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92-30

SBC Executive Committee  
opposes homosexuality

By Art Toalston

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee squarely positioned itself against homosexuality Feb. 18 and against two North Carolina churches weighing measures sympathetic to homosexuality.

The Executive Committee adopted a resolution singling out Pullen Memorial Baptist Church in Raleigh and Olin T. Binkley Memorial Baptist Church in Chapel Hill, reminding them "God regards homosexuality as a gross perversion and unquestioned sin."

"I believe these two churches ... laid down the gauntlet to Southern Baptists," said Fred Wolfe, a pastor from Mobile, Ala. If the Executive Committee fails to take a stand, he said, it will be interpreted "by the liberal press that we've chickened out."

The 77-member committee also initiated efforts to recommend to the Southern Baptist Convention that it amend its constitution and/or bylaws to include measures against any church "affirming, approving or endorsing in any way the active practice of homosexuality," according to one proposal. Such acts would include ordaining or licensing homosexuals into the ministry, performing marriage-like ceremonies or otherwise affirming homosexual practices as an "alternate lifestyle."

Members of Pullen Memorial voted Feb. 9 to use a secret mail ballot to decide whether to sanction a "same-gender union," or marriage-like ceremony, requested by one of the church's members and his homosexual partner. The ballot will be mailed to nearly 800 church members and the vote will be announced by the end of February, according to church pastor Mahan Siler.

The ballot also will ask Pullen members whether church membership should be open without regard to sexual orientation.

Olin T. Binkley Memorial Baptist Church, meanwhile, is in the process of deciding whether to license a homosexual member of the church to the gospel ministry. A series of small group discussions is planned prior to an April 5 meeting to decide the matter, said church pastor Linda Jordan.

The resolution adopted by the Executive Committee expresses "deep and compassionate concern for these churches (and their) departure from doctrine and theology generally held by Southern Baptists... ." Committee members resolved "to pray fervently that the Holy Spirit will admonish and enlighten these churches in their deliberations ... that their members will have sufficient grace to know and do that which is right in the eyes of Almighty God ... ."

But Executive Committee members also wanted something more substantive than a resolution against homosexuality.

They approved a motion by T.C. Pinckney of Virginia instructing their administrative subcommittee to develop a proposed change to the SBC constitution and/or bylaws to address "the possibility of some churches endorsing homosexuality."

And Executive Committee members referred another motion by Pinckney to their bylaws workgroup. Pinckney brought the motions to the Executive Committee's closing session after failing to get them reported out of a subcommittee.

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Both the administrative subcommittee and the bylaws workgroup are to report their recommendations to the Executive Committee in time for the items to be considered during this year's Southern Baptist Convention, June 9-11 in Indianapolis.

The motion by Pinckney referred to the bylaws workgroup called for the Executive Committee to recommend to the Southern Baptist Convention that it 1) instruct its credentials committee not to seat messengers, or representatives, from churches that endorse homosexual activity, 2) instruct all SBC entities not to receive any money from such churches and 3) pledge to minister to individuals who have "chosen to rebel against God by participating in the abominable practices of homosexuality ... to help them come to a saving relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ ... to rehabilitate their lives."

Several Executive Committee members voiced no fear over the possibility of a lawsuit by someone excluded from participating in the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting over the issue of homosexuality. "I don't care if 10,000 lawyers tell us not to do it," Wolfe declared.

Harold C. Bennett, president and treasurer of the Executive Committee since 1979, said in response to a question he could not recall the group ever adopting a resolution on a social issue.

"We probably have never been faced ... with this kind of aberration," noted committee member Guy Sanders, a pastor from Florida.

News of the two churches' homosexual-related deliberations has prompted an array of reactions across the Southern Baptist Convention.

Siler said he has been "amazed at the intensity and breadth of interest. It's kind of like we named a family secret, in that there are homosexual persons and parents with homosexual children in every church. We hope by us dealing openly with the request that it might encourage the larger church to discern its own sense of God's will in regard to homosexual persons."

Beyond its ties to the Southern Baptist Convention, the church is affiliated with the American Baptist Convention, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and the Southern Baptist Alliance, Siler said.

