



**-- BAPTIST PRESS**  
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June 18, 1996

96-105

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SBC officials establish fund  
for arson-caused church fires

Baptist Press  
6/18/96

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--A fund has been established to assist African American churches whose facilities have been destroyed by arson, Southern Baptist Convention officials announced June 18.

Southern Baptists and other concerned groups as well as individuals may contribute to help rebuild the 33 African American churches attacked since January 1995, primarily in the South, according to Tom Elliff, newly elected president of the SBC.

"We are committed to helping our brothers and sisters in Christ to rebuild amidst these tragic events," said Elliff, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, Okla., who was elected SBC president at the denomination's annual meeting in New Orleans, June 11-13.

"Greater than any hatred which fosters such reprehensible acts is the love that Southern Baptists find in their hearts for these churches that have been burned," Elliff said.

At the New Orleans meeting Southern Baptists raised \$282,000 in cash and pledges for the churches. Officials said all the money sent to the "Arson Fund" will be distributed exclusively for the rebuilding of the churches.

Southern Baptist churches are encouraged to send their gifts through the regular channel with their state conventions. The designated gifts should be marked "Arson Fund" when sent to the state convention office.

Contributions from other than Southern Baptist churches, marked "Arson Fund," can be sent to the SBC Executive Committee, 901 Commerce St., Nashville, TN 37203. For more information, call Bill Merrell or Jon Walker in the Executive Committee convention relations office at (615) 244-2355.

In addition, Southern Baptist construction crews are volunteering to immediately begin rebuilding the burned church facilities. Thus far, four Baptist state conventions have sent crews to churches in need and the SBC's Brotherhood Commission is attempting to contact each of the fire-damaged congregations to assess the level of need, SBC officials said.

Those wishing to be part of volunteer construction crews are encouraged to contact the Brotherhood Commission at 1-800-280-1891. The commission is located at 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, TN 38104.

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A Southern Baptist congregation, meanwhile, additionally became an arson victim in the early morning hours of June 17. The congregation, Pine Lake Baptist Church, Stone Mountain, Ga., averages 250 people on Sunday mornings and has 33 black members, according to interim pastor Randy Mullis.

As in the other church fires, FBI and ATF officials are investigating the blaze which destroyed the church's first building, a wood-and-siding structure built in 1949.

According to church neighbors, the sound of a car speeding away from the site was heard around 2 a.m. and almost immediately the building was on fire.

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'Hunchback,' Disney's Miramax  
cited as examples of SBC concerns By Jon Walker

Baptist Press  
6/18/96

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Less than a week after messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention voted to prayerfully consider a boycott of Disney products, the entertainment conglomerate announced it is cutting movie production in half. Walt Disney Company executives said the reorganization will allow for an increased emphasis on family movies.

"Even though it seems the decision by the Disney Company is being driven only by finances, we are delighted that it will result in more family movies," said Bill Merrell, vice president for convention relations for the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee.

"Unfortunately, the Disney subsidiary Miramax will apparently continue unabated on its course of producing objectionable films. It would delight us even more if Disney would return to the dreams and values of Walt Disney and to the very essence of what made the Disney company so great."

Even the mainstream media have noticed Disney's increasing permissiveness in recent years, Merrell said -- a trend which prompted the Southern Baptist Convention to approve consideration of a boycott during its annual meeting June 11-13 in New Orleans.

Merrell cited an article in the June 14 edition of USA Today which described Disney's newest animated film, "The Hunchback of Notre Dame," as family entertainment "gone adult." The newspaper reported the film includes a voluptuous Gypsy dancer that, "Heaven knows most dads in the audience" will certainly notice.

"In one song, we have (a character) sing the church liturgy but also sing of twisted sexual fantasies," said Alan Menken, the Oscar-winning composer of Hunchback's music, who added that Disney chief Michael Eisner said "even if it goes PG, he would not compromise the material." USA Today also reported producer Don Hahn declared that Hunchback shows the "training wheels are off" for Disney films.

All of this reflects the point of the Southern Baptist Convention's resolution on Disney company policy, said the SBC's Merrell. "Disney has consciously shifted away from its roots in family entertainment," Merrell said. "It used to be when your kids went to a Disney film, you knew family values would be reinforced within the context of the story. That is no longer the case."

Merrell said the SBC resolution on Disney company policy was not aimed at denying health benefits to homosexuals, as widely reported in the media; rather, it was aimed at expressing disappointment that Disney's moral leadership has dissipated due to a variety of corporate decisions.

"They have established an employee policy which embraces homosexual relationships for the purpose of insurance benefits," Merrell said. "However, they also host homosexual and lesbian theme nights at their 'family' parks. I don't believe middle America is ready to accept Mickey Mouse as a militant homosexual or Donald Duck in drag."

