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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE:
SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2355
Herb Hollinger, Vice President
Fax (615) 742-8910
CompuServe ID# 70420,17

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Martin King, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 898-7522, CompuServe 70420,250
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 333 N. Washington, Dallas, Texas 75246-1798, Telephone (214) 828-5232, CompuServe 70420,115
NASHVILLE Linda Lawson, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300, CompuServe 70420,57
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151, CompuServe 70420,72
WASHINGTON Tom Strode, Chief, 400 North Capitol St., #594, Washington, D.C. 20001, Telephone (202) 638-3223, CompuServe 71173,316

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SBC restructuring net savings
should be \$34 to \$41 million By Herb Hollinger

Baptist Press
6/10/96

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--The restructuring of the Southern Baptist Convention should produce a net savings, after all expenses, of approximately \$34 to \$41 million over five years, according to the chairman of the group coordinating the reorganization.

Robert E. Reccord, chairman of the Implementation Task Force, said the anticipated savings "are not an opportunity to build reserves or reduce giving but an opportunity to redirect resources from duplicated administrative operations to frontline ministries." Reccord is pastor of First Baptist Church, Norfolk, Va., and a member of the SBC Executive Committee.

The restructuring of the denomination, which will reduce the number of SBC agencies from 19 to 12, is part of the "Covenant for a New Century" approved at the SBC's 150th anniversary meeting in Atlanta in 1995. The 80-member Executive Committee was given responsibility for coordinating the massive restructuring and, in September, appointed a 10-member Implementation Task Force to begin working with the affected agencies and to come up with a transition plan.

Reccord introduced the ITF report, "Transition Plan for Covenant for a New Century," to the pre-convention meeting of the SBC Executive Committee June 8 in New Orleans. The SBC annual meeting is in the Louisiana Superdome June 11-13.

The ITF report is the first detailed look at the transition of the SBC restructuring which, organizationally, will be in place at the end of the SBC meeting in Dallas in 1997. The eight-page report, to be made available to the public during the SBC meeting, includes cost/benefits associated with the mergers and dissolutions of the seven agencies.

A major part of the report deals with the creation of a new agency, the North American Mission Board, from the merger of three agencies: the Home Mission Board, Brotherhood Commission and Radio and Television Commission.

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The report says the one-time costs of severance, relocation of personnel and non-real estate implementation costs are between \$4.1 million and \$5.7 million. The recurring savings from labor efficiencies (derived primarily by eliminating redundancies and duplications) are estimated at \$6 million per year for five years. Another \$3 million in recurring savings will come from non-labor efficiencies, the report says.

Net savings for NAMB in the first five years are estimated to be \$30 to \$37 million with the recurring costs recaptured "within two years." Approximately \$4 million in additional savings will be realized from restructuring and dissolution of other agencies, the report estimates.

The only question mark about the NAMB report is whether the RTVC production facilities will be relocated to the NAMB site in Atlanta. Apparently there are three possibilities: 1) move everything to Atlanta, 2) keep production facilities in Fort Worth, Texas, while administrators move to Atlanta, and (3) subcontract out all projects needed. That decision has not been made as yet, Reccord said in response to questions by Executive Committee members David Tolliver, St. Louis, Mo., and Bill Phillips, Portland, Ore.

Tolliver and Phillips also asked "who" would make that decision. Reccord said it hasn't been decided but it would be made in complete consultation with RTVC officials.

Reccord, in response to a question from Blaine S. Barber, Petoskey, Mich., said the ITF meetings would remain closed to the media, per recommendations from legal counsel, but consideration can be given to opening the meetings at a later date.

The Executive Committee unanimously approved the report which will be given to the annual meeting June 11 by Reccord.

Reccord reminded the committee that all of the report, including a proposed charter for NAMB to be voted on by SBC messengers, is predicated on the second approval by messengers of SBC Bylaw 15 which lists the SBC agencies. The change in Bylaw 15 is the only part of the restructuring plan which needs approval at two successive SBC meetings.

Reccord said the ITF had invested 4,000 man hours thus far and said there is "no comfortable way to do change," adding that change is never an event but a "journey." He said the ITF was always looking for the "win-win" situation when dealing with the changes called for in the restructuring.

Executive Committee chairman Ronnie W. Floyd, pastor of First Baptist Church, Springdale, Ark., called the ITF report "absolutely splendid."

The ITF report lists in detail how each affected agency will deal with the restructuring. The Historical Commission and the Southern Baptist Foundation will be dissolved; the Education Commission and the Stewardship Commission will be dissolved through a legal merger into the Executive Committee; The Southern Baptist Commission on the American Baptist Theological Seminary will be dissolved; and a new North American Mission Board will incorporate the Home Mission Board, Brotherhood Commission and Radio and Television Commission in a legal "merger."

Also, the Foreign Mission Board will become the International Mission Board and the Christian Life Commission will become the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission.

The legal phase of the restructuring will be completed and effective in June 1997.

The ITF had earlier estimated its own costs of travel, communication, legal work and consultation fees to total \$800,000.

The primary motivation in the Covenant for a New Century, the ITF report said, "is increasing the effectiveness of the churches of the SBC in spreading the gospel."

Regarding personnel of the affected agencies, the ITF report said the "vast majority of the people working for SBC entities will continue in their current jobs after the implementation However, because of the provisions (of restructuring) some employees will be severed or relocated to a new entity."

Reccord said the affected agencies are taking "great care" to fairly compensate those who face job loss through such things as retention and severance benefits, early retirement options and outplacement assistance. The report said the "final disposition about employees' future employment will not be known before the fall of 1996." The report suggested guidelines to the agencies "in caring for personnel during the transition." The total number of personnel in the seven affected agencies was 566 as of mid-1995.

The ITF said its strategy "is to involve the affected entities in discussion and planning with a view to establishing a mutually agreed upon plan of action and timetable." The report concludes with a "review" and "action plan" for each affected agency.