R. Albert Mohler Jr., editor of the Georgia Baptist newsjournal, The Christian Index, wrote in a Feb. 13 editorial that "Southern Baptists no longer have the false comfort" of regarding homosexuality issues "as someone else's problem. The moral and theological integrity of our own denomination is at stake, and at every level.

"Make no mistake, issues of sexuality will divide American society in the 1990s just as the Vietnam war produced the divisions of the 1960s and '70s."

Christians must be willing to be "badly out of step" with other denominations that have failed to take a Bible-based stand against homosexuality, Mohler wrote. "We must show genuine compassion and Christian love to the homosexual. But genuine compassion is found in telling the truth -- to the homosexual and to a society in rebellion."

For Siler, this isn't the first time he has faced controversy over his stance for ministry to homosexuals, he said. After writing an article in the moderate Baptist publication SBC Today several years ago advocating pastoral care for homosexuals, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., removed his name from its list of approved adjunct faculty members.

Executive Committee members in their resolution commended the seminary and its president, Lewis Drummond, "for their courageous stand."

Executive Committee recommends  
reallocation of disputed funds

By Herb Hollinger

NASHVILLE (BP)--A reallocation of \$300,000 in disputed funds, held by the Southern Baptist Foundation, to "convention causes as the Executive Committee deems appropriate," will be recommended to the Southern Baptist Convention in Indianapolis in June.

The Executive Committee, meeting Feb. 17-18, voted overwhelmingly to approve a recommendation that the controversial account, claimed by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and sought by the SBC Christian Life Commission, be reallocated. The decision, a voice vote without audible dissent, was the climax of months of study by the Executive Committee but may be fought by the BJCPA, a Washington-based religious liberty agency.

"I don't believe the Lord leads people to take money that is not theirs," Oliver S. Thomas, BJCPA legal counsel told Baptist Press after the vote. Thomas said he felt the decision by the Executive Committee was inconsistent with the SBC action in 1964 setting up the fund.

However, the Executive Committee also will ask the SBC annual meeting to "disclaim any right to the interest accumulated on these funds on deposit and request that the Foundation remit all accumulated interest to the BJCPA as soon as practicable." As of Jan. 27, 1992, the accumulated interest was \$83,954.45. The BJCPA had been granted the interest earned on the funds over the years and has drawn \$568,384 since 1968.

Thomas rejected the decision as a possible compromise with the BJCPA getting the interest but not the original funds. Asked if the BJCPA would pursue legal action if the SBC approves the recommendation in June, Thomas would say only that he planned to report to the BJCPA board of directors who ultimately would make any decision to respond.

The funds have been held for nearly four decades by the Southern Baptist Foundation -- which sees itself as an agent in the matter instead of a trustee -- but last year a dispute erupted between the CLC and the BJCPA over ownership of the funds. The BJCPA requested the funds last fall with the intent to purchase a building in Washington; however, the matter had by then been referred to the Executive Committee by the foundation.

A special committee appointed to research the matter spent hours in closed sessions before making the recommendation.

In a two-page background statement, the committee cited a number of reasons for their decision: critical differences between BJCPA and the SBC, a religious liberty assignment now with the SBC Christian Life Commission, the cessation of funding for the BJCPA from the SBC, the desire of the SBC to disassociate itself from the BJCPA, lack of a valid request from the BJCPA fulfilling the original requirements to get the funds, the money was neither a gift, nor contract to the BJCPA, and the funds have been the property of the SBC from the original deposit at the foundation in 1966.

In addition, the present theological differences between the SBC and the BJCPA were cited which would make it a "breach of trust" for the SBC to give the funds to the BJCPA, "thereby assisting the BJCPA in promoting religious views that are not shared by the SBC."

The committee's statement also said giving the \$300,000 capital needs allocation to the BJCPA would "dilute the voice of the SBC on matters of religious liberty. Reallocating the money to other organizations which share the SBC's theological ideologies would strengthen the SBC's voice on religious liberty issues." The other organizations were not spelled out but there has been speculation they would include the Christian Life Commission.

