



- - 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) 544-4226

May 30, 1989

89-86

Resolutions Committee considers
issues, one-year moratorium

By Linda Lawson

N-SSB

NASHVILLE (BP)--During a five-hour meeting May 26 in Nashville, the Resolutions Committee for the 1989 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting reviewed advance copies of resolutions it has received, including one proposing a one-year moratorium on resolutions.

The committee also identified issues likely to be subjects of resolutions during the 132nd annual meeting of the convention June 13-15 in Las Vegas, Nev., and committee members were assigned to write preliminary drafts.

Mark Coppenger, chairman of the 10-member committee, said a moratorium on resolutions is being considered "in light of the timing (of this year's convention) and the location in Las Vegas" where Southern Baptists are relatively unknown and Baptist work is new.

However, he emphasized, no decision has been made regarding a moratorium.

Topics being considered for resolutions in Las Vegas include the laity, because 1988-89 has been designated the Year of the Laity in the denomination, he said.

Abortion, a topic of resolutions in recent years, also is being considered, Coppenger said. A ruling is expected within a few weeks on a case recently heard by the U.S. Supreme Court, Webster v. Reproductive Health Services. That ruling, some observers believe, may result in restrictions or revocation of Roe v. Wade, a 1973 Supreme Court ruling which, by invalidating existing state laws, established abortion on demand in the United States.

Other issues of interest to the committee included racism, drug-related violence, the growth and influence of Islam in the United States, the growing influence of Satanism and the "great need for integrity in the lives of Christians," Coppenger said. "We stand ready to consider the full range of issues in Las Vegas."

Coppenger characterized the meeting, attended by all 10 committee members, as a "harmonious and hard-working" session.

Deliberations were guided by a "strong desire for a peaceful, harmonious convention," he said. "We are concerned for harmony and effectiveness in Las Vegas.

"There is clearly a desire that revival take place in our hearts in Las Vegas."

All resolutions submitted in advance to the committee must be submitted again for official consideration on the first day of the convention, Coppenger said. Members of the committee and a convention parliamentarian will receive resolutions during designated business sessions at a desk near the convention podium.

The committee will meet again June 12 in Las Vegas.

In addition to Coppenger, the committee includes two women, one layman and six pastors. By bylaw requirement, three committee members also are on the SBC Executive Committee.

Executive Committee members are Jerry Brown, a truckstop operator and member of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Edmond, Okla.; Joy Dorsett, a homemaker and member of Central Park Baptist Church in Birmingham, Ala.; and Walt Tomme, pastor of Tyson Community Baptist Church in McLean, Va., but affiliated with the District of Columbia Baptist Convention.

--more--

Other members are David Allen, pastor of Audelia Road Baptist Church in Dallas; Kenneth Hemphill, pastor of First Baptist Church of Norfolk, Va.; David McAlpin, pastor of First Baptist Church of Pine Castle in Orlando, Fla.; James Merritt, pastor of First Baptist Church of Snellville, Ga.; Linda Shrewsbury, a member of Memorial Baptist Church in Tulsa, Okla.; and Jerry Sutton, pastor of Two Rivers Baptist Church in Nashville who also chaired the 1988 Resolutions Committee.

--30--

'Young Conservatives'
hold rally in Texas

By Jim Jones

N-60

Baptist Press
5/30/89

EULESS, Texas (BP)--About 70 "Young Conservatives" held a pre-Southern Baptist Convention rally in First Baptist Church of Euless, Texas, May 25, hoping to encourage younger Baptists to take up the conservative cause.

The meeting was organized by Rick Scarborough, a former vocational evangelist now pastor of Retta Baptist Church near Fort Worth, Texas, to show support for the conservative cause in the SBC.

"We think the conservative movement is good for the convention, and we wanted to encourage people to attend the Southern Baptist Convention in Las Vegas," (Nev.), "Scarborough said. He added most of the pastors attending the meeting were between 35 and 45 years old.

Despite opening remarks that the meeting's purpose was not to stir up controversy and that conservatives should promote peace and healing, one speaker used the words "rats" and "skunks" in speaking of "liberals" in the denomination.

During the meeting, the pastors approved a resolution urging that Jerry Vines, pastor of First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla., and current president of the SBC, be re-elected during the June 13-15 annual meeting.

