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Thanks,
 Baptist Press

Charles Sullivan accepts
 Indiana convention post

By Gary and Tammi Ledbetter

Baptist Press
 7/2/91

INDIANAPOLIS (BP)--A former Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee chairman and Tennessee pastor, Charles Sullivan of Lenoir City, has accepted the unanimous call of the Indiana convention executive board as its executive director.

Sullivan was elected by the Indiana board in an executive session last week following the unanimous recommendation of a search committee which had met for five months. After the near three hour session in which they questioned Sullivan and then voted, he returned to accept the position and will assume it in late August.

"The day is coming when the Southern Baptist Convention looks to this state as one that is truly a lighthouse and a beacon in the midst of the convention and work of God's kingdom," said Sullivan, 61, who expressed delight over the opportunity to be a part of the future work in Indiana. Pledging his total commitment to leading the state convention, Sullivan said he and his wife, Delilah, were "coming lock, stock, and barrel to plot our lives in Indiana.

"We're not looking back but looking to the future of what God wants us to do in Indiana," said Sullivan.

Sullivan leaves a nine-year pastorate in Lenoir City, a suburb of Knoxville. While pastor of the 2,200-member congregation, Sullivan also spent seven years on the SBC Executive Committee. He rotated off the committee at the SBC annual meeting in Atlanta and most recently served as chairman of the administrative subcommittee. He was chairman of the Executive Committee from 1987-1989.

"(I am) deeply, deeply excited that Charles Sullivan is coming as executive director to our state," said John Greever of Indianapolis and state convention president. "I'm convinced he's the man from God at this time.

"The work Mark Coppenger was able to do in the time he was here certainly links in a significant way with the future and what Dr. Sullivan is going to be able to do," said Greever. "He will be able to stand in the gap as God's man while at the same time be able to embrace a larger group of people and usher us together."

Sullivan was one of the five Executive Committee officers who, as a search committee, recommended former Indiana executive Mark Coppenger to the newly created position of vice president for public relations.

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The Sullivans are natives of Missouri and met while attending Southwest Baptist College. After completing his bachelor's degree at Baylor University, Sullivan received the bachelor of divinity and doctor of theology from Southwestern Seminary.

Sullivan has also pastored First Baptist, Mexico, Mo.; First Baptist, Chickasha, Okla.; University Baptist, Arlington, Texas; Southland Baptist, Memphis, Tenn.; and First Baptist, Port Arthur, Texas.

The Sullivans have three grown children: Cynthia, David and Stephen living in Texas and Oklahoma.

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(Herb Hollinger of Baptist Press, Nashville, contributed to this story.)

Angelique Jones relates God's grace
throughout Liberian civil war

By Karen Benson

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RIDGECREST (BP)--It's probably not happenstance that the word "angel" is part of Angelique Jones' name.

Nothing else in her life has been happenstance, or coincidental, or even just plain luck. In fact, the woman is a walking miracle.

Make that multiple miracles.

Consider what Jones, a Christian and a refugee of the Liberian civil war who arrived in the United States just weeks ago, has encountered, witnessed, or survived in the previous eight months:

-- a deep, gnawing hunger, to the point of near-starvation that took 30 pounds off her already petite frame, and that took 50 pounds off her husband, who had once made a very good living as a dentist in the Monrovia suburb of Paynesville;

-- the cruel deaths of her brother, sister-in-law, niece and cousin at the hands of Liberian soldiers;

-- the killing of her nephew, whom she had reared as a son, along with all the other occupants of the car they were driving from one area of the city to another;

-- the death of her father from the trauma of the destructive war;

-- having a bayonet pressed against her stomach, with the soldier threatening to "rip my stomach open," just after her husband had been threatened, as well;

-- lying flat on the floor of her house while soldiers, who had surrounded the house, fired continuous rounds of ammunition into the house for hours, long after all the glass had been shattered;

-- staying on the run from advancing soldiers, running to relatives' homes farther away, then to friends' homes, and finally, just running, with calloused feet and no possessions, not knowing for sure where she would end up next;

-- becoming a hostage in her own land and being forced to join hundreds of other hostages on a long march to a compound where they were confined and continually threatened;

