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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355W. C. Fields, Director
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor
Norman Jameson, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041

DALLAS Richard T. McCartney, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Tex. 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996

MEMPHIS Roy Jennings, Chief, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, Tenn. 38104, Telephone (901) 272-2461

NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) L. Bracey Campbell III, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2798

RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151

WASHINGTON Stan L. Hasteley, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

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79-95

**Baptists Must Reach Ethnics
To Increase Baptism Rates**

By Roy Jennings

HOUSTON, Texas (BP)--Southern Baptists need to focus on ethnics if they want to improve their baptismal rate in the 1980s, a research specialist advised.

Addressing the newly organized Southern Baptist Research Fellowship on the subject of the church growth movement, Larry McSwain, associate professor of church and community at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., said the simple fact is that ethnic women are having more babies than white women.

McSwain blamed a declining birth rate instead of poor church growth principles for the drop in baptisms among Southern Baptists.

"We can expect a continuing drop in the total number of baptisms of children and youth well into the 1980s because of lower birthrates," he said. Southern Baptist baptisms fell almost 10,000 to 336,050 in 1978, the third consecutive year of decline.

Only a dramatic increase in the proportion of adult baptisms prevented a much more radical decline in total baptisms among Southern Baptists in the early 1970s, McSwain explained.

"If the same proportion of adult to youth baptisms (one to two) had been maintained through the decade, and normal baptisms of the young occurred, these would have been 40,000 fewer total baptisms than was the case. We are doing better at evangelism than our internal critics charge."

Other denominations felt the drop in conversions ahead of Southern Baptists because "infants impact membership much earlier for them," McSwain explained.

Besides the focus on ethnics, McSwain said church growth strategy for Southern Baptists may include more aggressive evangelism of children and youth, an emphasis on young adults, and enticement of over 30-year-olds back to the church as part of family acculturation.

However, the emphasis on young adults and over 30-year-olds has pitfalls, McSwain said.

"Religious defection among young adults appears to be one of the most pronounced trends of the past 25 years and the likelihood of return (to church) after age 30 is somewhat less than in former years."

If significant defection is occurring among the young which is becoming permanent in middle adulthood, radical changes in church life may be required to evangelize these groups to attract them back to the church, McSwain deducted.

Growing churches will need to alter their style of family emphasis if the over 30 group is to return to the church in large numbers, McSwain indicated.

"The decade of the seventies has been one of assault upon the fabric of American families," McSwain said. He pointed to an increase of almost 300 percent in illegitimate live births during the last 25 years, a 48 percent increase in children living with one parent during the last seven years, 60 percent increase in divorced persons in six years, and 63 percent increase in the number of single persons in the same period.

Southern Baptists need more research in at least six other areas before they adopt church growth principles, the researcher said.

McSwain contended Southern Baptists need (1) data verifying church growth principles, (2) broader criteria for measuring church growth, (3) in depth case studies of growing churches, (4) intensive research on the relationship between age cohort and family life cycle and church growth, (5) studies on the church within a total community, and (6) research on the relationship between community change and church growth and decline.

Home Mission Board Appoints
Missionaries to Greeks

ATLANTA (BP)--The first missionaries to the half million Greeks in the United States were appointed by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board during the June executive committee meeting the board's directors.

Ignatius and Parthena Meimaris of Roslindale, Mass., were named to missionary associate status and assigned as catalytic language missionaries ministering primarily among the estimated 40,000 Greeks in the Boston area.

Two others were named missionaries and 15 pastors were approved to receive financial aid by the directors meeting in Atlanta.

Named missionaries were Robert and Ann Campbell of Rockwood, Tenn. They will serve in the New England Baptist Association where he will be evangelism director from the Northborough, Mass., offices.

According to Jim Lewis, language missions staffer at the Home Mission Board, Meimaris is "to the best of our knowledge the first person appointed to serve among Greeks-- at least in the last 100 years."

Meimaris and his wife are both natives of Katerini, Greece, and still maintain Greek citizenship, although they've been in the states nearly 10 years. Meimaris came to the United States to attend Malone College in Camden, Ohio, where he received a bachelor's degree in chemistry and mathematics in 1974. He also graduated from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Massachusetts with a master of religious education degree.

In Greece, Meimaris and his family had belonged to a Protestant church; his grandfather was a lay preacher. Yet, most Greeks have a Greek Orthodox religious background, making a Greek-language Baptist church difficult to establish.