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Disney now produces books and films that disparage Christian values, Merrell said, "and they deny that decent parents know what's best for their children. One Disney executive has reportedly said, 'parents underestimate what their children can handle.'

"They have a right to produce the movies they want to produce," Merrell said. "But we have a right to measure those movies against the plumb line of decent and moral family values and a right to decide not to do business with Disney.

"We are hopeful that Disney will rethink its well-publicized changes and set its aims on returning to be an entertainment company families can trust," Merrell said.

The 18-paragraph SBC resolution, as adopted by messengers to the denomination's annual meeting, encourages Southern Baptists "to give serious and prayerful reconsideration to their purchase and support of Disney products, and to boycott The Disney Company and theme parks if they continue this anti-Christian and anti-family trend."

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Sunday morning fire destroys  
Southeastern physical plant

By Lee Weeks

Baptist Press  
6/18/96

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--An early Sunday morning fire June 16 gutted Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary's physical plant building.

The losses totaled about \$1 million in damages to the two-story brick building constructed in the early 1940s, with portions dating back to 1923. Offices and storage rooms filled with computers, records, paper, tools, janitorial supplies and an array of spare parts for house repairs top the list of casualties.

No one, however, was hurt in the blaze that took firefighters from eight area fire departments nearly six hours to finally snuff out.

Firefighters eventually extinguished the blaze by extending a ladder high above the now-roofless building, pouring hundreds of gallons of water on the fire.

The school's boiler room, the seminary's primary source for heating campus buildings, which adjoins the physical plant was salvaged despite receiving water damage.

But it was the loss of a new professor's personal library being stored at the physical plant until his office was ready for use that left the greatest void for Paige Patterson, president of the Wake Forest, N.C., seminary.

"To me that's the most devastating part of it because anybody that has ever had a large library and learned to be dependent upon it knows that it becomes almost like one of the members of your household," Patterson said.

Patterson has initiated a fund drive by donating \$500 to help restore Greg Lawson's 3,000-volume library which was valued at about \$90,000.

Lawson, who is on vacation and unavailable for comment, is scheduled to officially join Southeastern's faculty Aug. 1 as assistant professor of Christian education.

Federal, state and local investigators determined that the fire started when water from a galvanized pipe leaked onto an electrical box, causing a short in the wiring and thus igniting the blaze.

Ken Street, a security guard who patrols the seminary campus, said firefighters responded shortly after 4 a.m. Sunday after he reported seeing smoke hovering over the back of the building.

For more than an hour, Street said, firefighters braved the dark billowing smoke in search of flames.

"They did not see the flames until it burst through the roof," Street said.

Residents of seminary housing across the street from the physical plant said flames were shooting 40 to 60 feet in the air once the fire erupted through the building's roof.

"You could feel the heat from where we were standing (just off the front porch)," said Dawn Jones, who lives directly across the street from the physical plant.

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Jones said small, red-glowing embers of debris rained on her and her neighbors' front lawns while firefighters fought the blaze. Residents were not asked to evacuate their homes for safety.

Dan Taylor, director of the physical plant, said he saw flames shooting from the building from several miles away as he drove to the campus before 6 a.m. Sunday.

"As I was approaching Wake Forest, possibly four to five miles out, I could see the illumination of the city and then I just saw flames shoot up," Taylor said. "I knew then how serious it really was and I expected the worst when I got here and it was the worst."

Paul Fletcher, vice president for administration, said the fire could have been much more destructive. Fletcher said the building's hard pine wood walls and floors quickly accelerated the fire into nearly a raging inferno.

"We were very fortunate that flammable liquids stored in the warehouse were not damaged," Fletcher said. "Tons of coal stored in the coal bin were not ignited."

As for the days ahead, Fletcher said, "The building is only 60 percent insured. It is an irreplaceable loss, a financial loss to the seminary that will be very difficult to make up."

Fletcher said the seminary will continue to operate its plant services operation out of an existing metal building and part of the boiler room. Offices will be relocated to other buildings where space is available.

Fletcher said the seminary will decide what action to take after studying an architectural plan due out this summer outlining future development of seminary facilities.

Joyce Pearce, an administrative assistant in the physical plant, appeared shocked Monday as she looked into the blackened and charred shell of the building where she worked for years handling shipping and receiving orders for the seminary.

"That's 32 years of my life," she said sorrowfully as she dropped her gaze to the ground while shaking her head in disbelief.

Together, Joyce and her husband, Clarence, have worked a combined total of 75 years at the physical plant building. Clarence retired in 1989 as director of plant services.

"It's like a part of you is missing," Joyce said.

