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TEXAS--RTVC holiday radio spots offered to local churches.  
TEXAS--Drunk driving theme among RTVC radio spots for churches.  
MADAGASCAR--A formula for new life: time, love and patience; photo.  
ALABAMA--Author urges Christians to speak up for children.  
TENNESSEE--Tennessee Baptists hear Henry Blackaby 6 times.  
ILLINOIS--African American elected as Ill. Baptist president.  
UTAH--Utah-Idaho messengers OK new convention structure.  
MASSACHUSETTS--New England Baptists target reductions in budget deficit.

**RTVC holiday radio spots  
offered to local churches**

**By C.C. Risenhoover**

**Baptist Press  
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FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Eight 30-second holiday radio spots have been produced by the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission for use by local churches and radio stations.

The spots, available on compact disc (CD), are titled "Cookies," "Christmas Guest," "Loving Home," "Whose Birthday," "Give Life," "Extra Place," "Our Future" and "1997."

"Each spot provides a Christian holiday message and has been produced so that a local church can add a brief message at the end," said Ed Malone, RTVC vice president of radio services.

Spots prepared for and sent directly to stations close with statements such as, "Brought to you by your Southern Baptists friends," but special CDs have been prepared so churches can personalize the spots for their particular area.

"We encourage local churches to add their own brief message to the end of each spot," Malone said. "A CD with all eight spots is available to churches at no cost. A church can use as many of the spots as it chooses and can work with local radio stations in personalizing the messages."

Churches wanting the spots for use in their area are encouraged to contact Stan Grubb, RTVC church media consultant, at 1-800-292-2287.

"Our radio people have produced some wonderful spots in the past," said Lisa Young, RTVC director of radio marketing, "but I think these take us to a new plateau of excellence. They appeal to a wide range of listeners and touch on timely Christian topics such as loneliness, the importance of family and the true meaning of Christmas."

Young said the spots have been sent to more than 11,000 radio stations.

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**Drunk driving theme among  
RTVC radio spots for churches**

**Baptist Press  
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FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--The holiday season is an opportune time for a church to make a statement to its community.

Each of eight radio spots produced by the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission can help a church do just that.

The following, for example, is the transcript of the RTVC holiday spot addressing drunk driving:

DRIVER: (SINGING WITH RECKLESS ABANDON. IT IS OBVIOUS HE HAS HAD TOO MUCH TO DRINK.) Deck the halls with boughs of holly,

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SOUND: CAR MOTOR STARTS ... INTERIOR PERSPECTIVE.

DRIVER (CONTINUING): Fa-la-la-la, la-la-la-la.

WIFE (CONCERNED): Honey, let me drive! You've had too much to drink!

(CUT CAR SOUNDS)

ANNOUNCER (SOFT DELIVERY, CLOSE TO MIKE): Every 30 seconds, someone is killed in an alcohol-related car crash.

(RESUME CAR SOUNDS)

DRIVER (SINGING): 'Tis the season to be jolly,

WIFE: (GETTING FRANTIC) Stop the car and let me drive!

(CUT ALL SOUNDS)

ANNOUNCER: During the holiday season, the rate goes up alarmingly.

(RESUME SOUNDS)

SOUND: CAR SWERVING AT HIGH SPEED.

HUSBAND (SINGING): Don we now our gay apparel ...

WIFE (SCREAMING OVER HIS SINGING): You're going too fast! Look out for that curve!

SOUND: LOUD SCREECH THAT STOPS JUST BEFORE THE CRASH.

(MOMENT OF SILENCE)

ANNOUNCER: The best gift you can give your family this year is life -- YOURS!

A reminder from ... (LOCAL CHURCHES CAN ADD THEIR NAMES)

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**A formula for new life:  
time, love and patience**

**Baptist Press  
11/20/96**

AMBOANJOBE, Madagascar (BP)--When Cyclone Geraldo roared out of the Indian Ocean and ravaged the eastern coast of Madagascar in 1993, thousands of islanders were left homeless and destitute.

Already some of the poorest people in the world -- with an average monthly income of less than \$25 -- many were reduced to begging or driven to prostitution.

Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board missionaries on Madagascar, however, envisioned something better -- a new start for people who had lost what little they had.

