start your family, enjoy life for a year or two then come back and see me.' That wasn't what I wanted to hear at the time, but discovered it to be wise counsel."

Gross said Nelson demonstrates "a gift of helping people calm the storm and chop some of their giant crises down to size."

Ken Hall, president of Buckner Baptist Benevolences, said Nelson "is one of those people who stands at the front line as a guiding force in my life and ministry. His leadership and effective mentoring of so many of us is a treasure that can only be measured in eternity."

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EDITORS' NOTE: Please add the following to the end of the (BP) story titled "Anti-gambling sentiment felt across the country," dated 11/6/96, and add the name of Laurie Lattimore to those contributing to the story:

Alabama:

Legalized bingo in Alabama had little problem receiving voters' endorsement as they approved three bingo-related amendments Nov. 5.

Statewide, 57 percent of voters approved nonprofit bingo in three cities in northwest Alabama's Morgan County. Voters also approved by a 55-percent majority giving local officials in Jefferson County control over setting limits on prize earnings. Previously, the state constitution prohibited individual earnings of more than \$1,200 during a bingo session and \$2,400 in a week.

In a local election, Russell County voters also approved nonprofit bingo. The amendment was similar to the Morgan County proposal, but it received unanimous approval by the Alabama legislature and did not have to go to a statewide vote.

"We've got enough Baptists in this state to defeat any issue, but they just didn't go to the polls and vote," said Padgett Cope, associate director for Alabama Citizens Action Program.

However, there could be a legal battle over the bingo amendments for Russell and Morgan counties. The ballot language asked voters to approve "for profit" bingo operations, but the proposed amendment to the constitution strictly limits it to "nonprofit" bingo.

Legal counsel for the Alabama secretary of state's office and the state attorney general's office confirmed the discrepancy between the ballot and the amendment could be legally challenged.

"The variance leads it open to legal attack," said Chuck Granger, general counsel for the secretary of state. "I don't know what a judge will decide, but I think (the variance) is substantial."

Bill Pryor, of the state attorney general's office added there is a "definite potential court case here."

Arizona:

Voters by a two-thirds majority approved an amendment to allow all of the state-recognized Indian tribes to participate in negotiations for state-authorized gambling compacts.

Sixteen of the Arizona's 21 Indian tribes currently have legalized gambling. The amendment will open the door to legalized gambling for the state's five other Indian tribes.

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