As for Patterson, his immediate burden is to see Lawson's library restored.

"I know that others will be generous also and we'll rebuild Dr. Lawson a first-class library," Patterson said.

People desiring to contribute to Lawson's library fund can make a check payable to SEBTS and note "Lawson Book Fund" on the check.

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Trustees receive report  
of NOBTS community efforts

By Debbie Moore

Baptist Press  
6/18/96

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Trustees of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary learned of 162 professions of faith resulting from student evangelism efforts in New Orleans during the Southern Baptist Convention and elected three professors during a full board meeting June 13.

Called to order by new chairman Bill Hamm, a retired layman from Shreveport, La., trustees heard a report from Chuck Register, director of the seminary's Leavell Center for Evangelism and Church Growth, concerning a new week-long summer school class started on the first day of the SBC's "Crossover New Orleans" evangelistic thrust.

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Sponsoring block parties and using other innovative techniques to share the gospel where people live -- from the dangerous Desire Street Housing Project to the beautiful Lake Ponchartrain area -- 49 NOBTS students were able to present the gospel 687 times and saw 162 people make a profession of faith. The entire Crossover New Orleans event registered 2,666 known professions of faith.

In addition, NOBTS students started four mission churches in the greater New Orleans area on June 9, the Sunday before the SBC began.

Chuck Kelley, seminary president, brought trustees up to date on the seminary's involvement with the neighborhood immediately around the main campus. For several years the seminary has volunteered to be responsible for much of the maintenance and grounds work at a local public elementary school, Parkview Fundamental Magnet School six blocks from the seminary, and for the past two years the seminary has maintained the 10 acres of grassy area at the Interstate 10 interchange a few blocks from the campus.

In a new development since Kelley became president March 1, the seminary hosted a luncheon with the councilman for the district in which the seminary is located and the chief officers of the three other schools of higher learning in the district: the University of New Orleans, Dillard University and Southern University of New Orleans.

The four officers attending agreed to have their students work together on a community project to benefit the district, along with the help of the councilman, Kelley reported. The first project will take place in the fall.

The three new faculty members, one for the seminary's 20-year-old school of Christian training and two for the division of church music ministries, will begin Aug. 1.

Jerry Norman Barlow, elected as associate professor of communication, will be the fifth full-time teacher, along with several contract teachers, in the school of Christian training. The school has developed in the past three years from offering several two-year associate degree programs to offering two baccalaureate degrees, three associate degrees, two diplomas and a certificate program. Currently the school, under the direction of Assistant Provost Jimmy W. Dukes, has more than 600 students, counting both the main campus and the 12 undergraduate extension center campuses.

Barlow, pastor of First Baptist Church, Franklinton, La., since 1981, completed two degrees at New Orleans Seminary, the master of divinity in 1978 and the doctor of theology in 1982. Prior to his call to ministry, Barlow, 52, completed a degree in chemistry at William Carey College, Hattiesburg, Miss., and had nearly completed a master's degree in chemistry from Rice University in Houston when he was sent to Navy Officer Candidate School in Newport, R.I., in 1969. While working in human resource management with the Navy until 1974, he began his first ministerial position as assistant pastor and education director for Aragona Baptist Church, Virginia Beach, Va. During his seminary years, he was pastor of two Mississippi Baptist churches, Sylvarena in Wesson and Crystal Springs in Tylertown, and was an NOBTS contract teacher of homiletics while working on his doctorate. He has been elected to several associational, state and national SBC positions through the years. Barlow and his wife, Lynn, have one daughter, Catherine, 23.

Becky Parker Lombard was elected assistant professor of music theory and organ. Convention organist during the recent Southern Baptist Convention in New Orleans, Lombard has been a church pianist and organist since age 9. She has been music associate and organist for Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mobile, Ala., since 1990 and a music professor at the University of Mobile since 1991. She completed two degrees at New Orleans Seminary, the master of church music in organ performance in 1987 and the doctor of musical arts in church music/music theory in 1991. Originally from Lake Charles, La., Lombard completed the bachelor of music education degree from Oklahoma Baptist University in 1974. She has taught private organ and piano lessons for 20 years. Lombard and her husband, Kent, a public school special education teacher, have two children, Melinda, 19, and Parker, 16.

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Michael Durward Sharp was elected assistant professor of music theory and piano. A specialist in musical instrument digital interface (also known as MIDI) and the recipient of numerous awards for his piano skills, Sharp has been an assistant professor of music at Brewton-Parker College, Mount Vernon, Ga., since 1993. Previously he served three years with the Foreign Mission Board as director of the music department and a professor at Venezuela Baptist Theological Seminary in Los Teques, Venezuela. Sharp completed the bachelor of music degree specializing in piano performance at Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, Ark., in 1980; the master of church music degree at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., in 1982; and the doctor of philosophy degree in music education at Louisiana State University in 1988. He and his wife, Leanne, have three children: Bethany, 12; Brittany, 8; and Brandon, 6.

