



- - BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
Wilmer C. Fields, Director
Dan Martin, News Editor
Craig Bird, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300
RICHMOND (Foreign) Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON Stan L. Haste, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

November 21, 1983

83-179

Women's Ordination, Record Budget
Highlight Oklahoma Convention

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--Oklahoma Baptists took another step toward an eventual 50-50 split of receipts between their state convention and the Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program at their annual meeting but didn't resolve the continuing battle over the ordination of women.

The 1984 budget of \$17.7 million includes 48 percent to support worldwide mission and education causes of the SBC, an increase of two percent over last year. The 50-50 division is a goal for 1985.

The women's ordination issue was introduced by Hugo T. Lindquist, pastor of Bethel Baptist Church in Oklahoma City, who attempted to amend the convention's constitution to exclude messengers from churches which ordain women or have charismatic practices.

William H. Cook, convention president, ruled the motion out of order but suggested Lindquist could put the matter in resolution form if he wanted. Lindquist agreed, but served notice he intends to make another attempt next year to amend the constitution. The resolutions committee presented a milder version of what Lindquist submitted to them which noted "the significant contribution of women" in local church ministry, but opposed their ordination to church office.

"We believe the ordination of women as deacons and ministers deviates from the accepted faith and practice and creates discord among our fellow churches," the resolution stated. It stopped short of demanding churches not engage in the practice but put the convention on record "encouraging our churches to refrain from ordaining women as deacons and ministers."

Joe Brown, pastor of First Church, Shawnee, moved to amend the resolution to include the statement: "Be it further resolved this resolution is not to be interpreted to say the BGC0 fails to recognize and honor the autonomy of the local church." Brown called local church autonomy a "time honored, tested and proven Baptist principle."

Lindquist pled with messengers not to water down the issue further and said, "let's not get sidetracked on this issue."

Messengers turned down the amendment after Cook made a statement that the autonomy of the local church could not be overthrown by any action of the state convention.

The resolution passed, 328-91.

In a related action, Charles Gregory, a layman from First Baptist Church, Midwest City, proposed a resolution from the floor, first as a substitute for the resolution on women and later as a separate proposal. It called on messengers to "reaffirm their support" for article 3 of the state convention constitution, which forbids the convention to write creeds or exercise ecclesiastical control over the churches. The resolution failed.

Gene Garrison, pastor of Oklahoma City First and immediate past second vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention, said the convention had "voted against the priesthood of the believer, the autonomy of the local church and repudiated its own constitution" in passing the resolution on women. First Church, Oklahoma City, recently ordained three women as deacons.

--more--

Other resolutions approved urged elected officials to voice opposition to the liquor-by-the-drink proposal that is upcoming in Oklahoma and commended one of their U.S. senators, David Boren, for leading in the defeat of legislation to establish tax credits for parents who send their children to private schools.

Cook, pastor of First Baptist Church, Bartlesville, was reelected convention president. Jim Sanderson, pastor of First Baptist Church, Jenks, was chosen first vice president, and Bob Hinson, pastor of First Church, Marlo, was chosen second vice president. There were 1,316 messengers at the meeting.

The 1984 convention meeting will be Nov. 13-15, at Council Road Baptist Church, Bethany, a suburb of Oklahoma City.

--30--

Louisiana Elect Laymen
Approve South Korean Crusades

Baptist Press
11/21/83

BOSSIER CITY, La. (BP)--Louisiana Baptists voiced opposition to gambling, tuition tax credits and appointing an ambassador to the Vatican at their 136th annual session Nov. 14-16.

Raymond T. Boswell, Shreveport, was the second layman in 23 years to be elected president. Other officers are Tommy French, pastor of Jefferson Baptist Church, Baton Rouge, first vice president and Reggie Ogea, pastor of First Baptist Church, Amite, second vice president.

Business actions included adopting a \$15,750,000 budget, an increase of only \$250,000; accepting the invitation of Korean Baptists to conduct evangelistic crusades through committee for another year and approving a recommendation to establish the Louisiana College

National and worldwide Southern Baptist Convention programs will receive 34 percent, the same as 1983.

Two of the 10 resolutions adopted were on the subject of gambling. The resolution on raffles, lotteries and games of chance was passed as amended by Richard Luebbert of New Orleans to "make it stronger." The resolution concluded by stating "we call attention to the fact that raffles, lotteries and games of chance are forms of gambling and we oppose these as well as all other forms of gambling."