The Meimaris, however will not give up. Through his understanding of the religious backgrounds of his native people and through his commitment to Southern Baptists, Meimaris already has begun several Bible studies, small but growing.

Mrs. Meimaris graduated in 1979 with a bachelor's degree in French and Spanish from Emmanuel College in Boston.

The Campbells are both Tennessee natives. Prior to appointment, he was pastor of the First Baptist Church of Rockwood. He also served churches in Gleason, Tenn., Moulton, Ala., and Paducah, Ky. He is a graduate of Bethel College in McKenzie, Tenn., and holds a master of religious education degree from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

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Fellowship Bible Classes
Aid Adult Outreach

By Linda Lawson

Baptist Press
6/11/79

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Howard Halsell believes fellowship Bible classes offer one answer for reaching adults for Bible study who would not respond positively to an invitation to a Southern Baptist church.

Halsell, a growth consultant in the Sunday School Board's Sunday School department, said apartments and mobile homes are two prime locations for church-sponsored weeknight Bible study groups.

While many complexes and mobile home parks have rules about what kinds of activities may be held, Halsell said in an interview most managers are receptive to fellowship Bible classes being started by residents. "You can get in anywhere if you really want to get people involved," he said.

According to statistics in the 1978 Southern Baptist Uniform Church Letter, 209,475 people were involved in 13,894 fellowship Bible classes sponsored by 7,982 Southern Baptist churches. Halsell estimates that at least 75 percent of the participants would not have been reached for Bible study any other way.

While many Baptist churches are actively involved in starting fellowship Bible classes, Halsell admits that others question why they should be reaching people outside the church when there is still room in the building.

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Halsell predicts that fellowship Bible classes will increasingly be used as a tool for involving persons in Bible study. "It gets more exciting and more complicated to get the people," he said.

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Top Ten Home Missions
Givers Named in Houston

HOUSTON, Texas (BP)--South Main Baptist Church of Houston and Sunny Hills Baptist Church of Fullerton, Calif., led the Southern Baptist Convention in gifts to the 1978 Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions.

The top 10 churches in both total and per capita gifts to the offering were announced by William G. Tanner, executive director-treasurer of the Home Mission Board, during ceremonies at Woman's Missionary Union's annual meeting preceding the Southern Baptist Convention here.

Kenneth L. Chafin, pastor of South Main, received a plaque from Tanner for the church's offering of \$22,951.

G. William Grady, pastor of Sunny Hills, also got a plaque for the church's offering of \$1,624.36 which averaged \$36.09 for each of the 45 resident members.

The mission board compiled the lists of top 10 churches from 1978 SBC Uniform Church Letters on file with the Sunday School Board in Nashville.

Nine other churches leading in total gifts received letters of commendation and a book. They were First Baptist Church of Amarillo, Texas, \$19,322; First Baptist Church of Columbus, Miss., \$17,054; First Baptist Church of Decatur, Ga., \$15,641; First Baptist Church of Houston, \$15,440; First Baptist Church of San Antonio, \$15,104; Second Ponce de Leon Baptist Church of Atlanta, \$14,902; First Baptist Church of Shreveport, La., \$13,962; First Baptist Church of Columbus, Ga., \$13,922; and Wieuca Road Baptist Church of Atlanta, \$13,308.

Leading churches in per capita gifts per resident member also honored were Palmerville Baptist Church of New London, N.C., \$35.55 for each of 29 members; Rifle Southern Baptist Chapel of Rifle, Colo., \$29.46 for each of 28 members; New Zion Baptist Church of Ona, Fla., \$27.89 for each of 85 resident members; Keysville Baptist Church of Keysville, Ga., \$25 for each of seven members; New Concord Baptist Church of Rose Hill, Miss., \$25 for each of six members; Estes Park Baptist Church of Estes Park, Colo., \$23.44 for each of 39 members; Midway Baptist Church of Lamesa, Tex., \$21.03 for each of 68 members; Hart Camp Baptist Church of Littlefield, Tex., \$20.91 for each of the 23 members; and Hill Creek Baptist Church of Richlands, Va., \$20.62 for each of 26 resident members.

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Criswell Endorses Adrian
Rogers For SBC Presidency

By Charlie Warren

HOUSTON, Texas (BP)--The opening session of the two-day conference of Southern Baptist pastors was used as a platform here Sunday, June 10, to endorse Adrian Rogers as the Southern Baptist Convention presidential candidate of those advocating biblical inerrancy as an issue.

