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89-29

Vines announces willingness
for nomination to 2nd term

By Kathy Palen

N-BIC

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention President Jerry Vines has announced he plans to allow his nomination for a second one-year term during the convention's annual meeting in Los Vegas, Nev., June 13-15.

Vines, pastor of First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla., made the announcement during an address to the SBC Executive Committee meeting in Nashville Feb. 20.

Citing his excitement about the SBC's potential for witnessing, Vines said a second term as president would allow him to continue his emphasis on that priority.

During the past eight months, Vines said, he has felt called to remind Southern Baptists of the priority of "personal evangelism, being a witness to Jesus." That emphasis has led to his own commitment to be a better soul winner, he added.

"I can't talk about it if I don't do it," he said.

Vines challenged other SBC leaders to take active roles in promoting witnessing as a convention priority. He asked each state Baptist newspaper editor to write an editorial sharing a personal witnessing experience. He also called upon the executives of SBC entities to begin their reports at the annual meeting in Los Vegas with one-minute testimonies about their own witnessing experiences.

Acknowledging that problems exist within the convention, Vines encouraged Southern Baptists to face those difficulties and deal with them honestly. He pointed out three major problem areas:

-- Financial difficulties. "We have less dollars and more things we want to do," he said.

Southern Baptists must study their decline in giving, Vines said, adding that pastors need to preach about the importance of stewardship.

-- Institutional difficulties. "Some institutions tend to loose their sense of priority and forget why they were brought into existence in the first place," he said.

The priority for every SBC entity should be evangelism and missions, Vines said.

-- Attitudinal difficulties. "There are problems in the hearts of our people," he said, adding that he was not referring to any particular group within the convention.

While hostility and bitterness easily fester, Christians never are justified in letting a wrong spirit get into their hearts because of the wrong actions of others, Vines said. Such a spirit, he added, will hinder a person's ministry.

After encouraging individuals with attitudinal problems to "get alone with the Lord and face the problem," Vines said he believes Southern Baptists "could well be on the way to a revival of love and a revival of brotherhood."

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Southern Baptists, Vines said, can be optimistic for several reasons. He pointed to the "wonderful motive" of winning people to faith in Jesus; the "wonderful methods" of growing Sunday schools, doing missions cooperatively and training people to be witnesses; and a "wonderful Master," Jesus Christ.

Southern Baptists have access to a "tremendous tool" in prayer, he said calling on them to pray that "God will do something wonderful in our Southern Baptist Convention."

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Palestinian leader
advocates nonviolence

By Pat Cole

N-CO
(SERTS)

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LOUISVILLE, Ky (BP)--American Christians should be "building bridges of peace" between Israelis and Palestinians instead of choosing a side in the conflict, advised a Palestinian-American advocate of nonviolence.

Mubarak Awad, a Christian and the founder of the Palestinian Center for the Study of Nonviolence in eastern Jerusalem, told Southern Baptist Theological Seminary students that Christians should "try to take both sides" in the dispute over the West Bank and Gaza, which have been occupied by Israel since the Six Day War in 1967.

Christ is a "bridge builder" Awad said urging Christians to "do his (Christ's) work."

Awad spoke to a group of students and faculty at the Louisville, Ky., school during a campus visit sponsored by the seminary's Clarence Jordan Center for Christian Ethical Concerns.

The futility of taking sides in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is demonstrated by the United States' strong support of Israel since the creation of the Jewish state in 1948. America "has been on the Israeli side for the past 40 years" and that support has been "nothing but disaster," he said."

Awad gained international attention in June when he was deported from Israel on charges of inciting violence and residing in Israel illegally. Although he is a native of Jerusalem, Awad became an American citizen in the 1970s when he attended college and worked as a social worker in the United States.

His deportation from Israel came over the objection of then Secretary of State George Shultz, who made a personal appeal to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir on behalf of Awad.

While the Palestinian uprising has been fraught with violence since its beginning in December 1987, Awad said, the most effective tools to protest the occupation are civil disobedience and nonviolent resistance.

