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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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June 14, 1990

90-80

Southern Baptists alter
relationship with BJCPA

By Robert O'Brien

N-10
BYC

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention completed a series of votes June 13 to alter the SBC's historic relationship to the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

By a show of hands, messengers adopted a Cooperative Program unified budget recommendation of the SBC Executive Committee that includes an 87.2 percent cut of the BJCPA's budget. The action decreases the BJCPA'S 1990-91 budget from \$391,596 to \$50,000.

Before this action, the BJCPA had survived five attempts in six years to either defund it or to alter the method by which its funding was provided. The previous day, messengers voted 17,915 to 13,608 to defeat an amendment to the recommendation to restore the then-proposed cut.

The amendment, by messenger Frank Ingraham of Franklin, Tenn., called for the BJCPA, the SBC Christian Life Commission and the SBC Public Affairs Committee to receive 1.89 percent increases in line with increases for other SBC entities in the \$137.3 million Cooperative Program budget proposal.

Besides slashing the BJCPA budget, the CP budget proposal, as finally passed, increases the CLC budget by 40.7 percent to \$1,262,836 and the PAC budget by 5.47 percent to \$25,000.

The CLC increase was granted after messengers approved an Executive Committee recommendation to add a religious liberty function to the CLC, the convention's moral concerns agency.

That action passed by a show of hands after messengers defeated, 14,789 to 12,626, another motion by Ingraham to strike the committee's recommendation. Ingraham is an attorney and former member of the SBC Executive Committee.

Historically, the BJCPA, a First Amendment/religious liberty organization in Washington, has handled religious liberty concerns for Southern Baptists. The BJCPA, made up of nine Baptist denominations, has had a 53-year relationship with the SBC through the 18-member PAC; represented on the BJCPA by the 18-member PAC.

The BJCPA has been a center of controversy in the SBC's 12-year-old political/theological debate on such matters as school prayer and the relationship of religious liberty to moral and social concerns.

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In a news conference, James Dunn, executive director of the Joint Committee, said he expected interested Southern Baptist individuals, churches and state conventions to more than cover the loss of funding with direct gifts.

In a related action, messengers approved an Executive Committee recommendation to delete the PAC's program statement.

That action does not end the PAC, which will continue to function under a set of guidelines drawn up by the Executive Committee. The committee recommended deletion of the program statement because only SBC agencies have program statements.

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Land outlines plans
for CLC expansion

By Jim Newton

Baptist Press
6/14/90

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Richard Land, executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, outlined plans for extensive expansion of the CLC office in Washington, following adoption of a \$300,000 increase to its budget June 13.

Land said the action of the Southern Baptist Convention to add religious liberty and separation of church and state issues to his agency's program statement would greatly strengthen Southern Baptists' influence in the nation's capitol.

He discounted as unfounded any fear that the Christian Life Commission would send messages to Congress that would conflict with the voice of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, which represents nine Baptist bodies on religious liberty and church state separation issues.

Both Land and James Dunn, executive director of the BJC, answered questions during press conferences following SBC actions which cut the budget of the BJC by 87 percent and increased the budget of the CLC by 40 percent.

Dunn said the action would free the BJC to raise money from other sources, to reorganize its board to give more representation to other Baptist groups and to project a more sophisticated agenda.

"It will also free us of a certain amount of harassment," Dunn said. He added that the BJC plans to continue its operation.

The BJC and CLC might send conflicting messages to Congress, but "we will just have to live with that," Dunn said.

The CLC, which also is assigned to handle social and moral concerns for Southern Baptists, will maintain its national headquarters in Nashville but strengthen its operations in Washington.

Land announced plans to add three members to the staff of the CLC's Washington office: the general counsel/Christian citizenship director, a news media director, an administrative assistant, plus the current director of government relations, Jim Smith.

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Land said about 35 percent of the agency's \$1.2 million budget would support the new Washington office. The CLC is negotiating for more office space within walking distance of Capitol Hill, he added.

