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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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Stanley Elected
 President Of SBC

By Greg Warner

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KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)—Charles Stanley, pastor of First Baptist Church, Atlanta, and a leader of the conservative faction within the Southern Baptist Convention has been elected president of the 14.1 million-member denomination on the first ballot.

Drawing 52 percent of the vote (7,692), Stanley easily outdistanced both Grady Cothen, former president of the Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, Tenn., and John Sullivan, pastor of Broadmoor Baptist Church, Shreveport, La. Cothen collected 26 percent of the votes (3,874), while Sullivan, who served as vice-president of the SBC for the past two years, drew 22 percent (3,174).

Stanley was nominated by Jerry Vines, pastor of First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Fla.

Vines said Stanley's Atlanta church "just may be the greatest missionary-giving and sending church in the history of the Southern Baptist Convention." He noted the church gave \$600,000 to "mission causes" this year, but did not indicate how much of that figure was contributed through the Cooperative Program.

"If all our churches would just begin to have the impact of First Baptist Church of Atlanta, Bold Mission Thrust would be an accomplished fact," Vines said.

Cothen's name was offered by B.O. Baker, pastor of Plymouth Park Baptist Church, Irving, Texas, who said Cothen was an "uncommon man" who could lead Southern Baptists out of a time of strife. Baker said Cothen's 40 years of service to Southern Baptists had prepared him to take the helm of the denomination.

"No other living Southern Baptist has served in such varied positions," Baker said, citing Cothen's former positions as college, state convention and national agency head. "He's already back from where most of us have never been."

Baker said despite Cothen's decision to retire recently, Southern Baptists should "call him back" much as England looked again to Winston Churchill in time of crisis.

Sullivan, who has served for the past two years as first vice-president of the convention, was nominated by James Pleitz, pastor of Park Cities Baptist Church, Dallas. Sullivan and Cothen are considered moderate candidates for the presidency.

Pleitz said the next president should be a "servant," and that after 25 years in denominational service, Sullivan qualified. He noted Sullivan has worked on the SBC Executive Committee and Resolutions Committee.

A qualification Pleitz said was "very important" was the commitment of Sullivan's church to the Cooperative Program. Broadmoor church currently gives 26 percent of its receipts to the Southern Baptist unified giving plan, Pleitz said.

"You will not find a man that preaches and believes more of God's word than John Sullivan," Pleitz said.

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The issue of the candidates' Cooperative Program giving was highlighted just before the election when Sam Cathey, messenger from Second Baptist Church, Hot Springs, Ark., took a point of personal privilege to denounce the distribution of handouts containing giving figures for the candidates as well as those of nominees to convention boards and agencies.

Holding a folded copy of the independent publication, SBC Today, Cathey said the giving figures distributed were "grossly misleading and in my judgment totally false." He called on messengers to disregard the information, which, he said, "can be proven to be deliberately misleading and in violation of long-standing convention policy."

Zig Ziglar, a motivational speaker from Dallas, was elected first vice-president of the SBC.

He won a runoff election with Donald Wideman, pastor of First Baptist Church of North Kansas City, Mo., and local arrangements chairman for the 1984 SBC.

In the contest for first vice-president, nominees other than Ziglar and Wideman were Russell Bennett, director of missions, Long Run Baptist Association, Louisville, Ky., and Fred Roach, a layman from Richardson Heights Baptist Church, Richardson, Texas.

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Stanley Pledges
To Work With All

By Stan Hasteley

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KANSAS CITY (BP)--Newly elected Southern Baptist Convention president Charles Stanley denied emphatically that he was elected by a conservative faction in the denomination and pledged to work with all Southern Baptists during his one-year term of office.

The 51-year-old pastor of Atlanta's First Baptist Church told a crowded news conference: "I was not elected by any particular group; I can guarantee you that. I came to that conclusion (to seek the presidency) out of a whole lot of praying and searching my heart and seeking the Lord's mind about it.

"It was not until this morning (Tuesday) that I was willing to say yes to the Lord. And I had to say yes to him out of pressure from him and not from anybody else in this world."

In answer to another question, he said he participated during the early morning hours Tuesday in a hotel room prayer meeting that included among others former SBC presidents Bailey E. Smith of Del City, Okla., and Adrian Rogers of Memphis and conservative leaders Paul Pressler of Houston and Paige Patterson of Dallas.

Stanley was pressed also to explain the breakdown of more than \$600,000 in mission gifts last year from his 9,000-member congregation, a figure used Tuesday morning by Jacksonville, Fla. pastor Jerry Vines in nominating Stanley.

The Atlanta pastor admitted only 2.1 percent of undesignated gifts went to the denomination's Cooperative Program. The rest, he explained, went to the congregation's own privately supported foreign mission efforts, to the Southern Baptist Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and to Baptist Student Unions at Georgia Tech and Georgia State University.

Responding to criticism by some Baptist editors in recent weeks that he has been inactive in Baptist affairs at the associational and state convention levels, Stanley responded: "I have decided to become more involved."

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Although he affirmed his own acceptance of biblical inerrancy, the view that the Bible is without error of any kind, Stanley downplayed the denomination's role in enforcing it.

"You are not going to ever get all Baptists to agree, and I think we have to accept that. . . I think we have to learn to live together and love each other whether we agree or not."

The "thrust" of Southern Baptist life is evangelism and missions, he added.

Stanley also said he supports Southern Baptist seminaries, under fire in recent years from denominational inerrantists, noting that his own church has sent numerous students to the SBC schools. He also denied his intention to set up a competing theological school, saying he does want to establish a week-night program for laypeople in his congregation who want more extensive Bible teaching.

On another sensitive denominational matter, Stanley declined to declare support for a move by some ultra-conservatives to withdraw funding from the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, a denominational agency that represents eight U.S. Baptist bodies on church-state issues in Washington, D.C.