In the "conclusion" of the report, the ITF says it will need the "goodwill and the cooperation of the leadership of the affected entities. Because the implementation is a strategic, complex and on-going enterprise, the ITF covets the prayers of all Southern Baptists for this work."

In other actions, the Executive Committee:

- approved resolutions of appreciation for R. Quinn Pugh, retiring executive director-treasurer of the Baptist Convention of New York, and W. Guy Henderson, retiring editor of Mississippi's The Baptist Record newspaper.

- will recommend a revised mission statement for the Covenant for a New Century by adding the doxology "to the glory of God the Father." The latter is a reversal of the Executive Committee's action last September following a referral from the 1995 SBC meeting asking for an addition to the mission statement recognizing the doctrine of the Trinity of God.

SBC President Jim Henry also spoke to the Executive Committee, sharing some thoughts from his two years as president. He urged the committee members to "stay on your knees, stay in the Book and stay close to the people."

"I'll miss the prayers of the people and churches I've had these last two years," Henry said.

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Implementation time line
listed for restructuring

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NEW ORLEANS (BP)--The following time line for implementation is part of the Implementation Task Force report, "Transition Plan for Covenant for a New Century," to the 1996 Southern Baptist Convention in New Orleans.

A. June 1996: Final approval of Bylaw 15 revisions.

B. June-September 1996: Detailed Transition Plans are finalized by the ITF and the various boards.

C. October 1996-June 1997: The Transition Plans are executed in order to achieve orderly and timely legal and organizational transfer to the new structure.

D. June 1997: The Executive Committee reports to the SBC, recommending any further necessary legal revisions; the entities become legally operational; the former agencies cease.

E. June 1997-June 1998: The ITF monitors the implementation of Covenant for a New Century.

- Reviews Annual Ministry Plans and progress of entities in assuming ministry assignments of the Covenant for a New Century

- Reviews budgets to insure cost savings are achieved

- Reports to Executive Committee any ministry statements in need of reformulation

- Evaluates ministry assignments for any deficiencies or oversights and recommends action

- Insures that provision has been made for displaced personnel

- Insures that appropriate audits and inventories have been completed

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-- Insures that record and document retention has been accomplished by SBHLA for discontinued entities

-- Reports to the Executive Committee

F. June 1998: The Executive Committee gives implementation progress report to the SBC

G. June 1998-June 2000: The ITF monitors the status of new ministries, reviews Annual Ministry Plans and budgets, and reports to the Executive Committee, assisting the Executive Committee with reports to the SBC.

H. June 2000: The Executive Committee reports to the SBC the final implementation of approved programs and structure for major advance in ministry in the third millennium.

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African American church fires
likely topic of SBC resolution

Baptist Press
6/10/96

By Dwayne Hastings & Tammi Ledbetter

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--The sickening glow of churches burning across the southeastern United States is expected to attract the attention of messengers to the 1996 Southern Baptist Convention in New Orleans.

Meeting June 11-13 in the Louisiana Superdome, representatives of Southern Baptist churches will consider several resolutions including condemning the apparent torching of more than 30 African American churches in the past 18 months.

"This desecration and destruction of churches is a particularly heinous form of hatred," said Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, in submitting the resolution to the SBC Resolutions Committee.

"It is the duty of Southern Baptists to pray for, support and stand with our sister churches in the African American community who are being victimized by these hoodlums," Land said. In addition to heading the SBC ethics and religious liberty agency, Land is a convention messenger from First Baptist Church, Franklin, Tenn.

A watermark of the 1995 convention in Atlanta was the passage of a resolution apologizing for current and past racism within the Southern Baptist Convention. Since that meeting, convention leaders have formed a racial reconciliation task force which is exploring ways to make denominational leadership more reflective of its constituency and to eliminate any vestiges of systematic racism within the convention.

The Resolutions Committee also is expected to consider a resolution criticizing the Walt Disney Company for establishment of a personnel policy which "embraces homosexual relationships" and for the company's "production of objectionable (film) material."

Additionally: Messengers to the convention may receive for consideration a resolution decrying the legalization of same-sex marriages. The Resolutions Committee will consider a proposed resolution which calls recent government action to legitimize homosexual unions as "an abominable sin."

Also on the committee's docket for possible recommendation for convention action are a denouncement of religious persecution and denial of the rights of Christians worldwide; a call for Southern Baptists to "affirm the biblical and Hippocratic prohibitions against assisted suicide;" and a call for "maximum enforceable legislation to prohibit indecent material in cyberspace."

The committee is expected to act on a proposed resolution which laments "the shedding of innocent blood by abortion," asking Southern Baptists to pray that President Clinton will reverse his veto of legislation outlawing a late-term abortion measure, called "partial-birth abortion."

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A resolution in support of federal legislation establishing a commission to study the impact of gambling upon society will be reviewed by the committee. The resolution is expected to urge the U.S. Senate and the president to move forward by joining the House of Representatives in approving creation of the "National Gambling Impact and Policy Commission Act."

Resolutions have played a part in Southern Baptist meetings since its first meeting in 1845. Since 1959, 40 resolutions have dealt with church-state issues, 30 have addressed religious liberty, 22 have dealt with alcohol consumption, 20 have considered race relations, 17 have spoken to abortion issues and, particularly during the era of the Vietnam War, 18 involved issues of peace and war.

Incumbent presidents and members of the U.S. Congress and the Supreme Court have been targeted:

-- President Ronald Reagan was criticized for appointing an ambassador to the Vatican.

-- Just hours before incumbent President George Bush spoke to the 1991 SBC meeting in Atlanta, Southern Baptists passed a resolution calling on him to withhold government funds Southern Baptists believed would encourage immoral sexual behavior, specifically criticizing a \$25,000 grant for "pro-homosexual" research at the Centers for Disease Control.

-- In 1993, messengers to the SBC in Houston passed a detailed resolution citing certain public policies advocated by President Clinton which were at odds with resolutions adopted by the SBC, further noting his membership in a Southern Baptist church.