W.A. Criswell, pastor of the 20,000-member First Baptist Church, Dallas, and former SBC president, made the unqualified endorsement during the opening remarks of his address to the 8,000 preachers.

"We will have a great time here if for no other reason than to elect Adrian Rogers as president of the Southern Baptist Convention," Criswell said, after Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn., had addressed the conference.

Criswell's church operates Criswell Center for Biblical Studies, a hotbed of concern about "liberalism" in the 13.2 million member denomination.

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In an interview following the address Criswell said he expects Rogers to be nominated and elected, even though he explained there is an "unwritten law" that forbids a former SBC president to nominate a candidate for that office.

Criswell also indicated that if Rogers is nominated and agrees to run, two other candidates, Bailey Smith, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, Okla., and Jerry Vines, pastor of Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mobile, Ala., will withdraw their names. Rogers and the other two pastors are the three candidates reportedly committed to doctrinal reform within the denomination, primarily over the issue of biblical inerrancy.

Rogers, pastor of the largest Southern Baptist church east of the Mississippi River with more than 10,000 members, said God hadn't "spoken to his heart" about offering himself as a candidate but that he should know by Tuesday, June 12, date of the election to choose a successor to President Jimmy Allen of San Antonio.

It was Rogers who fired the opening volley at liberalism in an address kicking off the pastors' conference at the Houston Coliseum. He expressed concern about the liberalism that he claims is taking over Baptist colleges, universities and seminaries. He also attacked Baptist publications for their support of the seminaries and denominational agencies, and stated that every Baptist church with an excellent track record in annual baptisms is "a conservative Bible-believing church" with pastors who "believe in the inerrant, infallible word of God.

"It is not the only ingredient," he said, "but it is the basic ingredient.

"I've been reading our Baptist publications," Rogers continued. "They're saying to forget orthodoxy and get on with evangelism and missions. That's ridiculous. What you believe determines what you do. Your zeal is never any greater than your conviction and your conviction comes out of the word of God.

"If those liberals will ever come to the Cross of Christ, all heaven will break loose," he said.

Another speaker at the opening session of the conference of pastors devoted most of his address to an attack on liberalism in the denomination.

James Robison, evangelist of Hurst, Texas, said if Southern Baptists tolerate the liberalism of the convention "we will be guilty of the death" of the convention.

Even SBC President Allen didn't escape Robison's criticism.

Robison, making an indirect reference to Allen, said he disagreed with his recent statement that "There are those who would like to change the agenda of the convention from missions to orthodoxy, and that such a shift of emphasis would be tragic because it would make us miss God's initiatives at a time when we are in a unique position to become a flash point in spiritual awakening."

"I don't question the authority of the Bible," Allen said in an earlier interview. "My only apprehension is creating an atmosphere at the convention resulting in the erosion of trust in denominational leadership and in shifting the denomination's priorities from evangelism and missions to biblical inerrancy."

In rebuttal, Robison, said that "without the Bible you have no message. Without the Bible you have no evangelism. Without the Bible you have no mission . . . and it does matter which Bible you believe."

Most of Robison's attack however was aimed at professors of Baptist colleges and seminaries. He said Satan works most effectively when he influences the "minds of those who teach others . . . sowing seeds of doubt and skepticism."

"How many are coming out of our seminaries with a zeal for souls?" Robison asked. "There are some, but it's in spite of and not because of our institutions."

Robison also defended Harold Lindsell, editor emeritus of Christianity Today and president of the Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship who asked liberals to leave the SBC. He said editors of Baptist publications should not have attacked him in their editorials and "it's a shame that a seminary president called him and his book 'poppycock.'

"We must elect a president not only dedicated to the inerrancy of the word of

God, but who will stand to remove any seminary professor who doesn't believe in the inerrant word of God," Robinson said.

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SBC Must Inform
Women of Difficulties

Baptist Press
6/11/79

By Bracey Campbell

HOUSTON, Texas (BP)--A woman professor in social work education at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary at Louisville, Ky., called on the Southern Baptist Convention here to take steps to make young women aware of the difficulties facing them if they answer God's call to enter denominational work.

Anne Davis told 300 participants at a dinner for women in church-related vocations that too many girls come to Baptist seminaries thinking an education will guarantee them a place in denominational or church life.