In the aftermath of Geraldo, about 180 homeless families created the new village of Amboanjobe (ahm-bahn-zoo-BAY), said Ben Williams, who serves on Madagascar through the board's International Service Corps program. The missionaries decided to share God's love with the families by helping them become self-sufficient -- and then waiting for them to respond to the caring witness.

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Using Southern Baptist hunger and relief funds, each family was given \$10 credit toward the purchase of small animals. Many chose chickens, ducks or turkeys, while some families pooled their credits to buy a sheep or a pig. A small herd of dairy cows provides milk for children whose diets usually consist only of rice and beans. A new biogas plant uses manure from the cows to produce gas to help villagers cook meals.

"We're really pleased at how people have responded to this opportunity," said Williams, an Alabama native who has served on Madagascar since September 1995. "There is a desire in each of us to provide for our families. We try to tap into that desire."

The witness to God's love convinced a few of the 130 families participating in the program to make decisions for Christ, Williams said. That small congregation in turn caught a vision of what God wanted to do in Madagascar.

Members of the new church began visiting, going door to door until they had shared the gospel with every family in the village. About 40 people made decisions for Christ in one week.

"These are all adults," Williams said. "These new Christians have begun to evangelize, and they have seen results. Over 50 people have just accepted Christ. It's very exciting."

Now the congregation is turning its attention to other villages in the valley, two of which are controlled by witch doctors.

The church at Amboanjobe is reaching people for Christ who otherwise might never have heard the gospel -- because Southern Baptists cared enough to minister to physical needs, Williams said.

"We've been able to plant a church in a country that has few Baptist churches and where few people have a true understanding of the gospel," he said. "We'd like to say fire came down from heaven and all these people made decisions."

"But it takes time and patience to develop churches like this. When people haven't been around Christians, they don't know what Christians are, so it takes work. The people have to see an example lived out on a daily basis."

"When they do see, and when they learn you really believe what you're saying, that's when they make a decision."

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Reported by Tim Cummins, a Southern Baptist media missionary in Madagascar. (BP) photo (horizontal) mailed Nov. 19 to state Baptist newspapers by the Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Cutline available in SBCNet News Room.

**Author urges Christians  
to speak up for children**

**By Sue H. Poss**

**Baptist Press  
11/20/96**

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Speaking up and defending the rights of children is the passion of Diana Garland, who as a social worker has seen what neglectful and abusive homes do to children.

"These children are abused by the ones who are supposed to love and protect them," said Garland, director of the Family Ministry Research Project at Louisville Presbyterian Seminary in Kentucky and a former social work professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. "As Christians, we must seek ways to welcome these children, to receive them into our midst and to care for them as Jesus taught us."

Garland is the author of "Precious In His Sight" (New Hope, Birmingham, Ala.), the second edition of which was released earlier this year. The book is foundational to Woman Missionary Union's 1996-97 national focus, "Project HELP: Child Advocacy," which seeks to involve Southern Baptists in ministry with and for children.

In "Precious In His Sight," Garland outlines some of the problems children face and how churches can help. She also provides a teaching plan for concerned Christians who want to be effective as child advocates.

Garland talks specifically about issues of child care, violence in the home, poverty, homelessness and teenagers who are not equipped to deal with adulthood.

"Children and youth in America today confront an array of challenges and difficulties," Garland said. "These difficulties are the consequences of choices adults have made and the values our society has embraced."

Among the challenges are:

-- Children are left alone at home for hours.

-- Many children live in homes comprised of children and parents from former marriages.

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-- Parents are increasingly bearing the responsibility for raising children alone with no help from extended family or neighbors.

-- Some children have it all; others live in poverty.

-- Today's children are growing up, not afraid of global annihilation, but of being shot at school.

-- Physical abuse of children is increasing.

Church members, Garland said, should be willing to speak out on behalf of these children, not as a threat to parents or teachers but as resources to help make their jobs easier. Churches, she said, can sponsor day care or after-school care centers. They can offer help to homeless families. They can organize a network of child-care providers. They can make room for children in worship.

For older children, Garland suggests churches can provide workshops to help parents and teenagers communicate. They can offer programs which teach values on sexuality or drug use. They can provide opportunities for one-to-one mentoring between adults and youth.

Individuals, working on their own, also can be advocates for children, Garland noted. "First, everyone needs to be involved in the life of a child who is not their own," she said. "There are not enough adults involved with children in our country.