"When a lot of people use it (nonviolence), it is stronger than any army," he said. "But people have to be willing to sacrifice. People have to be willing to accept whatever punishment ... and they have to understand their enemy is fear. When they get rid of fear, things start to happen."

Many Palestinians have been jailed because of their nonviolent protests, Awad noted. The nonviolent methods of resistance used by the Palestinians have included avoiding Israeli taxation, boycotting Israeli products, flying Palestinian flags and displaying slogans advocating Palestinian independence, he explained.

The center founded by Awad in 1985 has conducted workshops and seminars on nonviolence and has translated into Arabic writings by Martin Luther King Jr., the slain American civil rights leader, and Mohandas Gandhi, the late leader of India's nationalist movement.

Awad favors the "two-state solution" to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. Such a solution, he said, would provide an independent state for Palestinians and would designate Jerusalem as the capital city for both the Palestinian state and Israel.

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He also supports the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole representative of the Palestinian people, he said: "I view the PLO as representing all Palestinians. I have no problem with that, but I also criticize (some) PLO activities. Others also criticize (the PLO). That's why we have so many splinters in the PLO. The PLO is an umbrella of lots of organizations of Palestinians."

Awad contended the Palestinian struggle for independence is a quest for equality of rights: "We (the Palestinians) are human beings, and nobody can control or oppress a human being. We don't want to be superior to anybody else. We want to be equal."

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Genevox Music Group album
nominated for Dove Award

N-SR

Baptist Press
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NASHVILLE (BP)--"In His Presence: The Risen King," a Christian musical album produced by the Genevox Music Group of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, has been nominated as musical album of the year in the Gospel Music Association's 20th Annual Dove Awards to be announced April 13.

Fes Robertson, director of Genevox, said the album is one of five nominated in the musical album of the year category.

The songs were written by Dick and Melodie Tunney, GMA songwriters of the year for 1987. They include "In His Presence," "Come Before Him," "Calvary's Love," "Stand Up and Bless the Lord," "Bless the Lord, My Soul," "Create in Me," "Christ the Lord is Risen Today," "Come, Worship the King," "Seekers of Your Heart" and "In Majesty He Will Come."

According to the Gospel Music Association, the Dove Awards are given to recognize "excellence or significant accomplishments in the quality and means of spreading the 'true word' through gospel music."

Genevox was established in 1986 by the board to produce music products for sale through trade outlets to churches and individuals.

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Atkinson named to head
missionary selection

N-FMB

Baptist Press
2/22/89

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Former missionary Lloyd Atkinson, 47, has been named director of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's personnel selection department.

Starting March 16, Atkinson will direct the missionary appointment process. Personnel selection staff members counsel potential missionaries, share information and help them examine their motivations and qualifications.

Atkinson replaces Louis R. Cobbs, who became special assistant to the mission board's executive vice president in January. Cobbs, 63, who saw 6,000 new missionaries go overseas during his 20-year directorship, cited personal health problems in asking to be relieved of the administrative responsibilities related to his personnel position.

Atkinson and his wife, Sue, were missionaries to Chile from 1972 to 1977. He later joined the board staff as administrative assistant to the director for western South America, then worked with prospective missionaries as a candidate consultant in the personnel selection department from 1981 to 1986.

He has been pastor of Hatcher Memorial Baptist Church in Richmond, Va., since June 1986.

Atkinson, who worked under Cobbs, said: "I believe we're always going to be sending foreign missionaries. I feel that the reason Southern Baptists got together as a convention is because of missions. Sending people overseas is not an option; it is an absolute necessity."

As director, Atkinson said, he anticipates "seeing people come with God's leadership over their lives, their excitement and interest growing until total commitment comes."

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A difficult side of missionary selection, however, is dealing with people who are not appointed for various reasons, he noted. Staff must do that in a "caring way" and with "sensitivity and tact," he said.