In other actions, trustees:

-- responded positively and unanimously concerning the seminary's new assignments as a result of the Southern Baptist Convention's adoption of the "Covenant for a New Century." Effective June 19, 1997, the six SBC seminaries will form a nonprofit religious corporation known as the Council of Seminary Presidents. The seminaries will be the sole members of the corporation, and the corporation will be governed by a board of directors consisting of the six presidents of the member seminaries. The seminaries also will share responsibility for the management of the outgoing Historical Commission's library and archive functions on behalf of the SBC, as well as the work of the Seminary Extension Department, each of which are currently located and will remain in the SBC Executive Committee Building in Nashville, Tenn.

-- approved creation of a new rank of instructor for the teaching faculty. Instructors will be non-tenure track positions, generally to be filled by doctoral students for a defined length of time.

-- granted tenure to two members of the school of Christian training faculty: Perry Hancock, assistant professor of Christian education, and Thomas Strong, assistant professor of theological studies, each serving since 1993. By granting tenure, "the institution is expressing that we want you to spend the rest of your life here," Kelley said, "and it is assumed that you will continue to teach under the same operating guidelines in your moral, doctrinal and professional behavior."

-- granted title changes to two members of the Christian training faculty: Francis Kimmitt, from assistant professor of general education to assistant professor of theological studies, and Thomas Strong, from assistant professor of theological studies to assistant professor of New Testament Greek. "This change," Dukes said, "is simply a recognition of the expansion of our faculty and necessary specializations."

-- heard from a trustee prayer emphasis committee, "which grew out of the March meeting when the new president expressed a desire for revival on this campus and in this city," said trustee Ron Jackson of Gaffney, S.C., pastor of East Gaffney Baptist Church. Reminding fellow trustees of NOBTS' 79-year history as "a school of providence and prayer," Jackson said the committee soon will be presenting ideas for prayer emphasis.

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EDITORS' NOTE: This story subs out a story with the same title released 6/13/96. Foreign Mission Board administrators believe mention of missionary names in connection with this incident could cause the missionaries to lose visas and be barred from working in Indonesia. Please discard the earlier story. Thanks, FMB.

10 churches destroyed  
in Indonesia; none Baptist

By Marty Groll

Baptist Press  
6/18/96

SURABAYA, Indonesia (BP)--Ten church buildings in the city of Surabaya were destroyed and at least one pastor left permanently lame by a mob who attacked during Sunday morning services June 9.

None of the churches destroyed was Baptist. Still, a Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board administrator in Indonesia issued a call for prayer June 12 for Christians and government leaders to act in wisdom.

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Police arrested some in the mob of about 1,000 and found a list with about 50 churches they had targeted in Surabaya. It was unclear whether any is related to Southern Baptist work.

At one church, people in the mob rushed the sanctuary, dragged the pastor off the platform and then flooded outside where they began burning motorcycles and other vehicles.

Most churches were stoned and violently dismantled. Clay tile roofs typical of the area are easily shattered by rocks and stones, the administrator said.

Indonesia media, controlled by the government, did not mention the violence, perhaps because publicity could spur incidents in other areas, said the board's administrator.

Officials in the Christian division of Indonesia's Religion Department have suggested churches not meet for a while unless they have police protection. But it is unclear whether police protection has been offered at the local level.

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Marshall says educators are  
at cultural 'cutting edge'

By Joni B. Hannigan

Baptist Press  
6/18/96

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Christians in 20th-century America are largely "ghetto-ized," withdrawn from the world, fearful, defensive and lacking in vision, Peter Marshall Jr. told listeners at the annual Christian School Leadership Conference June 13-14.

Marshall, preacher, historian and son of Peter Marshall, U.S. Senate chaplain from 1947-49, and Catherine Marshall LeSourd, author of the best-selling "Christy" and other books, spoke at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary at the conference held immediately after the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in New Orleans.

Evangelical Christians are on the defensive in what Marshall called an "all-out civil ... and cultural ... war for the soul of the nation."

"You are on the firing line. All the issues are being joined and you are on the chief battleground," he told the group of Christian school administrators and teachers. "In Christian schools, you are on the cutting edge, for this is the end-time battle in our society -- church-state issues impact right here," Marshall said.

Christians have been "ghetto-ized" because they have forgotten their heritage and have no vision, Marshall said. "Without a vision the people perish," he said, quoting Scripture. "We have no vision and no understanding of our role. We are totally unequipped to be whom we are called to be.

