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91-10

Elder's employment to end  
by mutual agreement

By Wm. Fletcher Allen & Lonnie Wilkey N-10

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptist Sunday School Board President Lloyd Elder and trustees mutually have agreed to end Elder's tenure as head of the denomination's 100-year-old education and publication agency.

In a special called meeting of the trustees Jan. 17 in Nashville, Elder presented his plan to retire, effective on the earlier of Jan. 31, 1992, or 30 days after a successor is named.

About 400 people attended the meeting which was held in open session. It was speculated the meeting would be held in executive session.

The employment and consultation agreement presented by the board's general administration committee noted Elder's retirement "is a result of honest differences of opinion between employee and the board with regard to management style, philosophy, and performance."

This agreement focused on three primary accusations: financial mismanagement, taping of phone calls without second party consent, and editorial bias in a centennial history.

The document further says the agreement "is not a result of or based upon political or theological differences between the board and employee, but rather results from the parties' honest and good faith with regard to the boards management."

The document said Elder "prays that his requests for retirement at this time will not and should not be a reason or basis for dissension, controversy, or disagreement within the Southern Baptist Convention."

Elder, 57, also noted in the agreement that he "intends and agrees to do all within his power to cause and facilitate a smooth expeditious, and harmonious transition of his administration to his successor."

Terms of the contract were proposed by Elder and his attorney.

Elder and the committee came to the agreement only about 2 hours before the full board met.

Cleveland, Tenn., pastor Gene Mims, a member of the general administration committee, noted, "It's been a long painful process. I thought that as late 4:00 p.m. today (Jan. 17) we were at an impasse, facing prospects of real pain and difficulty.

"But I was pleased at the response of the committee to Elder's initiative for early retirement. This was the best we could do."

Speculation has been rampant in recent weeks that Elder faced possible dismissal as president. The called meeting, at the written request of more than 20 trustees, was "for the purpose of evaluating and responding to the performance of Lloyd Elder."

Elder has undergone close scrutiny before. A motion was made to fire Elder in August 1989 at the trustees meeting in Glorieta, N.M. but was withdrawn before a vote was taken.

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Several meetings have been held since Dec. 13 when a five-member workgroup of the GAC met to review Elder's performance.

The 17-member GAC met with Elder again Jan. 14 and discussed several options including one in which Elder "would resign quietly within the next 12-18 months." As late as Jan. 10, however, Elder, in a memo to the GAC, had said he would not resign.

Trustee chairman, Bill Anderson, a pastor from Clearwater, Fla., in his opening remarks told the trustees, "the general administration committee agreed there are problems in leadership style, especially with the president.

"Dr. Elder feels, with his attorney's advice, that it is best for him to retire," he said.

Elder then reported to the board. "We have been through some difficult weeks," he told them. "We have looked at some options and moved forward in our process."

"We had come down to a couple of choices. It had been my hope that we could work together. The general administration committee heard me carefully and sincerely during the hours we talked."

"I wanted to work with them in orderly transition. First, what is best for the board, then, what is best for Southern Baptists -- and what is best for Lloyd Elder ..."

"What is the guiding star of the board's mission? I can answer only for myself and try to know the Lord's will for me. A guiding principle for me has always been that I will do the best for the Lord. And I stand ready to do the will of the board."

Elder discussed the BSSB centennial year theme of "Celebrating Hope, Entering Our Second Century." He stressed moving into the next century with hope. "This meeting is about the way we enter that century," he said.

He reported on the 17 programs of work under the Sunday School Board umbrella. "It is the hope and dream of my heart that we honor God through these programs in the next century," he said.

In discussing problems with the manuscript of the centennial history written by Leon McBeth, which the trustees voted not to publish, Elder said there was evidence of mistakes "in managing the manuscript for which I have apologized. There was no breach of integrity."

