



- - BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE
SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2355
Alvin C. Shackelford, Director
Dan Martin, News Editor
Marv Knox, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA *Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 873-4041*
DALLAS *Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 511 N. Akard, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 720-0550*
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 *200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4225*

April 28, 1989

89-68

Vines asks deferment
of new SBC commission

By Dan Martin

N-CO

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (BP)--Jerry Vines, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, has asked the SBC Executive Committee to "defer its recommendation to establish a Religious Liberty Commission" at the 1989 annual meeting in Las Vegas, Nev.

Vines, pastor of First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla., told Baptist Press he requested the action in order to keep the focus of the annual meeting "on presenting Christ in Las Vegas."

The creation of the new Religious Liberty Commission, to represent Southern Baptist First Amendment and religious liberty concerns in Washington, was recommended by the Executive Committee at its February 1989 meeting. In order for the new commission to be created, it must be approved by majority vote by messengers to two subsequent annual meetings.

During the February meeting, Executive Committee members, by a 42-27 secret ballot vote, approved a recommendation from a seven-member study committee appointed to propose "an alternative to accomplish the program and funding" of the Washington-based Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, composed of nine Baptist bodies in the United States and Canada, including the SBC.

The action specifies the SBC would continue its relationship with the Baptist Joint Committee through the new commission.

The BJC has been involved in controversy in the SBC for several years. The seven-member study committee which recommended creation of the new commission is the third study committee to look into the relationship between the BJC and the SBC in recent years. In addition, the BJC has survived several attempts to withdraw funding.

A part of the Executive Committee recommendation includes dissolving the 18-member Public Affairs Committee, the standing committee through which the SBC relates to the BJCPA. Under recent actions, the role of the PAC has been expanded, but actions of the group also have resulted in controversy over its role and direction.

The action to create a new commission, in addition to drawing a divided vote on the Executive Committee, set off protests. The leaders of both Southern Baptist mission boards -- R. Keith Parks, president of the Foreign Mission Board, and Larry Lewis, president of the Home Mission Board -- have made statements opposing the creation of the new commission, noting fears the new agency would siphon money from missions.

In his statement, Vines said: "As president of the Southern Baptist Convention, I am requesting the Executive Committee to defer its recommendation to establish a Religious Liberty Commission. The primary thrust of my presidency has been an emphasis on personal witnessing. This is the focus of my own ministry and also the heart of our work as Southern Baptists.

"I have been most pleased with the affirmative response this emphasis has received from all sections of Southern Baptist life.

"The upcoming convention session in Las Vegas is intended to be a major effort to share the gospel with the people of Las Vegas. As I understand it, this was the motivating factor in the selection of Las Vegas for the 1989 convention site. All of the preliminary planning has revolved around making our witness as positive and united as possible."

--more--

Vines said the matter has "been of great concern to me in recent weeks," and added that after much prayer, he decided to write Charles Sullivan, chairman of the Executive Committee and pastor of First Baptist Church of Lenoir City, Tenn.

The letter, he said, included the request to defer discussion of the RLC, and added: "Whatever the merits of the recommendation to begin the Religious Liberty Commission, the focus in Las Vegas must be on missions and evangelism.

"Our Home Mission Board has carefully developed a strategy to get the gospel to every person in Las Vegas. Therefore, rather than devoting our thoughts, prayers and energies to this matter, I am suggesting that we devote them fully to the task of presenting Christ in Las Vegas."

In an interview, Vines declined to discuss the controversial nature of the proposal, noting only that he wants to defer the action in order to make the annual meeting "as positive and united as possible. I would like to see all Southern Baptists join hands in Las Vegas in a positive, united witnessing effort."

Under leadership of the Home Mission Board, the Nevada statewide evangelism emphasis includes simultaneous revivals, scripture distribution and sponsorship of 25 church-tye missions. In Las Vegas, some 2,000 will participate in revivals, a door-to-door canvass of the city and scripture distribution.

The president noted other items of business facing the convention -- such as the election of officers, adopting a budget and doing other business -- "will not take away from the focus. They are normal convention business; this (the RLC) is a different matter, in my view."

Vines said he had no recommendations for how the Executive Committee should defer the action, and is "leaving that up to Charles (Sullivan). I just believe we should defer it."