The other gambling resolution called for the governor and legislature to discourage any action which "would further legalize gambling in our state."

The resolution on tuition tax credits was prepared during convention sessions as the result of information from the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs in Washington, that the Senate was in a filibuster on the subject. The Senate subsequently voted down the measure.

Boswell, one of three nominees for president, was elected in a run-off vote with Ron Herrod, pastor of First Church, Kenner.

The messengers voted to meet at First Baptist Church, Pineville, Nov. 12-14 for their 1984 convention.

--30--

Tennessee Baptists Okay
Record Cooperative Program Budget

Baptist Press
11/21/83

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. (BP)--Messengers to the 1983 Tennessee Baptist Convention approved a record Cooperative Program mission support goal, voted to extend the life of two special committees, and approved a change in the financial policy which limits the handling of designated gifts to Tennessee Baptist or Southern Baptist causes.

--more--

Unofficial registration figures indicate a record 1,713 messengers attended the Chattanooga meeting.

In other action, the messengers elected Raymond Langlois, pastor of Nashville's Judson Memorial Baptist Church, as president. Also elected were Vice President Leonard Markham, pastor of First Baptist Church, Sweetwater, and Second Vice President Frank Proffitt, director of missions for Lawrence County Baptist Association, Lawrenceburg.

Other major business actions were the approval of changes to the TBC Constitution and Bylaws and the adoption of resolutions supporting the role of women in Tennessee Baptist life and the raising of the drinking age from 19 to 21, and opposing pari-mutuel gambling and pornography on cable television.

The Cooperative Program budget-goal for the November 1983-October 1984 convention year was set at \$18.3-million--an 8.93 percent increase above the \$16.8-million budget-goal for last year. The new budget will increase the percentage shared with missions and ministries supported by the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program from 36 to 36.25 percent.

Two special committees, authorized by earlier conventions, were extended.

The Ministers Aid Committee, which was created by the 1980 TBC to find ways to aid ministers who lose their positions, was authorized to continue as a special committee for five years. The six-member committee will begin rotation next year, with the TBC president appointing two members for three-year terms each year.

The messengers also approved a recommendation from the committee that \$35,000 from earned interest on day-to-day deposits of the convention be made available to the committee, and this need become a regular budget item in the TBC budget beginning next year.

The Trustee Relationship Study Committee, which was created by the 1982 TBC, was granted an additional year to complete its study and to make its report to the 1984 state convention.

On recommendation of the Executive Board, the messengers approved an amendment to the TBC financial policy which states, "Designated gifts for other than Tennessee Baptist Convention and Southern Baptist Convention agencies, institutions, programs, auxiliary, and associated organizations (i.e., American Bible Society and United Tennessee League) shall be redirected to the sender."

James Sorrell of Johnson City, chairman of the Executive Board's special committee which considered this matter, said the change does not violate the freedom or the autonomy of a local church, would save the convention from embarrassment of appearing to support certain movements and would protect the state convention and its churches from the possible loss of tax exempt status.

Joey Rosas and Patrick Stewart, both of Memphis, spoke against the change, feeling the matter should be left to churches to create new designations within their budgets. The amendment was approved on a voice vote with some opposition.

The messengers approved a strong statement opposing the current drive in Tennessee to legalize pari-mutuel gambling. Other resolutions opposed pornography on cable television, supported the raising of the legal drinking age in Tennessee from 19 to 21 and recognized and confirmed the role of women in the life of Tennessee Baptist churches.

When the resolution on women was presented, Richard Holloman, Humboldt, offered an amendment that "due to the current division of conflict throughout the Southern Baptist Convention concerning the ordination of women and since we uphold the autonomy of the local church, the resolution does not speak to the issue of endorsing or rejecting the ordination of women."

Lon Shoopman of Madisonville, a member of the Resolutions Committee, noted the resolution was written with great care not to take a stand on ordination. "The convention has never ordained anyone nor does not have the authority to do so," he added. His move to the table amendment carried.

Shafer Parker of Elizabethton then presented an amendment which stated the resolution did not specifically approve the ordination of women as pastors or deacons.

