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April 24, 1985

85-51

Braidfoot: Baptist Heritage
Calls For Peace Commitment

By David Wilkinson

CHARLESTON, S.C. (BP)—Southern Baptists, because of a heritage of political independence, are uniquely equipped to speak prophetically about the cause of peace in a world threatened by nuclear annihilation.

Larry Braidfoot of the Southern Baptist Convention's Christian Life Commission spoke at a two-day Christian ethics emphasis at the historic First Baptist Church of Charleston, recognized as the "mother church" of Baptists in the South.

Braidfoot said Southern Baptists always have been known for their "passionate commitment" to religious liberty and its corollary of separation of church and state. Yet, he noted, the denomination has generally not used the political independence achieved through such commitment to address issues related to peace with justice.

"It is time for our heritage to challenge us to become not only soldiers of the cross but also crusaders for peace," he said. "Within our diversity of political opinions and religious convictions, we must be unequivocally committed to peace, not domination; to peace, not war; to peace, not civil religion."

Braidfoot, who coordinates the commission's work on peace with justice, said he is personally convinced the threat of nuclear war is "the most serious political and moral problem of our day. If we fail to resolve this problem, we will fail to resolve all others as well."

Noting the convention last year observed its first Day of Prayer for World Peace, Braidfoot said Christians "fail in a deep responsibility" when they neglect to pray for national leaders. "And we must be sure to pray that their goal is not to win in conflict," he added, "but to secure peace."

Peace, he stressed, is more than the absence of conflict. King David, he pointed out, brought an end to conflict by conquering Israel's enemies. But God prohibited him from building the temple because he was not a man of peace.

Braidfoot urged Baptists to stand in the prophetic tradition of Amos who dared to challenge the militarism of Israel in a day when civil religion and nationalism dominated established religion.

"We speak of rearming ourselves to protect the free world," he noted. "But are we sure that we are so different from the people of Israel in Amos' day?"

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Trustees Affirm Honeycutt,
Adopt \$12.6 Million Budget

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES
Historical Commission, SBC
Nashville, Tennessee

Baptist Press
4/24/85

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)—The board of trustees of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary unanimously voted to reaffirm their support of President Roy L. Honeycutt, created a new degree program and adopted a \$12.6 million budget among a number of actions of their annual meeting on campus.

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Reporting to trustees, Honeycutt announced \$1.1 million in new endowment gifts and a third consecutive year of record enrollment gains. The board also participated in the dedication of a million-dollar addition to Cooke Hall, home of the seminary's School of Church Music.

In their final action the trustees supported a motion by trustee Wayne Allen, pastor of Briarcrest Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn., unanimously adopting a statement in which they expressed "our love and concern and admiration of Roy Honeycutt as our president, and pledge our fellowship of him." Earlier they also voted 38-12 to reaffirm the Executive Committee's resolution "The President and Denominational Leadership," adopted unanimously in the committee's October meeting.

In what was called "a pioneering step for theological education and music education in this country" by Dean Milburn Price of the School of Church Music, the trustees created a Doctor of Music Ministry degree. The degree will provide a professional doctorate for music ministers which parallels the Doctor of Ministry degree available to pastors and other church leaders.

Trustees adopted a \$12.6 million operating budget--representing a 6.7 percent increase over the 1984-85 operating budget--and a capital needs budget of \$350,000. The salary scale for both faculty and staff was increased by three percent for the coming year, which begins Aug. 1, 1985.

In other actions, the trustees:

--Elected Elizabeth Lambert vice-president of student services. She was dean of students at the seminary for several years.

--Elected John H. Dickson, currently director of the Longhorn Singers at the University of Texas, as assistant professor of church music. A graduate of Dallas Baptist College and Baylor University, Dickson is a former lecturer and conductor of the Baylor Chorale, and was Minister of Music at Trinity Baptist Church, Tyler, Texas.

--Appointed two professors to endowed chairs: R. Alan Culpepper to the James Buchanan Harrison Chair of New Testament Interpretation, and Page Kelley to the John R. Sampey of Old Testament Interpretation.

--Promoted five professors to new academic ranks: Culpepper to professor of New Testament Interpretation; Wade Rowatt, to professor of psychology of religion; Frank Tupper, to professor of Christian theology; Ronald E. Boud, to professor of church music and J. Ralph Hardee, to professor of church administration.

