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May 23, 1996

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California former executive  
to lead search for NAMB exec

By Herb Hollinger

Baptist Press  
5/23/96

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--The remaining seven members of a special 13-member group to search for a president of the North American Mission Board have been nominated, according to Bob Reccord, chairman of the Implementation Task Force which is coordinating the denominational restructuring.

The 13-member incorporator group is one part of the articles of incorporation for the NAMB to be submitted to messengers at the June 11-13 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention.

C.B. Hogue, retired executive director of the California Southern Baptist Convention, will chair the group called NAMB incorporators. Hogue was the messenger to the 1993 Southern Baptist Convention in Houston who made the motion to study the denomination's structure, which led to a 1995 SBC vote approving the "Covenant for New Century." That restructuring, to be finalized if a revision to SBC Bylaw 15 is approved for a second time this year by messengers in New Orleans, will reduce the number of SBC agencies from 19 to 12 and merge three agencies -- Brotherhood, Radio and Television and the Home Mission Board -- into NAMB.

In addition to Hogue, nominees for incorporators are B. Carlisle Driggers, executive director of the South Carolina Baptist Convention; Fred Lowery, pastor of First Baptist Church, Bossier City, La.; Alice Sanders, a homemaker and member of First Baptist Church, Wales, Fla.; John O. Yarbrough, pastor of First Baptist Church, Perry, Ga., and Georgia Baptist Convention president; Michael Hamlet, pastor of First Baptist Church, North Spartanburg, S.C., and former chairman of the RTVC; and Robert Sorrell, associate pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church, Cordova (Memphis), Tenn. Yarbrough and Sorrell are members of the SBC Executive Committee which created the Implementation Task Force following the convention's approval of the restructuring plan.

According to Reccord, pastor of First Baptist Church, Norfolk, Va., the primary task of the NAMB incorporators is the search for a president of the new agency. Their nominee must be presented to the NAMB trustees for election.

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According to the charter of NAMB, two trustees from each of three affected agencies complete the 13-member group. Those six, announced earlier, are C. Donley Brown, Keith D. Corrick, John P. Avant Jr., Charles G. Fuller, Omer Ray Finch Jr. and William G. Underwood.

The six incorporators from the three agencies will form a subcommittee of the incorporators group to nominate a chairman, vice chairman, secretary and treasurer of the NAMB from its full slate of trustees elected at the 1997 SBC annual meeting in Dallas.

"This is a change from the ITF's original thinking because HMB trustees wanted only trustees of NAMB to have input into board officer nominees. All of the six incorporators from the three agencies are eligible to be nominated NAMB trustees in 1997," Reccord said.

"The ITF was interested in nominating people for incorporators who would bring a lot to the table by reason of experience and background. For example, Bill Hogue has been a pastor, HMB leader and state executive director. His perspectives on the relationships needed between state conventions and the NAMB will greatly aid the incorporators.

"The same can be said of Carlisle Driggers, who served on the staff of the HMB and now leads the S.C. convention," Reccord said. "I could point out great strengths each nominee brings, but let me simply conclude that I believe we have a wonderful blend of skill, experience in Southern Baptist life and faithfulness to Christ in the people who we have asked to serve Southern Baptists in this significant assignment."

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White House: President supports  
bill limiting homosexual marriage By Tom Strode

Baptist Press  
5/23/96

WASHINGTON (BP)--President Bill Clinton supports legislation which would enable states to refuse recognition of homosexual marriages, a White House spokesman said May 22, according to published reports.

The president's endorsement of the Defense of Marriage Act came a week after a sometimes-contentious congressional hearing on the legislation.

Clinton would sign the bill if it is presented to him in its current fashion, said White House press secretary Michael McCurry.

"The president doesn't have objections to the two things the bill does," McCurry said, according to The Washington Times. "One, it says that no state is forced to recognize another state's codification of the union. And then the second thing it does is it says that marriage is a union between a single man and a single woman."

The Department of Justice already had said it considers the legislation constitutional.

McCurry's statement was the clearest to date of Clinton's position on the bill. It came in an election year with the president caught between maintaining the support of the homosexual community and reaching out to moderate and conservative voters.

"The president is to be commended for his position in light of opposition from a very vocal and powerful segment of his political constituency," said Will Dodson, director of government relations for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

"I hope and pray that the president will further retreat from a radical pro-homosexuality agenda to a position consistent with Scripture. The Bible makes clear that homosexuality is wrong and is therefore not in the best interest of those who engage in homosexual conduct. If we truly have compassion for homosexuals, we will admonish them to turn from their sin to a God who loves them."

Homosexual rights proponents criticized the White House.

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"This is a capitulation to religious political extremists," said Human Rights Campaign Executive Director Elizabeth Birch in a prepared statement. "It is deeply disappointing that the president has chosen the politically expedient course of action rather than standing up to gratuitous gay-baiting."