The CLC has argued the funds were originally meant for the SBC Public Affairs Committee which has since merged with the CLC. Part of the documentation during the history of the funds includes references to "public affairs committee" and "joint committee on public affairs."

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE WRAP-UP

Transition plan revealed  
for Chapman and Bennett           By Herb Hollinger & Art Toalston

NASHVILLE (BP)--Election of a new president/treasurer, a stand against homosexuality in Southern Baptist churches and approval of recommended convention operating and Cooperative Program allocation budgets were included in items approved during the SBC Executive Committee meeting in Nashville Feb. 17-18.

A reallocation of a \$300,000 controversial fund claimed by both the SBC Christian Life Commission and the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs also will be recommended by the Executive Committee to the annual SBC meeting in Indianapolis in June. (See accompanying story.)

Morris H. Chapman, 51, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, was elected president/treasurer of the 77-member Executive Committee, effective June 15. He will succeed Harold C. Bennett on Oct. 1 following Bennett's retirement Sept. 30.

Chapman, pastor of First Baptist Church in Wichita Falls, Texas, will be only the fifth chief executive officer of the Executive Committee since its beginning in 1927. His salary will be \$120,000, including a housing allowance. (See (BP) story, Feb. 18.)

A six-month transition period for the incoming and retiring executive officers was approved by the Executive Committee. Bennett, 67, will be feted at a number of receptions beginning with the annual meeting in Indianapolis in June.

Harold and Phyllis Bennett will receive all expenses paid through 1995 for commitments he has as vice president of the Baptist World Alliance, expenses for the couple to attend SBC annual meetings throughout their lives, a 1993 Lincoln Town Car automobile and the title of "President Emeritus" of the Executive Committee.

In addition, the auditorium in the SBC building in Nashville will be named the Harold C. Bennett Auditorium with appropriate bronze plaque. Bennett will receive a \$22,000 retainer for three months following his retirement, through Dec. 31, 1992, as "the need is determined by Dr. (Morris) Chapman." He also will receive additional retirement benefits allotted in the personnel manual of the Executive Committee.

A stand against homosexuality and against two North Carolina churches considering actions regarding homosexuality were approved by the committee. Proposed SBC constitution and/or bylaw changes, as well, are probable at the June meeting eliminating participation in annual meetings by churches approving homosexuals. (See accompanying story.)

A convention operating budget of \$4,211,070 for 1992-93 was approved to be recommended to the SBC in Indianapolis. The figure is a 4.67 percent increase over the current year's budget.

The SBC Cooperative Program allocation budget for 1992-93 also was approved for recommendation to the annual meeting. The \$140,200,395 proposed total reflects 0.36 percent decreases shared equally by the 19 SBC agencies and institutions compared to the current year's budget.

The audit of the 1990-91 fiscal year for the convention operating budget revealed the budget ended that year \$287,372 in the black. Coupled with \$103,096 surplus to start the 1990-91 year, the current fiscal year began with a nearly \$400,000 balance in the convention operating budget fund.

Executive Committee members approved the Christian Life Commission's revision of its program assignment to incorporate religious liberty concerns after the SBC defunded the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs last year. The new CLC document, which also authorizes it to relate directly to local churches in its work, must be approved by the SBC in June.

Concerns regarding the CLC's religious liberty assignment were aired by the Foreign Mission Board during an Executive Committee workgroup session Feb. 17. The FMB took issue with new CLC responsibility for communicating "with representatives of governments the concerns of the Southern Baptist Convention for ... religious liberty throughout the world."

According to the FMB, it traditionally has represented Southern Baptist concerns overseas. But, the CLC responded, many religious liberty concerns extend beyond U.S. borders. The trustee workgroup amended the document to state that the CLC should work "in consultation" with the FMB on overseas concerns.

Program statement revisions also were approved for the Executive Committee and the Woman's Missionary Union, Auxiliary. The WMU had requested approval of the revision, although as an auxiliary, was not required to do so. Both program statement revisions were approved for recommendation to the Indianapolis annual meeting.

However, the WMU revision did bring a unique request from Executive Committee member E. Gibbie McMillan of Louisiana. He moved that the WMU be invited to initiate legal steps to become an agency of the SBC instead of an auxiliary. Following some discussion, his motion was referred to the administrative subcommittee for further study.