"Why does it matter, this business about education for the future of America?" Marshall asked rhetorically.

Quoting Abraham Lincoln, he said, "'The philosophy in the classroom in one generation will be the philosophy of the government in another.'"

Pointing to the example of President Bill Clinton, he said Clinton is "simply putting into practice what he learned at school."

Three generations "unhinged" from a biblical worldview and understanding is what is putting the future of western civilization at stake, Marshall said.

"Every single discipline in western civilization is shaped by the Bible -- art, architecture, literature, politics, philosophy and economics -- (if you) remove the Bible as the source of morality and values ... then western civilization crumbles," Marshall said.

Education is the passing of "those cherished values" from one generation to the next, Marshall said, and if those become "godless," that is what is perpetuated.

Citing numerous perversions of the historical experiences and influences ranging from Columbus and the Pilgrims and the Puritans to Darwin, Freud and Marx, Marshall said no civilization has ever risen except on a religious basis, and if there are no absolutes, then the basis for that civilization begins to erode.

Christian educators need to focus on forming and shaping character, he said, rather than imparting information to students.

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"Restoring a whole generation of leaders" is what makes Christian education unique, said Marshall. Teachers should challenge their students to be like the early Puritans who risked their lives to obey Jesus, he said. "We are kidding ourselves beyond delusion if we think God will restore America without the same quality of commitment," he said.

"Kids are aching for a challenge. Throw it to them, put it to them!" Marshall challenged.

Ultimately, the health of America depends on whether individuals will experience revival or renewal, he said; out of that will come the consistency needed to maintain a representative government.

"No politician will pull a rabbit out of a hat," Marshall said. "Nationwide revival will only come through the church."

Answering questions in an interview following his Thursday evening message, Marshall said America is not based upon a redemptive constitution, but one that acknowledges creation through a creator.

Quoting one of America's founding fathers, James Madison, Marshall said in response to a question about America's commitment to the freedom of all peoples, "An atheist has every right to be a citizen, but not a good one."

That doesn't give cause for Christians to tyrannize non-believers, but neither does it call for Christians to embrace an atheistic form of government, he said.

Marshall used an example from the recent United Nations women's conference in Beijing, China, where Muslim women representing other countries and cultures stood strongly against pro-abortion stands articulated there.

"The American delegates, to our great and national disgrace, were pro-abortion - you don't have to be a Christian to not slaughter babies," Marshall said.

America is the way it is today, Marshall said, because churches stopped promoting Jesus Christ and starting "watering down" a code of behavior consistent with Christian ethics.

Referring to clergy beginning in the 19th Century who claimed to be spiritual leaders were not born-again or practicing the Christian faith, Marshall asked, "How can dead men beget living children?"

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Southern Baptist organization  
bolsters Christian schools

By Joni B. Hannigan

Baptist Press  
6/18/96

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Safety is one of the greatest factors prompting the rapid growth of Christian schools in America -- and that growth is leading to a great need for school facilities, Glen Schultz, southeast regional director for the Association of Christian Schools International, told participants at the 1996 Annual Christian School Leadership Conference June 12-13 in New Orleans, following the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Nearly 75 participants were registered for the two-day conference sponsored by the Southern Baptist Association of Christian Schools, a professional organization for elementary and secondary schools and individuals.

The association's executive director, John Chandler, is a retired Baptist Sunday School Board employee whose work, prior to a BSSB reorganization, involved aiding churches and schools involved in Christian education.

Formerly a ministry of the board's church administration division, Chandler said the SBACS was formed in 1979 to serve Southern Baptist families, schools and churches by providing information, training, fellowship and avenues of influence to impact the educational and spiritual development of school-aged children.

The organization receives some funding from the BSSB, Chandler said, and it will continue to be a separate professional organization while working closely with the board in the introduction of a new department there, the Christian schools and media services department, called for in the restructuring of the SBC to encompass the areas of Christian schools, home schooling and media services.

Chandler said in an interview he is looking forward to the new department at the BSSB and is optimistic about the future of the SBACS.

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"We will work strongly in the areas of fellowship and developing an area of influence for Christian schools," Chandler said, emphasizing collaboration in the areas of training events and distribution of information.

"I anticipate a very strong cooperative reaction -- one that is open to mutual influences," he said.

The lack of school facilities can be a challenge, said Schultz, who said in a later interview churches without Christian schools could offer information about others in their community to members, or could "pray and seek God's face" about their own involvement.

"Pastors could do more speaking from the pulpit on what it is to train a child correctly," said Schultz, who is also a former Southern Baptist missionary, to a question about what the most urgent needs are in Christian education. "They don't even have to promote Christian schools," he said.