Rep. Bob Barr, R.-Ga., and Sen. Don Nickles, R.-Okla., introduced the Defense of Marriage Act in their respective chambers in response to an expected court ruling in Hawaii. In a case scheduled to go to trial this summer, a Hawaii court is expected to declare homosexual marriage constitutional.

If such a union is declared legal in Hawaii, it likely would be considered legal in all other states under the full faith and credit clause of the U.S. Constitution, unless a state is able to show it has a compelling policy opposing such unions. Eight states have enacted legislation banning homosexual marriages, and three more await a governor's action, according to a May 10 report from the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

The Defense of Marriage Act says no state shall be required to recognize a homosexual marriage from another state. It also amends federal law to define marriage as "only a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife."

Rep. Charles Canady, R.-Fla., chairman of the Constitution Subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee, said the legislation is necessary because "opponents of this bill have a strategy of winning big in Hawaii" and imposing the ruling on the remainder of the country.

The bill is the "ultimate states rights legislation," said Rep. James Sensenbrenner, R.-Wis. The legislation does not require a state to adopt a certain definition of marriage but only prevents a state from being required to accept another state's definition of marriage, supporters said.

The legislation's opponents, including openly homosexual Rep. Barney Frank, D.-Mass., on the subcommittee and Birch on the witness panel, labeled the bill anti-states rights, unnecessary, unconstitutional and politically motivated.

Amherst College professor Hadley Arkes said, however, if the Supreme Court struck down Colorado's Amendment 2 ban of local and state homosexual rights laws, it would "remove the prop" upon which states may refuse to recognize same-sex marriages. Five days later, the court did just that.

In her testimony, Birch said she considered her lesbianism a "gift from God."

Rep. Bob Inglis, R.-S.C., a conservative Presbyterian, tried to straighten Birch out on her theology when he told her something he said he knew she did not want to hear.

It "offends me greatly" to have homosexuals compare themselves to ethnic minorities, Inglis said. "The fact is being black is not a choice, but it is absolutely a choice to be homosexual."

Inglis said he hopes many can be rescued from the homosexual lifestyle "because I think it is inherently destructive."

The Defense of Marriage Act is H.R. 3396 in the House and S. 1740 in the Senate.

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Resolutions Committee member  
to withdraw, another resigns

By Herb Hollinger

Baptist Press  
5/23/96

ORLANDO, Fla. (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention President Jim Henry announced May 23 he has asked one member of the SBC Resolutions Committee to withdraw and another has resigned.

Henry, in a statement to Baptist Press, said he received word from Morris H. Chapman, SBC Executive Committee president, that the SBC bylaws allow for 10 members for the Resolutions Committee while Henry has appointed 12.

"In my desire to widen participation in our SBC life, I had enlisted more than the 10 members," Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla., said.

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"Therefore I have asked Dr. Ferris Jordan of Louisiana to withdraw, which he has consented to do. Buddy Sutton of Arkansas has resigned from the committee," Henry said. "We appreciate their willingness to serve and will miss wisdom and skill they would have brought to our work."

The committee is one of several the SBC constitution and bylaws allow the elected president to appoint. The committee prepares resolutions for the messengers at the annual meetings to consider. The Resolutions Committee is the subject of Bylaw 22 which states, in part, "the president ... shall appoint a Committee on Resolutions to consist of 10 members ... ."

Chapman told Baptist Press, "When I became aware 12 members had been appointed to the committee though SBC bylaws call for 10, and this opened the possibility of a challenge to the president's appointments during the convention, I called the matter to the president's attention."

The remaining 10 members of the committee are: chairman, Nancy Victory, Louisiana; Jay Wolf, Alabama; Jack Kwok, Arkansas; Faith Kim, California; Harry Lewis, California; Joe Coats, Florida; John Click, Kansas-Nebraska; Linda Donnell, Mississippi; Mark Acuff, New England; and Karen Bullock, Texas.

Recently, Sutton's appointment had drawn criticism.

Larry Holly, a physician from Beaumont, Texas, distributed to news media a letter he had written May 21 to Henry asking the president to withdraw Sutton's appointment. Larry Page, head of the Christian Civic Foundation of Arkansas, also was critical of the Little Rock attorney's appointment in an interview with the Indiana Baptist state convention newspaper.

Sutton is a managing partner of a firm which drafted an amendment which is part of a November ballot initiative in Arkansas said to be pro-gambling.

A spokesman for Henry said he did not want to comment on the Sutton matter.

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Rio 'True Love Waits' dares  
young people to be different

By Betty Poor

Baptist Press  
5/23/96

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil (BP)--In a go-for-it hedonistic culture, the "True Love Waits" sexual purity campaign in Brazil challenges young people to dare to be different.

Missionaries and Brazilian youth leaders offer no apologies for their "counterculture" effort -- and they're getting mixed reactions.