--Elected new officers to lead the board of trustees in 1985-86, including: Chairman--Ben Murphy, a Dallas businessman and member of Park Cities Baptist Church; First Vice-Chairman--Perry Webb Jr., pastor of First Baptist Church, Baton Rouge, La.; Second Vice-Chairman--Emil Williams, pastor of First Baptist Church, Jonesboro, Ark., and Secretary--Fred Pfannenschmidt, a Louisville businessman and member of Valley View Baptist Church.

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Trustees Affirm
Ferguson's Role

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4/24/85

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)—In its spring meeting, the board of trustees of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary adopted a recommendation to acquire the William H. Morton collection of biblical artifacts and commended the seminary president for his leadership during the current controversy within the Southern Baptist Convention.

In unanimous action, trustees expressed appreciation to Milton Ferguson, seminary president, for his leadership of the seminary during what trustees called "these difficult days of controversy within the convention." Trustees also affirmed the president for his chapel address, delivered earlier this year, when Ferguson emphasized "biblical faith" as the key to unity within the SBC.

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Trustees voted to acquire the Morton collection of rare coins, pottery and assorted biblical artifacts owned by William H. Morton, senior professor of biblical archaeology at Midwestern. Morton, a noted archaeologist and research scholar, collected most of the artifacts while directing archaeological excavations and travelling in the Near East. He has been director of the American School of Oriental Research (now Albright Institute) in Jerusalem.

The collection includes artifacts dating as early as the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age (c. 4000-2100 B.C.). It will be housed in a proposed museum of biblical history, part of a new teaching/learning center at the seminary.

Trustees also commended the seminary's plans for involvement in Good News America, a convention-wide evangelism emphasis sponsored by the Home Mission Board in 1986. Seminary administrators have adjusted the school's academic calendar to undergird the evangelistic program and have adopted plans for campus preparation and participation. Faculty and students also will be involved in revival leadership.

In other action, the board adopted a 1985-86 budget totalling \$3,358,812, primarily funded by the Cooperative Program, endowment income, student fees and housing rentals. Student matriculation fees will increase to \$300 per semester, bringing fee schedules in line with the other Southern Baptist seminaries.

Trustees also approved a retirement request from William B. Coble, professor of New Testament for 25 years. Coble, who will retire Dec. 31, 1985, was appointed to senior professor of New Testament, effective Jan. 1, 1986.

The board also advanced N. Larry Baker, associate professor of Christian ethics, to full professor of Christian ethics effective Aug. 1, 1985. Baker is also academic dean at Midwestern.

Trustees approved the appointment of Larry E. McKinney, reader services librarian at Midwestern, as instructor of biblical studies, effective June 1985. McKinney earned a master of divinity degree from Midwestern in 1981 and will be pursuing a doctor of philosophy degree in ancient studies.

In addition, trustees reelected Kermit McGregor chairman of the board. McGregor, former pastor of Morrison Heights Baptist Church, Clinton, Miss., is director of public relations at Mississippi Baptist Children's Home in Jackson, Miss.

Also elected were Doyle Smith, Great Bend, Kan., to a second term as first vice-chairman; Jerry Davenport, Sheffield, Texas, second vice-chairman and Paul Terranova, Merriam, Kan., secretary/treasurer.

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High Court Rules Against
Religious Foundation

By Larry Chesser

Baptist Press
4/24/85

WASHINGTON (BP)—Commercial activities of a private religious foundation are not exempt from the minimum wage, overtime and recordkeeping requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act because of the organization's religious character, a unanimous U.S. Supreme Court ruled April 23.

In an opinion written by justice Byron R. White, the high court rejected claims by the Tony and Susan Alamo Foundation of Alma, Ark., that application of the federal fair labor provisions violated the group's First Amendment rights.

The foundation, founded in California in 1969 and subsequently moved to Alma, Ark., operates a variety of commercial businesses located in four states. These businesses are largely staffed by the foundation's "associates," mostly former drug addicts, derelicts or criminals who receive no cash salaries from the foundation but are provided food, shelter, clothing and other benefits.

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The Alamo Foundation contended its various business activities differ from ordinary commercial businesses because they are "infused with a religious purpose."

In its ruling, the high court held the Fair Labor Standards Act "contain no expressed or implied exception for commercial activities conducted by religious or other non-profit organizations." It further noted what it called "broad congressional consensus that ordinary commercial businesses should not be exempted under the Act simply because they happened to be owned by religious or other non-profit organizations."