"What about correcting our mistakes and forgiving," he said. To err is as human with an agency as it is one on one, he explained. With an agency as large as the board -- the size and shape of the mistakes seem to say that everything is going wrong, but the board has 100 more opportunities to make an error than does one large church, Elder observed.

He talked about other Sunday School Board projects -- such as the New American Commentary and the periodical Growing Churches. He discussed financial stability, noting revenue increased from \$96 million in 1979-80 to almost \$172 million in 1988-89. The board's current budget is \$190.4 million.

When Elder concluded his report, Anderson told the board, "Much that thrills us was in that report, but the general administration committee still brings its recommendation to accept Dr. Elder's retirement."

Dan Collins, committee chairman and attorney from Greenville, S.C., introduced an outside parliamentarian for the meeting, Lee Demeter. According to a board spokesman, this was the first time in recent history trustees have used a paid parliamentarian.

Collins explained the committee had met for many hours, some members for as many as 70 hours.

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Yesterday, Jan. 16, we discussed our preliminary report. We received Dr. Elder's early retirement proposal material and reviewed it with counsel from the board's attorney. The vote of this committee is unanimous to recommend to you Dr. Elder's proposal."

Collins explained the agreement to board members as they received copies. The retirement would be effective Jan. 1, 1992, or 30 days after the appointment of a successor, whichever is earlier.

Elder would serve as a consultant until April 1, 1993, during which he would receive full salary and benefits. His current salary is \$135,800. After that point he would receive in retirement income and a supplement from the board up to 50 percent of his present salary. Elder's wife would receive half of those benefits if Elder precedes her in death.

Elder also would receive his board automobile after serving as consultant and office furniture when he leaves as president. The board would pay certain expenses in post employment. He would agree to a non-competition clause.

Collins said the board had found honest differences in opinion and leadership style.

In addition to the McBeth publication, Collins cited the failure of three business ventures with losses of about \$20-\$25 million as another cause for concern. Collins noted the president had been warned by the business and finance committee of trends and declining sales.

Another point discussed by Collins involved "ethical issues." It later developed that the committee felt telephone calls with Elder had been taped. Members of the committee agreed, including Anderson, who acknowledged there was a signed affidavit to that effect.

Board attorney Robert Thomas said, "I was taped without my knowledge. However, I do not think this board needs to make that bid of an issue out of this. There are a lot more things to discuss tonight. It is not that big of an issue."

Elder refuted all the charges of taping. "Telephone calls coming into my office are not taped. They never are. Employees do not tape telephone conversations." He said only conversations in a conference call were taped, "and then with permission. On occasion these conference calls have been taped, but always with knowledge. Your personal calls into and from by office have not been, and are not taped. There is not need to. That's the best I know how to answer this concern."

After Collins's presentation, the motion to accept Elder's retirement was placed before the trustees.

Memphis, Tenn., layman Roland Maddox amended the recommendation so that Elder would retire as president "immediately."

Citing the reports of Elder and the GAC and their differences, Maddox said, "It is not in the board's best interests for him to remain. I recommend that Dr. Elder retire immediately."

Maddox added that as a business practice "it is not good for a president to stay. He has made his decision to retire."

Debate continued for about an hour.

During the amendment debate, SBC President Morris Chapman, a trustee by virtue of his position, spoke against the amendment.

"I believe in the best interests of the board and of the Southern Baptist Convention," he said, "this amendment should be defeated. We should accept the recommendation of the committee. I appeal for cooperation with the committee. Dr. Elder has agreed to bring no dissension to the board or the convention. I am willing to trust him.

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In a roll call vote, trustees defeated the amendment by a 41-31 vote, with one abstention.

Trustees then voted to accept Elder's retirement with two dissenting votes.

Chapman asked to speak to the board and audience at the conclusion of the meeting. "I am grateful for the chairman and the GAC chairman, and for the decency and order and spirit in which the business tonight has been transacted.

"I thought for a few minutes I might be in the minority on the amendment vote. But I believe we all should try now to contribute to the life of our convention, believing that God's will has been done.