This year's Resolutions Committee is equally likely to address moral issues currently being debated in the nation's political arena.

Nancy Victory of Shreveport, La., who is chairing the Resolution Committee, said, "Obviously the convention has never been hesitant to do that; so I don't see any change. We won't be afraid to tackle the issues."

Other committee members are pastors Jay Wolf, First Baptist Church, Montgomery, Ala.; Harry Lewis, Immanuel Baptist Church, Ridgecrest, Calif.; Joe Coats, Glendale Baptist Church, Miami; John Click, Immanuel Baptist Church, Wichita, Kan.; and Mark Acuff, Grace Baptist Church, Hudson, Mass.

Other members are Karen Bullock, church history professor at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas; Faith Kim, Santa Ana, Calif.; Linda Donnell of Hattiesburg, Miss.; and Jack Kwok, Little Rock, Ark., race relations director for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

Throughout committee deliberations, the Christian Life Commission serves as a resource, helping clarify some of the issues that arise from resolutions that are introduced.

"The Resolutions Committee has complete authority as to how they wish to do that, what kind of language they want to use and how specific they want to get," Land said.

The Resolutions Committee is holding its first meeting Monday, June 10, to consider resolutions submitted in advance by messengers.

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**Strong missions giving makes
missionary pay raise possible** By Mark Kelly

**Baptist Press
6/10/96**

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Prompted by stronger giving from Southern Baptists, Foreign Mission Board trustees approved an immediate missionary salary increase during their June 7-8 meeting in New Orleans.

Their action allocates \$1.4 million to upgrade raises based on length of service for the Southern Baptist Convention's nearly 4,200 foreign missionaries working in 129 countries and among 336 ethnic people groups.

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Meeting prior to the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, trustees also allocated \$3.3 million from real estate sales in Hong Kong to meet high-priority missionary housing needs elsewhere in the world.

Board President Jerry Rankin also challenged trustees to envision radically increasing the missionary force in countries of the former Soviet bloc to capitalize on momentum building in Baptist work there.

Stronger than expected giving by Southern Baptist churches and a slightly lower than expected growth rate in missionary numbers freed resources needed to finance the missionary pay raise, according to Carl Johnson, Foreign Mission Board vice president for finance.

Trustees' vote gives increases ranging from \$408 to \$3,240 per year for missionaries at the five-, 10- and 15-year cycles of service, beginning July 1.

"We've been saying we would give longevity raises to missionaries as soon as Southern Baptists increased their giving," said Avery Willis, senior vice president for overseas operations. "We've not been able to do that for a long time. This is a response to Southern Baptist giving."

Final figures for the 1995 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions showed an increase of 3.59 percent over the previous year. Giving through the Cooperative Program, the Southern Baptist unified budget, is up 2.42 percent in the first eight months of the fiscal year. And contributions during May were up 25 percent over the same period a year ago.

The move will encourage missionaries with long-term commitments to overseas service at the point where their family financial needs are growing, Willis said.

"We haven't been able to show our appreciation for those who are staying a long time," he said. "This will be a great encouragement to missionaries on the field, some of whom are facing very difficult financial situations. It will be a new lease on life to many."

The trustees' allocation of \$3.3 million from real estate sales in Hong Kong will allow them to meet high-priority missionary housing needs in other parts of the world.

In many places across Asia, property purchased decades ago has multiplied in value. As mission needs change, selling that real estate can generate large amounts of money to meet strategic needs in other parts of the world. For example, several properties in Hong Kong purchased in the 1960s for \$30,000 to \$70,000 were appraised at \$6.5 million to \$12 million in the 1990s.

"This is a lesson in stewardship, like Jesus' parable of the talents," said John White III, associate vice president of overseas operations. "Buying those missionary houses proved to be a good investment, as well as a ministry necessity."

The allocation will purchase housing in responsive places eager for new missionaries, such as the countries of the former Soviet Union. There, revitalized Baptist unions are requesting large numbers of new career missionaries.

Two of those countries, Russia and the Ukraine, were on board President Jerry Rankin's itinerary during a recent 12-day tour of European mission work. Rankin said Baptist leaders in both those countries urgently appealed for the immediate appointment of large numbers of new missionaries.

"Gregory Komandant, president of the Baptist union in the Ukraine, dispensed with the usual cordialities and opened our conversation by simply pointing his finger and saying, 'I want you to send 120 more missionaries by next year,'" Rankin told the trustees. "He said he would like to have two church planters in every district of the country."

Ukraine Baptists started 150 churches and reported more than 9,200 baptisms in 1995, Rankin said. The country symbolizes the tremendous opportunities created by the collapse of communism in many countries of the former Soviet bloc. Baptists in Russia will request 150 new missionaries next year, he said.

"The momentum in these countries must not be allowed to diminish," Rankin said. "I personally believe we would be remiss if we failed to deploy less than 1,000 missionaries to the Commonwealth of Independent States and Eastern Europe over the next five years."

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**Pre-SBC evangelism thrust
yields 1,100 new Christians**

**Baptist Press
6/10/96**

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--The city known for jazz, cajun cooking and sensual nightlife received an invitation to eternal life June 7-9. Early reports indicate more than 1,100 people accepted the offer and one church was started as a result.

During the pre-Southern Baptist Convention evangelism thrust known as Crossover New Orleans, volunteers gave away food and New Testaments, conducted neighborhood surveys, witnessed on the streets of the French Quarter and shared the gospel in four prisons. The annual SBC meeting will convene June 11.

"This will have a real impact on the city," Wayne Jenkins, director of evangelism for the Louisiana Baptist Convention, said. Crossover participants saturated the area with gospel presentations and strengthened local churches.

Six weeks before Crossover, members of Memorial Baptist Church, Metairie, La., began ministering in the St. Bernard Housing Community, home to 6,000 residents. With help from other churches and volunteers, a Crossover block party there served as a kickoff event for a new church that met for the first time June 9 on the St. Bernard property.