"O Globo" national television network ran a positive report on young people distributing white roses to promote sexual purity for Brazilian Valentine's Day. A Rio newspaper used its front page to display a picture of a "True Love Waits" sign in a "red light" district. A Rio TV station made fun of the idea of a purity campaign in a sensual society.

But in a land where AIDS is prevalent, nobody laughed when Brazilian Baptist youth sponsored a community blood drive in Campinas during their national congress -- and gave 100 percent uncontaminated blood.

The blood drive broke all records for the number of people donating -- 472 -- and for the 100 percent usability of the blood. "This is just incredible," a blood bank worker said. "We've never seen anything like this before."

Baptists conduct the campaigns in a "revivalist" style in the Brazilian culture, said Tom Hearon, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board youth worker for the state of Rio de Janeiro. "You have a sermon, present the evidence and then you ask for an immediate decision.

"It's rewarding to have an emphasis that can be taken into a local church that calls attention to youth and their needs," Hearon said. "It provides a subject that's uniquely theirs." They receive it well because a large percentage of them want morality, even though "the extremely sensual culture militates against it so violently," he said.

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"Sexual propaganda here is just so intense," Hearon said. "Girlie magazines are out in the open on every news rack. Television content is very sensual. Magazines for young girls promote sexuality. The whole philosophy concerning sex is not one of waiting.

"Without a campaign like 'True Love Waits,' I don't feel Brazilian young people really have an option, because no one tells them their body is their own -- it doesn't belong to anyone else. No one tells them they have the option of waiting until marriage to have sex," he said.

Brazilian Baptists have taken the lead and published a "True Love Waits" manual. Missionaries in south Brazil voted a goal of having 90 percent of them work in some way to promote the campaign. They see this as a way to reach youth for Jesus Christ as well as help Christian youth cope with their society.

"We carry out a positive campaign," Hearon said. "We encourage young people to learn what true love is and look for it -- not settle for less. We help them look to God as the author of love, and find their joy in him first."

Hearon said he hopes one day Brazil may be known -- not for sensuality -- but as the South American country where a generation of youth dared to be different.

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Baptist, Orthodox teams  
meet in Istanbul, Turkey

By Wendy Ryan

Baptist Press  
5/23/96

WASHINGTON (BP)--With "official international conversations" between the Baptist World Alliance and the Orthodox Churches the ultimate goal, leaders of the BWA met with Orthodox leaders in Istanbul, Turkey, May 10-14, where Baptist and Orthodox teams shared information about their respective beliefs in the second of what is described as "initial exploratory discussions."

The first such discussion was held Oct. 22-24, 1994, and the Orthodox and BWA team agreed to meet again at Oxford, England, May 24-28, 1997.

The Orthodox Synodical Commission for Inter-Church Affairs was led by Chrysostomos of the Senior See of Ephesus and the BWA team by its general secretary, Denton Lotz.

The BWA team presented papers on Baptist identity, structure and statistics worldwide, evangelism in the life of the church and the authority of the Bible. The Orthodox presented papers on the Ecumenical Patriarchate and tradition and their place in the teaching of the Orthodox Church.

Those participating in the conversations were Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Ephesus; Metropolitan Gabriel of Koloneia; Metropolitan Athanasius of Helioupolis and Theira; Metropolitan Kyrillos of Seulecia; Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Myra; and Gennadios Limouris and Basil Stavrides of the Ecumenical Patriarchate; Lotz; Tony Cupit, BWA director of study and research; Karl Heinz Walter of Germany, general secretary, European Baptist Federation; Theo Angelov of Bulgaria, president, European Baptist Federation; James Leo Garrett Jr., distinguished professor of systematic theology, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas; and Bruce Milne, president, Canadian Baptist Ministries.

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Guy Henderson to retire  
June 30 as Miss. editor

Baptist Press  
5/23/96

JACKSON, Miss. (BP)--Guy Henderson, editor of The Baptist Record, will retire June 30 after six years with the state paper of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

Henderson, 68, and his wife, Lois, will remain in Mississippi although he told Baptist Press he would like to assist in some overseas pastorates in the future. Henderson said they have a farm about an hour from Jackson with a "cabin on a lake" and plan to spend considerable time there.

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The Baptist Record is a publication of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. A successor to Henderson has not been announced although observers expect William W. Causey, executive director-treasurer of the board, to announce a nominee before Henderson's retirement date.

Henderson has been with the Mississippi board 18 years. Prior to that he was a missionary with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board for 20 years, serving in Korea and the Philippians.

The Hendersons have four children and eight grandchildren. A daughter and her husband, missionaries in Costa Rico, begin furlough soon with their three children, Henderson said, which will occupy his immediate retirement time.

A retirement reception will be held in his honor June 28 at the Baptist Building in Jackson.