Atkinson, who is from Miami, received the bachelor of arts degree from Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tenn., and the master of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. He attended the Institute of Religion in Houston, where he earned a certificate in clinical pastoral education.

He also was pastor of Sunset Hills Baptist Church in Alexandria, Va., and Jackson Memorial Baptist Church in Chesapeake, Va.

The Atkinsons have three children, John, 17; Jennifer, 15; and Daniel, 12.

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

Texas CLC urges treatment
for child abuse victims

By Ken Camp

N-TEX87

Baptist Press
2/22/89

AUSTIN, Texas (BP)--As part of a child advocacy coalition, the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission has urged the state legislature to join a nationwide movement to help break the cycle of family violence by offering treatment for abused children.

Texas cannot afford to perpetuate the cycle of abuse by continuing to neglect treatment for child abuse victims, Phil Strickland, director of the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission, said at a Feb. 15 press conference in Austin.

Strickland, chairman of the CARE -- Children: Abused, Rejected, Endangered -- Coalition, said support for a comprehensive child abuse treatment package is the centerpiece of that child advocacy group's 1989 lobbying agenda in the 71st Texas Legislature.

While affirming the need for classroom discipline, the coalition also is calling for the abolition of corporal punishment in Texas public schools except when explicitly authorized by parents, Strickland announced.

CARE Coalition is a public policy group designed to provide a voice in the Texas Legislature for abused and neglected children. Member organizations include the Texas PTA, Texas State Teachers Association, the Texas Conference of Churches and the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission.

"Texas is paying a high price for neglecting child abuse treatment, because a large percentage of the abused children will become abusers themselves unless there is intervention through treatment," said Strickland. An emphasis on "intervention through treatment" is the focus of a movement led by the National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse, he noted.

The child abuse treatment package would include proposals for parenting education programs, intensive in-home services for high-risk families and school-based therapy for abused and neglected children.

CARE Coalition proposes that the resources of the Children's Trust Fund -- established by the Texas Legislature in 1985 -- be expanded to provide programs to enhance the skills of young parents, particularly those in high risk groups.

The coalition is recommending that the legislature authorize and fund the Texas Education Agency to provide voluntary education for expectant mothers and parents of young children. Proposed in-home services for high risk families would provide an alternative to substitute care for children about to be removed from their homes.

"Intensive family-based programs are significantly less costly than out-of-home placements. The savings would enable agencies to serve more children in need," said Strickland. "The social and psychological trauma created when a child is placed outside the home also would be avoided."

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In calling for school-based therapy groups for abused and neglected children, CARE Coalition proposes that the legislature allocate \$1 million for each of the next two fiscal years to provide for the development of about 16 pilot programs.

CARE Coalition also wants the Texas Education Code amended to outlaw corporal punishment in public schools except when explicitly authorized by parents, said Strickland. He pointed out the change would impact public schools only and would not directly address private schools.

"This change would put into the hands of parents the decision as to whether children should be spanked," said Strickland, "and that is where the decision should rest."

"Parents know their children, but classroom teachers cannot know the special sensitivities and psychological make-up of each child. Corporal punishment can be damaging to some children, and teachers should not be placed in the position of blindly having to make the decision as to its use."

Strickland noted organizations favoring the abolition of corporal punishment in schools include the American Medical Association, the American Bar Association, the National PTA and the National Education Association. Eleven states have banned corporal punishment in public schools altogether.

"Schools are the only institution in America in which striking another person is allowed and condoned," he said. "It is considered too severe for felons -- including juvenile delinquents -- and too demeaning for soldiers, sailors, servants and spouses. Yet it is practiced daily on our children."

Good teachers can maintain a positive learning environment without resorting to physical punishment, Strickland said. He noted 90 percent of the corporal punishment in public schools is administered by only 5 percent of the educators, and the National Education Agency has outlined 41 alternatives to corporal punishment.

Race and socio-economic status is a factor in the administration of corporal punishment, he said pointing out that minority and poor white children are the recipients of corporal punishment four to five times more often than upper-class white children.