Don Whatley, Memorial's minister of missions, summarized the strategy: "Minister, win 'em to Christ and disciple 'em." Immediate needs include beds, air conditioners and fans, he said. Future plans call for medical ministry and parenting helps.

At the block party, 800 hot dogs were served, in addition to red beans and rice. About 230 people made professions of faith in Jesus Christ, Whatley said.

Residents are "hungry to know that somebody loves them and cares for them," observed Ed Pope, North Dakota Baptist Convention evangelism director, one of dozens of volunteers who witnessed, passed out Bibles and conducted activities for children.

Hundreds of youngsters played in an inflatable "moonwalk" and had their faces painted. Adults selected items of clothing donated by First Baptist Church, Lafayette, La. Baton Rouge-based Michael Ellerbe and the gospel group Refined By Fire provided music for the party, with Ellerbe enlisting a backup group of children to sing a semi-rap version of Romans 16:19-20. They leapt in unison at the promise that the God of peace will crush Satan under the feet of believers.

St. Bernard resident Catrina Evans expressed appreciation for the block party. "I like the way they read you the Bible and help you on these things." She commented that more teenage men needed to be present. "They're the most troublemakers."

New Orleans police officer Sgt. Rudolph Thomas, whose territory includes St. Bernard, said the block party would have more impact than anyone could guess. "More than anything, the people need direction, they need leadership, they need the gospel of Christ if there's going to be any real change in the quality of their lives."

Thomas pointed out that crime-fighting is "the back end" -- something people resort to when they're ready to make an exit from society. "We've got to catch them on the front end, and the front end is family and church and school."

In another, better-known area of the Crescent City, Crossover New Orleans volunteers worked in the French Quarter, where sex shows, psychics and voodoo shops assault visitors' senses. On Friday night, Tennesseans Don and Miny Weaver admitted their hearts were heavy at what they saw on Bourbon Street.

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"All the wickedness that's going on here -- how can our feeble effort make a difference?" Don Weaver asked. "It scares you; you almost feel like you ought to not be here at all. But still God loves these people. He created them and we need to see them through his eyes."

Later that evening in Cafe Joel -- a Christian coffee house on Bourbon Street -- Weaver led a man to the Lord and introduced him to a cafe worker for follow-up.

Noel Vincent, volunteer with a band from Houston's Northwest Baptist Church that was playing at the coffee house, acknowledge Bourbon Street challenged volunteers.

"First we have to watch ourselves and not leave anyone alone," said Vincent, an investment counselor. "But when someone gets saved, it's a party for us."

Salvation parties also were held in prisons as volunteers shared the gospel with inmates. At St. Gabriel women's prison, 67 people made professions of faith and 34 people were baptized Sunday morning. "It was electrifying," said Richard Harris, Home Mission Board director of mass evangelism who led the service.

Six students from various Louisiana colleges, part of a Baptist Student Union summer missions team, led three services at Louisiana Training Institute in Bridge City. The institute is home to 180 boys, ages 10 to 18, all wearing burr haircuts, white T-shirts and blue jeans. At least half of them came to the chapel services, clapped with the music and listened to the testimonies; 25 of the boys made professions of faith in Jesus Christ.

Gary Pearce, a Southern Baptist, is the only chaplain at the facility. He said he depends on volunteers such as the BSU team to help him work with the boys. "The state and our superintendent, Benny Harris, recognize that they have spiritual needs. That's why I'm here."

Meanwhile, groups of two canvassed area neighborhoods, asking residents about their religious beliefs and sharing the gospel.

"I'm so thankful for those who set this program up for us," said Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary President Mark Coppenger, an eight-year veteran of Crossover events. Coppenger said some people he met in New Orleans were eager to hear the gospel, and one of them prayed to receive Christ as Savior. He and his wife, Sharon, began their involvement in Crossover with the first such effort in 1989 in Las Vegas, Nev., and have participated every year since.

Greg Barker, pastor of Haynes Avenue Baptist Church, Shreveport, La., saw Crossover as a means of introducing the teenagers of his church to door-to-door evangelism. The church's WMU used their mission funds to cover expenses for the four adults and eight teenagers to make the day trip to New Orleans.

"It started out as a class project," added Beth Mericle, also of Shreveport. Admitting she wasn't excited by the prospect of witnessing in New Orleans, Mericle said, "I'm their Sunday school teacher and I knew it wouldn't look too good if the teacher didn't want to go. So I prayed about it and knew I needed to be here."

While the adults took the lead in sharing their faith in the neighborhood of Beacon Baptist Church, it didn't take long for the kids to speak out. "They saw that we were accepted well and all of a sudden they came alive," Barker said. "They were the ones knocking on the doors."

Gary and Tammi Ledbetter of Kansas City, Mo., surveyed a six-block area at the edge of the French Quarter where they encountered openly homosexual residents, prostitutes, cultists, several men who were intoxicated and many placing their trust in a Catholic upbringing. "Those are not the kind of people Baptists usually rub elbows with," said Ledbetter, dean of students at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

"Crossover provides some manpower and initial evangelistic contacts for struggling churches located where people don't usually like to go," he added.

Beacon Baptist Church "has a ministry in one of the harder six-block areas that I've ever seen," Ledbetter said, noting that the 82-year-old pastor of Beacon Baptist has developed a rapport with many in the area. "This church is made up primarily of older people in a neighborhood increasingly populated by young singles with some deep social problems. So it's a church that's located in the right place where there is a desperate need for the gospel and a clear witness."

J.B. Wells of Town Creek, Ala., led two people to faith in Christ. One was a 31-year-old man with a Catholic background "with a head knowledge of Jesus Christ." The other was a man in his 70s with no church affiliation.

While 15-year-old Rebecca Sides of Baton Rouge had witnessed to strangers in a small-town mission setting, the reception she found in New Orleans was vastly different. Though some people were unwilling to talk, that didn't discourage Sides. "People need to know the Lord and they need to go to heaven. They need to walk with the Lord." She and her friends left tracts at the doors of people who would not answer.