-- watching friends she had just spoken to during one of the marches be called out of the ranks by soldiers and shot on the spot, and then left to be eaten by roaming dogs;

-- protecting, hiding and treating a severely injured and traumatized female friend who had escaped from a "death squad," after being shot and left for dead, by swimming through a dirty swamp, where her whole family had been taken, shot and killed;

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-- being forced to watch as soldiers grabbed babies away from their mothers, tossed the babies into the air, and then shot them in mid-air, as if they were shooting targets;

-- lying on hard floors with a thin, queen-sized sheet the only protection for her and three other adults against swarms of mosquitoes that nonetheless penetrated the sheet, leaving them all covered with hard sores that developed from the bites, and leaving some, including her husband, suffering from malaria; and

-- losing everything she and her husband owned;

-- their home, furniture, clothes, car, etc. -- and being robbed at gunpoint of the only money (\$60) they had managed to take with them when they first fled.

Jones spoke of her nightmarish ordeal -- and the "miracles from God" that happened daily throughout the experience -- during "WMU Week" June 22-28 at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center.

The week of training conferences, general interest conferences and worship services is sponsored by Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union. WMU brought Jones to Ridgecrest, N.C., as a special guest for the week. In Liberia, Jones is president of Liberian WMU.

"I got here (to the United States) only by the grace of God and the help of friends, missionaries and church 'sisters,'" Jones said. "We all shared whatever we had."

She had to leave her husband behind in Liberia, since the paperwork allowing him to leave was not ready. But she was able to slip back into Monrovia for one week before coming to the United States -- long enough to take him some food and have a brief reunion with him.

Jones speaks calmly about the trauma she experienced, stopping only occasionally to wipe away a few tears that come when she recalls a particularly horrifying part of the experience.

The only way she survived each day, Jones said, was to "bathe everything" in prayer. "Every day we recited the 23rd Psalm and the Lord's Prayer," Jones said.

And she listened to the Lord, he directed her through instinct and "urges," she recalled. She talked repeatedly of times when she felt instinctively it was time to move on in the flight from the soldiers, and later, from the various rebel factions.

She cited example after example of how the Lord protected her and the group of refugees she was with. In one instance, the group had just finished a time of intense prayer. One of the men stood up and walked away. The split second after he left his spot, a bullet flew into the room, striking the just-emptied spot.

Another time, she prayed earnestly the Lord would allow the soldiers to grant mercy to her and one of her brothers when they went to them seeking permission to bury the brother and members of his family who had been killed in their own home.

That prayer was answered. When her father died a short time later, the same scenario was repeated, with the soldiers granting permission a second time.

The Lord provided another miracle on board a cargo ship, Jones related. The cargo ship was crammed with 400 people for a two-day journey to Guinea, where the Liberian passengers hoped to get documents from various embassies located there, which would enable them to flee their homeland.

Jones, her daughter and her daughter's fiancée were among the 400 people on board. The journey was to have taken two days, and there was only enough food on board for two days. But it turned into a difficult six-day trip, during which Jones gave the last bit of food she had to a stranger who was trying to keep his ill elderly mother alive.

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Upon arrival, the Liberian passengers were told they would not be allowed to disembark, but would be sent directly back to Liberia, since the Guinean authorities had gotten word some Liberian soldiers in disguise were among the passengers.

Upon hearing that news, Jones said her daughter "nearly lost it." But Jones convinced her to stop and pray with her about the situation. "God is powerful enough to get us off this ship," Jones recalled telling her daughter. "I don't see how!" was her daughter's desperate reply.

The two prayed intensely, turning the situation over to the Lord, Jones said. At about 10 a.m., before the ship was to set sail on its return trip at noon, "a young fellow appeared who had boarded the ship," Jones said. "He pointed straight to me and told the authorities, 'That's my aunt,'" Jones said.

Through that young man, Jones, her daughter and her fiancée were allowed to get off the ship. They were the only Liberians permitted to disembark. The young man took them to the American Embassy, where he interceded for them with the American consul.

"I had never seen him before in my life," Jones said. "And I've never seen him since."