"Operating by the will of the majority is the way we as Baptists do things. My challenge to all of us is to express thanks to God that he has led. Our vote is on record. As trustees we must support our chairman and be sure we are enhancing the work of the board.

To Elder he said, "I am trusting that you are in accord with what you have brought to us tonight. Do all in your power to lead and to bring glory to our Lord. I trust you to do that."

After the meeting, Collins said the committee always was interested in truth and mercy. "The matter was crucial," he said.

"Southern Baptists must know the concern of the general administration committee was to present the situation fairly. There were good and valid reasons to accept Dr. Elder's proposal.

"There were concerns about mismanagement of the centennial manuscript. He acknowledged some mistakes. There also has been a loss of confidence in leadership, a crisis of trust.

"Dr. Elder and his attorney brought the proposal to us and it was thoroughly discussed and reviewed -- as late as this afternoon (Jan. 17).

"The committee didn't think we should be punitive over the differences. We accepted the financial terms as offered. There is no bitterness or rancor, no desire to do that."

Answering speculation that the board had pressured Elder to resign or retire so a "conservative" could be placed at the Sunday School Board position, Collins said, "There is absolutely no agenda on my part -- nor on the committee's actions. In fact, we were concerned about what would happen if we were left suddenly without a president," he said, in referring to the amendment that was proposed.

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Desire for orderly transition  
guided Elder's decisions

By Linda Lawson

N-10

Baptist Press  
1/21/91

NASHVILLE (BP)--The conviction that his best available option was to facilitate an orderly transition of administrations led Southern Baptist Sunday School Board President Lloyd Elder to propose his own early retirement.

Trustees of the board adopted an agreement with Elder, 57, during a called meeting Jan. 17 in which he will retire Jan. 31, 1992, or 30 days after his successor is named, whichever comes first. He will then continue employment as a consultant until April 1, 1993.

"I serve at the will of the board (of trustees)," Elder told Baptist Press Jan. 18. "I serve effectively at the good will of the board. When that's gone, what you have is a position, not leadership."

Reiterating comments he made to trustees prior to their adoption of the agreement, Elder said he and the general administration committee explored many options in the final days and hours before the Jan. 17 meeting. The committee and Elder reached agreement only about two hours before the full trustee board convened.

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"As far as I'm concerned, we came down to two options -- rebuild trust and stability or provide for an orderly transition," said Elder. "It had been my hope we would re-establish our trust. That was an option we worked on.

"Failing that, the priority became providing for an orderly transition for the board," he said.

Elder said he chose not to resign prior to the called meeting because "the board (of trustees) needed to have an opportunity to determine if I stayed."

Elder said he tried to be guided by three questions: (1) What is best for the mission of the Baptist Sunday School Board? (2) What is best for Southern Baptists? (3) What is best for Lloyd Elder's effective leadership?

He said he had adapted a Vacation Bible School motto as representative of his personal journey regarding his life and seven-year presidency of the denomination's church programs and publishing agency: "I will do the best I can with what I have, where I am, for as long as I can, for Jesus' sake today."

Elder declined to outline details of negotiations with the general administration committee.

"I am continuing to honor the executive session of the committee regarding material which did not become public information" during the called meeting which was an open session attended by about 400 people.

Elder said he intends "to abide by terms of the agreement" which includes a statement that his request for retirement "should not be a reason or basis for dissension, controversy or disagreement within the Southern Baptist Convention."

As president of the board, he said, "I am still under guidelines not to engage in political activity. I will abide by that."

His upcoming retirement has not dimmed his commitment to the Sunday School Board or its mission, Elder emphasized.

"I'm committed to working with the board of trustees in every way possible toward an orderly transition. My next assignment is getting ready for a regularly scheduled board meeting Feb. 4-6."

Despite his personal circumstances, Elder said he views his own future and that of the 100-year-old Sunday School Board with hope, a note he sounded in a report of his performance given to the trustees.