E.C. and Jeanie Mitchell also accompanied the Shreveport youth, grateful for the opportunity Crossover provided. "No matter how old you are, 5 or 85, a born-again Christian should start producing fruit," Mitchell said.

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Compiled by Sarah Zimmerman, with reporting by Tim Palmer and Tammi Ledbetter. (BP) photos and cutlines (6) posted in SBCNet News Room.

National Hispanic Fellowship

incorporates, adopts constitution By Joni Hannigan

Baptist Press

6/10/96

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Hispanic Baptists, who have been part of the Southern Baptist Convention for more than 100 years, formed a fellowship a decade ago and in 1996 settled on a new name, National Hispanic Southern Baptist Fellowship.

They also incorporated as an organization and approved a new constitution during their ninth annual meeting June 8 at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, where the day's activities drew nearly 100 participants. The fellowship gathering preceded the June 11-13 annual meeting of the SBC at the Louisiana Superdome.

One out of every 10 Americans claim Hispanic heritage, according to the 1990 census, and the figure is growing, Bob Sena, director of the office of Hispanic ministries for the language missions division of the Home Mission Board, said. This points to the need for more involvement of Hispanics in Southern Baptist life at every level, he said.

The fellowship hopes to increase the visibility of Hispanics among Southern Baptist leaders, Sena said in an interview. The fellowship represents 3,800 churches and works in support of 21 state Hispanic fellowships, with a total membership of nearly 500,000 members.

Newly elected president, Roberto J. Lopez, pastor of Bethel Baptist Church, Las Vegas, Nev., said the fellowship acts as a "spokesperson" and liaison for Hispanic individuals and churches, while supporting distinctives such as church autonomy and the priesthood of the believer.

New fellowship historian Julio Fuentes, minister of education at Northside Spanish Baptist Church, Hialeah, Fla., said the fellowship is helpful for Hispanics. "Historically it is very important for people who are thinking about problems in the same way, who speak the same language and have the same origins to work together inside of a big body -- in this case the SBC," he said.

In light of flagging attendance at the national meeting, fellowship leaders voted in their business session to approve a constitution and slate of officers. They predicted the new organization will create a solid foundation to increase fellowship funding, influence and visibility.

Definite plans to develop and implement bylaws to address issues not covered in a purposefully broad constitution were assigned to a committee to be appointed by the newly elected officers.

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Lopez said immediate response to the actions has been "very positive," with individuals and churches already pledging regular financial support and leadership.

Other officers elected are: Jose Luis Molliner, pastor of Northside Baptist church, Hialeah, Fla., vice president; Paul Rodriguez, president of the Hispanic fellowship in Utah/Idaho and pastor of First Spanish Baptist Church, Burley, Idaho, second vice president; Victor Mendosa, pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church, Aurora, Ill., secretary; Eduardo Decampo, director of missions, Greater Orlando (Fla.) Baptist Association, parliamentarian; Oscar Hermosillo, a minister from Comfort, Texas, treasurer; Ernesto Chaparro, pastor of Canaan Hispanic Baptist Church, Corona, N.Y., president of the missions committee; and Eliseo Fierro, pastor of New Hope Baptist Church, Brighton, Colo., nominating committee chairman.

At the June 8 meeting, Hispanics employed by SBC agencies presented information about agency resources and their involvement in Southern Baptist life. The Annuity Board, Baptist Sunday School Board and the Foreign and Home mission boards were represented. Additionally, Woman's Missionary Union and the Baptist Spanish Publishing House gave reports.

The conference, conducted almost entirely in Spanish, was punctuated by spirited "Musica Congregacional" led by Pedro Nunez, pastor of San Juan Baptist Church, DeQueens, Ark.

SBC President Jim Henry brought personal greetings and spoke about his relationship with the Hispanic fellowship as a result of his daughter's marriage to the son of outgoing president Rafael De Armas of Orlando, Fla. "I had to be here. If I did not come he would not give me any more roast pig," joked Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church, Orlando.

Speaking of the experiences he has had as president, Henry cited his appointment of Rudy Hernandez of San Antonio, Texas, an international evangelist and former SBC second vice president, to be one of 10 members of the Implementation Task Force overseeing the restructuring of the SBC.

Chaparro gave a missions report detailing work conducted by the fellowship in cooperation with the New York/New Jersey state Hispanic fellowship to support a mission in De Cachi, Ecuador. Other missions actions included a unanimous vote to accept a nine-page document presented by Eduardo Docampo titled, "The Beginning of an Hispanic National Strategy."

Other speakers on the program included Nilson Fanini, president of the Baptist World Alliance; Don Kammerdeiner, executive vice president of the Foreign Mission Board; David Fajardo, director of promotion for the Baptist Spanish Publishing House, El Paso, Texas, a ministry of the Foreign Mission Board; and Russell Begaye, director of the language church extension division of the Home Mission Board.

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Hispanic Baptists:
a melody of dialects By Joni Hannigan

Baptist Press
6/10/96

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--If the language of heaven is a melody of languages all spoken together, 21 distinct Hispanic dialects are represented among Southern Baptist Hispanic Christians.

Citing the diversity of Hispanic Southern Baptists, Rudy Hernandez of San Antonio, president of the Hispanic Fellowship of Texas and a former second vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention, asked participants in the June 8 meeting of the National Hispanic Southern Baptist Fellowship to raise their hands when he named their group.

Hands flew in the air or were hesitantly raised while Hernandez called out Mexico, Nicaragua, Argentina, Cuba, Chile, Colombia, Peru, Guatemala, El Salvador and others.

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"Here's an illustration just among the Hispanic leadership of Southern Baptists," Hernandez said. "We have this kaleidoscope; we are so multifaceted. The world needs to know what is going on among us."

Speakers and participants in the meeting ranged from first- and second-generation Hispanic Americans to recent immigrants from Spanish-speaking countries.

These differences are put aside among Hispanic Baptists to focus on ministry, said Bob Sena, director of the office of Hispanic ministries in the Home Mission Board's language missions division.