"Our denomination in its literature and through other processes must begin earlier to acquaint young women called of God to what may be in store for them if they answer that call," Davis said.

She said the reality of the difficulty of a woman getting the position she thinks she has been called for--and then trained to fill--often does not strike until late in the seminary process.

"I have a lot of young women in my classes wondering what they are going to do," she said. "The idea that they will be guaranteed placement upon completion of their seminary work just does not work."

Davis said she thinks it is "more difficult--much more difficult" for a woman to pursue a Southern Baptist career today than it was 20 years ago. "It was easier for me when I started, because people weren't looking for me."

The professor characterized today as a difficult time for women in Southern Baptist life.

"But in our denomination to make progress you just about always have to suffer temporary setbacks before you can make any long-range gains."

Davis said one of the major steps confronting women in seeking a religious calling is competence. "In our society, an incompetent man can be hired to fill a position. A woman has to be competent to get the job."

The dinner meeting was held as part of the annual meeting of the Woman's Missionary Union. It grew out of an inter-agency Consultation on Women in Church-related Vocations last September in Nashville.

Laura Fry, evangelism consultant with women for the Home Mission Board in Atlanta, said women need to become more conscious of the role they can assume in Southern Baptist life. Too often, women are ruled out of jobs just because they have always been occupied by a man, she contended.

"Just the suggestion that it could be filled by a woman often opens doors. In my pilgrimage thus far with God's leading, I have learned that he is constantly preparing us for the next step he wants us to take. We may not understand now why we are experiencing what we are, but we must trust that he is growing us for that next step. As a woman in a church-related vocation, I have learned both patience and persistence."

Women must be patient, she said. "At the same time, we must be sensitive to the appropriate moment for Spirit-led persistence and aggressiveness with human beings that he brings into our lives."

Carolyn Weatherford, executive director of WMU, called the dinner a continuation of the WMU role of helping women find their places in church and denominational life. "Today we can no longer say, 'here am I, Lord, send my brother'," she said.

Miss Weatherford said she was certainly "open" to exploring the possibility of making similar dinners an annual event at the conventions. "We hear from women all over the country expressing their desires for help in seeking to follow God's will in their lives."

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SBC Missionaries
Leave Nicaragua

MANAGUA, Nicaragua (BP)--In the midst of stepped-up civil conflict, all Southern Baptist missionary personnel to Nicaragua have temporarily left the country.

Stephens and Paula Baumgardner, missionary journeymen stationed in Managua, were the last Southern Baptist missionaries to leave the country. They flew to the United States on Sunday, June 10. The other missionary couple, Stanley and Glenna Stamps, also stationed in Managua, left Nicaragua about two weeks earlier, taking local leave in Honduras. Both couples made their own decisions to evacuate.

Sporadic fighting and political tensions have existed for over a year between the national government of President Anastasio Somoza Jr. and guerrillas of the Sandinista National Liberation Front.

The Baumgardners, entering their last year of a two-year term in the Southern Baptist missionary journeyman program, were to have been with the Stamps on local leave status. But because of an anticipated visit by relatives and the country's "on again, off again" tensions, the journeymen opted to stay in Managua, a Foreign Mission Board spokesman said.

Conflict increased, however, and following declaration of martial law, the Baumgardners, both Florida natives, consulted Foreign Mission Board personnel and made tentative plans to evacuate as soon as possible. Originally they chose to go to Honduras or Guatemala, but because of severe business shutdowns and other obstacles those plans were dismissed and the couple booked a flight to Miami, Fla., and on to their home in Orlando. Sunday was their first opportunity to leave.

The Stamps, natives of Mississippi and Texas, respectively, were in Honduras when martial law was declared and could not reenter the country. They are staying in Tegucigalpa.

As fighting continued in Nicaragua, neighboring El Salvador remained under general unrest. Southern Baptist missionaries there have reported that "things are rough, but calm," the spokesman said.

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Lindsell Scores 'Liberals,'
McCall Denounces 'Games'

Baptist Press
6/11/79

HOUSTON, Texas (BP)--Arch conservative Harold Lindsell defended his view of the inerrancy of the Bible in a news conference here and outlined what he claimed were evidences of "liberalism" in Southern Baptist seminaries.

When Lindsell finished his news conference, Duke McCall, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, staged an ad-hoc meeting with media, charging Lindsell was "playing games with words."

Lindsell, president of the independent Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship and former editor of Christianity Today, drew generously from his new book, "The Bible in the Balance," to support his charges that there are liberals within the Southern Baptist Convention who do not believe the Bible is verbally inspired.