President Steelman ruled Parker's motion to amend was out of order, because the convention had already expressed itself on that matter. Messengers sustained the ruling of the chair.

The resolution on women was then approved by a standing vote.

The messengers voted to hold the 1986 TBC at Freedom Hall in Johnson City. By previous action, next year's convention will be held Nov. 13-15 at Belmont Heights Baptist Church, Nashville.

--30--

Florida To Send
49 Percent To SBC

Baptist Press
11/21/83

LAKELAND, Fla. (BP)--The Florida Baptist State Convention approved a record budget and the purchase of land for a south Florida satellite assembly at its annual meeting.

Without discussion or serious question, messengers adopted a 1984 FBC Cooperative Program budget goal of \$19,044,175 and a Cooperative Program basic budget of \$17 million with 51 percent of the basic budget designated for FBC causes and 49 percent designated for SBC causes.

That is a one percent increase from last year's budget.

In 1980 Florida Baptists started moving toward a 50-50 division of Cooperative Program funds between FBC causes and SBC causes. A 13 percent annual gain in Cooperative Program giving through the churches was necessary to achieve the goal of 50-50. This requirement is well on the way to achievement and 1985 should see Florida sending as many dollars for worldwide causes as is kept for home state use.

In the past four years Florida has moved from giving 40.8 percent of total receipts to the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program to 49 percent.

The convention okayed the purchase of 400 acres of land for \$680,000 near LaBelle for a south Florida satellite assembly and accepted a property gift of 78.62 acres of land from Thelma S. Thompson, the owner and seller of the property. The gift will bring the total acreage for the new assembly to 478.62 acres.

Baptist Bible Institute at Graceville, Fla., was granted permission by the convention to construct a single story dormitory to accommodate 32 students and authorized to borrow a portion of the \$190,000 construction costs from the quasi-endowment fund of the institute. Also BBI received approval to increase the student enrollment ceiling by 25 students per year for the next five years beginning in 1984. This action permits a total enrollment of 525.

Through a resolution, Florida Baptists were called upon to participate for "Coalition for 21," a movement to sign petitions and get Florida state constitutional change on the November 1984 ballot to raise the allowable drinking age to 21. Another resolution requested the FBC to consider placing on its calendar "The Day of Prayer for Peace with Justice" on the first Sunday in August, coinciding with the SBC planning calendar.

New officers are president, Jerry Passmor, pastor of Olive Baptist Church, Pensacola, Fla.; first vice president, Gary Redding, pastor of Lakeside Baptist Church, Lakeland, Fla., second vice president, Mrs. Stanley V. Buss of Vero Beach, Fla.

The next meeting of the Florida Baptist State Convention will be in St. Petersburg, Nov. 12-14, 1984.

--30--

Kentucky Baptist Issues
Decided By Narrow Margins

PADUCAH, Ky. (BP)--A suggestion to combine the three Kentucky senior Baptist colleges into one university and the election of the convention president produced sharply divided votes Nov. 15-17 at the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Willis W. Henson, pastor of Lone Oak Baptist Church in Paducah, received 50 more votes than T.A. Prickett, pastor of Seven Hills Baptist Church in Owensboro, in the presidential election, even though there was little discussion.

But when messenger Greg Hancock advocated combining Georgetown College, Campbellsville College and Cumberland College into a single university with campuses in Georgetown, Campbellsville and Williamsburg, the audience was "visibly stirred" according to news reports.

A 38-vote majority voted not to name a committee to study the idea.

The first vice presidency went to Charles Barnes, a Louisville layman, with 58 percent of the vote in a three-way race, and the second vice presidency went to Robert W. Durham, pastor of Gilead Baptist Church, Glendale, without opposition.

The 1,884 messengers also approved an executive board recommendation to establish ties with Kenya in a partnership plan and adopted a 1984-85 budget goal of \$17.5 million. The budget includes a \$14.9 million operational section, a \$1.3 million Bold Mission challenge segment and includes \$1.3 million to be supplied by income other than church contributions.

The national Cooperative Program of the Southern Baptist Convention will receive 36.25 percent (up from last year's 36 percent) of the basic budget and 37 percent of all income toward the Bold Mission challenge section.

The partnership with Kenya will join volunteers from Kentucky churches in projects which will increase evangelist enterprise in the east African nation starting during 1985-88.