"My perspective," said Land, "is that we have a two-pronged assignment: to speak to Southern Baptists as the denomination's prophetic conscience on moral and social issues, and to ascertain what Southern Baptist views are and bring those Baptist convictions to bear before policy-making groups in Washington."

The CLC will follow the wishes of the SBC as stated in convention-adopted resolutions such as those on abortion and prayer in public schools, Land said.

However, he said he supports the 1962 and 1963 Supreme Court decisions on prayer in public schools, and believes that since the Supreme Court has upheld the equal access clause that Baptist clamor for public school prayer will decrease.

The CLC will focus on issues and not endorse candidates for political office, he added.

Since the CLC opened its Washington office in 1987, it has cooperated in writing at least four joint statements with the BJC on such issues as child care legislation, he noted.

"Before yesterday's action (by the SBC), we could not address the religious liberty and church state separation issues," Land said. "Now we can, and this frees us to work more closely with the Baptist Joint Committee on joint statements."

Land pointed out that both he and Dunn always have been careful to point out they do not speak for all Southern Baptists, or represent Southern Baptists. "No one can do that," he said.

The conflicts between the CLC and BJC will be far less than most people might suppose, he predicted.

The greatest threat to religious liberty in the last half of the 20th century will come from the violations of the "free exercise of religion clause" in the First Amendment that would impinge on individuals' right to exercise their religious faith freely, he said.

The recent "Peyote case" in which the Supreme Court ruled against Native American Indians' use of peyote in religious rites was a "terrible travesty that must be overturned," Land noted.

Oliver S. (Buzz) Thomas, general counsel for the BJC, said earlier that misinformation had been circulated before the convention on the BJC's position on the "Peyote case." He denied the BJC has advocated use of illegal drugs in religious ceremonies. He said he helped draft a petition for a hearing to protect the free exercise of religion, but did not defend the use of peyote in religious rites.

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Both Dunn and Land opposed the use of tax money for religious schools. "There seem to be some folks," said Dunn, "who believe you can take a little tax money as if you could be just a little bit pregnant."

Dunn said he plans to continue his stand on religious liberty and church-state separation just as he has in the past. "My commitment is to do the job God has called me to do, and I haven't heard God call me elsewhere," he insisted.

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New Orleans convention
registration 38,478

By Mark Wingfield

NCO
Baptist Press
6/14/90

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--The 1990 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting drew the third-largest crowd and the second-largest Tuesday registration in the denomination's 145-year history.

Unaudited registration totaled 38,478, comparing to 45,519 in Dallas in 1985 and 40,987 in Atlanta in 1986. A final total will not be available until all messenger cards have been tallied.

This year's registration patterns compared closely to the 1988 convention in San Antonio, Texas, said Registration Secretary Lee Porter of Nashville, when 32,727 messengers registered.

Hourly checks of registration from the opening of registration lines Sunday until 6 p.m. Monday night appeared almost identical to the pattern established in San Antonio, Porter said. After 6 p.m. Monday, the New Orleans registration jumped ahead of San Antonio.

The increased flow of registrants continued Tuesday, giving the New Orleans convention the second-highest Tuesday registration in history. Almost 9,000 messengers registered on that day.

"In most of the past eight to 10 years, we've registered 3,000 to 5,000 people on Tuesday," Porter said. "The only exception was in Dallas where 10,000 people registered on Tuesday morning."

Tuesday is the opening day of the three-day annual meeting. Most of the convention's contested elections -- including the race for president and a vote on changing agency program statements and budgets regarding religious liberty -- were scheduled for Tuesday.

"Many of these messengers who registered on Tuesday came from small churches in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama," Porter explained.

The high registration total created a problem Wednesday morning, when a business session had to be delayed because of the lack of a quorum. At least 9,604 messengers were needed to meet the 25 percent quorum stipulated in SBC Bylaws.

Based upon Porter's estimates at 10 a.m. Wednesday, the largest number of messengers came from Texas (4,550) followed by Georgia (3,950), Louisiana (3,550), North Carolina (3,400), Alabama (3,150) and Mississippi (3,100).