The high court affirmed lower court findings that "the Foundation's businesses serve the general public in competition with ordinary commercial enterprises" and that "the payment of substandard wages would undoubtedly give petitioners and similar organizations an advantage over their competitors."

The justices also affirmed the lower court ruling that the foundation's associates were employees under definitions of the act. While the foundation's associates did not expect compensation in the form of ordinary wages, the high court declared, they did expect the foundation to provide benefits such as food, shelter, clothing and transportation.

Answering the Alamo Foundation's argument that application of the act to its business activities would "lead to coverage of volunteers who drive the elderly to church, serve church suppers and help remodel a church home for the needy," White wrote, "The Act reaches only the 'ordinary commercial activities' of religious organizations," and "only those who engage in activities in expectation of compensation. Ordinary volunteerism is not threatened by this interpretation of the statute."

Dismissing arguments that application of the act would violate free exercise rights of the associates who protested such coverage, the high court noted the associates already receive benefits "in exchange for working in the Foundation's businesses," and could "simply continue to be paid in the form of benefits."

The justices further noted even if the associates were paid wages in cash, the act would not prevent them from returning the amounts to the Foundation, "provided they do so voluntarily."

As to claims by the foundation that the act's recordkeeping requirements would foster excessive government entanglement, the justices declared: "The Establishment Clause does not exempt religious organizations from such secular governmental activity as fire inspections and building and zoning regulations."

The court stated that "the recordkeeping requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act, while perhaps more burdensome in terms of paperwork, are not significantly more intrusive into religious affairs."

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Southern Baptist To Teach
Theology At Catholic University

Baptist Press
4/24/85

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)—Andrew Manis, a 1984 Ph.D. graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, has become the first Protestant named to the theology faculty of Xavier University, a Catholic university in New Orleans.

Manis, who will become assistant professor of theology this fall at Xavier, is a native of Birmingham, Ala. He is a graduate of Samford University, and received his M.Div. degree from Southern seminary in 1980.

The new professor currently is pastor of Richland Baptist Church, Falmouth, Ky. He has been an instructor at Southern seminary, Boyce Bible School and Simmons Bible College in Louisville.

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Southern Baptists Top List
In Home Missions Force

By Joann Bunch

ATLANTA (BP)—Southern Baptists support one-third of all home missionaries in the United States, according to a recent survey of 92 U.S. denominations.

Southern Baptists support 3,723 home missionaries, 33.7 percent of all home missionaries currently serving in the United States, reported David T. Bunch, director of Mission Service Corps for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. Mission Service Corps enlists persons who raise their own support to serve as volunteer missionaries for one to two years.

The Board also annually enlists more than 40,000 volunteers, including MSC missionaries, in its home missions efforts, he added.

Bunch surveyed 92 U.S. denominations, representing 130.8 million of the estimated 133 million church members. The report revealed that the 64 denominations which responded to the survey supported 11,064 home missionaries, an average of one per 9,998 church members, noted Bunch. The responding denominations represent 110.6 million of the nation's estimated 133 million church members, he added.

Ranking second and third in number of home missionaries reported were Christian Churches and Churches of Christ with 1,461 home missionaries, and The Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod, which reported 967 home missions workers.

The top three denominations account for 6,151, or 55.6 percent, of all reported home missionaries, said Bunch. Of those surveyed, 20 of the 92 denominations report no home missionaries, he added.

Bunch defined a domestic or home missionary as "one who serves in the United States or its territories, who receives salary from mission/benevolence funds of the denomination and who serves full time, indefinitely, in the ministry." Compiled statistics included those home missionaries supported by national religious offices but not locally supported pastors or staff, explained Bunch.

This survey "helps Baptists see how much of the spreading of the gospel through the work of missions falls on our shoulders," said Orrin Morris, director of the board's research division. "It increases the awareness of our part in the total task of missions and should draw us into greater cooperation with persons of other Christian groups."

HMB President William G. Tanner added the results showed Southern Baptists "are serious about reaching America for Christ."

The denomination's high percentage of home missionaries stems from Southern Baptists' "unique and strong missionary finance system—the Cooperative Program," said Bunch. "Without it (the Cooperative Program), Southern Baptists would be unable to maintain this missionary strength across our nation."

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(Joann Bunch is an Atlanta freelance writer.)

Baptists Begin Border
Ministry In Arizona

By Wayne Grinstead

Baptist Press
4/24/85

NACO, Ariz. (BP)—The tall chain-link fence separating Naco, Mexico, and Naco, Arizona, does little to hinder the flow of pedestrian traffic across the border; a gaping hole in the fence sees to that.