Messengers also heard plans for a new pension plan for church and denominational employees which will be acted upon at next year's convention. If approved, it will significantly increase financial outlay from the convention, churches, and individuals, and will greatly enhance benefits to cover employees during their retirement years.

Resolutions adopted expressed opposition both to state lotteries and the appointment of a U.S. ambassador to the Vatican.

The 1984 Kentucky Convention will meet at Walnut Street Baptist Church, Louisville, Nov. 13-15.

--30--

Court Dismisses Charges
Against Tanzanian Pastor

By Evelyn Knapp

Baptist Press
11/21/83

KYELA, Tanzania (BP)--Walden Kamomonga, a Baptist pastor jailed for alleged involvement in economic sabotage and racketeering in Tanzania, has been released.

Kamomonga, 47, pastor of Busona Baptist Church in Kyela District, was arrested by Tanzanian police April 13. Police confiscated 72 bags of unhulled rice, bicycle parts, hoes and other items worth more than \$8,330. These were left from his shop, which he had closed several months earlier.

The arrest came during a crackdown announced early this year by the Tanzanian government to stop economic corruption contributing to black markets and deadly price-hiking in the country. The government jailed anyone suspected of being an economic saboteur and confiscated any goods suspected of being held for resale at blackmarket prices.

--more--

A Tanzanian court, ruling lack of evidence, dismissed charges against Kamomonga and released him Oct. 19 after six months' imprisonment. He said he credits God, whom he asked to be his advocate, for his release.

The pastor said life in a Tanzanian jail wasn't easy and relatives weren't allowed to see prisoners. Nonetheless, for a Christian, being in such a jail can be a blessing.

The pastor shared Jesus with other prisoners, six of whom accepted Christ as Savior. He said they were receptive to the gospel because they felt hopeless. "They knew no one else could save them spiritually and physically but Jesus," he said.

As a result of this experience, Kamomonga feels there's great opportunity in a prison ministry and would like to see Tanzanian Baptists enter this work.

During his absence, thieves stole Kamomonga's other property. They even uprooted his cassava, a sweet potato-type plant, and carried it away.

The government has promised to return the confiscated property, including the 72 bags of rice, so that his wife and six children will not go hungry.

--30--

(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press

Beirut School Opens, Closes;
Other Baptist Work Continues

Baptist Pr ss
11/21/83

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Beirut Baptist School in west Beirut opened as planned Nov. 2 with about 700 students, the usual student load. But shelling in the area Nov. 15 prompted the government to call off classes the next two days, apparently so the children would not be endangered while traveling to and from school.

Arab Baptist Seminary in Monsouriyeh, on the east side of Beirut, opened Oct. 18 with nine students, despite heavy shelling.

Baptist Publications, also based in Monsouriyeh, completed the first Arabic translation of MasterLife discipleship materials in time to field test them in a workshop in Nicosia, Cyprus.

Isam Ballenger, Foreign Mission Board director for Europe and the Middle East, said the workshop drew Arab Baptists from across the Middle East, including some from Israel.

Ballenger reported first-term missionaries James and Stephanie Bethea have moved from west Beirut to Sidon, a coastal city to the south about midway between Beirut and the Israeli border.

The couple feels they have more freedom of movement in Sidon and the opportunities for student work are greater there, Ballenger said.

--30--

Flexibility, Cooperation
Keys To Training Growth

By Gail Rothwell

Baptist Press
11/21/83

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Flexible training approaches, cooperation with denominational agencies and worldwide distribution of materials were cited by Roy Edgemon as key factors in a three-year resurgence in Southern Baptists' church training enrollment.

After more than a decade of steady enrollment declines, participation in church training showed a dramatic turnaround in 1980 when an enrollment gain was posted for the first time since 1963.

Enrollment by 1982 had climbed to 1.9 million.

--more--

Edgemon, director of the Baptist Sunday School Board's church training department, attributed much of the growth to flexibility made possible by the introduction of the "Survival Kit for New Christians" and adult and youth discipleship training, MasterLife and DiscipleYouth.

He said about 1979 the department began moving toward the concept of church training as "not just for Sunday night anymore."

For years the department offered one basic type of training material. Now four approaches are available--ongoing curriculum, Equipping Center Modules for short-term training, doctrine study materials and survival kits, and MasterLife and DiscipleYouth discipleship materials.