Lindsell cited specific names and articles from his book in attempting to prove his point. He cited a news report which quoted him as saying Southern Baptists must face the issue of biblical inerrancy or suffer the consequences, even if it means the loss of 500,000 members.

"That should be put in context," he said. "That represents only about four percent (of the total membership). But I think if we are likely to follow the pattern of other denominations, it would be better to lose the 500,000."

"But I hope we don't lose anybody. It would be better if some of these people whose views are not comparable to those generally held by Southern Baptists would have some kind of conversion experience," he added.

Lindsell, who lives in a suburb of Chicago, Ill., said Southern Baptists actually are creedal people.

"This business of not being creedal is, no matter how thin you slice it, baloney. We are creedal. In Texas (Baptists) threw out a couple of churches because they were speaking in tongues. If that is not creeping creedalism, I don't know what is."

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At one point he said if he were president of a Southern Baptist seminary he would "welcome an investigation...indeed demand that the denomination set up some sort of committee to take a harder look to determine if there is truth in what I have said."

When asked what his organization is trying to correct among Southern Baptists, Lindsell said seminaries "have not heard" the concerns about liberalism from the people in the pew, and suggested that the way to get recourse is through electing officers who will do something about the situation he described in the seminaries.

In his response to Lindsell, McCall said there are some in the convention who would embark on a witch hunt, if possible.

During his rebuttal, McCall said he was not aware that Lindsell had ever been on the campus of Southern Seminary, although Lindsell told reporters he had visited the seminary library at Louisville.

"If he was there, I never saw him," McCall said.

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Wrapup

Stepchild Associations
Are Coming of Age

Baptist Press
6/11/79

By Robert Stanley

HOUSTON, Texas (BP)--That Southern Baptist stepchild, the local association of churches, at last is beginning to feel like a real member of the family, directors of missions indicated at a two-day conference here.

With the growth of metroplexes and the spread of Baptist work into all 50 states, it's the 1,197 associations that offer the key to continued growth of the Southern Baptist Convention, directors of missions learned at their annual meeting.

These associations, through which local churches cooperate voluntarily for fellowship and joint projects, have been part of Baptist life in this country since the first one was founded in 1707--more than a hundred years before the Southern Baptist Convention itself was formed.

Earlier, seminary President William M. Pinson Jr. challenged Southern Baptist directors of missions to recommit themselves to their basic task of starting hundreds of new churches across the country and not be diverted from their ministry "by a lot of rhetoric."

In an obvious reference to evangelist James Robison's speech to the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference, Pinson said it "troubles me in my gut when I see we could be diverted from our mission in ministry" by such rhetoric.

Pinson, president of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif., said this year may mark the most serious crisis in Southern Baptist life since the financial crisis of the Depression.

"Our vital signs are weak," he said. "Our leadership is in transition. Our institutions are under attack from within." But this instance is unlike the financial crisis in that "this time we seem to be our own worst enemy," Pinson said.

In a speech to the pastors, Sunday, Robison, a Hurst, Texas evangelist, aimed much of his attack at professors of Baptist colleges and seminaries who he claims are sowing seeds of doubt and skepticism.

Pinson did not mention Robison by name, but the seminary president noted that in times of crisis there is a tendency toward "scapegoatism."

On the subject of resurgence of associations, James Nelson, the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's new director of associational missions, said: "The unprecedented opportunities of the major metropolitan areas can stagger our minds if we look at them in isolation," Nelson said. "However, the association can overcome that."

He believes the 35,000 Southern Baptist churches have no choice but to band together more effectively in their local associations if they're going to meet the challenge of the next two decades.

"Who can develop a strategy for Seattle, Los Angeles, Chicago or Houston but the people who live there and who have heard God's call to be on mission in these places?" he asked.

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And Nelson thinks this is beginning to happen. "Baptist leaders across the nation are joining the movement for stronger associations," he said.

Nelson sees strong opportunities for growth not only in the newer Southern Baptist areas like the Northwest and New England, but also in the sunbelt--the string of states that stretches necklace-like from Virginia and North Carolina westward to California.

This sunbelt, which includes some of Southern Baptists' strongest areas of work, recently was described as the most rapidly growing population segment of the nation, Nelson pointed out. "Missions and evangelism there will not require millions of dollars," he said, "but equipped, motivated and functioning associational and church missions committees involving people in Christ."