According to records compiled by the SBACS, there are 525 Southern Baptist church-sponsored elementary or secondary schools in the United States, with only 66 schools and eight individuals registered as members of the SBACS.

In Friday business, the Southern Baptist Association of Christian Schools and Colleges Foundation was created for the purpose of assisting the SBACS and member schools in providing benefits for scholarships, grants and start-up funds.

Frank Webb, headmaster at Mt. Juliet Christian School, Mt. Juliet, Tenn., is serving his third year as president of SBACS. Officers elected to serve three-year terms ending in 1999 were Ed Rogers, headmaster, Northwest Baptist Academy, Miami, vice president for training; James Carey, Rainbow Hills Baptist School, San Antonio, vice president for academic affairs; and Horace Gaskins, principal, Park Avenue Christian School, Nashville, Tenn., treasurer.

Workshops offered at the seminar covered a wide range of topics, including "Developing a Worldview," Daniel Smithwick, president, Nehemiah Institute, Lexington, Ky.; "Teacher and Administrator Certification," Fred Donehoo, chairman, SBACS Accrediting Commission, Lake Placid, Fla.

In other business, the outstanding scholars for the year were announced, to receive \$1,000 scholarships: Greg Holt, Hyde Park Baptist Schools, Austin, Texas, and Julia Smith, Lake Country Christian School, Fort Worth, Texas. The scholarships are based on SAT and ACT scores, grade point average, Christian character, student activities, church activities and leadership.

The main speaker for the conference was Peter Marshall, historian, evangelist, former pastor and son of the late Peter Marshall, chaplain to the U.S. Senate from 1947-49, and Catherine Marshall LeSourd, author of "Christy" and other popular best-sellers.

In talks titled "Our Christian Heritage," Marshall traced the roots of American discovery and government and its involvement with education and the influences of the current educational system.

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Foreign Mission Board presents  
challenge of 'Last Frontier'

By Mark Kelly

Baptist Press  
6/18/96

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--His arms outstretched, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board President Jerry Rankin asked the hushed assembly: "Who will go? Whose heart is broken over the needs of a lost world, a broken heart that will compel a response to God's call?"

As the congregation stood and sang "Wherever He Leads, I'll Go," people left their seats and filtered down the aisles of the cavernous Louisiana Superdome the evening of June 12. They came by singly and in pairs, couples with their arms around each other, a man with his arm over a boy's shoulder. They stood and talked and prayed with missionaries on the floor of the arena. Others remained in their seats and quietly filled out commitment cards pulled from their programs.

The commitment service was part of the annual FMB report to the 1996 Southern Baptist Convention, which met June 11-13 in New Orleans.

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When the decisions were tabulated, more than 1,500 commitments had been registered: 476 for some type of overseas missions service, four for home missions and 959 pledging to support missions by praying, giving or encouraging others.

One person made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ; 94 renewed their commitments to their Lord.

"We had 105 people express interest in career service overseas," said Jim Riddell, associate director of the FMB personnel selection department. "That's the largest number of career commitments at an appointment service in years."

The board appointed 54 people to career positions in about 25 countries during an emotional service that mixed pageantry, music, video, drama and testimony. A parade of international flags -- a tradition of the appointment services -- included a somber procession of gray banners representing 2,161 ethnic people groups -- 1.7 billion people -- that have never heard the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ.

Baptists from every area of the world came to the microphone and told about the need for the gospel in their own countries and appealed for help. As each finished speaking, missionary appointees stepped up and shared how God had called them to meet needs in that part of the world. Each group then knelt at the front to pray for the lost and unreached in its area.

Members of The Company, a drama troupe from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, clad in tattered gray robes and wearing gray masks, portrayed the unreached people groups. They watched and listened and asked repeatedly: "What about us? Does anyone care about us? Will anyone come over and help us?"

One young woman, called to serve in Asia, stepped forward and removed the mask from one of the actors, symbolizing her desire, she said, to help bring an unreached people group to Christ.

Many Christian hearts are burdened for those that don't know Christ, Rankin said, but the new missionaries are different because their hearts have been broken over the needs of the lost and unreached.

"I pray you will never lose that broken heart," he told the appointees. "If your heart ever ceases to be broken, you'll not have the joy of bringing the lost to Jesus Christ . . . Your ministry will be ineffective."

He counseled them: "Only as you spend time with the Lord each day in an intimate fellowship will you have the heart of God that is broken over those that are lost."

Rwanda missionary Marlene Lee recalled the April 1994 genocide that left 500,000 Rwandan Tutsis "chopped up and left to die and rot like garbage."