Sullivan told Baptist Press he will "honor our president's request in the sense that I will present it to the Executive Committee. I believe it is coming from him in good spirit and the desire to make the emphasis of the convention missions and evangelism. I also believe he is trying to emphasize peace rather than the divisive issues that are before us."

Sullivan, however, said he would not predict what the response of the 76-member committee will be. "It may well be that they will vote to defer it," he said, but noted "hours and hours of study have gone into the formation of the commission."

"There is such a polarity of feelings about the Baptist Joint Committee, the Public Affairs Committee and the Religious Liberty Commission that ... divisiveness could come," Sullivan said.

"My personal feeling is that the Religious Liberty Commission is a means whereby we can solve the major problems we face with the Baptist Joint Committee by having a relationship with them on a reduced scale and dissolving the Public Affairs Committee while having our own primary voice for religious liberty and religious freedom," he said.

Sullivan noted perhaps a value in deferring the action in Las Vegas, would be that "we may have time to dispel the erroneous idea that the funding of the commission would be done at the expense of missions. There never was any intent for any mission money to be used for the establishment of the new commission."

James Roach, an Albuquerque, N.M., attorney and chairman of the study committee which proposed the new commission said: "I think the turmoil caused by the Public Affairs Committee and the Baptist Joint Committee in recent years has been more harmful than any good they did.

"It seemed to me the time was here to put the issue squarely before the convention for a decision. I do not know if putting the vote off a year will help or not, but if Jerry Vines thinks it will, then I am willing to do it."

James M. Dunn, executive director of the BJCPA, said: "I applaud Jerry Vines for his astute insight and his keen commitment to keepin^g the focus on missions and evangelism. It is increasingly obvious to Baptists of all persuasions that a redundant Religious Liberty Commission in Washington is a bad idea."

SBC President Vines
announces appointments

By Dan Martin

N- CO

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention President Jerry Vines has announced his appointments to four key committees to serve during the 1989 annual meeting of the SBC, scheduled June 13-15 in the Las Vegas, (Nev.) Convention Center.

The SBC Constitution requires the convention president to appoint the Committee on Committees and the Resolutions Committee "in conference with" the two vice presidents and the Credentials Committee "in consultation with" the vice president. The president appoints the Tellers Committee "in consultation with" the SBC registration secretary.

"My assignment to appoint members ... has been a challenging one," Vines told Baptist Press, the denominational news service which, under the bylaws, is required to release the appointments at least 45 days in advance of the annual meeting.

"I have approached my assignment energetically, prayerfully and carefully. My appointments have been made on the basis of recommendations received from state executive secretaries, pastors, directors of missions, church staff members and members of local churches," he said.

"These appointments reflect my commitment to appoint the best Southern Baptists I could find. They are Bible-believing people who love the Lord, believe the Bible and are committed to the Southern Baptist Convention."

Vines said he consulted with the two vice presidents "in meetings and by means of telephone. We have gone over these appointments together. I am pleased that Darrell Robinson, first vice president, and Rudy Hernandez, second vice president, issue these appointments jointly with me."

Robinson, former pastor of Dauphin Way Baptist Church in Mobile, Ala., currently is evangelism vice president for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. Hernandez is pastor of Metro Baptist Church in San Antonio, Texas.

Vines said the 113 people he appointed "include people from all walks of life. They are from the ranks of homemakers, pastors' wives, retired people, college professors, business people and professional people. They are people from a wide variety of positions in denominational life ... pastors, associate pastors, church administrators, church Woman's Missionary Union presidents, church Sunday School directors, state executive secretaries, presidents and vice presidents of state conventions, members of state executive committees, presidents of state pastors' conferences, state WMU directors, directors of missions, moderators of associations, seminary presidents and professors, former missionaries, former Southern Baptist Convention presidents and former Peace Committee members."

He also noted they come from "good Southern Baptist churches. The average of all Cooperative Program (unified budget) percentages from their churches is 11 percent. They come from churches ranging in size from under 50 members to more than 18,000 members."

"The overwhelming majority of these appointees have never served on any committee in the Southern Baptist Convention," Vines said, but added that "where exceptions occur, there are valid reasons.