But that doesn't stop others from making assumptions and forming stereotypes based on ethnicity, Sena said.

With light brown eyes, blond hair and lightly freckled skin, both Luisa Molliner and her pastor husband, Jose Luis Molliner, of Northside Baptist Church, Hialeah, Fla., often are mistaken as Anglo Americans, although they came from Cuba 14 years ago.

"I feel sorry for Americans who come to Hialeah, because no one understands them," Luisa said. "Many of the shopkeepers and the people in the bakery speak only Spanish."

"All Hispanics don't eat burritos," Sena said. Southern Baptists need to understand there are more than 106 ethnic groups that Southern Baptists work with, he said, and even among Hispanics, Asians, African Americans and Native Americans, there are many differences.

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Begaye: SBC must impact
coming Ethnic Millennium By Joni Hannigan

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NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Southern Baptists are in danger of becoming "more exclusive and more 'white'" if they don't impact the coming Ethnic Millennium, a Southern Baptist Home Mission Board official warned.

Russell Begaye, director of the HMB language church extension division, released a paper on "The Ethnic Millennium" during the ninth annual Hispanic Southern Baptist Fellowship Conference June 8 at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

"Ethnic Millennium" is a term first used by Alvin Toffler, author of "Future Shock" and "The Third Wave," to describe 21st-century America as a "de-massified" new civilization focused on ethnic and cultural distinctives in values, work, political movements, religious beliefs and more.

"We have moved from Ozzie and Harriet to the Cosbys, from Walter Cronkite to Connie Chung and from Chevrolet to Honda," Begaye wrote. "In 1991, salsa out-sold ketchup by \$40 million The tortilla chip is now consumed by 60 percent of all U.S. households."

The dawning of the Ethnic Millennium is supported by 1990 U.S. Census records that say one out of every four Americans claim African, Hispanic, Asian or Native American ancestry, Begaye wrote. Immigration and growth has been primarily in mega-cities like San Francisco, Miami and Los Angeles, which means most large ethnic groups reside in California, Florida and New York.

By the year 2000, ethnics will outnumber Anglos in California, he predicted.

In contrast with earlier groups of immigrants who came to America to "assimilate" themselves into a predominantly European-based economy and culture, Begaye stated ethnics now are "maintaining and/or developing new cultural distinctives."

The new immigrants defy the stereotype of being uneducated, unruly and dependent on welfare, Begaye wrote. Instead, he wrote, these immigrants are "more diverse and educated," paying \$100 billion in taxes annually and rebuilding the inner cities of America.

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Businesses and companies recognize the "entrepreneurial spirit" of new immigrants, Begaye wrote. Catering to the growing immigrant market, banks, grocery stores, hospitals and Band-aid companies recognize a need to produce products and services that appeal to distinctly different ethnic groups.

"In 1993, companies like Procter & Gamble, Anheuser-Busch and Coca-Cola spent \$734 million promoting their goods that target only Hispanics," Begaye wrote.

Like companies who use today's technology to study ethnic groups, Southern Baptists can easily locate, analyze and cross-analyze ethnic America, he stated. But high-tech approaches fall short of actually being able to offer much information on how to reach each ethnic group or make programs culturally relevant.

"We must go among the people Too many administrative decisions are being made without any knowledge of how they impact the local church or ethnic communities," Begaye wrote. "Rather than de-massifying our programs, emphases, materials and approaches, we are still trying to fit the 106 ethnic groups we reach into one massive program after another."

Research techniques developed to target the dominant culture are ineffective for use with ethnics, Begaye stated in his paper. Lifestyle and value differences provide a different frame of reference for ethnics, while cultural issues of language, religion, family patterns, gender roles, education and aspirations continue to be important in understanding the "congregationalizing" of ethnic people groups.

Southern Baptists need to first consider cultural differences, and then present culturally relevant approaches, programs and materials. Six things he stated that people should remember when learning about the cultures are:

- 1) Learn how to ask the right questions.
- 2) Continually track emerging trends.
- 3) Properly use data.
- 4) Anticipate change.
- 5) Adjust strategies and programs to each ethnic people group.
- 6) Seek consultation from the targeted community.

Begaye called on a restructured Southern Baptist Convention to appropriately address the questions, "What does this mean for Southern Baptists? What do we need to do within our Southern Baptist culture to impact the coming Ethnic Millennium?"

"If they are not (answered), we will quickly become more exclusive and more white . . . a remnant of what we once were rather than being a mighty instrument of God in the coming Ethnic Millennium," Begaye wrote.

Asking SBC educational institutions to broaden their curriculum and to expand their degree programs to include the languages and cultures of ethnic students, Begaye called for more sensitivity to cultural distinctives and for SBC agencies to employ ethnics for upper-management positions.

"The Southern Baptist political structure must intentionally broaden ethnic representation on all boards of trustees," he wrote. He applauded the work of the SBC Inter-Agency Council resolution that called for, among other things, "the eradication of all forms of racism" and the inclusion of more ethnics in SBC agencies, and as trustees on boards."

Hiring ethnics on state convention staffs, working more closely with ethnics in associational work and establishing ethnic missions councils at the associational level would boost communication between groups for more effective ministry, Begaye stated.

"If we are serious about impacting the Ethnic Millennium," he concluded in his paper, "the new president of the North American Mission Board must be bilingual or even tri-lingual."

Reaching the lost is critical,
Rankin, Lewis tell WMU leaders

By Lonnie Wilkey & Charles Willis

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--The need to reach the world for Christ is becoming more critical than ever, the presidents of Southern Baptists' two missionary-sending agencies told participants in the 1996 Woman's Missionary Union annual meeting June 9.

Southern Baptist Home Mission Board President Larry Lewis emphasized the urgency to reach the United States for Christ by the year 2000. He cited at least five instances in the Bible which he said show that Jesus directed his followers to reach everyone in the world with the gospel.