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Foreign missionary dies  
in Kentucky car wreck

Baptist Press  
5/23/96

CADIZ, Ky. (BP)--Daniel R. Hill, a Southern Baptist missionary to Thailand, died May 22, 1996, in an automobile accident near Cadiz, Ky.

Hill, 54, was driving to Indianapolis Wednesday morning to attend a son's graduation from military boot camp when he apparently fell asleep at the wheel, according to state police. His car left the road and overturned. Hill was thrown from the car and was pronounced dead on arrival at a Paducah, Ky., hospital.

An Atlanta native, Hill served as a church planter and evangelist in Bangkok, Thailand. He and his wife, Delores, were appointed by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in 1973. He was in the United States for two months of study, according to Clyde Meador, who directs the board's work in southeast Asia.

Delores Hill, a native of Amarillo, Texas, was in Thailand at the time of the accident.

Hill was a graduate of the University of Georgia and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas. He was completing requirements for a counseling degree at Georgia State University at the time of his death.

His first assignment for the Foreign Mission Board was in evangelism and relief work in Bangladesh, where he directed a vocational rehabilitation center for handicapped men. He transferred to Thailand in 1979, where he worked for five years in Cambodian refugee camps before transferring to Bangkok.

Prior to missionary appointment, Hill was a contract specialist for the U.S. government. He also served as pastor of churches in Missouri and Texas.

Hill and his wife have four grown children.

Funeral services were tentatively scheduled May 25 at Mount Harmony Baptist Church, Mableton, Ga., under the direction of White Columns Memorial Funeral Home.

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Betty Jo Lewis' first book  
done 'Hand In Hand' with God

By Sue Poss

Baptist Press  
5/23/96

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Betty Jo Lewis practiced what she wrote in this year's emphasis book for Woman's Missionary Union -- she turned the task over to God, letting him use her hands to write.

"I wasn't capable in my own strength," said Lewis, wife of Southern Baptist Home Mission Board President Larry Lewis. "But I realized that God could do it through me and that was what the whole book was about."

"Hand In Hand: Partners Working Together with God" (Birmingham: Woman's Missionary Union/SBC, 1996) was the result of this two-handed partnership Lewis said draws heavily on her lifetime of experience.

The book will be used to interpret the 1996-97 WMU theme of "Hand in Hand" in churches, associations and national training events.

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In the book, Lewis continually comes back to her basic point that God will use human hands to accomplish his tasks -- if they are willing to let God use their hands. "We must be pliable clay in the potter's hand and allow God to minister in and through us," Lewis writes. "For God to work through us, we must put our hands in his.

"I wanted to write a book that was biblically based but not a heavy theological treatise," she said. "I wanted to share experiences from my heart but with a scriptural basis."

Lewis' book of eight chapters talks about working hand in hand with God, with children, with women and with each other.

From the beginning, she reminds the reader that God chose human beings as his partners to work with him to accomplish his tasks. He knew human limitations, so he equipped believers with the Holy Spirit and allowed them to be a part of his mission in the world.

Lewis recounts a list of biblical saints whose hands were used by God, some willingly, some not. She talks about the eager hands of King Lemuel's mother in Proverbs, how her hands were never idle as she was finding ways to worship and praise God. She talks about the ministering hands of Mary and Martha, the one ministering in the kitchen, the other at Jesus' feet, reminding that ministering hands must first be worshiping hands.

Lewis moves back to the Old Testament to talk about the hands of Moses that held the rod as he stood before a burning bush. "Whatever we hold in our hands can be God's tools of mercy, rescue and compassion, or weapons of wrath," Lewis writes. "Whatever is in our hands can also be a barrier to our service and obedience to God."

"I have faced this myself many times," Lewis said. "One time in particular, when we were in a wonderful situation, I didn't want to leave. God showed me that I had a tight grip on that ministry. Much like Moses gripped the rod and God told him to throw it down and then he gave it back to him, I realized the application of that in my life. I realized that when we grip something in defiance of God, what was lovely can turn ugly. God showed me how, if I continued to grip that ministry, it could very well turn ugly. I came to the point of surrender and opened my hands to God.

"Even now," she continued, "I can still grip things and issues. I have to constantly open my hands to God. We have to hold loosely to our lives, our material possessions. We are not to hold them to ourselves and our selfish ambitions."

Being obedient to God, Lewis said, requires Christians read the Scripture and pray so they can discover his will for their lives. "When we have the thought that God wants us to do something, and it's consistent with Scripture, and if we just keep having that thought, then I think it's of God. Then the choice is ours, whether we are obedient or not."

Lewis talks about how Lydia, Dorcas, Priscilla and Aquila allowed God to mold them. She uses the mother and grandmother of Timothy, Eunice and Lois to launch into her section of working hand in hand with children. She lists some startling statistics: Among them:

-- Nearly 70 percent of all child-care workers earn less than the average parking lot attendant.

