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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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11/12/92

VIRGINIA -- Virginia Baptists approve financial channel to CBF.
FLORIDA -- Florida Baptists elect layman, urge Clinton to rethink stances.
NORTH CAROLINA -- N.C. Baptists adopt changes in trustee nomination policies.
MARYLAND -- Maryland/Delaware Baptists seek unity but debate issues.
GEORGIA -- Plains, Ga., church extends unique welcome to visitors.
NASHVILLE -- Corrections.

Virginia Baptists approve
financial channel to CBF By Michael Clingenpeel & Robert Dilday

Baptist Press
11/14/92

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. (BP)--Virginia Baptists have opened an official mechanism for churches in the state to contribute funds to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

The action, overwhelmingly adopted by messengers attending the Nov. 10-11 annual meeting of the Baptist General Association of Virginia, makes Virginia the first state Baptist convention to forge ties with the organization of moderate Southern Baptists.

Also during the two-day meeting, messengers adopted a resolution encouraging redemptive ministry to homosexuals but refused to modify the statement to parallel an earlier resolution passed by the state association's general board by categorizing homosexual behavior as sinful.

In addition, the 4,200 messengers elected retired public school administrator Walter Harrow of Deltaville as president. Harrow, a member of Zoar Baptist Church in Deltaville who was endorsed by the state's moderates, defeated T.C. Pinckney of Alexandria 2,888-877. Pinckney, a retired U.S. Air Force general and member of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, is widely acknowledged as leader of Virginia's conservative faction.

Elected first vice president was Edward Freeman, pastor of Broadus Memorial Baptist Church in Charlottesville. Margaret Wayland of Danville, a former president of Virginia Woman's Missionary Union, was elected second vice president. Both had been endorsed by Virginia moderates.

Funding for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship is part of a three-track world missions giving plan incorporated in the \$16,300,000 1993 BGAV budget.

About 65 percent of the total -- \$10,590,400 -- is allocated for state ministries, partnership missions projects and an annuity and protection plan for Virginia ministers.

Distribution of the remaining \$5,709,600 will be determined by churches that choose one of three options. "World Missions 1" allocates funds to causes supported by the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program budget.

"World Missions 2" is evenly divided between SBC Cooperative Program ministries and selected Baptist causes, including such moderate-supported agencies as Associated Baptist Press, the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and the Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond.

"World Missions 3" funds the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's "Vision 2000" plan, one of three giving channels administered by the CBF and the only one that exclusively finances CBF ministries.

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Virginia churches also may utilize a BGAV constitutional provision for crafting their own giving plans while remaining members of the state association.

World Missions 1 and 2 are nearly identical to the two options available in the 1992 BGAV budget. About 81 percent of churches currently give through the equivalent of World Missions 2 and another 11 percent through World Missions 1. An additional 8 percent have customized plans of their own.

Unless directed otherwise, BGAV treasurer Nat Kellum will place churches in comparable giving plans in the 1993 budget. Specific congregational instructions will be necessary for a church to participate in World Missions 3. It is not known how many will choose to do so. According to CBF coordinator Cecil Sherman, 74 of Virginia's 1,540 churches currently give in some fashion to the CBF.

Opponents of the budget and its three tracks called it divisive and evidence of diminishing ties between Virginia and the SBC. Supporters described it as a way for all Virginia Baptists to cooperate without violating their consciences.

Following unsuccessful attempts to eliminate the CBF giving track and the allocation for the Richmond seminary, messengers adopted the budget by an estimated 75 percent margin.

Virginia joined other state conventions in dealing with homosexuality, perhaps the most controversial topic among Southern Baptists today. The issue emerged last year when one Southern Baptist church in North Carolina ordained a homosexual man and another blessed the union of a homosexual couple. The SBC subsequently cut ties with both churches.

While Virginia's resolution encourages Baptists "to minister redemptively to all persons, including homosexuals," it does not condemn homosexual behavior. It describes homosexuality as a "difficult issue ... which must be faced by our churches" and acknowledges "the diversity of thought concerning this issue among Virginia Baptists."

"We call upon Virginia Baptists to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the Bible in dealing with this issue," the statement says.

The absence of a censure of homosexual behavior in the resolution contrasts with a statement adopted by the state association's general board in October. Messenger Charles Waller of Bumpass attempted to amend the resolution with two sentences from the general board statement which read: "We affirm the biblical teaching that homosexual behavior is sinful and unacceptable for Christians. Therefore, we do not endorse elevating those who practice it to positions of leadership."

However, the amendment failed.

"I don't interpret the amendment's loss as a rejection of the general board's statement," BGAV Executive Director Reginald McDonough said later. "Messengers let the general board statement stand and they didn't feel the need to supplement it. They wanted their focus to be on redemptive ministry and not on exclusion."

Also defeated was a proposed constitutional amendment excluding from BGAV membership any churches which "act to confirm, approve or endorse homosexual behavior," language similar to that given a first vote of two votes last June for addition to the SBC constitution.

"This is not a theological issue dividing conservatives and moderates," said Bill Foster of Roanoke, who proposed the amendment. "It is an issue on which we can all agree."

But Steve Cromer of Lynchburg called it a "terrible mistake" and "a major step away from our practice of seating churches which want to cooperate in supporting missions."

In other action, messengers:

-- agreed to nominate one or more trustees for the Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond and authorized their denominational relationships committee to negotiate a trustee relationship with Associated Baptist Press and the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

-- narrowly defeated a motion to pursue ties with the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. and the Progressive National Baptist Convention that would have led to joint ministries.

-- added a sanctity of human life observance to the list of calendar events endorsed by the BGAV. Similar attempts had failed in the past.

-- adopted a statement opposing federal financial aid to religious elementary and secondary schools. Other resolutions promised prayer for President-elect Bill Clinton and continued commitment to global missions and the goals of Bold Mission Thrust, the SBC's plan to share the gospel with every person on earth by the year 2000.

-- included two conservative seminaries -- Luther Rice in Atlanta and Mid-America in Memphis, Tenn. -- to the list of causes to which the BGAV treasurer may distribute funds from churches.

Next year's meeting will be Nov. 9-10 in the Richmond Convention Center.

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Florida Baptists elect layman,
urge Clinton to rethink stances

Baptist Press
11/14/92

By Barbara Denman & Jack Brymer

FORT MYERS, Fla. (BP)--For the first time in 12 years, a layman has been elected president of the Florida Baptist Convention.

Tim Locher of Hollywood, a pilot for Delta Airlines, received 55 percent of the vote, 594 votes, to 485 votes for the only other nominee, Darrell Orman, pastor of First Baptist Church of Stuart.

Locher has served for four years on the convention's board of missions and was vice chairman this past year. He is Sunday school director in his church, Sheridan Hills Baptist Church, and was nominated by his pastor, Bill Billingsley, a former state convention president.

Active in civic affairs, Locher has served on the Hollywood City Commission (1976-78), the Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Broward County Charter Review Commission and the Broward County Parks Commission.

In other actions, the 1,618 messengers passed a resolution promising to pray daily for fellow Southern Baptist President-elect Bill Clinton and asking him to renounce his "stated intentions to promote abortion on demand and minority status for homosexuals."

The resolution pointed out Florida Baptists repeatedly have affirmed the sanctity of human life and found homosexuality a contradiction to Scripture.

The response of Florida and Southern Baptists to the victims of Hurricane Andrew, which struck south Dade County in late August, was featured throughout the annual session. John Sullivan, executive director-treasurer, reported more than 15,000 Baptist volunteers came to the rescue and that \$1.8 million was received from across the Southern Baptist Convention. Personal testimonies by both volunteers and recipients were shared and resolutions of appreciation for several persons and state conventions were unanimously adopted.

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The convention's ethnic diversity was reflected also in the program. Each session featured a period of intercessory prayer offered in English, Spanish, Crete (Indian) French-Creole (Haitian) and Chinese. One day earlier, the board of missions voted to elevate its ethnic work from a language missions department to a division on equal par with the other areas of work. An ethnic will head the division.

In business matters, the messengers amended a \$24 million budget proposal, adding a 0.333 percent (\$80,000) to the funding of Florida Baptist Theological College in Graveville. The remainder of the budget was approved. It provides 42.2 percent for Southern Baptist Convention causes, 49.6 percent for Florida Baptist Convention causes, 5 percent for pastoral aid and 3.2 percent for SBC Church Annuity Plan.

The current year's budget had no separate item for pastoral aid, and the designations called for 46 percent to the SBC Cooperative Program, 52.82 for the work of the Florida Baptist Convention and 3.18 percent for the Church Annuity Plan.

In approving the budget, the convention attempted to resolve its long-standing conflict over funding for Stetson University in Deland. The new budget eliminates convention financial support but permits churches to designate gifts to the university.

In addition to Locher, a second layman, Richard Lowery of Tampa, was elected second vice president. Only four non-ordained persons have been elected to lead the state convention since 1950. The last layman elected president was Ed Mason of Tallahassee in 1980. Mason and his wife Vi currently are mission service corp volunteers in Kazakhstan, one of the former Soviet republics.

The new first vice president is Jimmy Deas, pastor of Deltona Lakes Baptist Church in Deltona. He was chosen over Morris Denman Jr., pastor of Cook Memorial Baptist Church, Lynn Haven.

Both Orman and Denman were part of a slate of nominees promoted in a card-writing campaign by Homer Lindsay and Jerry Vines, co-pastors of First Baptist Church in Jacksonville, and two Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee members, Guy Sanders, pastor of First Church in Lakes Wales, and Robert Parker, pastor of Markham Woods Church in Lake Mary. Steve Henderson, pastor of Scott Lake Baptist Church in Lakeland also endorsed the slate. He was elected president of the Florida Baptist Pastor's Conference. The slate's candidate for second vice president was not nominated.

The convention is scheduled to meet next on Nov. 15-17, 1993, in the new Fort Lauderdale Convention Center.

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N.C. Baptists adopt changes
in trustee nomination policies

By R.G. Puckett

Baptist Press
11/14/92

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. (BP)--North Carolina Baptists overwhelmingly approved recommendations from a special study committee, including two on trustee nominations, during the state convention's 162nd annual session Nov. 9-11.

In addition to action on recommendations from the Institutions Relationship Study Committee, messengers debated the structure of the convention's 1993 budget, affirmed action by the general board declaring two churches "not cooperating" congregations over their stands on homosexuality and re-elected all incumbent officers without opposition.

Registration for the three-day session in Winston-Salem's Lawrence Joel Veterans Memorial Coliseum reached 4,718 messengers, with about 400 more laypersons than ordained clergy. Church staff members numbered about 300.

The IRS Committee, created in May 1991, proposed seven recommendations, including two on trustee nominations:

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-- to enable institutions and agencies affiliated with the convention to have out-of-state trustees (directors) providing the people are "... members of churches cooperating with a Baptist state convention which is affiliated with the Southern Baptist convention."

-- to permit the institutions/agencies to nominate trustees to be approved by the convention but at a reduction of funds received through the Cooperative Program. No institution may nominate more than 50 percent of its trustees with a corresponding percentage reduction in CP funds. These trustees must be members of churches affiliated with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and/or a state convention affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.

The state's Baptist newsjournal, Biblical Recorder, and the North Carolina Baptist Foundation are examples of convention agencies, while the six Baptist colleges and universities in the state are among those designated as institutions.

Two amendments failed. One would have reduced the maximum to 49 percent rather than the 50 recommended; another would have excluded the agencies from the process.

Six of the seven recommendations passed by at least 90 percent, perhaps 95 percent, while the one permitting institutions/agencies to nominate their own trustees with a corresponding reduction in Cooperative Program funds passed by an estimated 85 percent.

The proposed budget for 1993 was debated at length Nov. 11, not because of the numbers involved but the structure which places the allocation for funding the Ministers Expanded Annuity program within the 38 percent of the budget allocated to Southern Baptist Convention causes.

Messengers rejected a motion by C. Mark Corts, pastor of Calvary church in Winston-Salem and a former president of the N.C. convention, for the annuity plan allocation to be a preferred item before the division of funds between the state and national conventions.

The approved budget calls for \$28.8 million as a Cooperative Program goal with 38 percent allocated for the SBC and 62 percent to state convention causes.