Through that hole and across the official crossing nearby, hundreds of Mexicans legally and illegally pass daily into the United States.

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Illegals who slip through the fence are seldom caught. Most, like those who cross the border legally, stay only a short time to buy groceries, attend school or visit family and friends then return.

But recently, some have returned to Mexico with gratitude to Southern Baptists for a new skill: the ability to read and write English.

Since last October, Hispanic adults on both sides of the border have attended literacy classes at the Sharing Center in Naco, about a half mile inside Arizona. The center is part of a border-ministry effort coordinated by Southern Baptist home missionary Ross Hanna.

"We wanted to begin a work in Naco," explained Hanna, "but had nowhere to meet." The Cochise Baptist Association contributed \$11,000 to purchase a small house in the middle of town. When two Southern Baptist Home Mission Board volunteers arrived, the center opened, he added.

"Volunteers knocked on every door in town, gave out food, doughnuts and clothing," said Hanna. "They invited children to attend day camp and adults to attend literacy and craft classes."

As a result, more than 200 are now enrolled in center activities, 40 in literacy classes.

"Literacy is one of our best outreaches," continued Hanna. "Two-thirds of our literacy students have made professions of faith. You can start a church through literacy work because of the relationship that develops between the teacher and the students."

Hanna, who coordinates ministry at three Baptist centers in Tucson and supervises the work of 54 volunteers, wants to see a network of Southern Baptist ministries along the Arizona-Mexico border.

"Mexico is changing and we must be ready to meet the challenge," said Hanna. "Five million people live between the border and the second checkpoint, eight to 20 miles inside Mexico. By the year 2000, because of unrest in Mexico, we expect 10 million."

The U.S. border population will also increase, predicted Hanna.

"On this side we have two million people. We expect another 1.5 million by the year 2000," he said.

In addition to the work at Naco, Baptist volunteers have begun work in Sassabe, Nogales and Douglas, all in Arizona and all with sister cities across the border.

The ministry in Douglas, 25 miles east of Naco, is led by volunteers Don and Dianne Leadbeater.

After Don retired from police work in St. Petersburg, Fla., he and Dianne applied to the Home Mission Board to become Mission Service Corps volunteers. Last June, they were assigned to Hanna, who asked them to work along the border in Douglas, population 15,000.

Douglas once home for Phelps-Dodge Mining Company, became an oasis in the Sonoran desert when people arrived to work the copper, rock and lime mines.

Don and Dianne began their work in a small building purchased years ago by the Home Mission Board. On the day the center opened, two children came to day camp. Refreshments, Bible stories, sports, music and word of mouth soon brought others.

Less than a year after the work began, the center now enrolls approximately 200.

The ministry in Douglas quickly spread across the border. "We went over (into Mexico) because we heard about a child who was starving," Leadbeater recalled.

The Leadbeaters began distributing food in a poor section of Agua Prieta, Douglas's sister city across the fence. Soon the food ministry was allowed into the city's prison.

"We began by going to the prison with a load of sandwiches on Sundays," said Don. "These men get a daily ration of one sandwich and one bowl of soup. We wrapped a sandwich and a tract in a piece of paper and had no trouble giving them away."

Prison authorities responded to the Leadbeater's work. "Soon they came to us and said that they had seen a difference in the men since we had been coming. They told us that we were welcome anytime, whether during visiting hours or not," said Don.

With that encouragement, Don began a Saturday afternoon Bible study with 22 prisoners. "Because of the relationships built through the food ministry and the Bible study," he added, "seven prisoners have come to know the Lord."

Such stories are examples of what Hanna called a whole ministry to the whole person.

"Christian social ministries is evangelism in action," said Hanna of the work in Tucson and along the border. Yet many churches delegate the role of caring to the government, claimed Hanna.

"In 1935," he said, "churches cared for 60 percent of the needy. Last year churches cared for less than two percent."

"We all need a second conversion," he continued. "Our first conversion called us out of the world to accept Christ. Our second conversion should call us back into the world for service and ministry."

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(Grinstead is associate director, Home Mission Board Communication Division.)

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

Protestant Momentum High
For Cross-Cultural Evangelism

By Michael Tutterow

Baptist Press
4/24/85

HOUSTON (BP)—Leaders of a unique gathering of Protestant Anglo and ethnic leaders indicated they believe the four-day meeting will significantly accelerate the evangelization of America's ethnics.