-- One-fourth of all births in the United States are to unwed mothers.

There are other statistics that support Lewis' claim that all children need a helping hand -- and not just from parents. "When parents are unavailable, other adults need to fill the gap," she said.

But it's not just children who need help, she said; women do also. Quoting from a study done by the HMB, Lewis said many women are angry and their anger is directed toward men. Therefore, she said, other women are in the best position to work hand in hand as mentors to these women who need help.

She also stated women can work well with victims of domestic violence and with recovery and support groups.

"The point I was making is that women have a place in the evangelization of other women who may not be open to a man," said Lewis, a native of Texas and graduate of Hannibal-LaGrange College in Missouri, where her husband once was president. "God desires unhindered opportunity for women. We are quality individuals in his design. We aren't second-class citizens."

To work hand in hand with each other, Lewis said women should be "touching people in their community," and she does this herself in her neighborhood in Lilburn, Ga. She said she knows just about everyone around her and prays regularly for them. Most recently, she has witnessed to a couple going through divorce and a family whose daughter was killed by a drunken driver. "I try to stay aware of the prayer needs but I certainly don't do enough," she said.

Each person has at least one gift and all have different gifts, Lewis said. She thinks her own gifts include encouragement, optimism and faith. "I practice walking by faith, rather than by sight. I love people. I enjoy encouraging people in their own gifts and nudging them to surrender those things," she said.

"I hope the Holy Spirit will convince anyone reading this book that they are a worthy individual and that God does want to use them in ministry. There is something, if but one thing, that every person can do."

After finishing her first book, Lewis said her own faith has been strengthened. "I think when we do what only fits in our comfort zone, we get kind of stale," she said. "But when we let him stretch us and take on things that are a real challenge, trusting him to lead all the way, then we can grow in our faith of him. And that has happened to me."

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

Southern California thrust  
underscores foreign missions

By Mark A. Wyatt

Baptist Press  
5/23/96

LAKE FOREST, Calif. (BP)--A three-day MissionsFest at locations throughout Southern California celebrated Southern Baptists' historical emphasis on foreign missions and renewed the call for missions support through prayer, giving and personal involvement.

Thousands of California Southern Baptists attended the rallies in locations from Bakersfield to San Diego, including six events held simultaneously on Friday evening, May 17. The rallies featured missions speakers and, at one location, a "global walkaround" where attendees talked with foreign missionaries and learned more about the Southern Baptist missions enterprise.

During a Friday rally at Mt. Tabor Baptist Church in Los Angeles, David Cornelius, FMB director of black church relations, encouraged African American Southern Baptists to become involved in foreign missions.

"Just as God used Queen Esther 'for such a time as this,' maybe God has allowed us (African Americans) to survive 'for such a time as this,'" Cornelius said.

"God has blessed us ... not to consume all those blessings ... but to be instruments in his hand to carry his message to a lost and dying world."

Cornelius pointed out America has about 32 million African Americans, half of whom claim to be Baptists.

"However," he said, "fewer than 100 are serving as career foreign missionaries. Of the 4,200 Southern Baptist career foreign missionaries, only six are African Americans."

He encouraged those attending to do their part to go help reach others of African heritage. "There are enough just in this room (about 300) ... to turn the world upside down," he said.

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At Highland's Immanuel Baptist Church, Randy Galloway was one of several missionaries who told about their work. A former California Baptist student worker, Galloway now serves as a missionary pastor in Toronto, Canada.

"It's great to be back home again," Galloway said. "When I said 'yes' to God, I had no idea where it would lead, but it's led to telling people about Jesus all over the world."

Don Kammerdiener, FMB executive vice president, contrasted the ease with which Americans can respond to the gospel and the difficulty facing people in other parts of the world.

"Think of the world as somehow divided into two kinds of places. In one kind, there are Christian churches -- a lot of paganism, evil, wickedness -- but a Christian witness. Anyone in Southern California who wants to become a Christian can do so," Kammerdiener said.

But in other parts of the world, "it's as if there were a great wall of unbelief" where there is no access to the gospel, he continued. That part of the world grows smaller every day as Christians take seriously the Great Commission's commandment to evangelize the world, he said.

Kammerdiener challenged his audience with three questions: "How are we going to relate to what God is doing? Are we going to turn inward and just be interested in ourselves, our own comfort, convenience and safety? Or say to God, how would you have me serve in your kingdom?"

The main rally Saturday at Saddleback Valley Community Church began with the Foreign Mission Board's signature parade of flags, a dramatic display of colorful national banners representing nations where Southern Baptist foreign missionaries serve. Also displayed were nearly a score of somber gray standards symbolizing 2,161 "Last Frontier" people groups with little or no access to the gospel.

The session continued with a worship session featuring hymns and praise with a distinctive international flavor. Hundreds joined in the celebration, clapping hands and swaying to the rhythm.