Vines announced in February he is willing to be nominated for a second one-year term as president. He will be opposed by Daniel Vestal, pastor of Dunwoody Baptist Church in suburban Atlanta, who spoke in mid-May to a regional meeting of Baptists Committed to the Southern Baptist Convention, a moderate group, in First Baptist Church of Arlington, Texas.

The pastors heard a battery of speakers during their day-long meeting.

Ronnie Floyd, pastor of First Baptist Church of Springdale, Ark., and a member of the SBC Executive Committee, told them women should not be pastors and deacons in Southern Baptist churches because it contradicts Bible teachings.

People who believe every word of the Bible would not ordain women, he said.

"Women have a place in the local church, but scripture does not allow at any time for those women to serve as pastors or deacons. We cannot allow the bent toward liberalism and the bent toward equal rights in society to ever pressure you -- or to ever pressure me -- to compromise the word of God," he said.

Women's ordination is one of the hottest topics in the SBC, Floyd said, adding a number of women are serving as ordained pastors and hundreds are studying for the ministry at the six Southern Baptist seminaries.

Conservative charges that liberalism continues to be a problem also were discussed during the session.

Dwight (Ike) Reighard, pastor of New Hope Baptist Church in Fayetteville, Ga., a suburb of Atlanta, urged the continuation of the battle against liberalism, which he compared to Goliath, the giant slain by David in the Old Testament story.

"Folks, I submit to you that we have knocked the giant down, but we are a long way from cutting off its head," he said.

--more--

Reighard, also president of the Georgia Baptist Convention, was asked by Terry Fox, pastor of Gardendale Baptist Church of Corpus Christi, Texas, how conservatives could capture the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

"It (being elected in Georgia) was a lot like what we did in electing conservative presidents of the Southern Baptist Convention," he said. The Georgia effort, in the fall of 1988, featured full page newspaper advertisements, candidates travelling the state in search of votes and a conservative rally attended by 7,000 people.

Another Texas pastor, Kerry Peacock of Belmont Baptist Church in Odessa, called "liberals" in the denomination "rats" and "skunks" in discussion from the floor. He was asked if conservatives would actively purge "liberals" from the convention.

"The rats and skunks are still inside the wall (of the SBC). Are we just going to leave them there?" he asked.

Richard Lee, a television evangelist and pastor of Rehoboth Baptist Church in Tucker, Ga., in suburban Atlanta, answered, "As long as they smell, one day we are going to get them out."

W.A. Criswell, pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas and a former president of the SBC, stirred controversy at the 1988 annual meeting in San Antonio, Texas, when he introduced the term "skunks" to refer to liberals in the denomination.

In addition to Scarborough, Floyd, Reighard and Lee, participants also heard presentations by Ruffin Snow, pastor of Eastwood Baptist Church in Tulsa, Okla., and James Merritt, pastor of First Baptist Church of Snellville, Ga., also in suburban Atlanta.

--30--

Jones is religion editor of the Fort Worth (Texas) Star-Telegram.

Seek 1st God's kingdom,
Southeastern grads told

N-10
(SEBTS)

Baptist Press
5/30/89

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Determine priorities and "seek first" God's kingdom, Thomas Bland Sr. told 161 graduating seniors at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., May 13.

"Jesus says if we are to enter the kingdom, we must become like children," said Bland, professor of Christian ethics and sociology.

"That's not easy for sophisticated adults, especially for newly degreed seminarians. It is more difficult to see the kingdom as a little child when you know as you do the partisanship of ecclesiastical officials, the quarrels of theologians, the persecution of the real saints so often by the official church and the vulgar politics to be found in the annals of organized Christianity.

"But note, please, that the child-like qualities Jesus enjoins are non-hypocritical naturalness, a genuine humility, a teachableness and unqualified trust in dependable relationships. Such is to seek the kingdom as a child."

The evening prior to the commencement, seminary Chaplain Donna Forrester delivered the sermon during a commencement worship service. She challenged the graduates to recognize God's power to "perfect" weakness by admitting and embracing their own limitations.

"Until you are willing to be truly human, as (the Apostle) Paul learned he had to be, the words you preach and the ministries you seek to perform will be empty, and your congregations will see through it long before you do," Forrester said.