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Other registration estimates by state are:

Alaska, 75; Arizona, 125; Arkansas, 1,200; California, 325; Colorado, 115; Connecticut, 25; Delaware, 10; D.C., 60; Florida, 2,600;

Hawaii, 40; Idaho, 10; Illinois, 350; Indiana, 260; Iowa, 40; Kansas, 160; Kentucky, 2,250; Maine, 3;

Maryland, 310; Massachusetts, 25; Michigan, 110; Minnesota, 20; Missouri, 1,600; Montana, 20; Nebraska, 15; Nevada, 55; New Hampshire, 10; New Jersey, 55; New Mexico, 180;

New York, 80; North Carolina, 3,400; North Dakota, 40; Oklahoma, 1,050; Ohio, 310; Oregon, 25; Pennsylvania, 90; Puerto Rico, 5; Rhode Island, 10;

South Carolina, 2,260; South Dakota, 30; Tennessee, 2,650; Utah, 40; Vermont, 10; Virginia, 2,050; Washington, 50; West Virginia, 125; Wisconsin, 20; Wyoming, 10.

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Do right thing at right time,
Parks exhorts Southern Baptists

By Mark Wingfield

Baptist Press
6/14/90

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Southern Baptists must do the right thing while God has provided the right time, the president of the denomination's Foreign Mission Board said June 13.

"This is the right time, and we must not do wrong at the time God has called right," Keith Parks told messengers to the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention. Parks was the keynote speaker in the board's annual report to the convention, which featured the appointment of 34 missionaries.

To do the right thing, Southern Baptists must make greater sacrifices, Parks said. He compared Southern Baptists to the Ceausescus of Romania. The former Communist dictator and his wife were executed last Christmas day after living an opulent lifestyle while their countrymen starved.

"He and his wife lived in obscene opulence, the fur coats, diamond-encrusted heels of shoes, golden faucets in their bathroom, three-page menus for their daily meal and menus for their dogs while people starved in the streets outside their palace," Parks said.

"God has given to Southern Baptists much wealth. We will be more guilty than the Ceausescus as we shamelessly wallow in self-indulgent luxury while a lost and dying world goes into eternity with no knowledge of Jesus Christ.

"Just as God has judgment on them, God will pass judgment on us who have the wealth of the world at our disposal but have refused to share the gospel with the people of the world."

In his challenge to the missionaries, Parks explained why he believes this is the right time. "Everything has been prepared for the spreading of the gospel in a way that I submit to you has not been true since that right time when God sent Jesus," he said.

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He cited changes in Eastern Europe and Asia as examples of God's timing. He cited further openness in Cambodia, Vietnam and Sub Saharan Africa, where half of the population could be Christians by the year 2000 if current trends continue.

These opportunities mean Southern Baptists must respond beyond anything ever done before, Parks said: "Make no mistake about it. Every religion and philosophy in the world is well aware and trying to capitalize on this new openness."

Southern Baptists face the open doors, Parks reported, "There are great unreached people groups waiting. We have set our commitment to reach 300 of them; we now have people assigned to 19.

"There are 47 other groups approved that represent a population of 260 million people -- the equivalent of the United States population -- with virtually no witness. ...

"All over this world 66 percent of the people do not even claim to be Christian, and 26 percent of the world has not even had a chance to hear the gospel.

"I ask you one question: Did the Lord Jesus Christ die for all the world? Do you want to send a message to the villages of Africa, the cities of Asia? Or shall we simply send the message, 'There's no one to come?'"

The service marked the second time the mission board has held an appointment service during the convention's annual meeting. It was the third of six foreign missions appointment services scheduled for 1990. The 34 appointees join more than 3,700 missionaries serving in 116 countries.

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Recording secretary
Bradley defeated

N-CO
Baptist Press
6/14/90

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--David Atchison, a Nashville, Tenn., layman, was elected recording secretary of the Southern Baptist Convention June 13, defeating Martin Bradley of Nashville who had held the post for 12 years.