Missionaries from Asia, the Americas, Europe and the Caribbean addressed the gathering next. They recounted incidents of opposition as well as success in their ministries and asked the audience to pray for their continuing efforts. Tom Wolf, professor of missions, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary and teaching pastor at The Church on Brady in East Los Angeles, choked back emotion as he prayed for concerns expressed by the missionaries.

"Give us, Lord Jesus, your eyes and your hands that we might minister with works and with words and, yes, with wonders," Wolf implored.

Jerry Rankin, Foreign Mission Board president and keynote speaker for the rally, quipped that the contemporary worship style was a "new experience" for some of the Richmond, Va.,-based FMB staff. In Virginia, he explained, "It takes four church members to change a light bulb. One to change the light bulb and three to tell you how wonderful the old one was."

In his sermon, Rankin told his audience God's call to missions service is:

-- a personal call. "It's a call to each one of us that God has given the privilege to know him. No believer is exempt."

-- a purposeful call not based on "our talents, abilities, education -- although he uses them in significant ways," Rankin said. "What God has given us is the knowledge of his Son, Jesus Christ, and he calls us to take that message."

-- a providential call. When God calls, a response is not optional, Rankin said. "You don't bargain with the Lord. You don't negotiate and make excuses when the Lord calls because that's a providential call."

-- an empowered call. "There is no power in all this universe that exceeds the power of the Lord Jesus Christ," Rankin said. "In all of that power and authority, we are assured."

"There's only one reason God is calling us, and that is to take the gospel of Christ to all the world. People are lost and it's only that message of Jesus Christ that can save them," Rankin declared.

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Terry Barone contributed to this story.

**'Culture fair:' Food, music,  
native clothing & missions**

**By Mark A. Wyatt**

SAN DIEGO (BP)--Music, food and colorful costumes from all over the globe accented Southern Baptist world missions efforts recently in San Diego. And most of the exhibition came from area churches.

The culture fair transformed a high school courtyard into a global village May 19, providing a dramatic windup to three days of a Southern Baptist "MissionsFest" emphasis throughout Southern California.

"Look around you," marveled Patrick Moody, pastor of Del Cerro Baptist Church in La Mesa. "You see just about every culture and ethnic group you can imagine. In many ways this is what Christlikeness is all about. That's the beauty of this."

The event, organized by churches in the San Diego Southern Baptist Association, capped a three-day schedule of meetings attended by thousands in locations from San Diego to Bakersfield. At each one, Southern Baptist missionaries and mission agency leaders urged audiences to help spread the gospel around the world by "praying, giving and going."

Jerry Rankin, Foreign Mission Board president, spoke at several of the gatherings. In San Diego he shed his suit jacket, mingled with visitors and sampled tasty treats prepared for the occasion by many of the association's ethnically diverse congregations.

The ethnic foods proved to be a popular and often eye-catching attraction. A half dozen Filipino Baptist congregations sponsored one of the food booths where the centerpiece was a whole roast pig, a festive dish called "lechon."

While carving the carcass, Travis Moore, pastor of Mabuhay Christian Fellowship in Oceanside, said it takes up to 12 hours to roast the pig. It took considerably less time for the curious and hungry to reduce the crisp-skinned delicacy to a small pile of bones.

Across the way, members of several Japanese Baptist congregations offered trays of sushi -- slices of pressed white rice and brightly colored vegetables wrapped in dark green seaweed. They also handed out delicate origami birds, each an intricately folded paper model of a crane.

In the next booth, recording artist Sonia Sekado serenaded visitors waiting to sample nachos, tamales and mole provided by the association's Hispanic congregations.

Also featured were Korean, Cambodian, Vietnamese, Chinese, African and European-American foods. In addition, displays staffed by foreign missionaries and California Southern Baptists promoted chaplaincy and deaf ministry among the fair-goers.

B. Wade McKinley, the association's director of missions, literally wore multiple hats for the occasion -- one made of woven straw with a wide brim shading the bright afternoon sun and another of multi-colored plastic used to identify the event's key organizers.

Saying he was "overjoyed" by the churches' participation in the culture fair, McKinley noted all but three of the association's 130 congregations had dismissed Sunday evening services to take part in the rally. Organizers estimated there were nearly 1,800 in attendance.

"It just proves if you share your plans and talk with people about what you're doing, they'll get involved," McKinley said.

Aaron Eurich, pastor of Paradise Hills Baptist Church, said the culture fair offered something of value for everyone. For one thing, local church members "get to meet missionaries we'd (otherwise) never get to meet," Eurich said.

"It also means a lot to our people who get a boost from seeing so many other Southern Baptists" from a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, he added.

Seven-week-old Tasha Benfield may have been the event's youngest visitor. She was accompanied by her parents, Michael and Tamra, members of First Baptist Church, Mira Mesa. The couple observed the culture fair also was good for the missionaries involved.

"I'm glad to see so many (missionaries) are here to see that the people support them," Michael said.

Tamra, who works as a secretary at the Mira Mesa church, agreed, admitting she was surprised by the size of the turnout. "It's really neat," she said of the culture fair. "There's so much to it."

Another visitor impressed by the colorful and informative exhibition was a vacationing Texas Baptist. Bill Bernhard said he was drawn to the event after worshipping at East Clairemont Southern Baptist Church that morning near the fair's Madison High School location.

Bernhard, a retired bivocational minister, said he and his wife Barbara had "prayed about where to go and God's Spirit just led us to it." Both are members of First Baptist Church in Houston, where Bernhard hopes to organize a similar gathering when he returns home.

"I've been walking around seeing the different kinds of food and dress," he said. "I'd like to try to get something like this together in our church in Houston."

Bernhard may have some ready allies in that task. While taking in the sights and sounds of the San Diego culture fair, he recognized two of his fellow church members from Houston. Bill and Alice Hockin had come to the rally with Doug Johnson, pastor of First Baptist Church, Imperial Beach, where they attend services while visiting California several months a year. The Hockins indicated they support the idea of a culture fair to promote foreign missions "back home" in Texas.

Chances are their pastor, John Bisagno, will too. Last year Bisagno was named a special assistant to the Foreign Mission Board president. In that role his assignment is to promote foreign missions in local churches, conferences and other speaking engagements.

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CORRECTION: In (BP) story titled "Coppenger: Ministers should be like Paul, rather than King Saul," dated 5/22/96, please make the following change in the third paragraph:

"... Coppenger told the 102 people who received degrees (one graduate was awarded two degrees)."

Thanks,  
Baptist Press

#### ANALYSIS

Court provides breakthrough  
for homosexual rights effort

By Tom Strobe

Baptist Press  
5/23/96

WASHINGTON (BP)--While the U.S. Supreme Court did not explicitly grant civil rights to homosexuals in its recent decision striking down a controversial Colorado amendment, it certainly gave hope to a movement seeking such protections.

Meanwhile, in the wake of the Romer v. Evans opinion, opponents of the push for homosexual rights castigated the high court decision as weak in constitutional reasoning and as an affront to those who consider homosexuality wrong.

On May 20, a 6-3 court ruled Colorado's Amendment 2 was a violation of the U.S. Constitution's equal protection clause. Passed in 1992, Amendment 2 banned local or state laws granting civil rights status to homosexuals.

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"The Supreme Court vindicated gay America," said Elizabeth Birch, executive director of the Human Rights Campaign, the country's largest homosexual political organization.

"You can see a whole new tone (in this decision). No civil rights actually got conferred on any gay Americans, but this allowed us to break through to a whole new context of hope," Birch told her staff, according to The Washington Post.

Steve McFarland of the Christian Legal Society warned believers not to "go off the deep end in describing this case."

"It's not a landmark decision," McFarland said. "The court was not wrestling with whether homosexuality is a fundamental right or whether gays are entitled to special legal protection.

"I think the decision is wrong, but I don't think the sky is falling. The government still can, should and must exempt churches, religious ministries, religious employers and landlords from gay rights laws. Nothing in this opinion changes that. No, a church does not have to hire a homosexual now for youth pastor."

It remains to be seen, McFarland said, how the court would rule on a "more carefully crafted law," such as one which excluded homosexuality from a list of characteristics against which the government cannot discriminate.

Others warned of the fallout from the opinion,

Describing it as a "disaster," Alliance Defense Fund President Alan Sears said in a memo the opinion will have a "major, long-lasting impact far beyond the limited holding."

Will Perkins, board chairman of Colorado for Family Values, said in a written statement, "Make no mistake: Today's decision gives homosexuals the de facto status of a protected minority."

Only five days before the release of the opinion, a witness at a congressional hearing warned of the repercussions if the court ruled against Amendment 2.

In *Romer*, it appeared the justices had "no intention" of overturning *Bowers v. Hardwick*, the court's 1986 decision upholding state laws against homosexual conduct, said Hadley Arkes, a law and political science professor at Amherst College, in written testimony.

"But if the court strikes down the amendment in Colorado, my own reading is that the decision will be understood, in effect, as the overruling of *Bowers*, even if the court does not care yet to acknowledge what it has done," Arkes said.

Such a decision, Arkes predicted, will result in many judges pulling out of the opinion this principle: "That it is now immanently suspect, on constitutional grounds, to plant, anywhere in the laws, a policy that casts an adverse judgment on homosexuality or accords to homosexuality a lesser standing or legitimacy than the sexuality 'imprinted in our natures.'"

Several critics of Associate Justice Anthony Kennedy's majority opinion agreed with dissenting Associate Justice Antonin Scalia, who described the court's action as "an act, not of judicial judgment, but of political will."