Southern Baptist prayers sustained her and her husband, Stan, as they were forced to evacuate and then worked among abandoned children in a refugee camp in Goma, Zaire, Lee said. They even survived two attempts on their lives, she said, "because you were praying."

"We're still alive and this coming Sunday we leave to go back home to Rwanda, to rejoin our nationals as we lead our nation in the revival that is taking place there," she said. "Will you continue to pray that we will be given God's mercy and protection, that we will be strong . . . and that we will see the world recognize Rwanda because God is doing something there?"

Appointee Erin Thomas recalled the 1990 airplane crash that claimed the life of her partner, English teacher Mary Anna Gilbert.

"In that horrible moment, I didn't know whether I would live or die," Thomas said. "I can't explain why God took Mary Anna home but chose for me to live. But I can affirm that God's plan is for me to claim one of these gray flags, representing an unreached people group in Indochina."

The appointment service capped an evening program that included presentations by the Home Mission Board and the Baptist World Alliance. Zambian Acapella, a singing ensemble of young African men won to Christ by Southern Baptist missionaries, performed immediately before the service.

In his formal convention report, Rankin said the FMB has appointed more than 12,000 missionaries in its 151-year history. Half of those have taken the field since 1976. One-third of that number remain in active service today.

In 1976, the FMB reported 80,000 baptisms and 7,500 churches on mission fields, he said. Twenty years later, the board reports 287,000 baptisms and 39,000 congregations. Of 50 new churches planted each week during 1995, seven were among peoples of the "Last Frontier" that previously have had little or no access to the gospel.

"God has broken down the barriers, and people are coming to faith in Christ," Rankin said. "All over the world, the gospel is increasing and bearing fruit. The Foreign Mission Board continues to reap the harvest where God's spirit is moving."

He thanked Southern Baptists for record gifts through the Cooperative Program and Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and for the record number of volunteers and new missionaries being sent. However, the needs and opportunities around the world exceed the resources, he said.

"We should be sending out at least one missionary for every 1,000 members in our churches," Rankin said. "God is still saying, 'If my people will hear and respond to my call, not 5,000 but 15,000 Southern Baptists would be impacting a lost world with the gospel. If my people would give generously and sacrificially, \$100 million could be given to the Lottie Moon offering."

"If my people would lift up their eyes and look on the fields and pray, strongholds of Satan would be broken down, and soon a multitude that no man could count from every tribe and people and tongue and nation would be gathered around the throne and worshiping our Lord Jesus Christ."

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BSSB ministries, resources  
are agency's 'abundant fruit'

Baptist Press  
6/18/96

By Charles Willis & Orville Scott

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--The ministries and resources developed by the Baptist Sunday School Board are the "abundant fruits" of its work during the past year, President James T. Draper Jr. told messengers to the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention during the agency's report June 11.

"As we develop materials or services or ministries, we must focus on relationships, beginning with that which must be first in our lives, our relationship with Jesus Christ," Draper said.

Feedback from state convention meetings, networking strategies and partnerships with other denominational entities have become a key means to focus ministries and services, he said. This year Draper said he is visiting 15 state convention offices "to learn about their priorities, to listen and to identify ways we can work together more effectively."

"Sometimes our relationships are begun in special places that are forever tied in our minds to the experiences we had there," Draper observed. "Glorieta (N.M.) and Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference centers throughout their history have been places where people have made life-changing spiritual decisions and received training that equipped them for greater service."

Hands were raised across the audience in response to Draper's asking how many could say their lives or those of family members had been enriched at Glorieta or Ridgecrest.

To position the conference centers for effective ministry into the 21st century, Draper said the board has launched a fund-raising campaign seeking contributions from a limited number of donors.

Draper also spoke of needs that prompted the board's new strategy to aid ministers in crisis. He said approximately 225 ministers are fired every month.

LeaderCare has been developed "to address the simmering issues that lie close to the surface of denominational life." Introducing Brooks Faulkner, a 31-year employee of the board who will lead the ministry of prevention, intervention and restoration, Draper said he and Faulkner have wept together when learning during recent months of two pastors who committed suicide.

He also presented Linda Miniard, a consultant who will work with an estimated 22,000 women serving in ministry leadership positions on church staffs.

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He said among the board's priority issues is an emphasis on church growth. The 1.5.4 church growth plan detailed in "Kingdom Principles for Church Growth," a book by Gene Mims, vice president of the board's church growth group, is a strategy that will grow churches, Draper said.

Draper introduced Rick Warren, senior pastor of Saddleback Church in Mission Viejo, Calif., as a pastor whose church embodies the 1.5.4 principles.

Warren said he is most often asked how his church grew so fast and so big. He said the church "balanced the five functions of the church. All living things grow, if they are healthy. It is natural for a church to grow if it is healthy. When the functions of a church are balanced, health and growth automatic.