"It's OK to be human, to know that you can't do it all or be good at everything. That's why we need each other and have community. And when you are willing to be human, the message you proclaim will be more believable. People will run to hear you preach the good news of love and grace through Jesus, our Lord."

--30--

Be 'colony of heaven'
Leavell tells graduates

By Breena Kent Payne

N- CO
(NOBTS)

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Christians should be a "colony of heaven" in a society characterized by indulgence, immorality and indifference, Landrum P. Leavell II told 194 candidates for graduation during May commencement exercises at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

New Orleans Seminary President Leavell compared the United States to the Roman empire during the first century.

"The parallels are unmistakable," he said. "Rome, you remember, did not fall to superior military power but to moral and spiritual profligacy. We're witnessing the emergence of a neo-paganism, and at the same time, Christian underpinnings are being destroyed."

To avoid such destruction, Christians should be a "colony of heaven," he said.

During the first century, Roman colonies were "little microcosms of Rome," Leavell explained. "Rome tried to Romanize every spot she conquered, and it was often done in very subtle ways, simply by displaying the Roman lifestyle to those over whom Rome held the rule."

As a colony of heaven, Christians are "to permeate society with Christian values in the same way that Rome (permeated) society with Roman values. In other words, we're to be a different kind of people, a separate people," he said.

Christians also should be aware of the foes they must face in ministry. One of those foes, indulgence, "is new, at least on a widespread basis, for ... prior to our generation, not many people had the affluence to indulge themselves," Leavell said.

"That spirit does permeate the younger generation, and it's going to be increasingly reflected in the life of the church and impact what you do in ministry for the Lord Jesus Christ."

Another foe Christians face is immorality, he said: "The church in Rome existed in the middle of a society that literally had gone wild in its search for some exciting new sensation.

"In the midst of that kind of influence, (the Apostle Paul) was unashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Blatant immorality did not silence Paul, and that's one barrier that you're going to face every day of your ministry, until God calls you home."

The modern Christian's third foe is indifference, Leavell added. In a society marked by divorce, drugs, abortion, alcohol, adultery, suicide, declining business ethics and AIDS, "the church is largely cold and dead and speechless," he noted. "In an age like this, we have no message, or at least, if we have it, we simply are fearful of articulating it."

Christians can make a difference in a "violent, anti-Christian society," he said: "History records some 300 years after Paul preached and taught in Rome, ... Christianity had become the dominant force in the empire. Constantine went too far to one extreme, just as we're in danger of doing; but on the other hand, ... marriage came to be considered a sacrament and was binding for life. Adultery was shunned. Abortion was abolished and became a crime. Human life came to be elevated to biblical standards. Homosexuality was made a crime and was viewed the perversion that the Bible labels it to be.

"Why? Because in a little colony of heaven some people stayed faithful, true to the word of God and to the call of God to proclaim the gospel in that kind of society.

"As a colony of heaven, you and I must model the discipline and morality that is extolled in the book (the Bible). Our citizenship is in heaven, and our lifestyle is that dictated by the book.

"The early church was a success because it absolutely refused to compromise the high calling of God in Christ Jesus and the biblical stand of morality. It can happen here. You and I are the determining factors."

Biblical Recorder
adds 2 staffers

N-CO
(N.C.)

RALEIGH, N.C. (BP)--The Biblical Recorder, North Carolina Baptists' weekly newsjournal, has added two staff members.

Todd Deaton has been elected associate editor, and Lou Anne Stephenson has been elected assistant editor, reported Editor R.G. Puckett.

Deaton, director of news and public relations for North Greenville College in Tigerville, S.C., is a graduate of Furman University in Greenville, S.C., and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

He has been an intern at two Baptist state newspapers, Kentucky's Western Recorder and South Carolina's Baptist Courier. He also has been an intern at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Stephenson, a graduate of Meredith College in Raleigh, has been an editorial assistant with the Biblical Recorder since Jan. 1. She has studied at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., and held a Biblical Recorder internship in 1988.

Both Deaton and Stephenson will assume their new duties July 1.

--30--

Dual prison views shape
Austin Brown's ministry

By Greg Warner

F-CO
(Fla)

Baptist Press
5/30/89

STARKE, Fla (BP)--Austin Brown has looked through prison bars from both sides -- first as a convicted killer and now as a prison chaplain.

In 1968, Brown was released from a Florida prison after serving four years for manslaughter. While most inmates leave prison with no intention of returning, Brown has spent much of the past 21 years in prison -- willingly -- in order to help other inmates find the new life he found while behind bars.

"I get my identity in prison," said Brown, associate chaplain at Florida State Prison near Starke. "That's my first love."

Because he found Christ in prison Brown said, he feels a special loyalty to serve God there. If he were anywhere else, he'd feel "like a fish out of the pond."

Brown, 62, is not the first released prisoner to return to prison to preach Christ, but he's one of the few who have returned as chaplains.

Many former inmates -- including Watergate conspirator Charles Colson -- now minister to prisoners and their families from the outside. But by being with the prisoners every day, Brown is able to develop the deep relationships that he says often make the difference in effective prison ministry.

Brown and the prison's two other chaplains -- all Southern Baptists -- keep a regular schedule of visitation, moving from cell to cell through the maze of hallways in the maximum-security prison. "You can work two wings a day and all the wings in a week," Brown explained.

About 800 of the 1,100 prisoners in the facility are in "locked down" units, which means they seldom leave their cells. Most have no access to the worship services and Bible studies offered by the chaplains, which makes the cell visits even more important.

On those visits, the chaplains simply talk to the inmates, asking if they have problems or need help. The purpose is to be visible and available, Brown said, which helps the inmates feel "they've got somebody down here they figure is a little bit in their corner."

"That means something when you're in a prison, because not everybody here is that way," he said.

--more--

Born in Chief, Fla., Brown became an expert on jail life at an early age because of a lifelong problem with alcohol. He began drinking at 9. At 14, he lied about his age to join the Navy in World War II but was dishonorably discharged for drunkenness. "All I did while I was overseas was drink," he recalled. He later rejoined the military to fight in Korea but again was kicked out for drinking.

"In 20 years, I never took a sober breath," he said. Although trained as a cook, he couldn't hold a job. "I bummed around as a public wino."

In 1961, what was left of his wayward life came crashing down. "I took another man's life. He drew a shank -- a knife -- and I took out a gun and shot him," he said.

Although a warrant was issued for his arrest, Brown evaded police for awhile. But later he was arrested for a driving violation. When police ran a check on his background, they discovered the outstanding warrant and charged Brown with second-degree murder.

He agreed to waive a jury trial and pleaded guilty to the reduced charge of manslaughter. He was sentenced to 15 years and sent to Florida State Prison for processing -- his first visit to the Starke facility.

That checkered past has given Brown insight and access into the lives of prisoners. Although any prison chaplain has difficulty earning inmates' trust, the task is easier for Brown because he has been there.

"I see them as people," he said. Their crimes are irrelevant, he explained; only their response to Christ matters.

Brown does not doubt the power of the Christian gospel to change the life of even the most despicable criminal. He's seen it happen in his own life and in countless others. But his experience on both sides of the bars has left him with a healthy skepticism about the ability of most Christians to help prisoners and ex-prisoners.

"Our churches are not going to minister to these people, in prison or out of prison," he said.

Many outsiders feel a burden for the spiritual well-being of prisoners, he said: "But the first thing they want to do is preach to these guys. It just doesn't work."

Florida State Prison has no shortage of the gospel, Brown explained. No inmate can pass through the Starke facility without being confronted with the message of Christ, he said. In addition to the witness of chaplains, volunteers and Christian inmates, the prisoners have access to the gospel through literature, radio and television.

About 50 of the 300 prisoners who are not in "locked down" wings attend weekly Bible studies and worship services. Even the 29⁴ Death Row inmates can view Christian videotapes by way of closed-circuit TV.

The prison has, however, a shortage of people who will invest the time to get to know inmates and their problems, which Brown said is the best way to win them to faith in Christ.

"One-on-one reaches them," he said.

Brown is living proof of that principle. The one-on-one witness of a prison chaplain led to his conversion.

After his manslaughter conviction in 1963, Brown was sent to Belle Glade Correctional Institution, where he met Chaplain Max Jones.

"I saw something in Max," recalled Brown, who said he was impressed with the Christians he met in prison. "I was just as blind as a bat, but I wanted to be around those people."

--more--

Through Jones, Brown heard the gospel for the first time and accepted Christ as savior in September 1964. He spent the next four years of incarceration learning about his newfound faith by immersing himself in study of the Bible. "I would work with one hand and read the Bible with the other," he remembered.

He gained a reputation in the prison as a strong Christian. Prison administrators sent inmates to him for advice. Eventually he was asked to teach a Sunday school class, using old literature donated by Southern Baptists.

When he was paroled in 1968, Brown immediately got involved in prison ministry, visiting the Belle Glade facility and other prisons to share the gospel.

He married a school teacher, Jeanette, in May 1974. Within a month she moved to Gainesville, Fla., to take another job, but Brown stayed in Belle Glade, commuting twice a month to Gainesville.

Then he got word that Jones, who since had moved to Florida State Prison, wanted to hire him as a chaplain. In July 1974, he moved to Gainesville and began commuting 30 miles daily to the Starke facility.

Because he dropped out of school in the eighth grade, he lacked the college and seminary training usually required of chaplains. For that reason, he initially was hired not as a chaplain but as a correctional officer assigned to chaplaincy. He since has been certified as a chaplain by the state of Florida and endorsed by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

What Brown found at the Florida State Prison was a prison population out of control, he said. "This thing was a mess then -- killings and stabbings every day," he noted, explaining fewer prisoners were in locked down areas then.

Jones and Brown opened up the chapel for two hours each morning, giving inmates a chance to view Christian videotapes or listen to Christian radio. "Some would come just to get off the wings. They could let their guard down here," he said.

But the open chapels also sparked a revival of sorts among the inmates, Brown said. The new spiritual interest had a calming effect on the whole prison, he explained, adding, "Violence in the prison dropped dramatically in less than two years' time."

Brown now spends much of his time now at the prison's O Unit, a minimum-security facility housing another 500 men, where he conducts weekly Bible studies for about 50 inmates. An evangelistic approach is the most effective means in that setting, he said, because the prisoners are there only a short time.

In the 15 years since returning to prison, Brown and his ministry have become known to many Southern Baptists. He became active in the Baptist lay renewal movement in the 1970s and since has found himself speaking on platforms around the country with such Baptist preachers as Jimmy Allen, Adrian Rogers and Billy Graham. It has been a humbling experience, he said.

"An old drunk like me has got no business being with men like that," Brown said. "It just shows you that the Lord wants to take something that the world sees as nothing and bring glory to the Lord."

--30--

Photo available upon request from the Florida Baptist Witness.

'Jailhouse religion'
both sincere, suspect

By Greg Warner

F - (0
(Fla.)

Baptist Press
5/30/89

STARKE, Fla. (BP)--Are prison conversions real? According to the chaplains who minister to inmates, some of the conversions are suspect, but others are definitely sincere.

Converts at Florida State Prison have included the notorious -- such as serial killer Ted Bundy and playboy jewel thief Jack "Murph the Surf" Murphy -- and the obscure -- like James Richardson of Jacksonville, Fla., who was released recently after serving almost 20 years when new evidence showed he was innocent of the murder of his children.

--more--

Venoy Jolley, Southern Baptist and head chaplain at the prison in Starke, Fla., has learned to take some prison conversions "with a grain of salt," he said. "I have some tremendous Christians here, but some (others) are only out to fleece the flock."

However, Austin Brown, another Southern Baptist chaplain at the Starke facility, rejects the idea that most prison conversions are manipulative and insincere -- a stereotype he says many outsiders use to dismiss Christian inmates. "Satan has done that," Brown said.

The faith of prison converts must pass the test of time, at least in a maximum-security facility, "because they're going to be looking at these same faces a long time," he said.

"You don't have a tough time in here being a Christian," Brown said. "You have a tough time being a phony."

Brown would not estimate how many of the prison's 1,600 inmates are Christians. "I got out of the counting business," he said. "I don't know who's saved."

An inmate serving a long sentence has a much better chance of responding to the gospel than someone in society, Brown said: "On the outside, he has so many things on his mind. If he'll use this time properly, he's got time to do some serious thinking."

An inmate at Florida State Prison can spend up to 10 hours a week in group Bible study. A few Starke inmates even are enrolled in Southern Baptist seminary-extension courses.

"Inmates here have more opportunity to do Bible study than anyone, except someone in a Bible school," Brown said. "If you're a strong Christian, you're stronger than someone on the outside."

Christian inmates also have closer fellowship with each other than is found in many churches, he said, because the close quarters and tough surroundings produce higher expectations of each other.

Once an inmate gets out of prison, however, the real problems with being a Christian crowd in, Brown said. Searching for a place of refuge and welcome, many ex-prisoners who go to local churches find acceptance lacking and the fellowship inadequate.

"There's no concern about each other," Brown said. "He's left out, and I don't have to tell you what that does for him."

"If they go into a local church, they don't last."

Former inmates who don't find help in churches often are attracted to Christian prison ministries that provide worship, fellowship and assistance for ex-prisoners, Brown said.

Churches that have incorporated released prisoners effectively have done so through a specialized ministry aimed at their needs, Brown said, noting, "You don't just sit them down in church and say, 'Come back every Sunday.'"

--30--

Scripture distribution supports
worldwide efforts, Cothen says

By Jim Lowry

N-SSB

Baptist Press
5/30/89

NASHVILLE (BP)--Spreading the gospel and supporting the denomination were cited as keys to the worldwide impact of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board by President Emeritus Grady C. Cothen during the agency's 98th anniversary celebration May 26.

"The Sunday School Board is the greatest influence of its kind in the world," Cothen told employees and retirees attending the annual anniversary celebration, which included a simultaneous observance of the 10th anniversary of the board's purchase of Holman Bible Publishers.

"This is truly a Bible board," said Cothen, who was president 1975-84. "Every day since this institution was formed 98 years ago, it has stood in the vanguard of the Baptist effort to proclaim the word of God. From its beginning in 1891, the purpose and the organization have centered around that one idea and one idea alone."

--more--

"Bible study of the world has been different because of the Baptist Sunday School Board. Bible study methods all over the world have been born here out of the outpouring of ideas and methodologies to bring the God's word to mankind in his needs.

"The influence of this institution has literally changed the lives of multiplied millions of people."

Cothen attended a Southern Baptist committee meeting several years ago when members were planning a new project that would be called Bold Mission Thrust, the effort to share the gospel with every person in the world by the year 2000. He was asked if the Sunday School Board would help in such a project, he recalled.

"We'll give you everything we've got. That's all we've ever done," he said he told the denominational leaders. "The resources of the board are available to the denomination in proclaiming the word of God. Since that day, this institution has poured out millions of dollars and millions of lines of print in support of Bold Mission Thrust."

Cothen, who was president of the board when the agency purchased the A.J. Holman Company 10 years ago, said Holman let the board be involved not just in publishing, but in the publishing of the word of God, "which is central to every activity at the board."

"The two major thrusts of this institution are publishing the news of Christ that salvation is available and the application of the gospel to daily life," he said.

All the support activities, including publishing training guides and Scriptures in foreign languages, "have to do with the distribution of the word of God and assisting churches to accomplish the Great Commission," he noted.

The board purchased Holman in 1979 for \$2.1 million, Cothen recalled, adding that sales in 1981 were \$2.2 million and \$9.5 million in 1988.

Cothen told of a neighbor near his home in Pass Christian, Miss., who has a technologically advanced modern boat that rarely is moved from the dock.

"Boats like that are made for the sea, not docks," he said, urging employees not to allow controversy in the denomination to distract them from contributing to the mission of the institution of spreading the word of God.

"Don't leave your personal ship tied to the dock of controversy," he challenged. "Cast off and serve the Lord who called you. Allow nothing to take your mind off Christ."

--30--

William Carey's Noonkester
announces June 10 retirement

By Tim Nicholas

N-CO
(Miss.)

Baptist Press
5/30/89

HATTIESBURG, Miss. (BP)--J. Ralph Noonkester will end one of the longest tenures of a current American college president when he retires from the helm of William Carey College June 10.

Noonkester announced he will retire on his 65th birthday, after 33 years as president of the 1,300-student Mississippi Baptist school, which has campuses in Hattiesburg and Gulfport and a nursing program in New Orleans.