The National Convocation on Evangelizing Ethnic America, the first meeting of its kind among North American Protestants, challenged American evangelicals to "evangelize, not Americanize" ethnics.

America should no longer be seen as a "melting pot," asserted C. Peter Wagner, professor of church growth at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif. Instead, he likened the nation's cultural diversity to a "stew pot," where each part of society is "changed and flavored by the other ingredients."

Oscar I. Romo, convocation chairman and language missions director for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, urged the more than 650 participants to "contextualize" the gospel. "All people really belong to a cultural church," he said. Ethnics deserve the chance to choose a church with which they, too, can culturally identify, whether it is bilingual, language-speaking, or a blend of cultures, he explained.

Contextualization was a dominate theme of the conference, held at Houston's South Main Baptist Church, itself a model of ethnic diversity. Three language-culture congregations meet at the church facilities in addition to the Anglo congregation. Also the church sponsors extensive ministries among internationals in the city.

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Ranging from top-ranking denominational leaders to a Rochester, Minn., Cambodian woman on a fixed income who came to the conference at her own expense, participants hustled through daily schedules of Bible study, presentations of denominational models for ethnic evangelism, workshops and general group sessions.

Well-meaning but insensitive Anglos often run roughshod over ethnic culture, driving a wedge between ethnics and the gospel, many workshop leaders noted. Small-group leaders, like Juan Carlos Miranda, stressed those who cross cultures with the gospel must do so with more than a knowledge of another language.

"Just because we understand Spanish doesn't mean we understand the culture or the people group," said Miranda, a Hispanic workshop leader and director of the Department of Hispanic Ministries at the Charles E. Fuller Institute of Evangelism and Church Growth in Pasadena, Calif.

Almost half of Houston 85 participants were either Hispanic or "pro-Hispanic," a common term for Anglos involved in Hispanic ministry.

Anglos are not alone in needing to adapt to cultural diversity, charged Daniel Sanchez, associate professor of missions at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

As ethnics assimilate into American culture, they begin to lose touch with their own language and culture, he explained. Ethnic churches which lock themselves into traditional culture and language may drive away second and third generation ethnics, Sanchez warned.

Though culture is valuable, "it is a means, not an end, in the communication of the gospel," he cautioned. "Ethnic churches ought to be committed to ethnic identity, not ethnic idolatry."

A Cuban Presbyterian evangelist urged participants in a workshop on Hispanics to integrate gospel proclamation and social action.

Dr. Cecilio Arrastia, associate for Hispanic ministries of the United Presbyterian Church, noted Jesus "taught, preached, healed and broke bread on the same occasion, ministering to the total needs of people." Likewise, Christians today must balance "words, rhetoric, proclamation" with compassionate deeds, he said.

Ten workshop groups, some holding as many as three simultaneous meetings, examined issues related to unevangelized ethnic groups in the United States. In addition to conferences on Hispanics, workshops dealt with ministries to internationals, refugees and other newcomers, as well as issues facing Asians, Middle Easterners, American Indians, Europeans, the Deaf, Pacific Islanders and Caribbeans.

Ethnic attendance was high, noted convocation coordinator J. Paul Landrey. In all, 63 different ethnic groups were represented, hailing from 41 states, Canada and Puerto Rico, he said. Also, 47 different Protestant denominations and organizations were represented at the convocation, said Landrey.

Houston 85 leaders had hoped the convocation would serve as a catalyst for similar meetings among other ethnic groups. At the very least, Houston 85 serves as a model for future conferences, said Leighton Ford, chairman of the Lausanne Committee on World Evangelization. It was the North American unit of the Lausanne Committee which conceived Houston 85.

Before the conference closed, two groups had already announced plans to hold convocations.

Blacks, disappointed they were not included as one of the convocation's target groups, announced their own plans to sponsor a convocation on evangelizing black America. Such a convocation would examine the state of black America while exploring ways blacks, whites and ethnics could work cooperatively to cross cultural barriers and reach all people with the gospel of Jesus Christ, noted Michael Patterson, a Virginia pastor who will serve as chairperson for that convocation.

Japanese leaders also announced that the First World Congress on Japanese Evangelization would be held this July at the University of Southern California at Los Angeles. An estimated 300 Japanese from around the world are expected to attend the meeting.

Not only has the conference created awareness of the needs of ethnics in America, but it surfaced models and resources for accomplishing the task, noted Houston 85 chairman Romo. Interdenominational ethnic ministries and the sharing of resources has already been planned, he added.