Those miracles, along with others too numerous to relate, gave Jones continuing evidence of God's presence, his power, and his sustaining grace, she said. Daily answers to prayer enabled her to have an inner peace throughout her encounters with death, destruction and displacement, she said.

During her brief time in the United States (her visa expires in September unless she is granted a one-year extension), Jones hopes to enlist prayer support for her battered and devastated country, and she is hoping to raise the awareness of Americans, particularly her fellow Southern Baptists, to the world beyond their U.S. borders.

Her appeal is for Southern Baptists "to be more curious about what goes on -- to be more aware of what Christians around the world face." And she especially hopes Southern Baptists will "not just read the news and then put it aside." At the very least, she said, "pray for the needs you read about."

She is amazed Americans have "so much food you have to diet, or count calories," Jones said, while much of the rest of the world looks for bits of food to keep from starving. "It's like you are living in a different world," she said.

"In this part of the world, people are very wasteful," she said. Leftovers -- from what's left in a can of soda, to what's left of a piece of meat -- could make the difference between someone living or dying elsewhere in the world, she said.

Jones cited several specific prayer requests for her country:

-- "Pray that the Lord will reunite us as a people," she said. "There are Liberian people scattered all over the world. We are refugees. It's so hard. We need to now try to return home to gradually restore our country. Pray that the Lord will restore peace to us and reunite families," she said.

-- "Pray that the Lord will appoint leaders of the country at this time who will fear him as God," Jones said. An interim government has just been established in Liberia that is recognized by "all of Africa," she said. "We need to cooperate with this government, because fighting at this time is senseless. Everything has been destroyed."

-- "Pray that whatever has happened to all of us who suffered -- that we will forgive," Jones said.

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She's not asking others to do something she's not willing to do, herself. "I feel free," Jones said. "I don't have any malice. I have no hard feelings toward anyone. When you pray, the Lord has a way of easing your mind and giving you peace. I'll just continue to praise him," she said.

-- "Praise God that there are missionaries who are at this very time sacrificing to help heal the wounds of the Liberian people," Jones said. "We need to pray for them. They are in a very difficult situation, and they desperately need our prayers."

Just like she did during the traumatic days of Liberian civil war, Jones clings today to the power of prayer, and there's not a doubt in her mind the Lord will answer those prayers.

She's seen it happen over and over again. And she believes in miracles. Maybe that's one reason her name just happens to start with "Angel."

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(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by WMU, SBC

New National WMU President
outlines role of women in SBC

By Karen Benson

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7/2/91

RIDGECREST (BP)--Women are losing ground in positions of leadership and ministry in Southern Baptist life -- and unless the situation is turned around, the denomination will continue on a path that runs counter to the expressed will of God in relationship to women.

Carolyn Miller, the newly elected national president of Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union, issued that warning June 26 during a five-hour Church Study Course conference on "The Role of Women in Southern Baptist Life" at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center.

Miller taught the course, which is based on a Discipleship Training module produced by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

"The original idea when God first created men and women was that of partnership," Miller said. Even though historically the Southern Baptist Convention never has lived up to that ideal of partnership, the SBC took a major step backward in 1984, she said, when messengers passed a resolution "On Ordination and the Role of Women in Ministry."

"That year we lost the partnership image that God gave us from creation, and which Jesus then tried to restore in the New Testament," she said.

The resolution mentions the words "ordination" and "ministry" only four times each in its 86 lines and 542 words. But it mentions "women" 15 times and especially draws attention to woman being "last in the creation" and "first in the Edenic fall."

"The problem in that resolution wasn't with 'ordination' or 'ministry,' but with womanhood in general," Miller said. "Why is it that when translated by men, the Scriptures men use are those that seem 'against women?'"

An equally strong case could be made "against men," Miller said, citing Scriptures that show:

- Sin came into the world through "one man" (Romans 5:12);
- A man was the first to blame another (Genesis 3:12);
- The first liar was a man (Genesis 3:10);
- The first murderer was a man (Genesis 4:8);

--more--

-- Jesus was denied by a man, betrayed by a man, and doubted by a man;

-- Jesus was condemned to death by men, and men drove the nails into his hands and shoved the spear into his side.

"If we were to add up the Bible's testimonies and divide them according to gender, then man does not come out any better than woman," Miller said.

But making such lists and tallying up points by gender do no good, when the whole exercise runs counter to the teachings of Jesus on the role of men and women, Miller said.

"It all boils down to this: Woman is not independent of man, and man is not independent of woman. We are not independent of each other. That was God's plan of partnership," she said.

Jesus involved women in all that he did, and he gave perfect models for how women are to be treated, Miller said. In the New Testament, Jesus overruled the traditional culture which made women second class. Even in the Old Testament, God broke the traditional laws that oppressed women, she said.

"It all comes down to one word -- 'culture.' It's the same word that makes it okay for a woman to 'speak' on the foreign mission field, but she can't 'preach' in the United States!" Miller said.

"We're going backwards, ladies!" Miller warned. "We've gone backwards in leadership roles for women in the culture of the '90s."

The attitudes of some SBC leaders toward women in general and toward WMU in particular are in need of adjustment, Miller said. For many men, their attitude toward WMU "is that we are to bake their cookies" for church events, she said.

"The WMU women are not responsible to be the 'cookers' in the church!" Miller admonished.

"We are not a social group who makes cookies for everybody else. We need to affirm our position in the church as what we do -- the missions task!" Miller said. "What we're all about is missions, not cookies!"

Of the few women leaders in Southern Baptist life and history, most have come from WMU, Miller said. For that reason, the men or the churches who feel threatened by women "are cutting out WMU!" Miller warned.

"You need to realize what is happening in your churches. Some of you don't even realize that's why you're having a hard time getting WMU going in your churches!" she said. "It's coming faster and faster, people. They do not want women leaders, so they're killing WMU."

Miller also issued a strong warning about AWANA, an independent organization for youth that advocates Scripture memory and strict adherence to its creeds, and which is infiltrating Southern Baptist churches.

Although it might look all right at first glance, a closer look will reveal the program does not teach the security of salvation; missions is never mentioned; the program does not undergird Southern Baptist beliefs; and other such flaws, Miller warned.

"We have been on the defensive long enough," she told the participants. "We must begin to be on the offensive. We've got to make our concerns more open, and we must tell our WMUs to be on the lookout for problems such as these. Your role is to be informed of all things that are happening now. If you're not informed about what's happening, then there's nothing you can do about it."

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It's also time WMU members quit "sitting in our pews and just going to meetings and reading our parts," Miller said. "We've got to get out in the world and change our image!

"I'm not advocating we forget all the old ways of WMU. But I am advocating new ways of doing the old thing," she said.

WMU members have been "holding our breaths" for too long during the recent years of the denominational controversy, hoping it would either get better or go away, Miller said. "It's time to quit holding our breaths and get out on the edge of a changing world -- or we will die!" she urged.

"We will not continue to do business as usual if we're going to grow. We have got to take part in the church. Christ related to the culture and the times, and if we're going to reach the world, we've got to relate to our culture and our times!"

As women take more active roles in their churches and in the denomination, they need to do so with the right spirit, Miller said.

"Historically, we have been so far ahead of the men, in terms of starting social revolutions," she said. As women challenge a '90s religious culture that puts women down, they need to go about the task "in a servant role," she said.

For instance, there is a right and a wrong way for women to take a stand on the issue of ordination, Miller said. "As a Christian woman, if you feel that you want to be ordained, and your church does not accept this, then I don't think you should make a big 'to-do' about it."

Even though it is an individual call, it is up to the local church to affirm that call, Miller said.

Miller's own view of ordination, she said, is "all men and women are ordained by God at the point of salvation to preach and teach the Great Commission." The Bible never mentions "ordination" -- whether for men or for women, she said.

Any ceremony of ordination is a culturally oriented one in which a local church affirms a calling to a special place of ministry, she said.

But the call to evangelize the world is not culturally oriented or gender-specific, Miller said. "I don't believe God would give his mandate of the Great Commission to only half of the world (the men). He needs all of us to fulfill his mandate."

WMU women and other women in Southern Baptist churches are a "silent majority if there ever was one," Miller said. "If women stuck together, we could change the world. But here we sit, afraid to speak out, afraid to ripple the water. It's time for us to ripple those waters!"

The salvation of WMU today, Miller said, will require just that: risking involvement like never before, rippling the waters both inside the church and outside in the secular world -- as women make changes in the lives of those without hope.

She cited a lengthy list of ways in which WMU must risk involvement, ranging from personal witnessing to women in "power jobs," to leading boycotts (against pornography and other social and moral ills), to instigating adult day-care programs.

"We can no longer sit in our churches and have 'WMU programs' and expect our organization to grow," Miller warned. "We have got to become an organization of action!"

She also urged WMU members to re-think their established ways of "doing WMU." "Don't schedule your Baptist Women meetings on Tuesday mornings 'because you've always done it that way!'" Miller admonished. "We've got to find more opportune times to be involved in missions."

Miller challenged the women to quit waiting for men to give them permission to do the task God has called each of them to do. "If you're a Christian woman, you're already a minister. Men do not have to give you credentials to minister. God gave you the credentials already. And you are only accountable to him!

"So speak with Christ's authority. Know what you're talking about. Don't make rash statements. Speak in love, not anger. And bathe everything you say and do in prayer."

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Staffer from England
seeks God at Ridgecrest

By Charles Willis

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RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--If overseas mail had arrived at Jonathan Woolley's home in London, England, in a different order, he might be spending this summer at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center.

But a letter accepting Jonathan on the summer staff at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center took only four days to get from North Carolina to England, and Glorieta's acceptance letter required three weeks for delivery. So Jonathan is working in Southern Baptists' national conference center in the mountains of western North Carolina.

An 18-year-old member of Morden Baptist Church in London, Jonathan is the son of pastor Steve Woolley. Jonathan's journey to the United States began as a worker in the church's 1990 Holiday Camp for children.

Tom McMinn, a manager in the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's Sunday school division, worked in the camp as part of a partnership between Morden Baptist Church and Brentwood (Tenn.) Baptist Church in suburban Nashville, where McMinn is a member.

As the younger Woolley worked alongside McMinn in leading Bible study and recreation activities, Jonathan talked of a television program that advertised for camp workers to come from England to the United States.

"I wanted to do something that is Christian linked," Woolley recalled, so McMinn arranged for summer staff applications to be sent to Jonathan from the two Sunday School Board-operated conference centers.

Since early June Woolley has learned songs and games to use with day campers whose parents are involved in leadership conferences at Ridgecrest. He has told Bible stories in his distinctive accent and has had his share of difficulty in understanding the variety of accents spoken by his American charges.

"Some of the counselors have problems with my accent, too," he acknowledged with a grin.

The most embarrassing language problem developed when Woolley confided to a fellow male staffer that he did not have any clean pants to wear the next day.

"You can wear a pair of mine," Woolley quotes his friend's response with a mischievous grin.

"He thought I was talking about trousers," Woolley laughed. "What I needed was what you call underwear!"

With adventure of summer in a foreign country stretched out before him, Woolley is trying new things and enjoying the differences he discovers in language and customs.

Although he has not been in a Southern Baptist church thus far, he observed worship services for summer staffers "are not as lively as we have in our church. We use electric guitars, organ, electronic keyboard and, occasionally, drums.

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"The preaching is a bit better than what my dad does," he confided with a smile.

Trips to restaurants have been among the more important outings, thus far, he said. And he is anxious to try Mexican food.

"We had something like it in the canteen (dining hall), and I liked it." Food aside, Woolley said he finds "Americans are more outgoing than the English. They want me involved in everything, and they want me to speak all the time."

Homesickness has not been a problem "yet," he said. Mail from home is important, he admits, adding sheepishly, "I've got to start learning to write."

With his family, friends and his hobby -- a computer -- thousands of miles away, Woolley said he is at Ridgecrest "to see if I can cope with children, to see if teaching would be a good career for me and to see what God wants to do in my life."

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by SSB bureau of Baptist Press

Education Commission extends
work of accreditation task force

By Tim Fields

*N-CO
Ed. Comm.*

Baptist Press
7/2/91

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (BP)--Members of the Southern Baptist Education Commission meeting in annual session voted to extend the work of a task force studying the feasibility of establishing a Southern Baptist accrediting agency and authorized a called meeting of the full commission in March 1992, to consider a report on accreditation to be presented to the Southern Baptist Convention at its annual meeting next June.