"Advocacy begins with involvement, putting faces with the statistics, knowing the stories of these children," she said. "If you can know a child living in poverty, it helps you to understand what they need."

But that alone is not enough, Garland said. "We then have to generalize from what we learn about specific children to the state of children in our communities and in our society," she said. "We have to find the voice of justice that the Bible calls us to use in behalf of the least of these."

That includes, she said, getting involved in school boards and in advocating just business policies for families who are caring for children. "It means being involved in government, in how our nation cares for its most precious resource."

Garland concludes her book with an appendix of resources to train church members and individuals to be successful advocates for children. The most effective child advocates, she said, propose solutions to problems that allow the children and families to make decisions about their own lives.

"You are an advocate when you educate yourself about the issues affecting children, provide information to your church community about the needs of children or make your opinion heard at a school board meeting," Garland said. "You are an advocate when you provide support and friendship to parents discouraged by unemployment or chronic poverty and work with them to change unresponsive systems.

"On the most crass, pragmatic level, we need to serve as child advocates because children are our future," Garland said. "They are the ones who will be paying our Social Security.

"But ultimately, we should all serve as child advocates because God calls us to seek justice. He calls us to watch after the least of these."

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Poss is a freelance writer in Greenville, S.C.

**Tennessee Baptists hear  
Henry Blackaby 6 times**

**By Wm. Fletcher Allen**

**Baptist Press  
11/20/96**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Six Bible studies led by Henry Blackaby were featured during the 122nd annual meeting of the Tennessee Baptist Convention Nov. 12-13 at Two Rivers Baptist Church, Nashville.

In business sessions, messengers defeated a motion to change the convention's bylaws to give a measure of nominating powers to the convention president.

In missions, a three-year partnership agreement was signed with Costa Rican Baptists, to begin Jan. 1.

Messenger registration totaled 1,774, the highest since 1992's best-ever 2,238. Almost 500 "first-timer" packets were issued, according to Dan Ferrell, TBC registration secretary.

Blackaby, who spoke during each of the program segments, concentrated on the "Tennessee Baptists Awake" theme, pointing messengers toward the need for a spiritual awakening in their churches. Blackaby is director of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's office of prayer and spiritual awakening and author of the widely used "Experiencing God" discipleship study.

"We read about the Lord's miracle of feeding the thousands with just a few loaves and fish -- and then cancel it out with our lack of application in daily life," Blackaby said.

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"If these messages have had hearing in your heart," he told messengers, "the difference will be your life when you go home from this place."

Blackaby laid forth the spiritual goal of, "What the community sees is not me or the church, but Christ himself!"

"Even as John the Baptist said that he must decrease and Christ must increase, so it is with us.

"The very moment Christ is present, he must increase and we must decrease!"

He noted the greatest deterrent to prayer in the churches is that the pastor is not involved. Some do not want a prayer ministry, he said, but the reality is that revival cannot come without a prayer ministry.

The proposed bylaws change, sponsored by a group from Chilhowee Baptist Association, to give limited appointive powers to the TBC president to nominate a third of the committee on committees lost 568-668.

Had the amendment passed, votes of a two-thirds majority would have been needed at two successive conventions to change the state constitution. Currently, the committee on committees is nominated by the convention's committee on boards.

Herbert Higdon, pastor of Cross Roads Baptist Church near Jackson, a retired director of missions and outgoing president of the executive board, was elected convention president, defeating Ronnie Wilburn, pastor of Meridian Baptist Church, Jackson, in a runoff, 528-481, a scant 47 votes.

A third candidate, M.B. Howard of Covington, was eliminated in the first ballot.

Vern Powers, liaison with Tennessee Baptists for Baptist Hospital Inc., Nashville, was chosen vice president by acclamation. Powers is a retired TBC Annuity Board representative and pastor.

Lynn King, pastor of Maplewood Baptist Church, Paris, was elected second vice president over Laurann Whetham of Luttrell.

With minimal discussion and no dissent, messengers approved a 1996-97 Cooperative Program 1996-97 budget of \$28,192,138, an increase of 4.5 percent over the current budget. The percentage of allocation to Southern Baptist Convention national and international ministries remains at 37.5 percent.