"That's not my decision to make," he said. "I think the trustees have to make that decision."

Asked whether the SBC should make the ordination of women to the ministry a test of fellowship in the 14.1 million-member denomination, he said the matter of ordination must be left to local congregations.

At the same time, Stanley said he is convinced the apostle Paul's teachings on the matter make it plain women should not exercise authority over men in the church.

Although reporters asked few questions about public policy issues, Stanley said he supported President Reagan's constitutional amendment which would have restored state-sponsored prayer in public schools.

He also said that while he was a founding director of Moral Majority Inc., he resigned from that role in 1980. He remains a director of The Roundtable, he said, an organization founded by Southern Baptist layman E. E. McAteer of Memphis.

Stanley revealed that while he worked from 1975 to 1977 as an Amway Corp. distributor in Atlanta, neither he nor his wife, Anna Margaret, have sold the company's home care products since.

The Stanleys have two children--26-year-old Andy, a third-year student at the independent Dallas Theological Seminary, and daughter Becky, 23.

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Messengers Sustain
Committee Nominations

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Baptist Press
6/13/84

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--Messengers to the 127th Southern Baptist Convention rejected several attempts to modify the 1984 Committee on Boards report naming trustees to the denomination's boards, agencies and institutions.

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Messengers were inclined to sustain committee recommendations, and only an effort to substitute Texas pastor Bruce McIver of Dallas, as a member of the SBC Executive Committee in place of Houston appeals court judge Paul Pressler was close enough to prompt President James T. Draper Jr. to call for a ballot vote. Pressler won by a vote of 5,462 to 4,607.

McIver, pastor of Wilshire Baptist Church in Dallas for more than 25 years, was nominated for a term on the Executive Committee by Winfred O. Moore, current president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Moore, a pastor of First Baptist Church, Amarillo, Texas, told messengers McIver "is a respected and proven leader of Texas and Southern Baptists. He knows Baptists. He represents the mainstream of Texas Baptists."

Former Southern Baptist Convention president Bailey Smith, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, Okla., defended the committee's nomination of Pressler, a leader in an effort to turn the denomination to a more conservative stance.

"Surely this man is not disqualified to serve our denomination because he has strong convictions about the very thing that makes Southern Baptists great, and that is a great commitment to the word of God," Smith said.

Other challenges to the Committee on Boards report were rejected by show-of-hands votes.

In those votes messengers turned down proposals to name Os Chrisman, a member of Cliff Temple Baptist Church, Dallas, instead of Paul E. Martin, West Memorial Baptist Church, Houston, to the Foreign Mission; Richard S. Eskew, First Baptist Church, Yadkinville, N.C., instead of Thomas M. Freeman, First Baptist Church, Dunn, N.C., to the Home Mission Board; and Calvin Robertson, Central Baptist Church, Knoxville, Tenn., instead of Mrs. David Butler, Sevier Heights Baptist Church, Knoxville, Tenn., to the board of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary.

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BTN, ACTS Launch
During SBC Meeting

By Anita Bowden

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Baptist Press
6/13/84

KANSAS CITY (BP)--Two of Southern Baptists' much-hailed babies were dedicated in ceremonies in Bartle Convention Center.

Baptist Telecommunication Network (BTN) and American Christian Television System (ACTS) were introduced in a fast-paced production telecast live over the ACTS network.

Beginning with the Home Mission Board's report to the convention, messengers got a taste of being in a studio audience as speakers and applause were cued in between video segments of churches influences by the two Baptist telecommunication networks.

An actor portraying James Marion Frost, founder of the Baptist Sunday School Board, told how his vision and that of other Baptists before him were no different than that of today's Southern Baptists.

Citing such pioneers as John Bunyan, William Carey and Luther Rice, "Frost" reminded Baptists that their mission today is the same as it always has been--getting the message of Jesus Christ to the world.

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Messengers and Baptists linked together through the ACTS network went via taped segments to such churches as Immanuel Baptist Church, White Oak, Texas, where the first satellite dish to receive the networks was set up, and to Park Hill Baptist Church in North Little Rock, Ark., where their new educational building was planned to utilize BTN to its greatest potential.

Church leaders spoke of using BTN to train teachers so they could train other teachers and to give teachers an idea of how teaching procedures would work in their classes on Sunday mornings.

Lloyd Elder, president of the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, Tenn., told messengers that "the compelling challenge of the Great Commission is inscribed before us tonight. God doesn't expect less today of us than he did of our heroes of the faith. Even as we attempt great things for God, we should expect great things from God."

"Many have asked, 'Why BTN?' My reply is that we must seize the technology of today to do our communicating, even as Jesus used word pictures, the parable, the symbol, the miracle, in his own effective communication of truth," Elder explained.

Jimmy R. Allen, president of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, Fort Worth, Texas, told the audience they may be participating in the most historic moment in the history of the Southern Baptist Convention in terms of what it means to reach into a nation, to touch the lives of families, to bring them into new relationships with God in the local churches.

"We are at this moment fashioning...a network (ACTS) to give to you, as the churches of Southern Baptists,...a hybrid system unheard of in American telecommunications."

The network will provide about 25 percent preaching and teaching, Allen said. The remaining 75 percent will be programming "you can trust your family to."

Messengers were treated to mini-segments of several programs ACTS already has underway. The network began broadcasting May 15 with a six-hour programming day. Tuesday the network jumped to 18 hours, including broadcasting of President James T. Draper Jr.'s address and most of the evening program.

Allen predicted the network would reach into all the homes of America in seven to eight years.

"There isn't any such thing as the electronic church," Allen said. "But there are churches who can use electronics, and we are going to be a part of that."