In the 1992 budget, the funds for the annuity program are a preferred item before the balance of the budget is divided 64.83 percent for the N.C. convention and 34.17 for the SBC.

For the third consecutive year, there is an optional budget for the 38 percent allocated to the SBC. It calls for 12 percent to be sent unrestricted to the SBC, 8.4 percent for scholarships for theological students attending Baptist colleges/universities affiliated with the Baptist state convention and 17.6 percent for special mission projects.

Efforts to amend the optional budget failed.

The decision by the convention's general board at its May 19, 1992, session to exclude Pullen Memorial Baptist Church in Raleigh and Binkley Memorial Baptist Church in Chapel Hill because of the churches' actions regarding homosexuality was overwhelmingly sustained by the messengers.

Efforts to have the decision reversed, based on the Baptist heritage of individual soul freedom and church autonomy, did not deter messengers from approving and supporting the general board's action which came as a recommendation from the convention's officers and general board officers.

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The Pullen congregation "blessed" the union of two homosexual men in March and Binkley congregation licensed a male homosexual to the ministry. The Raleigh association ousted Pullen in May; Binkley is not affiliated with a local association. The Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in Indianapolis in June, took steps to rewrite the national denomination's documents to exclude any church in the future which may take similar action as Pullen and Binkley.

All incumbent officers were re-elected without opposition: president, E. Glen Holt, pastor of First Baptist Church in Fayetteville; first vice president, Dot Allred of Flint Groves Baptist Church in Gastonia; second vice president, C. Ed Vick Jr. of First Baptist Church in Raleigh; and recording secretary, Marian Grant of Hayes Barton Baptist Church in Raleigh.

In other actions, the messengers approved a resolution of gratitude for R. Keith Parks, retiring president of the SBC Foreign Mission Board.

Other resolutions focused on world hunger and relief and expressed appreciation to President Bush and Vice President Quayle for their service to the nation while pledging to pray for President-elect Bill Clinton and Vice President-elect Al Gore, both of whom are Southern Baptists.

One resolution expressed appreciation to North Carolina Baptist Men for their work in Florida following Hurricane Andrew and another focused attention on the impact of television, music and motion pictures on morality in society, with a call to Baptists to use their influence in writing letters and communicating with the producers while boycotting products and sponsors associated with harmful programming.

The 1993 convention will be Nov. 8-10, again in the Winston-Salem coliseum.

In 1994, the convention will experiment with a weekend schedule to encourage more laypersons to attend. It will be Nov. 11-12 at the same site in Winston-Salem. A two-year trial for the weekend convention will determine future scheduling.

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Maryland/Delaware Baptists
seek unity but debate issues

By Bob Allen

Baptist Press
11/14/92

SILVER SPRING, Md. (BP)--Maryland/Delaware Baptists responded to pleas for reconciliation between Christians but exercised sharp disagreement over contested issues at their two-state convention's annual meeting Nov. 9-10.

Registration reached a record 987 messengers at the 157th session of the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware. The 18-year-old, 2,000-member First Korean Baptist Church of Silver Spring, Md., the BCM/D's largest worshipping congregation, hosted the convention for the first time.

Dozens of messengers came forward at an invitation by BCM/D President Homer Carter, pastor of First Baptist Church in Rockville, Md., to commit themselves to seeking unity among Maryland/Delaware Baptists. Those responding left names and addresses to indicate their willingness to pray and enter into dialogue with fellow Baptists holding different views on issues dividing Southern Baptists in recent years.

In his president's address, Carter strongly endorsed efforts of Salisbury, Md., pastor Bill Warren and Eastern Baptist (Md.) Association director of missions Walter Agnor to bring Baptists of differing views together. Prior to the convention, the two men convened a meeting attended by 44 people, mostly pastors, to discuss ways to enhance fellowship in the convention. At the meeting, Warren interpreted the number attending as "a sign that many people in our convention are tired of the fighting and want to be one."