"For example, I felt it would be wise to appoint last year's chairmen of the resolutions, tellers and credentials committees to serve on the same committees this year for purposes of transition and to serve as a resource person."

He commented Lee Porter, registration secretary, "made several excellent suggestions relative to the tellers and credentials committee. In implementing these suggestions, several people were placed on these committees who have served in the past."

Vines concluded: "I believe these observations give clear evidence that I have fulfilled my commitment to appoint the best Southern Baptists I could find. I am confident these Bible-believing Southern Baptists will carry out their assignments with the desire that God's will be done in our SBC and without any personal hostility."

--more--

COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEES

The committee, which has 66 members -- two from each of the 33 state or regional conventions qualified for representation in the SBC -- will be chaired by Sam Medina, a Hispanic attorney from Lubbock, Texas. Medina is a member of Alliance church.

SBC Bylaw 21 says the Committee on Committees "shall nominate all special committees authorized during sessions of the convention not otherwise provided for." However, the committee's key responsibility is nominating members of the Committee on Nominations, which, in turn, nominates trustees to serve on the 24 national entities affiliated with the SBC.

From each state, Vines appointed a layperson and a person with clergy or denominationally-related employment. He did not provide occupations for the laypersons nor specific titles for the clergy or denominationally-related employees.

In the listing, the clergy will be listed first.

ALABAMA - Herman Parker, Parkview church, Eufaula; Miriam James, First church, Auburn.

ALASKA - Walter E. Davidson, Faith church, Anchorage; Lorrane Gravens, First church, Kenai.

ARIZONA - Jerry Bowling, Hillside church, Phoenix; Kathy Hadaway, First Southern church, Glendale.

ARKANSAS - Delton Beall, First church, Forest City; Harve McClellan, Immanuel church, Rogers.

CALIFORNIA - Don Taylor, Central church, Alameda; Peggy Powell, First Southern church, West Hills.

COLORADO -- Jose Luis Cano, Redeemer church, Pueblo; Carole Cooper, Four-Way church, Fort Lupton.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA - Hubert Keefer, Hillcrest church, Hillcrest Heights, Md.; Carl F.H. Henry, Capitol Metro church, Arlington, Va.

FLORIDA - Jerry Weaver, First church of Panama City Beach; Carol Anderson, First church of Indian Rock, Largo.

GEORGIA - Pete Sharber, Anderson Drive church, Jesup; Tom Scissom, First church of Morganton, Blairsville.

ILLINOIS -- Ron Ferguson, First church, Goreville; Terry Martens, Glenfield church, Wheaton.

INDIANA - James Twiggins, Calvary church, Evansville; Kim Wagoner, Central church, Richmond.

KANSAS-NEBRASKA - Harold Henderson, First Southern church, Belle Plaine, Kans.; Don Mace, Country Acres church, Cheney, Kans.

KENTUCKY -- Geoffrey Lacefield, Rutledge Road church, Louisville; Seth Farley, First church, Bowling Green.

LOUISIANA - Phillip Smith, Cedar Crest church, West Monroe; Carolyn McVay, City Price church, Port Sulphur.

MARYLAND-DELAWARE - Chris Brammer, Hampstead church, Hampstead, Md.; Patricia Cademartori, Tabernacle church, Joppa, Md.

MICHIGAN - Roger Taylor, Nilef Avenue church, St. Joseph; Bill Goldman, Begole Road church, Perriton.

MISSISSIPPI - Gus Merritt, Clark Venable Memorial church, Decatur; J.D. Cutrer, First church, Pascagoula.

--more--

MISSOURI - Bill Bowyer, Rock Hill church, St. Louis; Bob Parker, Immanuel church, Hannibal.

NEVADA -- Robert Norvell, College Park church, Las Vegas; Henry Flatt, First Southern church, Hawthorne.

NEW ENGLAND - Jack Schneider, Pleasant Valley church, Columbia, Conn.; Brian Cantrell, Friendship church, Winsted, Conn.

NEW MEXICO - Bill Kilgore, Hoffmantown church, Albuquerque; Marion Partaine, First church, Gallup.