Atchison, who received 9,206 votes to Bradley's 8,044, was nominated by Stan Coffey, pastor of San Jacinto Baptist Church, Amarillo, Texas, and a member of the SBC Executive Committee.

While Bradley had been elected annually without opposition in recent years, Coffey told the messengers he felt the need for wider participation among the leadership. Atchison is the son of Joe W. Atchison of Rogers, Ark., a director of missions and trustee of the SBC Christian Life Commission.

The recording secretary of the SBC holds a seat on the Executive Committee by virtue of office.

Lee Porter, registration secretary, won another one-year term by defeating Bob Mowrey, a Nashville pastor, by a vote of 13,242 to 5,048.

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Coffey, who also nominated Mowrey, pastor of Park Avenue Baptist church said he was doing it for the same reasons.

Porter has been registration secretary for 12 years.

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Dilday, Honeycutt respond
to questions of politics

By Robert O'Brien

N-10
Baptist Press
6/14/90

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Two Southern Baptist seminary presidents fielded questions from messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention that related to the denomination's political/theological controversy.

Russell Dilday of Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and Roy Honeycutt of Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, Ky., responded to questions following annual progress reports on their seminaries.

Messenger Michael Haley of Lakeland, Fla., who said he overheard a press interview with Dilday, asked him to clarify whether he had labeled SBC actions June 12 as "satanic."

Dilday said he had not referred to the SBC meeting but to methodology used during the past 12 years in the SBC controversy.

"The comment I made in answer to press questions yesterday," Dilday said, "was that the methodology used in the takeover of the convention in these past 12 years -- the crass, secular, political methodology -- does have satanic, evil qualities of which I am desperately opposed."

Dilday added: "I did indicate that if Satan were interested in the destroying of the work of an evangelistic body such as this, the outcome we have seen in these 12 years would indeed be the kind of quality we would see in that intervention."

Michael Westmoreland White, a 1990 graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary from Louisville, asked Honeycutt if recent charges against him had not already been "laid to rest" by the SBC Peace Committee.

He referred to charges of "doctrinal infidelity" made against Honeycutt and several faculty members by seminary trustee Jerry Johnson of Aurora, Colo.

Honeycutt responded that he could not speak for the Peace Committee, a group formed to study theological issues related to the controversy.

But he said Southern Seminary's trustees had taken the Peace Committee study seriously and had voted 41-11 in 1986 that there were "no charges worthy of dismissal" represented in the committee's concerns.

In his report to messengers, Dilday lauded his faculty and staff "who this past year, despite criticism and unfounded accusations, continue to serve our Lord and the churches of this convention with an admirable consistency."

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He said most of the seminary's students were "12 and 13 years old when the controversy, which has so deeply divided our denomination, began a decade ago. They have grown up assuming that this is a normative pattern of Southern Baptist life."

Dilday called it ironic that Southwestern Seminary is experiencing a growing appreciation "in the larger, evangelical Christian world" while it has been "the target of criticism and reproach from within our convention family."

He said Southwestern was ranked first on a list of seminaries in a survey conducted by Christianity Today, a leading evangelical theological journal. He said five of the six SBC seminaries were ranked in the survey's top 20.

Dilday and Honeycutt both reported emphasis on missions, evangelism and biblical fidelity by seminary students, faculty and staff during the past year.

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Executive Committee
re-elects officers

By Robert O'Brien

*N-CO
90 Cont'* Baptist Press
6/14/90

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--The Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) re-elected its officers during a June 13 organizational meeting.

In other developments, the committee processed requests that its September meeting include a spiritual solemn assembly for its members and a discussion of the Washington office of Baptist Press, news service of the SBC.

A concluding prayer session included prayer requested to express concern and love for moderates hurt by conservative victories at the SBC meeting in New Orleans and that trustees of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary "be led by the Holy Spirit," hear God's voice and do his will in their relationship with seminary president Russell Dilday.