An executive board recommendation for a three-year partnership mission agreement with the National Union of Baptist Churches of Costa Rica was approved without opposition and officially signed during the mission emphasis on Wednesday evening.

Messengers received an explanation of another executive board recommendation involving a proposed one-year agreement between the board and Baptist Hospital in Nashville and approved it without questions.

The agreement, which was the only agreement offered by hospital officials and which can be canceled by either party with 30 days' notice, is substantially different from the five-year agreement which began in 1991 and ends this November. In the new agreement there are no guarantees of financial or service assistance to ministers -- much of which would depend on availability of funds.

According to the explanation given, various benefits in the five-year contract (now expiring) are not present in the new one.

The executive board on Monday approved a motion to recommend the one-year agreement to messengers.

During the two-day session, messengers approved resolutions on the dangers of gambling; an appeal to pray for and minister to homosexual people; and appreciation of Johnnie Hall, who retires in December for nearly 40 years of discipleship work in the convention.

The resolution on gambling was presented by Bill Bates, executive board consultant on moral issues.

The resolution explains the dangers in gambling, speaking specifically to an ill-advised bill passed late in the 1996 legislature, to allow pari-mutuel gambling referendums, which would involve off-track simulcast gambling in Tennessee.

Messengers were urged to contact legislators and ask for the repeal of Senate Bill 927, and to post the resolution in churches. The resolution was to be sent to state government officials and news media.

Next year's annual meeting will be Nov. 11-12 at West Jackson Baptist Church, Jackson.

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**African American elected  
as Ill. Baptist president**

**By Tim Ellsworth**

**Baptist Press  
11/20/96**

HARVEY, Ill. (BP)--Illinois Baptist messengers elected Gene Gibson president and adopted a new format for the annual meeting during the Illinois Baptist State Association's 90th annual meeting at St. Mark Missionary Baptist Church, Harvey, Nov. 6-8.

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Gibson, pastor of Chicago's Mission of Faith Baptist Church, becomes the second African American to hold the office of president. Don Sharp, pastor of Chicago's Faith Tabernacle Baptist Church, held the position from 1982-1984.

Gibson had served as ISBA vice president the past two years. Elected by acclamation, Gibson succeeds Roger Ellsworth, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church, Benton, IBSA's president the past two years.

Roger Marshall, pastor of First Baptist Church, Effingham, was elected vice president on a two-nominee ballot. Art Foster, of First Baptist Church, Eldorado, was re-elected recording secretary.

Messengers approved a recommendation from the committee on order of business that the annual meeting be changed from three days to two. Under the new format, the number of sessions will be reduced from five to four, cutting the number of hours of business from 14 to 11. The keynote address will be eliminated.

The meeting will now begin on the afternoon of the first day and end on the afternoon of the second. The change was prompted by poor attendance in the meeting's final session in recent years.

In other business, messengers approved recommendations from the ISBA board of directors:

-- the association's 1997 budget be set at \$7,125,580, an increase of about 1 percent over the current budget. The 1997 Cooperative Program goal will be \$5,461,823, up from the 1996 goal of \$5,308,570. The 1997 CP ratio will be 59.25 percent for IBSA ministries and 40.75 percent for Southern Baptist Convention causes, unchanged from the current year.

-- the 1997 staff salary scale be adjusted upward 2.5 percent.

-- 65 percent of the 1997 general fund income exceeding expense be allocated for a Kazakstan partnership and other projects, and 35 percent be spent on capital expenditures.

The convention, which registered 404 messengers, also passed seven resolutions, including appreciation for Gene Wilson, former executive director now on disability. Other resolutions included prayer support for elected leaders, the needs of forgotten seniors and Christian behavior toward a sinful world.

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#### Utah-Idaho messengers OK new convention structure

By Debbie Ward

Baptist Press  
11/20/96

WEST VALLEY CITY, Utah (BP)--A new focus of the Utah-Idaho Southern Baptist Convention was approved during its 32nd annual meeting, Nov. 12-13 at First Baptist Church, West Valley City, Utah.

The 163 messengers unanimously approved a proposed long-range plan through 2002, with three key components new to the Utah-Idaho convention.