Southern Baptist spokesman Will Dodson said he "was infuriated" as he read the opinion.

"As a former judge, I think I can recognize intellectual dishonesty in an opinion when I see it," said Dodson, a former Texas county court-at-law judge and now director of government relations and legal counsel for the Christian Life Commission. "The majority opinion is almost as bad as *Roe v. Wade* from that perspective.

"When you read and read and keep on reading an opinion, and nothing in it makes sense or ties itself together, you know the author is stretching for results instead of relying upon the letter of the law, precedent and sound reasoning."

In a speech from the House of Representatives floor, Rep. Charles Canady, R.-Fla., described the decision as a "truly amazing display of intellectual dishonesty" for striking down Amendment 2 while not mentioning the *Bowers* opinion.

"I defy anyone to explain how these two results can be reconciled," Canady said.

Canady joined Scalia in admonishing the majority for suggesting the only reason for the amendment was hatred of homosexuals.

"Such a crass dismissal of our moral and religious heritage should provoke outrage on the part of the American people," Canady said.

ADF's Sears said, "All I know to do is drop once again to our knees and fervently pray for our nation ... and pray for the judges of this nation's courts that they might know good from evil. ... If the body of Christ doesn't get more serious about the legal battles we are in, it won't recognize this nation in another generation."

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#### ANALYSIS

Missionary: Japan cutback  
indicates balance of resources

By Marty Croll

Baptist Press  
5/23/96

TOKYO (BP)--A decision to let missionary numbers in Japan shrink by 30 percent during the next three years points up the dilemma of how to spread limited resources worldwide, said Mark Edlund, missionary administrator in the East Asian nation.

"Finding this balance is probably the greatest challenge for our Foreign Mission Board leadership," Edlund said.

Edlund worked with a task force of Southern Baptist missionaries to Japan for several months, then with the board's area director for East Asia, Faye Pearson, to arrive at a plan for reducing the missionary force in Japan. Board leaders decided in April to allow attrition to reduce the force from 175 to about 120 missionaries.

The freed resources will benefit people groups in rapidly responding areas called "harvest fields" and in "The Last Frontier," which has had little or no access to the gospel. Japan fits neither category.

Workers report explosive growth in The Last Frontier, where 429 missionaries targeted 69 people groups and started 367 new churches last year. And while most missionaries in Japan support work in The Last Frontier, they fear diverting funds from their established work for the promise of results elsewhere, Edlund said.

"If the reduction in the investment (in Japan) means entering a country where the investment will lead to a response, then it is sound," Edlund said. "If it is reducing a force to send missionaries into countries that will not respond to the gospel, then it is questionable."

In recent years, mission leaders have realized that the resistance of governments to Westerners -- and missionary presence -- did not signal a hardness to the gospel. Many workers have found various doors into The Last Frontier and have discovered people groups ready to hear about Jesus.

But the board has adopted the position that even if people don't respond now, the Great Commission commands Christians to take the gospel to all people. Its position is that Jesus guarantees every people group will be represented in heaven.

For several years Foreign Mission Board leaders have wrestled with the problem of a high investment in some areas and lack of it in others. Talk of balancing the deployment of missionaries has become even more intense as nations previously closed to outside influence have begun looking westward for help.

Eight years ago, after extensive strategy studies, the board announced plans to reduce the number of missionaries in Japan from 200 to 160. At the time, missionaries shifted their own resources to start 50 new congregations. After being told last year they must cut again, they said they needed at least 75 missionary units -- up to 150 missionaries -- to maintain established work.

"Sixty units is not the 'right size' for the force in Japan. It is the necessary size," said Edlund. "The board is doing the best it can with the resources available to it."

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Mission leaders agree it will take deep financial sacrifice and commitment from Southern Baptists to reach the world. Though Southern Baptists continue to increase giving to the two primary sources of funding for foreign missions -- the Cooperative Program and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering -- financial needs overseas are enormous. The increasing cost of doing business on the world market has required the board to make tough choices.

"We're looking at a whole world," said Pearson, a Foreign Mission Board missionary to Taiwan for 25 years before becoming area director. "I'm 1,000 percent for East Asia, but there's a lost world out there."

"One day countries in East Asia will be harvest fields, and I believe when they are, the Foreign Mission Board will bring more missionaries back in."

The reduction in force would not affect missionaries on the field now. Only those who choose to transfer would do so. Other reductions will be accomplished through retirement and resignation.

Foreign Mission Board trustees cried when Pearson announced the cutback at their April meeting. "But they understood why it was necessary," she said.

"The missionaries serving in Japan are some of the most dedicated and faithful we have," Pearson said. "They have worked long and hard years with little fruit for their labor. They will work through this and on the other side, they will be stronger. We will watch God do his work among the missionaries, among the Christians, and among the lost of Japan.

"Revival is going to come."

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