Officers elected unanimously to second one-year terms were Sam Pace, director of associational missions, Lawton, Okla., chairman; Paul Pressler, Houston appeals court judge, vice chairman; and Fred Wolfe, pastor of Cottage Hills Baptist Church, Mobile, Ala., recording secretary.

Pressler brought up the Baptist Press question when he suggested that the SBC Christian Life Commission be asked "to submit to us in September the name of the person they would like to head the Baptist Press office in Washington."

BP's Washington office has been housed at the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs for 33 years. It is one of five offices which relate to the national BP office located at the Executive Committee in Nashville, Tenn.

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SBC messengers in New Orleans approved Executive Committee recommendations to cut the BJCPA's budget by 87 percent, add a religious liberty function to the program statement of the SBC Christian Life Commission, and raise the CLC's budget by more than 40 percent. Historically, the BJCPA has handled religious liberty concerns for Southern Baptists.

An Executive Committee document expressed "strong belief" that the BP Washington bureau should shift from the BJCPA to the CLC. But neither the Executive Committee nor the CLC has announced specific actions related to the transfer.

The Executive Committee's opinion on the transfer was expressed in a document it adopted expressing "Some Reasons for the Southern Baptist Convention 1990-91 Budget Allocation to Support Religious Liberty and Separation of Church and State."

The document said \$155,000 of the funds cut from the BJCPA and given to the CLC "will allow the CLC to house and operate the Baptist Press Washington office."

Dilday's relationship to Southwestern Seminary trustees surfaced when Don Taylor, a seminary trustee, asked for prayer to guide the trustees in how to respond to comments Dilday made Wednesday during the seminary's report to the SBC.

Dilday, responding to a question from the floor, said "the methodology used in the takeover of the convention these past 12 years -- the crass, secular, political methodology -- does have Satanic, evil qualities of which I am desperately opposed."

Taylor, a layman from Asheville, N.C., characterized Dilday's remarks as degrading. He asked the committee to pray that the Southwestern trustees "will have stamina to do what needs to be done" in regard to Dilday.

T.C. Pinckney, an Executive Committee member from Alexandria, Va., asked for prayer for moderates.

Pinckney, who expressed pleasure at the outcome of actions at the SBC meeting, said conservatives should pray for those "Southern Baptists who aren't part of the conservative group who look at this convention with pain in their hearts."

"We differ in substance, but share their hurt and raise them up before the Lord," Pinckney said.

The Executive Committee also agreed to a request by Larry Keith Otis of Calvary Baptist Church, Tupelo, Miss., to reaffirm the SBC's Bold Mission Thrust goal to proclaim the message of Jesus Christ to the whole world by A.D. 2000 and beyond.

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Eight new Executive Committee members introduced at the meeting included Otis, a businessman; Steve Choplin, a power and light company executive from Long Leaf Baptist Church, Wilmington, N.C.; J.C. Mitchell, pastor of First Baptist Church, Winter Park, Fla.; James Lee Oliver, pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church, Moore, S.C.; Joe H. Reynolds, an attorney from Second Baptist Church, Houston; Lee Roberts, a businessman from Eastside Baptist Church, Marietta, Ga.

Also, Morris Chapman, pastor of First Baptist Church, Wichita Falls, Texas, the newly elected SBC president; and David Atkinson, a layman from Two Rivers Baptist Church, Nashville, the newly elected SBC recording secretary.

Chapman and Atkinson are members of the Executive Committee by virtue of their office.

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Repent, pray
Wolfe pleads

By Bob Stanley

*N-10
GOREM*

Baptist Press
6/14/90

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--By repenting of pride and returning to desperate prayer, Southern Baptists can prepare the way for the winds of God's Spirit to bring a modern-day reawakening, a pastor told fellow Southern Baptists.

Fred Wolfe, pastor of Cottage Hill Baptist Church in Mobile, Ala., and former president of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference, said the hope for Southern Baptists lies in the same kind of moving of the Spirit of God that empowered the early-day church at Pentecost.