The commission acted in response to a referral of a motion made by E. C. Hooper of Virginia, during the 1991 Southern Baptist annual meeting June 5.

Hooper's motion, referred to the Commission by the Committee on Order of Business in accordance with SBC Bylaw 23, asked the SBC Executive Committee be directed to provide the convention at its 1992 meeting "...the pros and cons of disassociation from secular accreditation agencies and establishing an SBC accreditation process."

Hooper also requested a draft of a charter accompanied by constitution and bylaws "which will allow the 1992 SBC Convention messengers to make a positive decision on the matter of accrediting our seminaries and other Christian schools."

Hooper's motion was made during the business session later in the morning after the Education Commission's accreditation task force had presented the results of a two-year study on accreditation to convention messengers. The report stated "In light of this study we recommend that no effort be made to form an accrediting body which would interfere with or attempt to substitute for the existing good relations with the regional accrediting associations."

The task force found two major concerns which surfaced during the study. The first concern is "There seems to be a perception that accrediting agencies such as the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and the Association of Theological Schools in the U.S. and Canada represent external forces which at times apply influences which prevent Baptist colleges and seminaries from being as distinctively Christian and Baptist as our Baptist constituencies want them to be." The second concern was "the perception that Baptist colleges, universities and seminaries may have drifted toward a theological and educational perspective which no longer reflects the posture of most Southern Baptists."

In its report to the convention the task force said, "The careful analysis given to the nature and purpose of accreditation seems to indicate that the formation of a separate Southern Baptist accrediting agency will not provide the effective mechanism to assure correction of any problems which may be perceived nor to prevent the scrutiny of other accrediting bodies.

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"As long as Southern Baptist seminaries, schools and colleges attempt to provide a ministry of Christian education in a secular world we may have to experience some occasional discomfort and inconvenience as we interact with and offer education that is recognized by other colleges, universities and seminaries in society. Such interaction with the more than 3,400 colleges, universities and seminaries should in fact be an arena of Christian witness and an opportunity for ministry that could have a far-reaching positive effect on the world," the report concluded.

Arthur L. Walker, Jr., executive director of the Education Commission, told commission members, "At the time of the report of the Education Commission and its recommendation, no action was taken by the convention and no questions were raised on the floor of the convention."

Commissioners approved an eight-step plan for the continued work of the task force which includes a request the Executive Committee allocate \$10,000 to finance the task force study and to defray expenses of a special called meeting of the commission. Other steps call for the task force to identify and seek feedback from individuals in the convention who favor forming a separate Southern Baptist accrediting agency, to meet with representatives of both the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and the Association of Theological Schools to discuss current concerns of Southern Baptists, and to contact other evangelical conservative seminaries for their input and interest in the establishment of a Southern Baptist accrediting agency.

Commission members asked Walker to communicate with presidents of the 71 Southern Baptist educational institutions concerning the work of the task force and to keep them informed of developments related to the accreditation study.

In related action commission members named James Stewart, a layman from El Paso, Texas, to the task force to replace James Roach of Shreveport, La., who rotated off the commission.

Commission members also approved a budget for 1991-92 of \$594,4644 to be funded by nearly \$500,000 from the Cooperative Program, and the remainder from subscriptions to The Southern Baptist Educator Magazine, revenue from the sale of educational emphasis materials and educational services and \$19,000 from reserves.

In other action, the commission named Warren Angell, 84, composer, conductor and retired dean of fine arts from Oklahoma Baptist University (OBU), as recipient of the 1991 Charles D Johnson Outstanding Educator Award. Angell, who accepted the award during a meeting of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools following the commission meeting, responded to the award by playing some of his own compositions and other selections on the piano.

The award which was established by the commission in 1983, is given annually to a person who has made significant contributions to Southern Baptist higher education.

The commission elected Van D. Quick, Clinton, Miss., as chairman, Jerry Henry, of Selma, Ala., vice chairman and Betty Jo Cooley of Chesnee, S.C., as secretary.