"Great churches are built on purpose, not on plans or personalities," he continued. "I want to say from my experience, it works."

Also joining Draper during the presentation were Broadman & Holman author Wellington Boone and Linda Miller, a Baptist Book Store employee.

Draper presented Boone the author's copy of his book, "Breaking Through," describing him as "one of the most dynamic Christian teachers of our time."

Boone told the audience the 1995 SBC action on racial reconciliation was "the restoration of the desolation of the generations up to this time."

"This is the first time a Christian publisher has selected a black man as an 'A' level author," Boone said. "There can only be one first. The rest of the Christian publishers will have to eat the dust."

Miller, assistant manager of the Baptist Book Store in Los Angeles, recounted her experience of praying with a customer who was distraught over the massacre of 16 children in Dunblaine, Scotland.

She said through that customer, she met the daughter of the mayor of Dunblaine. At the urging of her granddaughter, Miller led in a Sunday school project creating a banner of children's handprints in the shape of a rainbow with the message, "You are now in the hands of God." The banner was then sent to Scotland as a gift to the town.

One contact with a customer in the Baptist Book Store has resulted in a ministry effort, Miller said, that has resulted in friendships and ongoing contact with a town that suffered loss.

Popular youth speaker and author Josh McDowell, in a message, warned the central core of Christian faith in America has not been as seriously challenged in the last 2,000 years as it is today.

McDowell said he fears Christian leaders will awaken in a few years to find that something called "positive tolerance" has become the number one virtue in America.

"Positive tolerance declares that all viewpoints are equal," he said. "John 3:16 is being replaced by Matthew 7:1: 'Judge not that you be not judged.'

"If you say in the average classroom, 'I love you but hate your sin,' you will be labeled a bigot and intolerant," McDowell said.

"Justice and tolerance cannot coexist," he said. "Justice says there is a moral basis for right and wrong. Tolerance says there is no moral basis."

McDowell, who received a standing ovation at the close of his message, encouraged churches to lead not only youth but their parents through "Right from Wrong," a curriculum produced by the BSSB for national campaign he is spearheading.

An entire generation has lost the ability to tell right from wrong, he said, noting only two of 132 young people in a survey knew why the Bible says, "Thou shalt not lie."

"We have turned a whole generation loose with precepts but no moral authority," he warned.

"America is not a battlefield," McDowell said. "It's a mission field."

Other items included in the BSSB presentation were:

-- introduction of an all-new National Conference for Church Leadership at Ridgecrest and Glorieta this year.

-- the simultaneous inclusion of two Broadman & Holman books on a best-seller list during the past year.

-- release of 20 volumes of The New American Commentary as of this year, half of the publishing project.

-- celebration of Baptist Book Stores' 70th anniversary this year.

## CORRECTIONS:

-- In (BP) stories, "Floyd calls for prayer, fasting to invigorate SBC 'vital signs,'" dated 6/13/96, and "Okla. pastor Tom Elliff elected SBC president without opposition, dated 6/12/96, please correct the reporting of new SBC second vice president's name to Fred Luter Jr.

-- In (BP) story, "Jewish fellowship introduces missionary, urges resolution," dated 6/12/96, please make two changes:

1) Please correct the lead paragraph to read: For the first time since 1989, Southern Baptists have a home missionary to Jewish people.

2) Please change the third paragraph to read: Sibley, who will work in the board's interfaith witness department, was a Southern Baptist representative in Israel for 13 years.

-- In (BP) story, "6 seminary presidents report campus progress," dated 6/12/96, please correct the first part of the eighth paragraph to read:

Mohler said Southern Seminary, based in Louisville, Ky., is "not a generic evangelical seminary, ..."

-- In (BP) story, "Messengers approve bylaw to implement restructure," dated 6/12/96, please change the seventh paragraph to read:

Messengers received the eight-page "Transition Plan for Covenant for a New Century," a report from the 10-member Implementation Task Force, at the registration area which opened Sunday afternoon. A motion to delay the vote on the restructuring recommendations until the afternoon session failed.

-- In (BP) story, "Messenger dogs his motion, gains floor consideration," dated 6/14/96, please change the fifth paragraph to read:

Messengers in the Wednesday morning business session eventually voted to move the debate up a day, at the recommendation of the Committee on Order of Business. It had first been suggested the motion be referred to the Annuity Board and then had been placed on the schedule for debate Thursday morning.

-- In (BP) story, "Extended SBCNet family gathers for annual reunion," dated 6/12/96, please change the third-from-the-last paragraph's second sentence to read:

He said a Jewish woman who was sincerely questioning was influenced by a sermon posted on the network.

Thanks,  
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