He cited release of the 1991 edition of "The Baptist Hymnal" in March, release of the first volume of "The New American Commentary" in June and Sunday school literature improvements to be introduced in October among major projects in process to meet the needs of churches.

He said a statement he made in accepting election as president of the board in 1983 still described his commitment in 1991: "I am committed to this Baptist Sunday School Board -- to be true to its purpose, mission and rich, century-old heritage; to be diligent in fulfilling the programs and ministries assigned by the convention; to give team leadership to the large, gifted and dedicated staff of men and women who pour out their lives in service through this board; and to the trustees who are charged by the convention with the ownership and destiny of this board."

I call on Southern Baptists to be much in prayer for this board and its mission," he said.

Herb Hollinger elected new  
Baptist Press vice president

By Polly House

N-10

NASHVILLE (BP)--Herbert V. Hollinger, editor of the California Southern Baptist has been elected vice president for Baptist Press. He plans a March 1 starting date.

Hollinger, 49, has been editor of the newsjournal of the California Southern Baptist Convention since 1983. Before that, he was editor of the Northwest Baptist Witness for five years.

An Idaho native, Hollinger received his bachelor's degree in business administration with a journalism minor from the University of Idaho in 1963. He earned a master of divinity degree from Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif., in 1973. He has been pastor of churches in California and Washington.

Hollinger was the unanimous choice of the president and the officers of the Executive Committee. Hollinger will join Harold C. Bennett, president and treasurer; Ernest E. Mosley, executive vice president; Richard P. Rosenbaum Jr., vice president for business and finance; and Mark T. Coppenger, vice president for public relations, as the Executive Committee executive staff. Hollinger, Rosenbaum and Coppenger are all subject to approval of the entire Executive Committee when the committee meets Feb. 18-20.

"Both my wife and I sought the Lord's will. Most of my ministry has been in the West, but God has given us a new direction," Hollinger said.

"I'm very interested in what happens to Baptist Press. I want to see it be the finest news service it can be," Hollinger added. "Frankly, I thought God might have someone else for the job, but I guess it's me."

In the election of Hollinger, Bennett cited Hollinger's "urgent feeling about the position of Baptist Press in Baptist life and his conviction that Baptist Press has a significant place in Baptist life. He has a solid commitment to missions. His work in the West and Northwest will help him prepare for similar mission-related activities in the SBC. As a former pastor, he has a pastor's heart and understanding.

"From a journalism point of view, he grew up in the newspaper business. His father owned and operated newspapers. Herb has worked in newspapers most of his life." Bennett added, "His educational background will suit him well for the position. His degree in business will help in running Baptist Press, as will his minor in journalism and years of experience in newspaper work."

Hollinger will "bring a new day of respect for Baptist Press on the part of all Baptists," said Charles Sullivan, a pastor from Lenoir City, Tenn., and chairman of the Executive Committee's administration and convention arrangements subcommittee. "He also will exemplify the broadest balance in reporting news. He will help to restore the credibility of Baptist Press in the minds of both the public media and the religious media. I'm fully convinced he is going to be God's man and God's voice in the time in which we've come," he added.

God led Bennett and the officers to Hollinger, according to Sullivan. "We interviewed some of the finest men across the convention. We could have been pleased with more than one of them, but God showed us that Herb Hollinger was the man he wanted."

One of the most significant things the Executive Committee has done, according to Sullivan, is to separate the public relations department from Baptist Press. Sullivan added, "Now, we have a way to get out what we want through the public relations arena and we don't have to rely on every bit of information going out through the news."

Hollinger has been involved in denominational life at the local church, associational, state and national levels.

After Hollinger begins the position, he will give direction to the employing of a second professional-level staff member for Baptist Press, according to Bennett.

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Hollinger and his wife, Mary, have three grown children, Doug, Kerri and Tracy.