In the annual convention sermon, he called on his denomination, like the people of the prophet Zechariah's Old Testament day, to "despise not" the day of small things.

Before God can pour out his spirit, Wolfe said, his people must "genuinely repent of our pride."

For too long, he said, "we have trusted in our pride, our self-sufficiency and in our might" instead of in the power of God's Holy Spirit."

Zechariah was told that God's spirit has the power to remove the mountains of obstacles that prevented accomplishing his task, Wolfe said. Today Southern Baptists face mountains that will never be leveled by human power -- "mountains that God wants to level."

One of these, he said, is the "mountain of desertion," the loss of almost half the denomination's members to non-residency as they move away to another city or drop out and fail to attend any church.

He identified decline and division as other Southern Baptist mountains that need to be leveled. Of division, he said that the SBC controversy is not to blame for current problems and declines in the convention.

"I have one word for that, and it's baloney!" he declared to instant applause. "Southern Baptists were declining long before the controversy ever came on the scene."

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Wolfe said he sees hope for the convention in the promises of God. "There has never been a time when we were more in need of a fresh outpouring of the Spirit," he added.

The "wind of God" can blow today, with revival that could bring over 18 million people to God, he said. But for this to happen, Southern Baptists must return to genuine repentance for "our pride," "our might" and our dependence on "our self-sufficiency," he added.

Quoting evangelist William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, he closed with a plea to "send the fire, send the fire, send the fire, Almighty God!"

The convention audience responded with a standing ovation.

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Sellers Home reunion
links present, past

By Susan Todd

N. CO 90 (Brv)
Baptist Press
6/14/90

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--The Sellers Home reunion seemed a likely place to find pieces of the past. But for the two women who were more interested in the past than future, it wasn't to be.

Sellers Home, in New Orleans, is a maternity care center and adoption agency operated by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. The home, which was begun nearly 60 years ago, serves a nationwide constituency.

Rita Smith, 19, of Ball, La., came looking for her mother.

"It was just a long shot," she said. "A very, very long shot."

Smith was adopted by Betty and Richard Moore of Sieper, La., when she was 5 weeks old. She has been trying for some time to locate her biological mother, but the files are closed and can only be opened if both the child and the mother consent.

"It kills me to know that the files are here, and there's nothing I can do about it," Smith said. "It at least feels good to know that she was here, and she walked in this building. Even if I don't ever meet her, this is the closest I'll ever be to her."

Walking where her biological mother has walked is nothing new to Smith. Two years ago, Smith found herself a single high school junior and pregnant. But unlike her biological mother, Smith chose to keep her child.

Smith married and had a baby boy one month later. She credits her adoptive parents with the fact that she has been able to complete high school. Her mother kept 2-year-old Jonathan while Smith attended classes and held down two jobs. But much of the motivation came from her biological mother.

"I feel like I was left," she said, "like I lost out a lot with her. When I got pregnant, (knowing about her mother) made me stronger."

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But not every adopted child feels the same way. Julia Walsh of Polkville, Miss., has a 33-year-old son who has had a happy life after being adopted. Walsh doesn't regret her decision to place her son up for adoption after a six-month-stay at Sellers.

"It's been a happy story for me," Walsh said. "I had every confidence that (Sellers) would place him with good parents."

A few years ago Walsh learned her son's story from the point when she left Sellers Home.

Through Home Life, a Southern Baptist magazine for and about families, Walsh learned of adoptive birthrights. Both Walsh and her son filed for information about the other.

"The saddest day of my life was the day I handed that baby to the lady who was in charge of the nursery, but the happiest day of my life was the day he came driving up in my yard," Walsh said.

As soon as Walsh and her son determined they were in fact mother and son, the adoptive mother sent Walsh a large box of pictures of her son's life.

"When his mother would write me, she'd call him our son."

Walsh and her biological son have developed a close relationship over the last 11 years. She came to the reunion hoping to share her happy story with others.