Program directors will now have the title, consultant. As consultants, the staff is prepared to advise churches and associations in various ministries rather than to direct programs. Convention departments will give way to three teams -- administration and communication, ministry and outreach, and church and leadership development. No longer will tasks be the responsibility of one staff member. Team members will be drawn from the staff as well as from pastors and laymen who might have expertise or experience helpful in planning an event or ministry.

Also under the plan, the convention becomes the first Southern Baptist agency to have the majority of its staff working from their homes. Teleworking -- commuting through computers and modems -- will allow staff members to live anywhere in the two-state area rather than Salt Lake City where the convention has its headquarters.

Messengers adopted a \$1,595,730 budget for 1997, an increase of \$74,654 over the current year. Cooperative Program receipts from Utah-Idaho churches of \$475,654 will be necessary to support the budget. Giving to Southern Baptist Convention national and international ministries will remain at 21 percent of the budget.

For the first time in 11 years, a woman was elected to fill an officers' position. Mary McFarling, church secretary at Calvary Baptist Church, Idaho Falls, Idaho, will serve as recording secretary.

Steve Best, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Boise, Idaho, was chosen as president by acclamation, as were the other new officers.

Best is the first person elected to office who has been in the convention less than a year. He came to Boise in January 1996 from Oregon. At 30, he is also the youngest man to serve as convention president.

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Other new officers are: first vice president, Rhett Dürfee, pastor of First Baptist Church, Provo, Utah; second vice president, Chris Costa, associate pastor at University Baptist Church, Boise.

Bethel Missionary Baptist Church, Pocatello, Idaho, one of two new churches unanimously received into the convention, is the first black Southern Baptist church in Idaho. William Beard is Bethel's pastor.

Twenty pastors and staff who were new to Utah or Idaho since the 1995 convention were recognized. Jim Harding, executive director, asked someone who had been in the area for a while to stand with each new person. "Your standing with these people is your pledge to encourage and support them for the next year," he said. "Your support will help them to assimilate into one of the toughest mission fields around."

In his address to the convention, Harding reported what he called the "state of the state convention."

There is good news, Harding noted. Forty-five new starts including two new churches, 12 missions, 14 Bible study fellowships, 14 missions ministries and three multihousing Bible studies is excellent, he said.

However, the bad news, Harding said, is that Sunday school enrollment, resident church members and baptisms are all declining or have plateaued in the last three years. Giving to the Cooperative Program was less in 1995 than in 1993, he said.

Harding encouraged churches to increase missions giving and watch what God will do. "God is ready to move. I challenge you and I together to be ready to move with him," he said.

Harding recognized the top five churches in total giving and in per capita giving to the Cooperative Program. Southeast Baptist Church, Salt Lake City, gave the most while Eagle Hills Baptist Mission, Eagle, Idaho, gave the most per capita.

Ethnic pastors and choirs were again included on the program this year. "It's important for us to listen to the gospel in other languages in order to appreciate the difficulty of those who don't speak English," said Dan Walker, outgoing convention president and pastor of University Baptist Church, Boise.

Phuc Nguyen, pastor of First Vietnamese Baptist Church, Salt Lake City, brought a Bible study message in Vietnamese. His message was interpreted by Mark Nguyen (no relation) of the Vietnamese Baptist Mission in Kearns, Utah. Domingo Chapa, who is starting a new Hispanic work in the Fruitland, Idaho/Ontario, Oregon area, led a Bible study in Spanish. Enio Aguero, director of language missions for the convention, was his translator. George Glass, pastor of New Pilgrim Baptist Church, a black church in Salt Lake City, led one of the Bible studies.

Choirs from New Pilgrim Baptist Church and Mision Bautista el Sembrador, a Hispanic congregation of Salt Lake City, shared special music.

Among resolutions presented by the resolutions committee and approved by the messengers was one joining Harding and the state staff "in complete support to work on the state of the state convention and to pray during the next year for God's wisdom and direction for all Southern Baptist Convention leaders as well as the Foreign Mission Board, the Home Mission Board, Woman's Missionary Union, and all other national agencies and offers additional prayer support during this time of restructuring" under the convention-wide "Covenant for a New Century."

Another resolution expressed excitement for the upcoming 1998 SBC annual meeting in Salt Lake City and offering any necessary support to the Utah-Idaho convention's executive board and staff during the upcoming time of preparation.

Additionally, appreciation was voiced for two-state convention's seven-year partnership with Kentucky Baptists, which ends in December.