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(BP) photo available upon request from Baptist Press

Christians fear war will  
mar Mideast ministry

By Mike Creswell

N.F.M.S

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LARNACA, Cyprus (BP)--Even before the bombs have stopped bursting or missiles finished flying in the Gulf war, Christian workers in the Middle East are concerned about future prospects for ministry in the region.

The Middle East has long been one of the most difficult places for Christian outreach in the world, and workers fear the new hostilities may make work even harder.

Many Muslims, including the Palestinians living in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza, have pinned their hopes for a boost in prestige and living standards on Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The fact that nations such as the United States and Great Britain have led an offensive against Saddam after his invasion of Kuwait has aroused bitter resentment in the minds of many.

Issues are seldom simple in the region, but conflicts include West vs. East, Christians vs. Muslims, rich vs. poor and haves vs. have-nots. Many Christian workers, even as they anxiously eye the conflict, wonder what the future holds in a Middle East that seems to be reshaping itself before them.

Tensions between Christians and Muslims are much higher, said one worker in the region.

"Predictions are that this could hurt Christian-Muslim relationships for 100 years," he said. "A realignment of Arab nations will create a quagmire of relations we (Americans) don't understand. Americans think of it as a police action, but more is involved."

Some say the hard feelings many Muslims already harbor toward Christians are getting mixed up with a hatred of America, like their loathing of Israel.

Describing the general Muslim view held by many, an Arab Christian said, "Missionaries come from America and Americans are thought to be those who started the war. It's not important who started the action last August -- the bombardment was started by the Americans. People are upset because of the bloodshed, the torn loyalties."

Some positive signs have emerged during the conflict. Government leaders in Yemen promised to protect Southern Baptist personnel at a hospital in Jibla, telling them they are still wanted and needed. The government even sent extra troops to guard the hospital.

However, many indications point to worsening Muslim-Christian relations.

Many Christian workers forced to evacuate areas near the war zone are disturbed by the swift attitude changes among people to whom they minister -- and in some cases Arab Christians with whom they have worked.

One Southern Baptist worker in the West Bank, where Palestinians oppose Israeli occupation, said he fears he will be more quickly fingered as "just an American" now.

"It's a fragile time for us and our presence," another worker said. Arab Christians have told him they fear if there is nobody else to attack, Muslims may decide to attack Christians in the area.

In another Mideast country where Saddam Hussein has wide popular support, local believers told a Christian worker from Europe that if he remained after the Jan. 15 U.N. war deadline, he would have to stay close to home for as long as six months. "If you stray from your block where you are known, you would be seen as just another Westerner and would be in jeopardy," he was told.

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"Our ministry would be so limited so as to be virtually nonexistent" under such circumstances, he said. The advice figured heavily in his decision to leave with his family for Cyprus. A Southern Baptist worker in the same city was given the same advice; he also decided to evacuate with his family.

An American Christian worker with another denomination evacuated the same country to Cyprus after an agonizing struggle to decide what to do. Most distressing was an encounter with an Arab woman she considered a friend.

"I hope this won't change your feelings towards me," she told the Arab woman just before departure. "She looked at me numbly and said, 'I don't know how I feel,'" recounted the worker, weeping at the memory.

A Southern Baptist worker who evacuated with her family said Arab Christians she knows "are concerned for the future, but aren't afraid." But one Arab believer said, "If they start killing you because you're American, they'll kill us too, because we're associated with you." She also wept.

The conflict also threatens to spill outside the Middle East and weaken Christian work in other Muslim areas.

An administrator of one Christian agency said the conflict has ramifications throughout the Muslim world, including Asia. His agency sponsors more than 400 workers from several nations, many of them in the Middle East. Muslims appear to be leaning toward more anti-Western and anti-Christian stances, he said.

"The Arab world is like a drum," he said, paraphrasing a French military officer who served in north Africa. "Hit one place and it reverberates throughout the region."

Others familiar with Islam agreed that the current crisis could threaten work with Muslims in many places.