"I was hoping, by some chance, I might meet one or two of the girls here today," she said. "I wanted to say to them that I hope things turn out as happy for you as it did for me."

Another group she wanted to see was also noticeably absent. Walsh hoped others who were there when she was would attend the reunion. But none of them did.

Pat and Bob Hodges of Ragley, La., came back to Sellers to show off their "new baby pig."

Almost 21 years ago, the Hodges got the call from Sellers Home saying they were the proud parents of a baby girl. Robbie was to be their second child. Matt, a 2-year-old at the time, also had come from Sellers.

"We decided not to tell anybody we were going to get another baby," Pat Hodges said. "We told my mother we were going to a hog sale. When we got home, we called my mother out to the car to see our new 'baby pig.'"

The Hodges, like many others attending the reunion, left pictures of their adopted children on a table in the foyer of the home.

But chances are that none of more than 200 visitors enjoyed the reunion more than Lucille Ladd of Baton Rouge, La. Ladd worked at Sellers Home for 25 years before her retirement as a Southern Baptist home missionary.

"It's so rewarding to think that you've done something for the children and for the families," Ladd said after she had visited with children and their families.

"The most shocking thing is that some of them are 30 and 32 years old.

"They're so happy. All of them."

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Clower praises youth
at Brotherhood breakfast

By Tim Yarbrough

N. CO
90 CONV.
6 HOUR

Baptist Press
6/14/90

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Comedian Jerry Clower affirmed the accomplishments of Christian young people in presenting the Jerry Clower Award June 13 to Howard E. Ammons, winner of the 1990 National High School Baptist Young Men's Missions Speak Out competition.

Clower spoke to 215 people at the annual Southern Baptist Brotherhood Breakfast following Ammons' winning speech. Ammons is a junior at Mooresville Senior High School and a member of Peninsula Baptist Church in Mooresville, S.C.

Fourteen states and 125 young men participated in the sixth national competition sponsored by the Brotherhood Commission. In addition to the speak out winner, the first recipients of the 1990 Award of Merit International Legion of Royal Ambassador Leaders were recognized.

Clower, a Southern Baptist who is a member of East Fork Baptist Church, Liberty, Miss., told the crowd not enough is said about America's young Christians who live their faith.

"We try to get the one who has been in jail the longest and killed the most guards and raped the most folks and been on the most dope and then was gloriously saved," Clower said. "But let me tell you something more powerful than that. When a young person reaches the age of accountability, win him to Jesus and don't never have to let me go through all that, that's a heap more powerful.

"Two percent of the young people in this country are sorry, but 98 percent of the young people are beautiful. You know what the problem is, the 2 percent that's sorry are getting all the publicity, and 98 percent that are great, they ain't saying nothing about them.

"If a boy reaches the age of accountability and commits his life to Jesus, he doesn't have to spend one hour of his life serving the devil."

Clower lauded Southern Baptists as a Christian people whose strength comes from their local churches.

"(The) local church is where it's at," Clower said. "That's where you have your RAs (Royal Ambassadors, a mission group for boys). The older I get, the more I'm convinced the local church ought to be the first place of Christian service for any Christian. And it's well known that I don't support nobody who wants to be elected to nothing that don't believe in giving to the Cooperative Program," SBC budget.

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In his winning speech, "Mission Projects and Me," Ammons said he found by participating in missions projects that "missions is not only the missionaries, and it is not only my pastor who are supposed to do the work of the Lord."

The first 1990 Award of Merit International Legion of Royal Ambassador Leaders were recognized for "their commitment to teach missions to boys through RAs" by James H. Smith, president of the commission.

The Legion was started as a way to recognize RA leaders for their life-long commitment to missions education for boys, Smith said.

Recipients of the Legion award and states they represent were:

Texas -- J. Ivyloy Bishop, 74, First Baptist Church, Plainview; Marion "Cotton" Bridges, 59, First Baptist Church, Plano; Herb Weaver Jr., 54, First Baptist Church, Houston.