NEW YORK - Noel Wilmott, Assurance church, Williamville, N.Y.; Ed Knight, Colts Neck church, Lincraft, N.J.

NORTH CAROLINA - Stephen Hensley, First church, Tcard; Walt Pegram, Goodwill church, Kernersville.

NORTHWEST - Charles Didato, College Heights church, Grants Pass, Ore.; Donald Sorensen, Hall Boulevard church, Portland, Ore.

OHIO - Jim Rich, East Toledo church, Toledo; Gary Fortune, First church, Rossford.

OKLAHOMA - Hoyt Aduddell, Olivet church, Tulsa; Bill Clark, Immanuel church, Duncan.

PENNSYLVANIA-SOUTH JERSEY - Oscar Stroede, Cranberry church, Mars, Pa.; Carolyn Hendrix, Pittsburgh church, Pittsburgh.

SOUTH CAROLINA - Everette Talbert, First church, Warrentonville; LuAnne Powell, First church, Greer.

TENNESSEE - Charles R. Wright, Maple Street church, Cleveland; Brenda Gass, Southside church, Shelbyville.

TEXAS - Terry Fox, Gardendale church, Corpus Christi; Chairman Sam Medina, Alliance church, Lubbock.

UTAH-IDAHO - Randy Myers, First church, Green River, Utah; Herb Hardgrave, First church, East Carbon, Utah.

VIRGINIA - David Johnson, Rileyville church, Rileyville; Bland Williamson, Liberty church, Hampton.

WEST VIRGINIA - Clarence Jones, North Charleston church, Nitro; Paul Drake, Grace church, Vienna.

--30--

Three key committees
named by president

N-CO

Baptist Press
4/28/89

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (BP)--Three key committees -- resolutions, tellers and credentials -- have been appointed by Southern Baptist Convention President Jerry Vines.

The committees will serve during the annual meeting of the SBC, scheduled June 13-15 in the Las Vegas, (Nev.) Convention Center.

On the appointments, detailed information about the occupations of laypersons or exact titles of clergy or denominationally-related appointees were not made available to Baptist Press, the denominational news service, which is required to make the appointments available at least 45 days in advance of the annual meeting.

--more--

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE

The Resolutions Committee is made up of 10 members, three of whom must be members of the SEC Executive Committee. According to SEC Bylaw 21, the committee has the "duty ... to prepare and submit to the convention resolutions which the committee deems appropriate for adoption and to report on all matters submitted to it by the convention, with or without recommendation or amendments."

The bylaw requests proposed resolutions be sent to the committee 30 days in advance of the annual meeting. It adds, "Resolutions, including those previously sent to the committee, shall be submitted to the convention not later than the evening session of the first day. Titles of proposed resolutions shall be read into the record by an officer of the convention"

Vines named Mark Coppenger, executive director-treasurer of the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana, Indianapolis, to be chairman of the resolutions committee.

He also named Jerry Sutton, pastor of Two Rivers church in Nashville, and the chairman in 1988, to serve on the committee.

Executive Committee members named include Jerry Brown, a truckstop operator and member of Emanuel church of Edmond, Okla.; Joy Dorsett, a homemaker and member of Central Park church, Birmingham, Ala.; and Walt Tomme, pastor of Tyson Community Church of McLean, Va., but a member of the DC Baptist Convention.

Other clergy or denominationally related appointees include David McAlpin, First church of Pine Castle, Orlando, Fla.; James Merritt, First church, Snellville, Ga.; David Allen, Audelia Road church, Dallas; and Ken Hemphill, First church, Norfolk, Va.

The other layperson named is Linda Shrewsbury, Memorial church, Tulsa, Okla.

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

Under Bylaw 8, the Credentials Committee works with the registration secretary, to "review and rule upon any question which may arise in registration concerning the credentials of messengers."

The bylaw says any committee ruling "may be appealed to the convention during business session. Any contention arising on the floor concerning seating of messengers shall be referred to the committee for consideration and the committee shall report back to the convention."

Charles Carter, pastor of Shades Mountain church, Birmingham, Ala., will be chairman. Vines also appointed Rod Masteller, pastor of Putnam City church, Oklahoma City, and the 1988 chairman, to the committee.