The 1997 annual meeting will be Nov. 11-12 at Calvary Baptist Church, Idaho Falls, Idaho.

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**New England Baptists target  
reductions in budget deficit**

**By Dan Nicholas**

**Baptist Press  
11/20/96**

ANDOVER, Mass. (BP)--Messengers attending the 14th Baptist Convention of New England annual meeting approved a \$2.46 million budget for 1997 and a financial development plan, while celebrating progress of the "Building for the Future" capital campaign.

The Nov. 14-15 sessions at the Ramada Hotel Rolling Green, Andover, Mass., drew 200 messengers and guests.

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The \$2,459,659 budget will challenge the 200 churches and missions in the convention in their giving to New England Baptist causes, in that the budget is \$196,485, or 8 percent, below projected income.

The current budget of \$2.5 million entailed a deficit of \$289,229 when it was adopted last year. Messengers adopted a plan to reduce the annual deficit to \$72,101 by 2000.

The budget includes an anticipated \$590,000 in Cooperative Program giving by the 20,000-plus New England Baptists, retaining allocations of 79 percent for New England ministries and 21 percent for Southern Baptist Convention national and international causes.

Messengers also adopted, after some discussion, a BCNE "Financial Development Plan" that "documents the fiscal operations process" and "provides guidance for the Convention in matters of soliciting, receiving, managing, and dispersing resources." The plan was designed to augment the state convention's vision for "empowering Great Commission churches to build God's kingdom."

BCNE Executive Director Ken Lyle reported \$670,000 of the \$1.1 million needed to complete the Building for the Future capital campaign has been given or pledged, equaling 61 percent of the goal, and 174 prayer commitments have been made.

The campaign centers on construction of a new office and training center in Northborough, Mass., but also features emphases on church growth and church planting.

Messengers approved a strongly worded resolution that condemns partial-birth abortion and euthanasia.

Richard Wright was re-elected by acclamation as convention president for a second consecutive term.

Addressing messengers, Wright, pastor of Faith Baptist Church, Warwick, R.I., said, "We need strong men and women who will have a real heartbeat for reaching the lost in New England." Addressing the crises of integrity, compassion and indifference that have plagued the church nationally, Wright called Southern Baptists to "a life of intimate fellowship with God" and "to be excited about God's Word." A spiritual leader, he noted, "is one who devotes himself to the Word of God. There's no way around that."

Randy Fearon, pastor of Fellowship Baptist Church, Hanover, Mass., was elected convention first vice president and Katy Smith, a pastor's wife and youth director at North Park Baptist Church, Bridgeport, Conn., was elected second vice president. Patty Golden of Hudson, Mass., a BCNE support staff member, was re-elected clerk.

Next year's convention meeting will be Nov. 6-7 in Portland, Maine.

More than 600 people committed themselves to spiritual awakening in New England at a "Toward a Fresh Encounter with God" prayer conference held immediately after the convention, Nov. 15-16, as Southern Baptist author and speaker Henry Blackaby urged each participant to "be a stander in the gap to bring revival to New England."

The conference was co-sponsored by the Baptist Convention of New England, American Baptist Churches of Maine, the American Baptist Churches of Vermont and New Hampshire, the Conservative Baptist Association of New England and the Northeast District of the Baptist General Conference.

Representatives from each sponsoring denomination delivered brief devotionals before Blackaby spoke.

"The evangelical community has lost the fear of God, and when you lose the fear of God you lose the fear of sin. ... We fear Satan, but we don't fear God. We've got things backwards," said Blackaby, director of the prayer and spiritual awakening office at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Blackaby said personal revival of Christians is essential for the spiritual awakening of non-Christians. "When we tremble in God's presence, the outside world will as well." Blackaby also asked parents to raise their children so the children's "greatest fear is not to do the will of God."

Blackaby, author of "Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God" and "Fresh Encounter: God's Pattern for Revival and Spiritual Awakening," asked those present to consider God's power before falling into a sinful lifestyle or giving into a sinful choice. "The only way I could let sin reign in my life is to lose (sight of) the awesomeness of God and his salvation."

Blackaby also said, "When people ask where in America revival will come, without hesitation I say New England." Referring to the America's Great Awakenings, he noted that "God has done a great work in New England -- and he still does."

HOUSE MAIL

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