Oklahoma -- Edward Hurt, 82, First Baptist Church, Shawnee. John W. Henson, 71, Checotah Baptist Church, Brush Hill. Dave Prichard, 65, First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City.

North Carolina -- Bill Jackson, 69, First Baptist Church, Asheboro. Bob Foy, 46, Peninsula Baptist Church, Mooresville.

Florida -- R.A. Carlton Jr., 68, South Patrick Baptist Church, Satellite Beach, Fla.

Missouri -- Jesse Cunningham, 82, South Haven Baptist Church, Springfield.

South Carolina -- William R. Montague, 61, Eau Claire Baptist Church, Columbia.

Georgia -- Michael L. Rivers, Prince Avenue Baptist Church, Athens.

Posthumous Legion awards honored those who were actively involved in RA-related work at the time of their death. They were: Jim Bethea, Montgomery, Ala., who had served as an associate in the Brotherhood department of the Alabama Baptist State Convention; Norman Godfrey, Memphis, Tenn., who had served 12 years as first vice president of the Brotherhood Commission and who had been a professional worker in Tarrant Association, Fort Worth, Texas, before becoming an RA consultant at the Brotherhood Commission in 1960; and Glendon McCullough, Memphis, Tenn., who had served seven years as executive secretary-treasurer of the Brotherhood Commission. McCullough also served as RA secretary in Georgia and interim RA secretary in Kentucky.

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'Just do it' sums
up evangelists' theme

By Sarah Zimmerman

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to Conv.*

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NEW ORLEANS (BP)-- After hearing four sermons about the work of evangelists, the message was summed up in three words: "Just do it."

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Darrell Gilyard received a standing ovation as he challenged 1,000 people attending the Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists meeting June 13 in New Orleans.

"It's time to stop talking about it, preaching about it, singing about it and complaining that people in your church just won't visit," said the pastor of Victory Baptist Church in Plano, Texas. "If in the average church we would put as much effort into reaching the lost as we do a good choir special, we'd turn our world upside down."

After the conference, participants were given Bibles and tracts to share with people in New Orleans as they rode taxis, shopped and ate. Jay Strack, outgoing conference president said, "People expect more than fussing and fighting when Baptists come to town."

Plans for evangelists to witness in the French Quarter after the program were thwarted by lack of transportation to the area known for its night life and impromptu entertainers.

Earlier in the afternoon, salesman Zig Ziglar of Dallas urged evangelists to keep their message simple. The author and motivational speaker said he always communicates on the seventh-grade level.

The most effective witnessing tool, Ziglar said, is to "believe Christ is Savior and Jesus is Lord." He said selling is the transference of feeling and urged evangelists to transfer their feelings about their Savior to others needing Christ.

Steve Hale, evangelist from Evansville, Ind., outlined results of revival: close, clean and compassionate fellowship, commitment to God's commission and cheerfulness.

Thankfulness is the prerequisite, said Homer Lindsay Jr., pastor of First Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Fla.

"Teach your people to love Jesus. The only way to teach your people to love Jesus is to teach your people to be thankful," Lindsay said. "The missing element in many of our churches is a deep, abiding love for Jesus. When they love Jesus, they obey him. Only the love of Jesus will motivate people and keep them going."

Joel Gregory echoed the need to know Jesus. The pastor of Travis Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas, said pastors must be "determined to not know anything other than Jesus Christ and him crucified."

He said if pastors consider themselves slick, logical, humorous, learned or clever, someone will come along who supercedes them in that area. But nothing will be able to supercede the message of "Christ and him crucified."

Next year's officers for the Conference are Bailey Smith, Atlanta evangelist, president; Hale, vice president; Ron Pledger from Commerce, Ga., secretary-treasurer; Ronny Floyd, pastor of First Baptist Church Springdale, Ark., pastor-advisor; Perry Neal from Montgomery, Ala., parliamentarian; Mike Speck, music evangelist from Owasso, Okla., music director; and Pat Roper from Greenville, S.C., assistant music director.