"Church leaders began to realize the importance of training and discipling people because most churches had an inadequate base of leaders to draw from," Edgemon said. "We began introducing materials to meet the needs of Southern Baptists."

In addition, he said "leaders began to focus on a generation of Baptists that did not understand the basics of their faith and heritage."

According to Edgemon, the resurgence of training in general is a result of the cooperative spirit that exists between various departments of the Sunday school board and the Southern Baptist Home and Foreign Mission Boards.

"We see ourselves as a broker for the training needs of all Southern Baptists," he said.

Edgemon believes the cooperation that exists between church training and other agencies should be a model for the type of denominational work that can be accomplished in the future. "The success of Bold Mission Thrust lies in our ability to work together to reach the world with the gospel by the year 2000," Edgemon stressed.

An example of inter-agency cooperation occurred in 1981 when the Foreign Mission Board incorporated MasterLife into its orientation process for new missionaries. Since that time more than 1,500 missionaries in 100 countries have been trained to use the materials. MasterLife has been printed in more than 15 different languages.

Edgemon said the supporting efforts of the Sunday School Board's church administration, church music and Sunday school departments contributed greatly to the recent success of Dynamic Doctrines, a 13-week fall study.

For the quarter, more than one million pieces of ongoing curriculum containing the materials was sold. This was the first time in more than 10 years that sales of ongoing materials reached one million.

The biggest success in terms of sales has been the survival kits for adults, youth and children. Edgemon said since 1979 nearly 1.5 million copies have been distributed worldwide. Kits are currently in more than 20 languages.

The future of church training holds excitement and promise, according to Edgemon. He said the department will continue to use the four general areas of materials, periodically adding, revising and deleting materials to meet the needs of Southern Baptists.

Scheduled for future release are Survival Kit II: The Journey Continues, a study on developing Christian values; MasterBuilder, a continuation of MasterLife, and DiscipleYouth II.

Both DiscipleYouth courses are joint ventures of the evangelism section of the Home Mission Board and the youth section of the church training department.

In addition to these products, plans are under way to introduce leadership courses on topics such as evangelism, stewardship and servanthood.

"All of our materials are Bible-based, person-centered, practical and sequential," Edgemon noted. "And from the response we are getting, this is what people want."

Hunger Specialist Confronts
Presidential Task Force

By Michael Tutterow

ATLANTA (BP)--A Southern Baptist hunger specialist urged the President's Task Force on Food Assistance to tell President Reagan cuts in federal food assistance programs have gone far past eliminating "fat" in the programs and been a major reason for significant increases in hunger in the United States.

"What I read, what I hear, and what I experience tells me cuts in food assistance programs have gone far past cutting out inefficiency," asserted Andy Loving, administrative director for SEEDS, a hunger ministry by Oakhurst Baptist in Decatur, Ga., and board member for Bread for the World, a Christian citizens' coalition directed at hunger issues.

"The cuts are hurting millions of people. I don't think that is soft-headed or soft-hearted, just honest and objective."

Loving, a Southern Baptist minister, told the task force during his travels throughout the United States and through participation in a Baptist Center soup kitchen, he has observed dramatic increases in requests for emergency food assistance.

"People who have never had to ask for assistance are coming, the so-called 'new poor,'" he explained. Loving noted in Atlanta, Techwood Baptist Center director Terry Moncrief reported requests for emergency food assistance tripled during the past two years, from 40-60 a month to 180-200 a month. At least half of the requests came from people whose food stamps ran out.

That same center, Loving added, sponsors a soup kitchen during the last full week of the month. Recently, he explained, soup kitchen workers had to turn people away because they ran out of food. "On Thursday, the last day of the month, we fed about 125 people," he continued. "On Friday, the first of the month, people got paychecks and government checks and we fed 45. Lesson: People don't come to our kitchen to get free food, they come because they are hungry and don't have any other choice."

He also noted other Atlanta-city soup kitchens, which traditionally serve "street people," have begun to attract a different clientele: families and children. Loving added people coming to soup kitchens report food stamps benefits do not last through the month.

Citing a recent study by the Washington-based Food Research and Action Center of people who are turning to food pantries, Loving asserted current levels of food stamp benefits are not enough to insure people do not go hungry.