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Debate over one resolution tested that unity. Messengers considered a statement asking the Woman's Missionary Union, an auxiliary, to reconsider a policy allowing use of Camp WoMeTo by certain non-Christian religious groups. The resolution was supported by Baptists critical of a decision by the WMU executive board in 1991 to allow a Hindu youth group to hold a religious retreat at the camp in Harford County, Md., which is owned by WMU. The WMU has always extended an open-door policy at camp to non-Baptist and secular groups but had never before granted use to a non-Christian religious group.

Among critics was Central (Md.) Baptist Association, which passed a stern resolution against Camp WoMeTo's policy at its annual meeting in October and submitted a copy of it to the BCM/D resolutions committee. The BCM/D committee recommended a gentler resolution, asking WMU to adopt a policy similar to one governing access to convention-owned facilities, approved by messengers earlier in the convention.

Messengers voted 200-138 for an amendment offered by David McPeake, a messenger from First Baptist Church in Cambridge, Md., reversing the intent of the proposed resolution by urging the WMU to "continue a policy of missionary inclusiveness at Camp WoMeTo."

Finally, messengers tabled the whole issue after a plea by Bob Lilly, pastor of Catonsville (Md.) Baptist Church and a resolutions committee member, that adopting the resolution would be "divisive" and "could split this convention right down the middle."

The convention's new policy forbids the use of facilities by non-Christian religious groups. A WMU policy adopted this year requires that use by such groups be case by case at WMU executive board discretion.

The convention elected a new president by 65 votes. Long-time Delaware pastor Otis Doherty of Olgetown Baptist Church in Newark received 421 votes -- 54.2 percent of the total cast -- to 356 for Howard Edmonson, pastor of Mason-Dixon Baptist Church, an affiliated church in New Freedom, Pa. Doherty had received the support of Maryland/Delaware moderates while Edmonson was backed by conservatives.

June Holland, a pastor's wife long active in convention affairs, was elected first vice president over well-known conservative Gary Glanville, pastor of Northwest Baptist Church in Reisterstown, Md., 262-99. Holland, of Kent Island, Md., coordinated a Foreign Mission Board appointment service in Baltimore last year attended by an estimated 7,600 people.

Messengers elected Louis Redd, a longtime bivocational minister, currently pastor of Arbutus Baptist Church in Baltimore, second vice president by acclamation. Both Holland and Redd had been endorsed by moderates in gatherings leading up to the convention.

Rene Olivier, former pastor of First Baptist Church in Brunswick, Md., was elected to a sixth term as recording secretary.

Messengers adopted a 1993 budget of \$4,540,622. It projects receipts of \$3,082,903 through the Cooperative Program method of unified budget support. The budget anticipates a deficit of \$98,483, which, if necessary, will be covered at the end of the year from reserve funds. After cutting state convention staff last year, convention leaders recommended a deficit budget for one year to determine if flat CP contributions simply reflect current economic conditions or signal a long-term trend.

Also approved was a division of 1993 CP receipts: 59 percent will fund BCM/D ministries and 41 percent the national and international Southern Baptist Convention causes. The division of funds is unchanged from the current BCM/D budget.

Messengers rejected an attempt to amend their constitution to allow churches to be represented based on support of the convention through channels other than the Cooperative Program. The constitution grants every cooperating church representation through messengers at the annual meeting and grants additional messengers based on the number of members and CP support.

Under an amendment proposed from the floor by Dave Flumbaum, former convention president and a member of Seneca Baptist Church in Baltimore, churches would have accrued messengers by other gifts, such as the state missions offering and designated giving as well as CP.

The proposal, which would have required a two-thirds majority at consecutive annual meetings, failed to gain even a simple majority, 191-203.

Other resolutions addressed human sexuality and abortion. The human sexuality statement criticized "sanctioning of the union of homosexuals and their ordination to ministry," an allusion to actions taken this spring by two Baptist churches in North Carolina. The Southern Baptist Convention voted in June that because of their overtures to homosexuals, the two churches were "not in friendly cooperation" with the SBC, marking the first expulsion of churches for doctrinal reasons in the convention's 147-year history.

The abortion resolution encourages churches to "take an active stand in support of the sanctity of human life" and to conduct an annual sanctity of life emphasis.