"Certainly, I think Baptist work, if there's any among Muslims, will be weakened, because Baptists are identified with America," said an Arab Christian.

Two Baptist pastors in a country where many citizens support Saddam declined to comment on the Gulf crisis at all. "Now is not the time to discuss this matter," one said.

Dale Thorne, who directs Southern Baptist work in the Middle East, agreed with many indicators of worsening conditions, but said God's clear instruction to share the gospel takes precedence. "We feel that Jesus is the hope for us and for all people," he said, quoting the biblical book of Colossians.

"We're committed to stay in the region to meet spiritual and physical needs and to share the love of Christ in word and deed," he said. "We ask for Southern Baptists to pray for us as never before, and also for all those making momentous decisions that will affect the future of the entire region.

"Pray with us that the loving and caring personal relationships we have built up with individual Arab Muslims through the years can be strong enough to stand amid this conflict, despite the horror and rhetoric of war, even a so-called holy war," Thorne said.

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Hemphill: Decisions in church  
are of ultimate significance

By Bill Webb

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OAK BROOK, Ill. (BP)--Ministry to the families of 50 of his church members stationed in the Persian Gulf helped Ken Hemphill realize the truth of a statement he had made often: "Decisions made in the local church are of greater significance and are of more crucial nature than any decision that can be made in Washington, D.C."

The pastor of First Baptist Church of Norfolk, Va., speaking only hours before the Jan. 15 United Nations deadline for Iraqi troops to be out of Kuwait, used his own experiences to call for about 650 church, associational and state extension leaders from seven north

The pastor of First Baptist Church of Norfolk, Va., speaking only hours before the Jan. 15 United Nations deadline for Iraqi troops to be out of Kuwait, used his own experiences to call for about 650 church, associational and state extension leaders from seven north central states to win their communities to Christ.

"This has been a week in the life of First Baptist, Norfolk, that tries the souls of men," Hemphill said.

He related the story of a young boy in his church's weekday pre-school program whose father is stationed in the Persian Gulf.

"We had developed a kind of relationship over the last several months because on one particular day as I was leaving my office, this little boy came running up to me and embraced my leg," he said.

"His mom began to apologize immediately, 'You have to understand, his dad has been gone for five months, and you look a great deal like his father.'

"I said to her, 'You let him hug my leg all he wants,'" Hemphill said.

"And some way we began to develop a kind of intimate relationship there in the parking lot. I began to look for him out of my study window so I could find him and be a surrogate father to him," the pastor said, his voice breaking.

"On Thursday, this lady came up -- the little boy had tackled my leg again -- and we were having a good time kind of playing.

"And she said, 'Pastor, you need to understand, I've dreamed about you twice this week. You may not be aware, but I've put you on the list to accompany the chaplain in case you need to come to my house.'"

"It hit me that she was talking about her husband's death," Hemphill said. That evening he watched soldiers in the gulf preparing their wills as they readied for war.

"On Friday, I had committed to tearing up the message I had prepared for Sunday morning ... and trying to move in a way that seemed more relevant for that situation for the life of the church," he said.

Hemphill prayed about his dilemma on Saturday morning with his staff only to realize that the message, part of a series on the ministry and uniqueness of the church, was perfectly suited for "that hour for that church."

"I guess the Lord kind of put me to the test to say, 'If indeed you believe what the church is about will impact eternity, then you need to say to these people ... that we, too, are at war,'" he said.

"If we don't come to grips with the fact that as the church of the Lord Jesus Christ we are in a spiritual battle for the lives and souls of men and women, we'll never be what God intended us to be today," he said.

Citing the New Testament church at Antioch as a model, Hemphill said a growing, mission-minded church will have five characteristics: (1) Strong leadership, both pastoral and lay, (2) a generous spirit, (3) spiritual sensitivity; (4) great vision and (5) a passion for soul-winning.