An example of this active associational outreach was detailed by Ed Onley, director of church-community ministries of Capital Baptist Association, Oklahoma City.

This association's 124 churches have more than 2,400 volunteers actively involved in 27 different activities ranging from free medical and dental clinics to a center for battered women and prostitutes.

Onley's latest project is a permanent Trucker's Chapel that the association hopes to open September 1 at the busy Trucker No. 2 truckstop on Interstate 40 northeast of Oklahoma City. The 6-by-12-foot chapel will be staffed 24 hours a day with volunteers who counsel or just talk with truckdrivers.

Originator of the idea was an independent Oklahoma trucker, Fred Wright, who came to Onley in January saying, "Ed, we've got a problem. Gals in vans are tempting good, moral family men as they cruise the highways. We've got to offer the truckers another place to go."

"With diesel oil prices going up, it's costing a bundle to operate the mobile chapel," Onley said. "But we can put up one of these permanent chapels for \$997, and Christian truckstop owners will furnish the site and the utilities."

If the first one is successful, he believes hundreds of similar chapels could easily be set up and staffed by Baptist volunteers through associations across the country.

In their closing business session, the directors of missions elected R. Edward Gilstrap, executive director of missions for the Atlanta Baptist Association, as president. They named Larry Rose, director of missions in Waco, Texas, as president-elect.

Other officers are George Arthur, Dexter, Mo., re-elected secretary; Robert A. Wells, Reno, Nev., treasurer; and Harold Blackburn, Silverhill, Ala., re-elected editor. Preston Denton of St. Louis will be host director when the group meets in that city next year.

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Concern Expressed Over
Groups 'Dividing' SBC

By Orville Scott

Baptist Press
6/11/79

HOUSTON (BP)--The Southern Baptist Executive Committee closed the first of two scheduled meetings here Monday, June 11, with expressions of concern over "groups dedicated to dividing" the Southern Baptist Convention.

Duke McCall, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., kicked off the unscheduled discussion at the close of the committee's session at the Hyatt Regency Hotel on the eve of a three-day meeting of the SBC.

"My heart bleeds at the thought we'd come to this convention and take any action designed to splinter a group I believe God is using to reach out to a lost world," said McCall, in asking the group to pray for God's leadership.

McCall and presidents of five other Southern Baptist seminaries held a news conference in Dallas in May in an effort to put to rest charges of "liberal" teachings levied by a group which says it is contending for biblical inerrancy (without error).

Earlier in May, Paige Patterson, president of the Criswell Center for Biblical Studies, Dallas, and Houston Appeals Court Judge Paul Pressler sounded an alarm over what they called "liberal" teaching in the seminaries. They said the issue prompted meetings in at least 15 states to encourage messengers to elect an SBC president committed to biblical inerrancy.

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Executive Committee Chairman Brooks Wester of Hattiesburg, Miss., accented McCall's concern at the Monday meeting.

"I believe God will work through this," he said, "but I also believe Satan is putting forward one of his efforts to blunt the Bold Mission Thrust (Southern Baptist's effort to present the gospel to every person on earth by the year 2000).

"The Bible warns us about inadvertently becoming tools of Satan," Wester added.

Outgoing convention President Jimmy Allen of San Antonio led the group in a prayer for unity of spirit.

He prefaced the prayer by saying he doesn't recall a time in Southern Baptist life more conducive to a spiritual awakening. But he added that he believes "fragmenting the fellowship now is the greatest threat."

In scheduled actions, the Executive Committee honored Baker James Cauthen, executive secretary of the Foreign Mission Board, and their executive secretary-treasurer, Porter W. Routh.

In a resolution of appreciation for Routh, who retires July 31 after nearly 28 years as executive secretary-treasurer, the committee noted that the number of Southern Baptist churches have increased during his tenure from 28,000 to more than 35,000, and total membership has grown from 7.3 million to more than 13.2 million.

Total mission gifts grew from \$37 million to more than \$318 million, and the Cooperative Program gifts for worldwide missions jumped from \$21 million to \$150 million.

In another resolution, the committee cited Cauthen for 26 years as executive secretary of the Foreign Mission Board and for 54 years as pastor, seminary professor, missionary and denominational leader. Cauthen will retire Dec. 31.

Since Cauthen came to his present position 26 years ago, the number of Southern Baptist foreign missionaries has increased from 900 to 3,000.