"If we're to be about anything as a people of God, it's to be sharing the gospel," Lewis said. "People without Jesus are dammed, doomed and condemned. Until we believe that, we're not going to get very excited about missions."

More than 200 active and retired foreign missionaries introduced themselves during a separate session highlighting foreign missions.

Foreign Mission Board President Jerry Rankin said he could not recall having seen "such a large assemblage of our missionaries. It made me wonder who is minding the store," he joked. "But this is less than 4 percent of the active and emeritus Southern Baptist missionaries.

"The harvest on traditional (mission) fields is multiplying with more than 800 baptisms every day and more than 50 churches started each year," he said. "But I believe we are in danger of neglecting the harvest. We need to quit commending ourselves and realize God is doing something new. We need to recognize the terrible darkness of the night for those without Jesus Christ."

Rankin said FMB personnel have identified 2,466 people groups that have not been accessible to missionaries. And while foreign missionaries reached 41 new people groups last year, he said, the systematic effort to reach such groups cannot be accomplished quickly enough.

"Millions will die before we can reach them with the gospel," Rankin said.

During a session emphasizing reaching persons "in the homeland," Lewis praised Southern Baptist leaders who 20 years ago "dared to dream." Their dreams resulted in Bold Mission Thrust, Southern Baptists' plan to share Christ with everyone in the world by the year 2000.

"Those who dreamed that dream were not just having hallucinations. Almost 2000 years ago Jesus had the same strategy," Lewis said.

He told WMU members of the HMB's "Celebrate Jesus: 2000" interdenominational strategy to get the gospel message to everyone in America by the year 2000. The HMB plan, according to Lewis, calls for an extensive prayer effort in 1997, followed by taking Christ to every home in 1998 and ending with crusades throughout 1999.

"I believe Southern Baptists are on the threshold of a fourth Great Awakening," Lewis said.

"Let's stand with God and make it so," he challenged.

In a tribute to the contribution of Woman's Missionary Union to missions endeavors, Rankin called WMU "the missionary conscience of Southern Baptists, challenging us to financial support for those who go."

"Because of your sacrifice, we continue today," he said, noting that the auxiliary to the SBC has cumulatively contributed more than \$2 billion to the support of foreign missions and provided funds at critical times in FMB history.

The life of Lottie Moon, for whom Southern Baptists' annual foreign missions offering is named, "represents the life and work of WMU," Rankin said. Foreign Mission Board trustees, during their June 7-8 meeting in New Orleans, voted an increase in financial support for missionaries based on 1995 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering which exceeded \$89 million.

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While last year more than 15,000 persons participated in short-term volunteer projects, working alongside Southern Baptist foreign missionaries, Rankin said support for such efforts by WMU will be formalized during the June 11-13 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting with the signing of a covenant for WMU to begin enlistment of volunteers for the FMB.

"Stir up our churches," Rankin urged. "Mobilize the resources, renew the partnerships and the resources that we might reach out to all the people of the world."

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Research shows 9 trends
in evangelistic churches

By Karen L. Willoughby

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NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Prayer precedes evangelistic harvesting, preaching fuels it and Sunday school fans the flame, according to research compiled from Southern Baptists' most effective evangelistic churches.

Findings on the data were shared June 8 at the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Research Fellowship, which preceded the June 11-13 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in New Orleans. The meeting was held in the Leavell Center for Evangelism and Church Growth at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Thom S. Rainer, dean of the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., presented "A Study of Effective Evangelistic Churches in the SBC." The material came from his research into Southern Baptist churches that reported at least 26 baptisms in 1993 and had a ratio of no more than one baptism per 20 resident members that year.

Out of 40,000 Southern Baptist congregations in 1993, 1,385 met the criteria, Rainer said. He then sent a 10-page survey to them; about 700 were returned. The surveys from churches that were not able to maintain the criteria in 1994 were set aside, as were the surveys that had not been filled out correctly.

Rainer was able to use data from 576 churches and from it identified nine trends related to effective evangelistic churches:

1) Focus on conversion growth over total growth.

The most frequently mentioned evangelism methods were: preaching, 90 percent; prayer, 67 percent; Sunday school, 62 percent.

"Many gave testimony that evangelistic effectiveness began after a concerted prayer movement," said Rainer, who made on-site and telephone visits with about 200 of the churches in the study.

2) New emphasis on preaching. A look at preaching styles revealed about 74 percent of pastors in the study preached expository and textual sermons; about 15 percent, thematic and life application; about 6 percent, topical; and about 2 percent, narrative.

3) The amazing prayer movement. "It is very obvious that corporate prayer has preceded evangelistic effectiveness," Rainer said.

4) A re-evaluation of church growth methodologies. The cost of event evangelism, such as a major musicalevent, was found to be prohibitive for the results that were achieved, Rainer said. Revivals were shown to have a 47 percent effectiveness rate, and the most effective revivals occurred when an itinerant evangelist with a spiritual gift for harvesting souls was guest speaker. Weekday ministries such as day-care centers received an 11 percent effectiveness rate.

5) Renewal of the Sunday school. Two-thirds of respondents said Sunday school is very effective as an evangelistic tool.

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"Worship is still the front door in terms of initial entry," Rainer said. "However, what they're telling us is that worship alone does not engender effective evangelism. There must be a context for small-group evangelism to take place. For Southern Baptists, that is Sunday school."

6) A return to "going" for growth and evangelism. Church leaders told him they were going to continue to go into homes regardless of the response, Rainer said.

7) Worship-style debate ends. Forty percent of worship services in the most effective evangelistic churches are traditional/revivalist; 26 percent, blended; 17 percent, seeker/contemporary; and 1.5 percent, liturgical. Ten percent of the churches surveyed have seeker services geared to the unchurched.

8) Youth ministry is the new receptive field. There are 76 million baby boomers who were born in the years after World War II; there are 72 million "bridgers," Rainer's term for children between the ages of 2 and 19 whose education will span two centuries.