Hemphill was one of seven speakers who urged leaders from Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin to redouble their efforts to evangelize what are collectively called the north central states.

The rally, held Jan. 15-16 with the theme, "Vision for the '90s," was one of a series to mobilize churches and leaders in evangelism and church extension.

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It marked the 15th anniversary of the North Central States Fellowship, originally scheduled to culminate December 1990.

However, in 1988 the church extension campaign was extended to the year 2000 to coincide with the Southern Baptist Convention's Bold Mission Thrust deadline.

North Central Mission Thrust began in 1975 with a goal of doubling the 1,784 Southern Baptist churches in the seven states by 1990. Today there are 2,409. Target for the year 2000 has been set at 3,325 churches and missions.

One out of every five Americans lives in the north central states. According to Home Mission Board estimates, 58 percent do not know Christ.

The other rally speakers included Larry Lewis, HMB president; Darrell Robinson, HMB vice president for evangelism; James Smith, Brotherhood Commission president; Dellanna O'Brien, WMU executive director; Charles Chaney, HMB vice president for extension; and Harry Piland, director of the Sunday school division at the Sunday School Board.

Lewis, who brought the concluding message, said the time, the place and the people are right for winning America to Christ.

"There has never been a greater time in the history of the earth to reach people for Jesus Christ," he said. "People are more receptive now, I believe, than any time in the history of the earth to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ."

In addition, "we are in the place, the one place on this planet where we have the greatest opportunity to reach people for the Lord Jesus Christ, Lewis said. He urged leaders to focus their growth efforts on personal evangelism and church extension, and to train their members in those areas.

Robinson, speaking on the place of evangelism in church planting, told participants, "Evangelism is essential for church starting. If we are engaged in church starting without evangelism, we're really being hypocritical because the mission of Jesus is to reach the lost for Christ.

"Not only that, church starting is essential for evangelism," he said. "The two go together. We do not evangelize far or reach many people for Christ without ... having the priority of beginning new churches.

"The New Testament pattern in church planting is for the people of God simply to share Jesus Christ wherever they are with whomever they meet every day in every way both in a lifestyle way and an organized kind of planned penetration," he said.

The New Testament plan for evangelization was total penetration of the congregation's geographical area through the total participation of the church's membership, Robinson said. "Witnessing is every person's job."

Chaney gave five reasons for planting churches:

1. Because of our constant obligation to the lost. Home Mission Board researchers say 172 million Americans are lost.
2. Because of our current opportunity in this nation.
3. Because of our concern for morality. "The only way to turn that around is to plant little colonies of righteousness."
4. Because of our capacity for the pragmatic. "The most effective way to reach any people is to plant a church."
5. Because of our commitment to obedience to the Great Commission. New Testament Christians responded to Christ's commission by planting churches.

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Piland painted a picture of Sunday school's history, its present and its future as he urged leaders to evangelize through Sunday school.

He called for churches to (1) accelerate and diversify evangelistic outreach and internal growth through Sunday school, (2) build on what is successful in planning innovative ways to reach people, (3) improve teaching to enhance effectiveness, (4) exercise organizational flexibility and (5) become visionary believers who have the faith to see the invisible, believe the incredible and receive the impossible.

"WMU really does want to be a partner with you in starting churches," O'Brien said.

She gave five reasons WMU should be involved in planting new congregations: (1) The Great Commission was given to men and women; (2) women and men make up the church; (3) there are more women in the Southern Baptist Convention than men; (4) to reach the goal of 50,000 churches by 2000, women must be involved; and (5) women have unique opportunities.

"Any church that does not have a missions conscience is not much of a church," she said.

Christians must have a vision and they must hear a voice if they are to be effective in reaching people, Smith said.

Vision is taking a look into the future, he said. "Dreams are actually based on past experience. A vision is based on a present need and a future possibility.

"There are always voices calling for us," he said. "We need to hear the voice of evangelism and the voice of missions and realize the need for new church starts."