Clergy or denominationally-related appointees include:

Ron Hart, Tucson (Ariz.) Southern church; Ron Mayes, First church, Beebe, Ark.; Jim Gipson, Woodstock church, Jacksonville, Fla.; David Drake, First church, Cartersville, Ga.; Ira Warren, Ephesus church, Winston, Ga.; John Hardy, Blue Valley church, Overland Park, Kans.; Jimmie Hefner, Ford Park church, Shreveport, La.;

Russ Priddy, Colonial church, Baltimore, Md.; Tommy Knotts, First church of Belvedere, Graniteville, S.C.; Bob Burch, Calvary church, Knoxville, Tenn.; Tod Zeigler, First church, Alcoa, Tenn.; Joe Brumbelow, North Side church, Houston; Benny Ray Slack, First church, Gainesville, Texas; and Clyde Alderman, Harrowgate church, Chester, Va.

Laypersons appointed include:

Sylvia Meenach, Central church, Aurora, Colo.; Tom Van Horn, Second church, Marion, Ill.; Tony Crisp, Allens Creek church, Waynesville, N.C.; George H. Johnson Jr., Merriman Avenue church, Asheville, N.C.; Anita Forester, Central Church, Oak Ridge, Tenn.; Jewell McFarland, First church, Whitwell, Tenn.; and Michael L. Adams, Colonial Heights church, Colonial Heights, Va.

TELLERS COMMITTEE

The Tellers Committee, working under the supervision of the SBC's registration secretary, tabulates any vote taken during the annual meeting.

Vines named Bob Sorrell, administrator of Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn., as the chairman. He also named Clayton Spriggs, associate pastor of First church, Fort Smith, Ark., and the 1988 chairman, to the committee.

Also named were a former SBC president, a seminary president, a seminary professor, a state executive director and a state convention president. They are:

Herschel Hobbs, pastor emeritus of First church, Oklahoma City, and SBC president 1962-64; William O. Crews, president of Golden Gate seminary, Mill Valley, Calif., and member of First church, San Rafael, Calif.; Roy Fish, evangelism professor at Southwestern seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, and member of University church, Fort Worth;

D.L. Lowrie, new executive director of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, and member of Belmont Heights church, Nashville; and Joel Gregory, pastor of Travis Avenue church, Fort Worth, Texas, and president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Other clergy or denominationally related persons appointed include Joe Godfrey, Taylor Road church, Montgomery, Ala.; Jerry Garrard, Celebration church, Tallahassee, Fla.; Tom Turner, Eastwood church, Marietta, Ga.; and Allen McKeithen, Murray Memorial church, Wilmington, N.C.

Other laypeople appointed include Jack Kreider, Parkview church, Alexandria, La.; Nancy Goodroe, First church, Camden, S.C.; and Walt Carpenter, Second church, Houston.

--30--

Historian paints portrait
of Baptists in America

By Marv Knox

N-60

Baptist Press
4/28/89

NASHVILLE (BP)--Christ, Freedom, Scripture and Church provide the borders for a portrait of Baptists in America today, Claude L. Howe Jr. told participants in the joint annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Historical Commission and Southern Baptist Historical Society.

Howe's "portrait" concluded the April 25-26 meeting in Nashville, which focused on "Baptists in America: 175 Years of National Organization."

"How does one portray over 50 different groups with 30 million members and 100,000 churches?" asked Howe, professor of church history at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

He sketched word pictures of American religion in general, noting Baptists are spread across a variety of groupings: mainline, evangelical and fundamentalist, Pentecostal-charismatic, ethnic religions, civil religions, moderate Protestants, black Protestants and conservative Protestants.

Drawing finer detail, Howe noted Baptists have their own distinct divisions: Northern, Southern, regular, general, ethnic, Landmark, Fundamentalist, Calvinistic and National.

But an accurate portrait requires coloration of Baptists' structures, convictions and challenges, he said.

The structures are diverse, he said, describing American, Southern, black and ethnic Baptists.

"American Baptists tend to be inclusive rather than exclusive, frequently describing themselves as evangelical, ecumenical, interracial and international," Howe said. "They provided major leadership in social concerns early in the century and continue to express this outlook actively.