Romo also announced he plans to open Southern Baptist language missions conferences to those from other denominations.

The ethnic influx may be God's way of evangelizing the world, concluded Sanchez. As ethnics are reached with the gospel in the U.S., he explained, their ability to reach fellow ethnics here and in their own country with a contextual gospel "the bridge for evangelizing the world."

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Historical Meeting Focuses

On Church-State Relations

By Stan Hasteley and Lonnie Wilkey

Baptist Press

4/24/85

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Southern Baptists were challenged to remember their roots in religious liberty in Nashville during a two-day meeting focusing on Baptists and the history of church-state relations.

Co-sponsored by the denomination's Historical Commission and Southern Baptist Historical Society and the intra-denominational Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, participants heard a veteran church history professor declare that the experience, actions and ideas of Baptists played a significant role in forging the American system of church-state separation.

G. Hugh Wamble, professor of church history at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo., said "Baptists' commitment to principles which eventually evolved into separation of church and state grew out of their experience as a dissenting, non-conforming minority in religion....they came by their credentials the old-fashioned way—they earned them."

Unlike those denominations in colonial America that were "established"--state-sponsored churches whose credo was "When we are in control, let everybody be like us"—Wamble said Baptists and Quakers "were always on the religious 'outside.'"

He added: "The Baptist experience...uniformly put Baptists on the unfriendly side of state churches. They came to see that, though there were some differences in various religious establishments, all state churches have fundamental flaws which government's favor cannot remedy. Experience taught them that religious establishments are inherently wrong and contrary to the New Testament standard."

Wamble said actions employed by Baptists both in England and America that eventually resulted in separation of church and state in the U.S. included confronting magistrates and colonial governments, pamphleteering and petitioning, noting further their awareness "that the cause of religious freedom would win or lose in the public forum," and that "therefore they courageously entered it and zealously contended" for it.

Wamble underscored, however, that besides unfavorable experiences and actions to remedy them, Baptists came at a desire for church-state separation because of theological ideas as well. The Midwestern Seminary historian said that foremost among them was "their view of faith as voluntary and experiential, not as assent to propositional truth."

Although they inherited Martin Luther's conviction of the priesthood of every believer, early Baptists "heartedly embraced" it, Wamble said, and went beyond it by "fashion(ing) the doctrine of liberty of conscience as an antidote to the view that there is a civil intermediary between God and man." Closely related, he added, was their view "that they owe government obedience in civil, temporal matters but that they are bound to obey God, not man, in spiritual matters."

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Lamenting that "sometimes Baptists forget their roots and do disservice to their principles," Wamble cited former Southern Baptist Convention president W.A. Criswell's statement during last year's presidential race that separation of church and state is the "figment of some infidel's imagination."

He concluded, "History will not be kind to us if we Baptists of the 1980s betray principles related to separation of church and state which our Baptist forefathers struggled to establish two centuries earlier."

William R. Estep Jr., distinguished professor of church history at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, expressed similar feelings that Baptists should not forget their roots as church-state separationists.

Estep told conference participants he viewed Thomas Helwys as "the bold architect of Baptist policy on church-state relations." Helwys, an Englishman, became an advocate of separation of church and state in the early 1600s.

Yet Helwys, according to Estep, developed the idea that a magistrate could be a member of the church, a position that finally distinguished Baptists from Mennonites and their more extreme views on the evils of the state.

Once Baptists were distinguished from Anabaptists, Estep said, Helwys' more positive attitude toward the state gave the Baptist movement "not only chances of survival but also the possibility of influencing society through active participation in government."

Oklahoma Baptist University associate professor of religion Slayden A. Yarbrough delivered a lecture complementary to Estep's tracing the influence of the 17th century movement of English separatism on the developing Baptist conception of church-state separation.

Arising out of English separatism, Yarbrough explained, early English Baptists built on their predecessors' foundation in theory and practice. In theory, he said, "they appealed to a higher authority than that of the prince and his magistrates. That was the authority of God." In practice, "they did not wait upon civil magistrates to initiate...reform of the church. In obedience to God's commands they believed that it was not only their right but their responsibility to participate in Biblically-based congregations."

Yarbrough noted further, "In the early years of the English Baptist movement these former Separatists had discovered how to 'render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.'" In so doing, he declared, they "established a footing upon which Baptists have stood firmly and uncompromisingly since the seventeenth century."

(BP)

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NEWS SERVICE OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION