



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

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89-101

Missionary candidates rejected;
ordination controversy cited

By Art Toalston & Eric Miller

N-FMB

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--An Oklahoma husband and wife, both ordained to the ministry, have been turned down for appointment as missionaries by a committee of Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board trustees.

The trustee committee voted 9-4 June 27 not to recommend appointment of Greg and Katrina Pennington of Ardmore, Okla. Board policies stipulate a rejected candidate must wait two years before again seeking appointment.

The Penningtons received publicity after both were ordained by Northwest Baptist Church in Ardmore in November, 1986 despite the opposition of Enon Baptist Association.

Harlan Spurgeon, FMB vice president for mission management and personnel, said the committee rejected the Penningtons because of "the way (the couple) dealt with the issue of ordination in the climate of the local association."

The trustee committee's action does not mean ordained women no longer will be appointed as foreign missionaries, said trustee Gary Smith, one of the committee members and pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Enid, Okla.

The same committee has approved two ordained women for appointment as missionaries in the past two years, Smith said. "The committee was pretty unanimous that (women's ordination) is a local-church issue and not a Foreign Mission Board issue."

Committee Chairman Paul Sanders, pastor of Geyer Springs First Baptist Church in Little Rock, Ark., voiced concern that Baptists stay centered on sharing the gospel worldwide rather than "focused upon one individual or one couple or one cause. What we're about is much larger than that."

But Sanders said the committee was praying its vote would not be devastating to the Penningtons. "Evidently they are a very outstanding young couple that has been very committed to the Lord and his work," Sanders said.

The Penningtons, who put their house up for sale in May, said they began preparing for foreign mission service 10 years ago at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif. Both cried with their parents and friends after hearing the committee had rejected them, Pennington said in an interview June 27.

Smith said the committee was in a "no-win situation" involving a Baptist association opposed to the couple's appointment as foreign missionaries. The situation left the committee "in agony when we got finished," he said.

Two letters opposing the couple's appointment were sent by Enon Baptist Association representatives to administrators at the mission board. The first letter was written in February 1987, the second June 7 of this year.

Pennington has been minister of education at Northwest Baptist since April 1984; Mrs. Pennington became part-time minister of preschool education there two months later. They were not seeking pastoral roles as foreign missionaries. Pennington would have done youth ministry in Scotland; his wife would have been assigned to church and home ministries there.

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Appointment of the Penningtons was recommended to the trustee committee by Foreign Mission Board staff members who work with missionary candidates. Trustee committee members discussed the couple's situation for more than three hours, Smith said, without being "antagonistic or divisive in any way" with each other.

Smith said committee members weighed their options: if they approved the Penningtons, members of Enon Association "would feel we betrayed them." If the Penningtons were not approved, some Southern Baptists "would say it was a crusade against women who are ordained."

"I would say most every person changed their vote four or five times during the discussion because of the sensitivity of the issue," Smith said.

He added, "Every person on the committee has been there long enough to know that when we make these decisions, we're dealing with peoples' lives, not political issues. We know that what we did had deep ramifications to the family as well as those within our denomination who feel that women in the ministry are not getting a fair look."

Foreign Mission Board President R. Keith Parks said the trustee committee's vote against the Penningtons was "one of those rather rare instances where the judgment of the committee differed from the recommendation of the staff."

Trustees override a staff recommendation perhaps once or twice a year, Parks said: "The process is exactly the process we've had for many, many years. Any recommendation is subject to whatever scrutiny the board wants to bring to it. The staff recommends; the board makes the determination."

On women's ordination in general, Parks said: "Our policy all along has been that ordination neither qualifies nor disqualifies for missionary appointment. We know Southern Baptists are divided on (women's ordination), and we just feel that the qualifications for missions service should not be influenced by the ordination issue."

The policy, stated in writing by Parks in 1984, noted that eight ordained women were working as foreign missionaries at that time. A few more have been appointed since, mission officials said. A total of 1,911 women currently serve as Southern Baptist foreign missionaries.

The most recent letter from Enon association opposing the couple's missionary appointment, signed by association Director Don Clark and others, said the Penningtons "were adamant in their pursuit of the ordination." The letter also said several "faithful members" of the church moved their membership from the church after the ordinations.

"It is our conviction that the ordination of Mrs. Pennington violated clear Bible teaching," the association's leaders wrote. They added that the ordination violated another biblical principle, rooted in 1 Cor. 8:13, that Christians should refrain from actions that might offend fellow Christians.

The letter ended with, "We strongly urge that the Penningtons not be considered for mission service."

Mrs. Pennington said in an interview June 28 that the ordination decision involved much study and prayer. "It was something we really didn't seek out, but it was as if the church was calling me out. Ordination was not a real important issue with me, but it was important to our church for identity of me as a minister.

"I think it's a real dangerous thing when other people presume to know the will of God for somebody else," she said, referring to Enon representatives' opposition to her missionary candidacy. "I wouldn't want to put myself in that position, and I'm very sad that they have done that.

"We don't feel resentful. We will get over the hurt and anger."

However, with the controversy continuing between conservatives and moderates in the Southern Baptist Convention, she added: "I don't think I would put myself through that (seeking appointment) again. We've gotten so far away from what it means to be a Southern Baptist in our denomination. It's scary. It breaks my heart.

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"There's no way I would want to be appointed by another board because I consider myself a denominational loyalist. I consider myself a Southern Baptist."

Phil Christopher, who was pastor at Northwest Baptist Church when the Penningtons were ordained, said, "My heart breaks for us as Southern Baptists, as well as for two people like Greg and Katrina." Christopher moved from Northwest to the pastorate of Highland Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky., in 1987.

When he first met the Penningtons in 1984, Christopher recalled, they stated their long-term goal was foreign missions. "Missions had shaped their lives," he said.

When Northwest Baptist voted on the Penningtons' ordination, after a two-year study of the issue by the church's deacons, nearly 100 members were in favor and about six were opposed, Christopher said. The ordination service was "a high, holy and celebrative moment for all of us. The congregation had been touched by their ministry and we felt we were confirming what God had already done." The congregation lost six to eight families after the vote, Christopher said.

"We realized the possible consequence" of being dropped from associational membership, he acknowledged. In October 1986, Enon Association voted the sanction against any church that ordains a woman. "We really had hoped to avoid that," and Christopher said he met twice with leaders of the association "to try to find some peaceable resolution," but to no avail.

Bill Johnson, current pastor at Northwest Church, said: "The idea that Katrina has been divisive in our association or our church is really a direct reflection on the church. Because it's the church that ordains. It's not a self-ordination. The decision was overwhelmingly carried out by the church.

"To hear that they were a divisive element, especially Katrina ... Well, it's really just a lie, because they are some of the gentlest people that I know. They have deep convictions about what they believe but are not divisive kind of people in any sense. (They are) deeply committed to Christ, called to missions for years, and in every way I think are qualified.

"It's a tough deal, and I'll be honest with you. ... We didn't really prepare for it. ... We were preparing for them to be appointed. So we are really saddened by it. It's tough on a lot of people around here."

Current association director Clark said he had no comment on the Pennington case, but went on to say: "There's a lot of hard feelings in the area. It's no secret that the association opposes the ordination of women. It's in the constitution. We're trying to live in an association with a church that we hope one day will turn around."

The Penningtons had planned a celebration party for June 27 whether they were accepted or rejected. At the party, "we all sat around and cried at first, and then it was OK," Mrs. Pennington said.

"God didn't close a door; people did," Pennington said. For now, the Penningtons will stay at Northwest in Ardmore. "God can use us wherever we are."

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President commends
SBC mission efforts

N-60

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JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (BP)--Jerry Vines, Southern Baptist Convention president, has commended messengers to the 1989 annual meeting for the mission effort conducted in Las Vegas, Nev.

"The Lord used you to accomplish our purpose far beyond our hopes and aspirations," said Vines, pastor of First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla.

"Your conduct was exemplary. From every hand I have received words of praise from Las Vegas concerning your demeanor, your joyfulness and your gracious behavior. The organized and the lifestyle witnessing was certainly a success," Vines said in a statement issued through Baptist Press, the denominational news service.

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Vines, who was re-elected to a second one-year term as president of the 14.8-million-member denomination at the 1989 annual meeting, said, "Only heaven will reveal how many more (people) came to Christ in lifestyle evangelistic endeavor on the part of messengers. To God be the glory, great things he hath done," Vines wrote.

Under sponsorship of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, the Nevada Baptist Convention and the Southern Nevada Baptist Association, the week preceding the annual meeting featured simultaneous "Here's Hope" revivals. On the Saturday preceding the convention, more than 2,000 Southern Baptists from 38 states and the District of Columbia fanned out across Las Vegas, visiting 130,000 homes.

Across the state, the evangelistic thrust resulted in 894 first-time professions of faith, including 471 in Las Vegas. It produced 5,000 prospects for church membership in Las Vegas and 412 other decisions, officials reported.

Vines, who has emphasized personal soul-winning as a theme of the first one-year term as president, also told Baptist Press:

"I am going to place a strong emphasis this coming year on building great soul-winning churches. I would encourage every pastor and layperson to join me in a renewed effort to build our local churches.

"As I understand it, New Testament evangelism has a two-fold focus: first, to win people to faith in Christ; second, to baptize them into the fellowship of a local church and help them grow into the likeness of Jesus Christ. This will be my emphasis in the coming year.

"Again, God bless you, Southern Baptists. Mission accomplished."

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Senate approves
child-care bill

By Kathy Palen

N- BJK

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WASHINGTON (BP)--The U.S. Senate has approved a Democratic child-care package that includes direct grants, tax credits and a church-state compromise.

By voice vote June 23, the Senate passed a substitute version of the Act for Better Child Care Services (S. 5), which was crafted by Majority Leader George J. Mitchell, D-Maine.

In addition to the original ABC bill -- which would authorize \$1.75 billion in annual payments to parents and child-care providers -- the substitute incorporates an almost \$2 billion tax-credit package that would assist low-income parents with young children.

The substitute also attempts to settle a dispute over the use of federal funds for church-related child-care services. It would exempt federal funds in the form of certificates or vouchers from the bill's prohibition against using such funds for "any sectarian purpose or activity, including sectarian worship and instruction." The substitute also states funds "shall not be expended in a manner inconsistent with the Constitution."

Before voting 63-37 to accept the Mitchell substitute, the Senate rejected 44-56 an administration-backed substitute introduced by Minority Leader Robert J. Dole, R-Kan. That plan relied almost exclusively on tax credits.

After the defeat of the Dole substitute, Senate Republicans introduced more than 50 amendments to the substitute version of the ABC bill. Most of those amendments also were rejected.

As approved by the Senate, the ABC bill would distribute direct federal grants through the states. It would require states to set standards for child-care providers, rather than the establishment of national standards.

It also would provide three tax credits. It would expand the existing dependent-care credit, making it up to 90 percent refundable in order to assist low-income parents who pay no taxes. It would create a tax credit of up to \$500 for premiums paid for children's health insurance. And it would supplement the current earned income tax credit to provide from \$500 to \$750 per year to families with children under age 4.

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On the church-state issue, the bill would allow child-care centers sponsored by religious institutions to qualify for federal funds if they avoid religious instruction, worship or other sectarian activities. Church-related providers receiving funds through parental certificates would be exempt from that provision.

It also would prohibit religious discrimination in admissions and employment of all ABC-funded providers. Unless 80 percent of a provider's operating budget comes from federal funds, the bill would permit that provider to exercise limited preference in hiring and admitting individuals who have a pre-existing relationship with the organization that owns or operates the child-care center.

The bill now goes to the House of Representatives, where a different approach to child-care legislation is expected. It also would have to be signed by President Bush, who already has threatened to veto the Senate measure.

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Church-state question major
issue in child-care debate

By Kathy Palen

N- BJC

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WASHINGTON (BP)--The question of how to send federal funds to church-affiliated child-care centers without violating the Constitution loomed during recent Senate debate on child-care legislation.

The bill that finally received Senate approval contains sufficient church-state safeguards, argued some Senators. But, other members countered, those provisions most likely would not survive a court challenge.

The Act for Better Child Care Services -- which now is substantively different than when reported out of the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee -- would allow parents to use federally funded child-care certificates at sectarian child-care centers as long as such use does not violate the Constitution. But, according to the bill, providers receiving direct grants would be prohibited from engaging in religious instruction, worship or other sectarian activities.

The division of thought over the measure's church-state language was not divided along strict party lines or even between proponents and opponents of the bill.

"Serious questions were raised about the constitutionality of using ABC certificates to support programs that involve religious worship and instruction," said Orrin G. Hatch, R-Utah. "Some believe that federal aid can go to sectarian programs so long as the aid is paid through such certificates, which leave the choice of the child-care provider to the individual parent. Others believe that any such federal payment to sectarian providers is unconstitutional, regardless of the form of the aid.

"The (bill's) compromise provides that parents receiving ABC certificates may choose sectarian programs for their children, as long as funds are spent in a manner consistent with the Constitution. This modification will permit the courts to resolve the issue in an appropriate fashion, consistent with the First Amendment."

But a number of senators objected to passing legislation that would lead to such litigation.

Minority Leader Robert J. Dole, R-Kan., complained the bill leaves the church-state issue largely unresolved and clearly subject to court challenge. The provision offers no guidance to religiously based child-care centers as to the types of activities and arrangements that are permissible, he said.

"This lack of guidance is an open invitation to litigation," Dole said. "And litigation, often expensive litigation, will force many religiously based centers to spend more time and more resources defending lawsuits than providing child-care services."

In response, Hatch -- one of the bill's major co-sponsors -- asked, "What program in our society today which allows churches and other religious institutions to participate will not be subject to a court challenge?"

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Other senators raised objections to using federal funds -- even in the form of certificates -- to support sectarian programs.

"I do not question the right of other people to send their children to whatever school they want as long as they pay for it," said John Glenn, D-Ohio. "That is an option of being a free American parent. But we also say that with our separation of church and state, which is so fundamental in this nation, that we do not want to see taxpayer dollars subsidizing religious instruction.

"The prohibition that we keep the separation of church and state does not mean that you cannot have a child-care facility in the church basement and does not mean it cannot be held on church property. It does mean that if they are on that property and receiving child-care certificates then they must be non-sectarian. That is about as American as anything I can think of."

Sen. Wendell H. Ford, D-Ky., said he did not agree with senators who had expressed fear that the use of ABC certificates would lead to tuition vouchers for all students.

"I strongly believe in our public education system and do not support weakening it through federal tax credits or vouchers for private schools," Ford said. "But I feel just as strongly that while child care may have an educational component, it should not be an extension of our public education system. Those hours outside of the regular school day belong to the child and his or her parents. And if parents are unable to be with the child during that time, then they should have the right to choose the provider that most closely reflects their own values and beliefs.

"We should not have to take God out of the life of a 6-week-old child in order to comply with the Constitution. The same Constitution that protects us against government establishment of religion through separation of church and state also guarantees us the free exercise of religion. I do not believe that our founding fathers intended for those two freedoms to be mutually exclusive."

Some members of the Senate argued for the use of tax credits rather than certificates so as to avoid potential constitutional problems.

Sen. Bob Packwood, R-Ore., said tax credits would be especially helpful for the 7 percent to 8 percent of child-care providers he described as "genuinely religious," whose main purpose is to teach children a particular religion. Tax credits would avoid violation of the First Amendment's establishment clause, as well as the possible entanglement of government in church affairs, he said.

Although admitting a tax credit approach would be less problematic constitutionally, Hatch said he could not support it as the sole approach to the nation's child-care problem because it would do nothing to improve the availability or quality of child care.

Other senators cautioned against subjecting churches to government regulations.

"Do we really want the states out there to start saying, 'Well, we will monitor the First Baptist child-care center for a month, and we will report to the second in charge in our labor and health and human services departments, and they will report to so and so, and finally the governor will decide if that is religious or not?'" asked Sen. Pete V. Domenici, R-N.M.

Sen. Dan Coats, R-Ind., warned against "a morass of intricate regulation that, in the end, does nothing but make it more difficult for religious-based child-care providers to provide essential child-care services."

Despite the variety of concerns, the Senate approved the measure without altering the basic church-state provision.

Hannibal-LaGrange College
suffers devastating fire

By Bob Terry

N - (O)
(Mo.)

HANNIBAL, Mo. (BP)--Fire destroyed a three-building complex containing the Hannibal-LaGrange College's cafeteria, gymnasium, auditorium, administrative offices and classrooms June 22 in Hannibal, Mo.

Student maintenance worker Ron Taylor discovered the fire about 2:45 p.m. He immediately called the fire department and checked the area to make sure no one was near the fire.

"We thought we were evacuating as a safety precaution," said Paul Brown, president of the Missouri Baptist school. "If we had known how serious the fire was going to be, we might have gotten more out of the administrative offices."

At first, firemen thought the fire was confined to the kitchen area, but as they pulled the suspended ceiling, they discovered the fire was ahead of them, burning into the gym floor above.

"All at once smoke was everywhere, coming out of every window in the gym," recalled one college official. "That is when we knew the gym would go."

But even then firefighters and college officials thought they could save the auditorium that connected the administrative/classroom building to the gym/cafeteria complex.

The building itself proved an enemy. Built in 1927 and occupied in 1928, the masonry and wood building was honeycombed with false ceilings which, at times, prevented firefighters from getting to the blazes from either top or bottom. Numerous crawlways connected the structures, allowing the fire to move between the buildings despite the brick walls, which officials hoped would stop the fire.

Firefighters were also hampered by lack of water pressure and of water despite volunteer efforts from Hannibal and nearby areas to truck water to the campus for firefighters to use.

By mid-evening the ceiling of the auditorium was ablaze, but firefighters thought they could still save the administrative/classroom building. Again their efforts were futile. The fire jumped the brick wall barrier and charred the top floor of the three-story building. Only the concrete floor prevented the fire from working itself down to the lower floors.

About 2 the next morning, some of the 23 firefighting units from 17 fire departments that responded to the fire were dismissed. Two hours later, the fire was out except for a few isolated hot spots that occupied Hannibal firemen until the late morning hours June 23.

Amid the agony of loss, Brown could only express thanks that no lives had been lost or anyone injured. "If you had seen what I saw, you would know why I keep emphasizing my thankfulness," he explained. He recounted how the gym roof collapsed only seconds after two firemen were ordered off the structure by their captain. Before the two could get down their ladder, the wall against which the ladder was propped collapsed into the fire.

"It was like a miracle to see those two men come out of that smoke," he added. "The fire showed me that we take our public servants too much for granted."

Several school personnel recounted emerging from a prayer meeting during one critical period to be greeted by a rainbow created from the water spray. "It was like God was telling us that it is OK, that he is in control and that he will work things out," noted one participant.

Brown and his administrative staff met June 23 to plan the school's response to the fire. Summer school will continue uninterrupted with classes held in other buildings. Special events, such as a writers' conference, an elderhostel session and a pastors' conference, will proceed as scheduled.

Brown also recommended to a called session of the trustees' executive committee June 29 that all fall activities be held on campus in temporary facilities.

Replacement cost of the three-building complex was estimated as high as \$10 million. Brown said the buildings were not insured "for anything near that amount." Insurance will cover about one-fourth of the replacement cost, he said.

Hearings held
on drunk driving

By Louis Moore

N-(CO)
(CLC)

WASHINGTON (BP)--Sen. John Glenn, D-Ohio, said he wishes the American public could get as excited about curbing drunk driving as it has about war.

He made the statement during the second day of hearing on alcohol-impaired driving, June 21.

Every two years, as many Americans die in alcohol-related automobile accidents as died during the entire 10 years of the Vietnam war, he said.

In his opening statement on the first day of hearing held by the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, Glenn said: "Alcohol costs this country more money, and kills more people, than all illegal drugs combined.

"Nearly 24,000 people -- an average of one every 22 minutes -- lost their lives in alcohol-related traffic crashes last year. An additional 534,000 people suffer injuries in alcohol-involved accidents."

The hearings were held in response to Surgeon General C. Everett Koop's recommendations to Congress on drunk driving. Koop recommended 10 key initiatives, including :

- That the federal excise tax be increased by at least 5 cents per drink.
- That alcoholic advertisers voluntarily cease the use of celebrities in promotions.
- That funds be made available for federal agencies to provide pro-health and pro-safety messages.
- That the legal blood alcohol concentration be reduced.

The 1989 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Las Vegas, Nev., adopted a resolution endorsing Koop's recommendations.

In addition to Koop, 16 people testified at the hearings. Nine represented either the alcoholic beverage industry or advertising organizations, and all criticized the surgeon general's report.

James C. Sanders, president of the Beer Institute, said beer advertising does not contribute to alcohol abuse and underage drinking. "The sole purpose of advertising is to persuade existing beer drinkers to choose one brand over another," he said.

Sanders and several other alcohol-industry representatives criticized the call for an increased federal excise tax, arguing that it would be a heavy burden on middle-and low-income consumers.

Douglas W. Metz, executive vice president and general counsel of the Wine and Spirits Wholesalers of America Inc., called the excise tax "ineffective in curbing alcohol abuse."

Speaking in favor of excise taxes, Dan E. Beauchamp, deputy commissioner for the New York State Department of Health, said: "Alcohol behaves in the market much like any other commodity. From the public policy standpoint, taxes on alcoholic beverages cause consumption, even heavy consumption, to decline.

"Alcohol taxes save lives. Alcohol taxes save young lives. Alcohol taxes will discourage the consumption of the major illegal drug used by youth, beer."

One of the sharpest exchanges during the hearings occurred when Glenn interrupted the testimony of Harold A. Shoup, executive vice president of American Association of Advertising Agencies. Shoup said advertising agencies had spent nearly \$112 million during a three-year period on a campaign to increase public awareness about the drunk-driving problem. After repeated questions from Glenn, Shoup said the alcohol industry spends \$2 billion annually on advertising and promotions of its products.

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In another sharp exchange, Glenn said the Federal Communication Commission is a "toothless tiger" for its reluctance to recommend government restrictions on alcoholic-beverage advertisements. The FCC advocates voluntary steps by the alcohol and advertisement industries.

Hamilton Beazley, president of the National Council on Alcoholism, said, "The recommendations generated by the surgeon general's workshop provide a framework for moving our nation forward to address this devastating problem."

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Texas Mexican Baptist Convention
challenged to 'arise, build'

By Orville Scott

N-Texas

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CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas (BP)--About 2,000 people were challenged at the annual session of the Mexican Baptist Convention of Texas, June 26-28 in Corpus Christi, to redouble their efforts to increase the number of Hispanic churches in Texas from about 900 to 2,000 by the year 2000.

Manuel Galindo of Harlingen, who was re-elected for a second one-year term as president, recalled the slogan of Corpus Christi as "Sparkling City by the Sea."

"We need to let the Holy Spirit take control of our lives until we sparkle for Jesus," he said.

In keeping with the evangelistic challenge and convention theme, "Arise and Build," some convention officers led a young woman to Christ during a press conference. Earlier at a pre-convention evangelistic rally, hundreds came forward to commit themselves to become personal soul-winners.

In the presidential election, Galindo defeated Isaac Rodriguez, pastor of Segunda Baptist Church of Corpus Christi, 442 to 178.

Rodriguez was elected first vice president over Dallas layman Ben Silva and Guadalupe Pena, pastor of Segunda Baptist Church in Houston.

Jesse Garcia, pastor of Primera Baptist Church of Bryan, was elected second vice president. Lydia Gama, wife of the pastor of Iglesia Bautista Trinity in El Paso, was re-elected third vice president, and Frank Moreno, director of church relations for the amnesty program of Union Baptist Association and Christian Life Baptist Church of Houston, was re-elected secretary.

The convention approved resolutions on political strife in China, satanic cults and respect for the flag.

The resolution on China noted that political liberty is the will of God and recognized with sympathy and admiration the effort of Chinese citizens who want democracy.

In the wake of the recent Supreme Court decision overturning the conviction of a young man who burned a U.S. flag during a demonstration in Dallas, the convention reaffirmed "the importance of having respect for the flag that is the visible emblem of this country and symbolizes respect for the basic human freedoms from which comes freedom of religion."

Also, the convention urged churches and church members to prepare to refute the doctrines of who practice human sacrifice and involvement with satanic cults.

The Southern Baptist Cooperative Program unified budget was the focus of two motions in a business session. The convention amended its constitution to require that an elected messenger must be an active member of a church that participates in the Cooperative Program.

A motion that drew debate called for the Mexican Baptist Convention to initiate an emergency fund for pastors and families and for an offering to be taken to begin the fund at next year's convention.

Rudy Hernandez, pastor of Metro Baptist Church in San Antonio, said that while he would be the first to contribute to the fund, he feared designated offerings might diminish support for the Cooperative Program. The motion was tabled.

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In a convention message, Oscar I. Romo, director of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's language church extension division, urged every congregation "to establish another church, and not just Hispanic."

"Just as Anglo Baptists have been compassionate toward Hispanics, Hispanics should establish new churches with other ethnic groups," said Romo.

A goal of 5,000 new Hispanic churches in the United States by the end of the century is not an impossibility, he added.

Also, he called for Baptists to have a more effective witness along the United States-Mexico border to people coming from Central America, saying, "Latin America is coming to us."

Another speaker, James Semple, director of the Texas Baptist state missions commission, told the messengers more than half of the 17.5 million people of Texas are not Christians.

"God has given to us the responsibility of telling them about Jesus Christ," said Semple. "We must do it together. What we cannot do alone, we can join hearts and hands together and move to win this state for Christ."

Daniel Sotelo, pastor of Templo Baptist Church in Fresno, Calif., president of the Southern Baptist Hispanic Fellowship, reminded the Hispanic Baptists: "Those who receive the blessing of God are all of the same level. In the Bible, we are all ministers, men and women. Some of us are pastors, but we are all ministers."

Another speaker, Jorge Munguia of Mexico City, president of the National Baptist Convention of Mexico, said Texas Baptists' seven-year evangelistic partnership with Mexico has aided and expanded the work of Baptists in Mexico.

"We pray that the project, which ends Dec. 31, will not be our last, but that the (Rio Grande) River Ministry will be our new challenge as together we preach the gospel," Munguia said.

The convention agreed to hold its 1990 session in Midland and elected Guadalupe Pena, pastor of Segunda Magnolia Park Baptist Church in Houston, to bring the annual sermon. The 1991 session will be in Austin and the 1992 convention in El Paso.

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Adams joins
SEBTS staff

N- CO
(SEBTS)

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WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Gary D. Adams had been named director of public relations/communications at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., effective July 1.

Adams, pastor of Kelham Baptist Church in Oklahoma City, will replace Rodney V. Byard, who resigned in 1988.

He is a 1971 graduate of Rhodes College in Memphis, Tenn., and a 1975 graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

From 1976-1979 he was associate editor of the Biblical Expositor and Illuminator of the Union Gospel Press Division in Cleveland. Since 1979, he has served as a freelance writer for the Biblical Expositor and Illuminator.

From 1980 to 1988 he was pastor of Hillside Baptist Church in St. Marys, Ohio.

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