The study questioned more than 1,000 people in 14 states who turned to food pantries. The majority, 62 percent of those responding to the survey, said they receive food stamps but benefits run out before the end of the month. More than three-fourths of those interviewed, Loving said, reported they run out of food stamps by the end of the second or third week of the month. Only four percent find food stamps adequate for the entire month.

"When one considers these facts in light of other studies which show people on food stamps tend to use their food money as well or better than the population at large, the inadequacy of present benefits seems obvious," charged Loving.

Lack of benefits is not the only problem facing the poor, he added. "A worker in a local emergency assistance program told me of senior citizens who are eligible for food stamps, need them, and are aware of the program but who refuse to apply because they refuse to be mistreated and dehumanized in the application process."

Loving, who called himself a member of one of "the most politically conservative Protestant denominations in the U.S.," said Southern Baptists have been willing to pick up the load in social services. But now, he stated, denominational leaders as well as the people in the pew "talk of how budget cuts have gone too far."

He called on the task force to urge the President to forego further budget cuts for food assistance programs.

--more--

Following his testimony before the task force, Loving told Baptist Press last year's "Preventing Hunger At Home Resolution," initiated by Bread for the World and overwhelmingly passed by Congress, showed the legislature's support to end social services budget cuts.

But the resolution was legislatively non-binding, he added. This year, the Reagan administration is proposing more cuts in social services. Baptists should write their Representatives and Senators "and say, 'That's enough,'" Loving said. "People are suffering and cuts have gone too far. We need to find other places to cut the budget besides places which deal with food."

-30--

Evangelism Leader Urges Marriage
Of Evangelism And Ministry

Baptist Press
11/21/83

ATLANTA (BP)--If the church expects to make a significant impact on this generation, its members must find the crucial connecting points between preaching the gospel and doing the gospel, according to Dale Cross, associate director of metropolitan evangelism at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

The debate between proponents of evangelism and ministry--over which is the authentic task of the church--is akin to the biblical illustration of the blind leading the blind and falling into a ditch together, Cross said. "I wonder what the world is saying as it passes by and beholds the would-be leaders of the church wrestling in the ditches by the roadside?"

Christ must scorn both the churches which have "traded the jewel of service for the bauble of worldly success" and those "who have reached out to the poor and helpless but have refused to tell them of Jesus," Cross charged. "The good news is drowned out by the unending rhetoric" of each group sitting in judgment on the other and clamoring in its own defense, he said.

The first connection between the two camps involves the "primary call of gospel preaching" to repentance. The biblical view of repentance is an inner turning to God manifested by outward compassion for those in need, Cross noted.

Among Southern Baptists, repentance too often is reduced to the realm of personal and private sins, "which allows us a sense of inner cleansing while our lifestyles, our values and our actions remain a mirror image of our culture," he warned.

"Genuine powerful evangelism will spark repentance...for both the wayward path of our personal lives and also the wrong direction of our corporate lives," Cross said. "Cultural and community sins in which we participate either by support or by silence must also be placed on the altar of sacrifice to Christ.

The calloused unconcern for the poor of the world, the malignant racism which is ingrained in our culture, the self-serving policies of the wealthy and powerful who control business, politics and often even our religious institutions are all sins which cry out for repentance and change in our day."

Social outreach which demonstrates God's righteousness "is the ground on which we must stand if we are to receive a hearing for the good news," Cross continued. While there is "no substitute for telling the story of Jesus," words alone cannot replace the witness of deeds done in Jesus' name, he said.

Neither can ministry stand apart from proclamation, Cross pointed out. In social activists' rush to "disassociate themselves from the perceived insensitivities or manipulations of the verbalizers, they have almost lost their voice," he observed. "They no longer declare the clear and certain sound of hope and salvation through Jesus Christ alone.

"The awful danger of such a stance is that if we lose the centrality of Jesus in the living out of our faith, we have lost it all," he maintained.

--more--

Loss of identity with Christ cripples his followers' ability to endure spiritual warfare, Cross warned. "Courage will come only when we are rooted in the deep knowledge that we belong to Christ and he belongs to us."

A holistic approach to evangelism strategy must "model Christ's mission, which was a balance of message and ministry, word and deed," Cross concluded.

--30--

(Adapted from the November issue of "SBC Today")

+++++