--more--

"While in many ways a strength, the diversity and inclusiveness of American Baptists has resulted in the loss of a clear identity or distinctiveness. ... American Baptists have not been an exception in the general decline of mainline churches in recent decades, and this fact poses the most serious challenge to a group that desires to be a viable, effective instrument of Christian service into the next century."

Southern Baptists number almost 15 million -- half the Baptists in the country, Howe noted. He cited the convention's growth in recent decades, its Cooperative Program unified budget as "the most effective channel" for funding denominational endeavors, its Bold Mission Thrust global evangelization campaign and its "racial and ethnic inclusiveness."

"For about a decade, Southern Baptists have been engaged also in an ecclesiastical controversy that has siphoned their energy and damaged their reputation," he said. The convention's two political parties have "created organizations and publications and institutions and constituencies for the glory of God and the destruction of the enemy. Both claim to be true Baptists. Whether fragmentation will occur remains to be seen, but in the meantime, some of the more intelligent and dedicated are quietly moving away, and the world for whom Christ died drifts toward eternity."

With 10 million members, blacks comprise about one-third of the nation's Baptists, Howe said. He cited several trends among their ranks: occupation of strategic local and national political positions, a desire by many to remain in the South, a tendency to align with American or Southern Baptists and segregation of the National Baptist conventions, and the churches' continued role as "vehicles of support and action."

"Race is still a persistent force in American religion," he noted. "Though an accelerated movement of blacks into predominantly white structures is possible, (it is) highly unlikely."

Ethnics "incorporate cultural and linguistic concerns with Baptist convictions," Howe said. Although Swedish and German Baptist conventions remain, "Americanization has often brought amalgamation so that many other groups have found distinct existence difficult," he added.

Furthermore, members of many groups, such as Hispanics and Asians, have joined American and Southern Baptists, he said, noting that Southern Baptists minister to more than 80 ethnic groups.

Landmark and Fundamentalist Baptists together number about 2.5 million members, Howe reported. They rarely cooperate with other Baptists, and "a strong independent tendency persists among Fundamentalists," he said.

Turning to Baptist convictions, Howe suggested "some basic convictions that have and do undergird Baptist life: Jesus Christ is Lord. Scripture is authoritative. Salvation is by grace, and every believer is a priest."

Acknowledging those convictions "are not unique to Baptists," Howe noted: "But Baptists have interpreted and applied them in a distinctive fashion, giving rise to additional convictions that distinguish Baptists from others -- religious freedom and believer's baptism by immersion, ... responsible church membership, autonomy and cooperation, evangelism and missions, and congregational worship. ..."

"More collectively than individually, these convictions unite and identify Baptists as a Christ-honoring, Bible-believing, freedom-affirming fellowship of believers."

Focusing on Baptist challenges, Howe talked about the Baptist "person" he had painted:

"But who is this strange figure portrayed -- a figment of the imagination, a relic from the past, or a vital body ready to face challenges and make contributions to life in the contemporary world? Perhaps some of all three, but surely desiring to be the latter.

"If this be true, then today he is called upon to remember the unity of the body. If one suffers, all suffer. If one succeeds, all succeed. He is also called upon to remember and protect the family heritage, not sell the birthright for a mess of pottage.

--more--

"He will live in an urbanized, technological, pluralistic society where rapid change is the order of the day. Goals and values and methods will be questioned and resisted and ridiculed. Only what is genuine will survive.

"But if Christ is Lord, and Scripture is central, and freedom is real, and church is good news of salvation, then this body called Baptist faces a time of unprecedented opportunity and challenge."

--30--

51 chaplains, spouses
endorsed by HMB

By Joe Westbury

N- HMB

Baptist Press
4/28/89

JONESBORO, Ga. (BP)--Newly endorsed Southern Baptist chaplains and spouses were encouraged to minister for spiritual good rather than worldly acclaim during the spring endorsing ceremony April 23.

Charles Carter, pastor of First Baptist Church of Jonesboro, Ga., where the service was held, challenged the chaplains to live by hope, faith, love and a healthy fear of God as they minister throughout the nation.

"Be sure your motivation for ministry is based on biblical initiative rather than worldly gain," Carter said. "One of the greatest dangers to ministry today is professionalism. Don't minister because you can make the headlines or the nightly news."