During discussion, Fred Bealfeld, a messenger from Scott Street Baptist Church in Baltimore, complained the convention "gave only lip service ... gave no money and gave no leadership" to a coalition which sought to defeat a state referendum on a Maryland abortion law Nov. 3.

The 1993 annual meeting is scheduled Nov. 15-16 at the Sheraton Convention Center in Ocean City.

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Plains, Ga., church extends
unique welcome to visitors

By Pat Cole

Baptist Press
11/14/92

PLAINS, Ga. (BP)--It's easy to spot visitors at Maranatha Baptist Church in Plains, Ga. They're the ones who aren't wearing badges.

Members wear bright yellow badges to identify themselves to the scores of visitors who flock to the 150-member church to hear former President Jimmy Carter teach Sunday school. Some Sundays, visitors outnumber church members by 3 to 1.

Previously, visitors had no way of knowing who the members were and thus often felt the church was unfriendly, said Maranatha pastor Dan Ariail. Therefore, the church traded the common tradition of visitor badges for member badges.

Ariail, who received his doctor of ministry degree in May from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., wrote his ministry research project on Maranatha's ministry of hospitality.

"The project centers around the concept that this church is a mission station," Ariail said. "I don't know of another worship situation that parallels this."

Visitors, which during the 1990-91 church year averaged more than 50 per Sunday, come from across the United States and several foreign countries to attend Carter's Sunday school class. Many have little acquaintance with the Christian faith, Ariail said.

This presents Maranatha with an opportunity for "singularity evangelism," he said, explaining, "We only see our visitors one time. None of these people will be (membership) prospects."

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In an interview with the Southern Baptist Historical Commission last year, Carter said he teaches "the standard ... basically conservative Christian story." Class visitors represent diverse Christian backgrounds as well as various world religions. "So I have to be broad-minded in my teaching, but also prepared for the most startling questions from people who have never had any immersion -- literally or figuratively -- as a Baptist," he said.

As part of his D.Min. project, Ariail surveyed 17 members at a mid-week prayer service regarding their perceptions of visitors. He found members had a mostly positive impression of visitors but had not seen "the extreme opportunity we have" for a ministry to visitors.

Ariail preached a sermon series on the biblical basis for hospitality and taught a series of workshops that dealt with both theological and practical considerations for making visitors feel welcome.

Since the workshops, the Maranatha members have taken more intentional measures to welcome visitors. Greeters are stationed at each entrance and welcome each visitor with a verbal welcome. They are also handed a bulletin with a visitor's card and children of visitors are escorted to their Sunday school rooms.

After worship, while the former president and his wife pose for pictures with visitors, members mingle freely with the guests and offer to photograph them with the Carters.

Surveys of visitors before and after the workshops revealed that an already positive perception of the church by visitors had been enhanced. One German couple was so impressed with their warm welcome that they mailed the church a contribution of 1,000 Deutsche marks which at the time was worth \$642 in U.S. currency.

Ariail's project was also helped by arranged visits of people who lived within easy driving distance of Plains but were unknown to the congregation. Their opinions were sought since other visitors were so excited over meeting the Carters that they lack objectivity, he said. The more objective comments from the arranged visits proved helpful, said Ariail, who adapted a questionnaire from a chain restaurant as a survey instrument to measure the church's hospitality.

"My whole thrust has been that there is a continuing theme in the Bible about welcoming the outsider, the stranger," Ariail said. "We must be careful not to make people feel put-off, like they are not part of the 'in group.'"

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CORRECTION: In (BP) story titled "Teen-agers blinded to dangers of promiscuous sex, author says," dated 11/11/92, the photo inquiry phone number at the bottom of the story should be 817-283-3485.

CORRECTION: In (BP) story titled "Put aside differences and unite for Lottie Moon, asks FMB head," dated 11/10/92, please correct the percent in the second paragraph's first sentence to 3.25 percent, not 3.5 percent.

CLARIFICATION: In the (BP) story titled "Baptist journals, worship services feel trends reflected by USA Today," dated 10/28/92, please change the second paragraph's introductory clause to read, "Second only to The Wall Street Journal is average paid circulation daily, ... " The rewording is based on figures by the Audit Bureau of Circulation in Illinois.

Thanks,
Baptist Press