The retirement will end a year of controversy for Noonkester, who was accused by some trustees of fiscal and administrative mismanagement. Those accusations were being investigated by the Mississippi Baptist Education Commission, which divides state Baptist funds among Mississippi Baptist colleges.

Accusations have centered around budget woes, including spending endowment money and a deficit approaching \$1 million. Last fall, Noonkester's accusers attempted to force his retirement as of June 10, but that action was reversed at the next meeting.

--more--

In a preliminary report in May, the commission recommended hiring someone to handle all school finances. The trustees unanimously concurred and hired James Edwards, who had been a member of the study team put together by the commission. Edwards is a former financial officer of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission and Union University in Jackson, Tenn.

The final report of the commission was to have been made May 25, the day Noonkester announced his retirement, but several trustees were unavailable to meet. The report is to be made soon, school officials said.

Noonkester's retirement statement, read at a news conference, referred to the controversy. "The revolution is over," he said. "I expect our school to return to being an educational institution. Even our critics may agree that Carey College has been punished enough."

Trustee Chairman Joseph Dale of Prentiss, Miss., was unavailable for comment concerning search committee plans.

--30--

Church training directors
teach doctrine in Hawaii

By Terri Lackey

N-SSB

Baptist Press
5/30/89

HONOLULU, Hawaii (BP)--Hawaiians traditionally live a relaxed lifestyle, and dressing up for church on Sunday mornings usually means wearing a favorite Aloha shirt, longtime observers have noted.

But when it comes to the Bible, the attitude of many Southern Baptists in Hawaii switches from casual to serious as evidenced by almost 40 Southern Baptist Hawaiian churches that have completed study of the 1989 Baptist Doctrine Study textbook, "The Doctrines Baptists Believe."

Southern Baptist churches on the islands of Oahu, Kauai, Molokai, Maui and Hawaii participated in the doctrine study prior to and following the Baptist state church training directors' mid-year meetings in Kona, Hawaii, in May. Sessions were led by state church training directors and personnel from the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's church training department.

Pastors from three of the churches said they decided to conduct the doctrine study to help their members, many of whom are not from Baptist backgrounds, to better understand what Southern Baptists believe about the Bible.

Charles Draper, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of Pearl Harbor in Honolulu, said his church is a "virtually 100 percent military church" and includes members who have come from a variety of faiths.

Draper hoped the study would cultivate "a hunger and taste for studying the truths and a desire for spiritual maturity" among his members, he said: "The Bible is alive. It is the power of God, and it does have the answers."

The doctrine study at First Southern Baptist of Pearl Harbor was led by Roy Edgemon, director of the Sunday School Board's church training department and author of the textbook.

George Maeda, pastor of Palisades Baptist Church of Pearl City on the island of Oahu, said he hoped his members, who are almost all native Hawaiians from Buddhist backgrounds, would learn more about Baptist doctrine.

"As a whole, a lot of my members are not that familiar with what Baptists believe, and I am hoping to learn more with them. I guess we never quit learning," said Maeda, a native Hawaiian who graduated from Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Ark., and Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif.

Learning more about the doctrines of salvation and the church, two doctrines taught in the book, would be beneficial to his members, Maeda said.

"If Christians don't understand their own salvation experience, it will be hard for them to share the experience with others," he noted.

--more--

He wanted his members to "come to understand the church and their place as a member," he said. "Our people enjoy church as a place of fellowship, and I want to go beyond that.

"When visitors come or new members come to the church, I want our members to be sensitive to those people. We tend to gather with those we are most comfortable with, and I want them to learn to touch the lives of others."

Maeda hopes the doctrine study ultimately will help his church grow "not so much numerically, but as individuals," he said. "I want them to know some answers if they are asked questions about what Baptists believe."

Travis Wiginton, pastor of Kona Baptist Church in Kona, said he believes Southern Baptists must have a knowledge of the New Testament and the doctrines it teaches in order to grow as Christians.

Like the Pearl Harbor church, Kona members are transplants from the mainland, many of whom came from other religious backgrounds or were not Christians.

"They come to a Baptist church and find out we believe a lot, and we aren't ashamed to say what we believe," said Wiginton.

Christians who study doctrine and the Bible are more committed to their faith, he said: "You don't find too much commitment in a denomination of people who don't believe anything. It's very difficult to spread the gospel when you don't know what you believe."