"This may be the most receptive generation to the gospel since the post-Depression-era 'builders,'" Rainer said. "But the challenge for Southern Baptists is, they're receptive to almost any religious system."

9) Explosion in church planting. The 576 churches in the survey started 200 churches in 1993. "They're discovering kingdom-building is more than local church building," Rainer said.

Rainer has written a book about his findings, "Effective Evangelistic Churches." It is to be published in August by the Baptist Sunday School Board's Broadman & Holman Publishers.

In another session, Clay Price, research and information services manager for the Baptist General Convention of Texas, presented findings developed by the interagency, ad hoc Church Ministries Research Team.

These findings came from the results of 805 responses to a 1995 questionnaire sent to 2,000 pastors and ministers of education. The purpose of the survey was to determine which ministry programs were being used and how effectively they were being used in the churches.

Preliminary results indicate a weakness in the "one-size-fits-all" method of providing one model of church program design for all size churches, he said, noting the research is still in process.

More than 99 percent of the churches offered Sunday school; music ministry, 93 percent; discipleship training, 81 percent; women/girls missions education, 70 percent; mens/boys missions education, 41.5 percent; co-ed mission education, 13 percent. The data also breaks down the information by church size.

"It's real clear from the study that small churches are not able to carry out the tasks of the current designs," Price said. "It's also clear that some churches are trying different approaches, especially in larger churches."

Chuck Kelley, president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, was guest speaker at a banquet at the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

"With a growth ratio of less than 1 percent, we're not far from declining as a denomination," Kelly said. "I believe the age wave is a part of God's plan for our future. I believe God intends to use our senior adults who can reflect a spark to help us recapture the fire of evangelism."

"Our current senior adults saw God do a mighty work," Kelley continued, referring to unprecedented Southern Baptist growth from 220,000 baptisms in 1945 to 415,000 baptisms in 1955. "We have to challenge our senior adults to articulate the memory."

There is an affinity developing between "builders," who live the principle of delayed gratification, sacrificing for worthy goals, and "busters," whose watchword is integrity, Kelley said.

"I believe God has busters as kindling for a great awakening, and seniors as the spark to set the fire blazing," Kelley said. "God has given something he has not given since the days of Noah -- extended life. It is life he has given for the sake of the church."

During a business session, two charter members of the fellowship, which was organized in 1978, were awarded lifetime memberships. J.V. Thomas was one of the early users of demographic data, when he was with the church extension department of the Baptist General Convention of Texas. James Lowry was a denominational statistician with the Baptist Sunday School Board.

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**Campus ministers challenged
to give spiritual guidance** By Jan Johnsonius & Brian Smith

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NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Campus ministers must give top priority to spiritual guidance rather than turning first to the "modern gurus" of secularized psychiatry and counseling, according to Gary Furr, pastor of Vestavia Hills Baptist Church, Birmingham, Ala.

Furr, keynote speaker for the June 7-9 annual meeting of the Association of Southern Baptist Campus Ministers in New Orleans, said too often today "when people have real problems, they go to a psychiatrist. They don't go to a pastor.

"Psychologists, psychiatrists and social workers are doing preliminary 'soul work,' and that means spiritual guidance is not being dealt with in the church like it should," Furr told about 25 participants in the sessions.

Psychoanalysts say they can take people to a certain place and then they can't go beyond that, Furr said. "All of this is a call to ministers to reclaim spiritual guidance."

He emphasized that a large part of the work of campus ministry involves guiding and directing young lives. "Guidance is an awesome task. It is more important than rallies, revivals and creative worship experiences," Furr said, adding that in North America the open door to God's spirit is through relationships.

When someone comes for help, Furr said their problem can typically be divided into one of three areas: 1) confusion, inability to cope and unconscious conflict, which can be treated through psychotherapy, 2) a dilemma of what to do, which is best handled through counseling, and 3) yearning for coherence and communion, searching for God, which requires spiritual guidance.

"It is inappropriate to treat spiritual guidance issues with psychotherapy. We need to distinguish spiritual issues from psychotherapy issues," he said.

Yet one of the biggest challenges in guiding college students and their ability to develop relationships is knowing how to deal with the developmental stages involved in human personality, Furr noted. "You are working with people who are not aware that there are developmental stages. They feel they have arrived -- they've gotten there."

Yet he said people in mid-life often undergo a temperament shift. "People move toward balance," he explained.

In another session of the meeting, Mike Nuss outlined how the campus ministry at the University of South Alabama (USA), where he has served the past 11 years, has benefited from a shift from a program-based to a relationship-based style of ministry.

"We were doing programs and hoping relationships would start," Nuss said, noting that relationships had become secondary to programs. "The students didn't learn to be leaders; they learned how to do something -- like make posters or plan car washes. There wasn't much leadership development."

The ministry at USA now focuses on small groups, he said, with students serving leadership roles in Bible study, outreach/evangelism and community ministry projects. "They are elected to leadership, not a particular assignment," he explained.

One result, Nuss noted, is that relationships among students are stronger. "Students now know other students, not just the council members. I've noticed our leaders being able to call students by name much earlier in the semester."

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He also said attendance and participation has been consistently higher. "We average about the same in May as we do in October."

Nuss also said the students benefit by becoming more well-rounded leaders. "I was concerned about how we were training future church leaders under the old model," he said. "Now I feel better about the kinds of things students can do when they leave."

In other business, the group elected officers to serve in 1996-97. Chosen were: president, Glenn McCoy, Baptist Student Union director, Eastern New Mexico State University, Portales; president-elect, Linda Osborne, Florida State University, Tallahassee; vice president for continuing education, Bruce Venable, campus minister, Northeast Louisiana University, Monroe; vice president for membership, Bob Ford, senior Baptist campus minister, Jacksonville (Ala.) State University; vice president for program, Shelia Gustafson, campus minister, Indiana University Southeast, Ivy Tech, Jeffersonville; vice president for publications, Charles Walker, LSU Medical Center, Shreveport; historian, Jane Poster, campus minister, University of South Carolina, Columbia.