People can have no higher calling than to be a reconciler of the gospel, he said: "We are all called by God to ministry, whether we are chaplains, members of a church staff or lay persons. And since we are called to ministry, we are all called to be reconcilers."

Carter challenged the chaplains to minister to people who hurt at all levels of society. "You cannot say you love God if you don't love that patient in the hospital or that inmate in the penitentiary," he added.

Participants in the service brought the number of chaplains endorsed by the Home Mission Board to 2,033. The chaplains serve in all 50 states and in 14 foreign countries, in military, hospital, institutional and industrial settings.

Michael Cook, a chaplain in the U.S. penitentiary in Terre Haute, Ind., gave a warning to young people to avoid peer pressure that could lead to a life of crime.

Cook shared how, as a 9-year-old youth in Missouri, he stated shoplifting. Due to the ministry of a Southern Baptist church, he accepted Christ and rejected the vice before it became a part of his lifestyle, he said.

Jackson Landham, a military chaplain at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida, told how his calling has allowed him to minister at 30,000 feet in the air in the cockpit of a B-52 bomber and 60 feet below ground in a missile-launch control center.

"The U.S. armed forces is one of the largest English-speaking mission fields in the world," said the native of Griffin, Ga. "I am grateful Southern Baptists allow me to serve Christ as an extension of the local church."

Carolyn Weatherford, executive director of the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union, told the chaplains WMU and the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission are dedicated to teaching girls and boys about their commitment "so God may call them into similar frontiers of ministry."

Huey Perry, director of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's chaplaincy division, recognized chaplain Nathaniel Milton, who was unable to attend the ceremony. Milton, stationed in Newport News, Va., was ministering to family members of victims who died in the explosion aboard the battleship USS Iowa.

The 51 chaplains and their spouses will serve in 18 states, Perry said.

--more--

The Home Mission Board does not appoint chaplains as missionaries or pay their salaries, but "endorses" them to the employing agencies. In addition to endorsement, the board provides them with pastoral and professional support through personal ministry, seminars and conferences.

--30--

Romo honored for 25 years
service with refugees

N-HMB

Baptist Press
4/28/89

MIAMI (BP)--Oscar Romo, director of the language church extension division for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, has been honored for a quarter century work with refugees to the U.S.

More than 63 religious and political leaders gathered in Miami to honor Romo for his longterm contributions. The cities of Miami and Hialeah jointly proclaimed the day in his honor.

In addition to the award from the two South Florida cities, Romo also received awards from Cuban civic organizations, the World Refugee Relief, the local Hispanic newspaper Los Tiempos and the Miami Baptist Association.

Guests included representatives from the Spanish Pastors Conference of the Miami Baptist Association, Episcopal Diocese of Southeast Florida, the Miami District of the United Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church, USA, the Presbyterian Church of America, the Lutheran Church, Assemblies of God, Latin America Mission and Christ for the City, Intervarsity, the Cuban Journalists Association, Editorial Caribe and the Miami business community.

In a keynote address, Florida Senator Illeana Ros-Lehtinen attributed many of South Florida's accomplishments in refugee resettlement and relief to Romo and the Home Mission Board's language missions division.

Romo's efforts began during the late 1950s when he aided Cubans fleeing the Castro regime, and continued during the following decades when the Home Mission Board assisted Southeast Asians, Mexicans, Central Americans and others seeking U.S. asylum.

Among those attending the ceremony were Lucia Cardenas and her 16-year-old son Antonio Enrique, whom Romo and World Refugee representatives helped gain entrance into the U.S. after Cardenas' husband, a Cuban political prisoner, died of a heart attack.

Through the two organizations' efforts, Cardenas found food, shelter and friends awaiting her in Miami when she arrived a week ago.

"There are many others like her," said Ray Carvajal, Miami's director of language missions, "people whom Oscar Romo has helped, even when he didn't know them. I think that when he gets to heaven, there will be a long line of people waiting just to say 'thank you.'"

"Miami Baptist Association is especially grateful for Dr. Romo," said Miami Director of Missions Doyle Wetherington. "He has helped us complete many things that we otherwise would not have been able to do. We wish to honor him in every way possible."

--30--