A three-member Executive Committee team focusing on seminary accreditation reported on its meeting with the Accreditation Task Force of the Southern Baptist Education Commission. The team listed five recommendations it offered: 1) annual trustee training, including an overview of the nature of various accrediting bodies, 2) legal review of institutional documents to assure "clear, legal and proper procedures for decision-making," 3) affirmation of seminary administrators and trustees "for their efforts to carry out their mission," 4) renewed priority by administrators and trustees for "affirming their institution's Southern Baptist heritage and ... spiritual mission," and 5) a request to accrediting agencies "to avoid creating pressure or the illusion of pressure designed to affect the theological posture" of the seminaries.

Also approved were amended articles of incorporation for Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., which reflects an Executive Committee request to end a stipulation the seminary could remove convention-elected trustees. A companion request for an SBC bylaw on trustee absenteeism also was approved with both proposals sent to the SBC June meeting.

Approved for study were the possibility of a computerized SBC registration process and a registration fee for SBC annual meetings.

In other action, the Executive Committee approved: Bill Melleski of Kenai, Alaska, and Wendell Wood of Burton, Mich., to fill vacancies on the 1991-92 SBC committee on nominations; a \$1,000-per-day, plus expenses, contract with C. Barry McCarty, president, Cincinnati Bible College and Seminary, to serve as chief parliamentarian during the Indianapolis SBC meeting; and an application for the Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania-South Jersey for full representation on SBC entities. That state convention reached church membership of 25,553 with 158 churches and 44 church-type missions, qualifying for the additional representation.

Executive Committee members approved a 5 percent increase adjustment in their staff's salary structure, effective Oct. 1.

Resolutions of appreciation were approved for Julian Pentecost, retired editor of the Virginia Religious Herald; Lloyd Elder, past president of the Sunday School Board; and Lewis A. Drummond, retiring president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

EDITORS' NOTE: Following is part one of a three-part series.

Pastoral tenure increasing  
slowly in SBC churches

By Chip Alford

NASHVILLE (BP)--Thirty years ago members of Haywood Hills Baptist Church met for worship in a small block building in a sparsely populated rural area just south of downtown Nashville. Sunday school classes were held in a nearby farmhouse.

Today, that former countryside is a crowded residential area complete with several subdivisions and apartment complexes. The church campus includes ample education space, an 850-seat sanctuary and a gymnasium.

But one thing has remained constant during three decades of change and growth -- the pastor.

Roger Shelton was the church's first full-time pastor. He will retire this summer after more than 30 years as the congregation's spiritual leader.

"I really had no idea I would stay this long," the 62-year-old pastor said. "I just felt this is where the Lord wanted me to be and when opportunities to go somewhere else came along, I never felt the clearance from him to make the change."

Though the amount of time Southern Baptist pastors are staying at one church is slowly increasing, Shelton's long tenure at Haywood Hills is unusual. The latest statistics, garnered from the 1991 Uniform Church Letter, show the mean (or average) pastoral tenure in the SBC is 5.5 years. A 4.3-year average was reported in 1975. It rose to 4.6 years in 1980 and 5.1 years in 1985.

But since the "average" figures include extremely long tenures such as Shelton's, denominational statistics specialist Jim Lowry of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's corporate planning and research department said a better gauge might be the "median" pastoral tenure -- the middle value when half the cases are above and half are below. That number stood at 2.6 years in 1975, 2.7 years in 1980, 3.1 years in 1985 and 3.4 years in 1991.

Lowry cited three possible explanations for the increase in pastoral tenure in the SBC:

-- The number of large churches in the SBC is increasing and pastors tend to remain longer at larger churches. Sunday School Board consultant Norris Smith said factors in longer tenure at larger churches include better salaries, increased visibility and influence in the denomination and help from a multi-member church staff.

-- The supply of available pastors in the SBC exceeds the demand, so pastors are less likely to leave a stable church position.

-- Some pastors are more reluctant to leave their churches because of financial reasons -- they are making a good salary or they own their own home in the community.

Adding to Lowry's list of factors influencing long pastoral tenures, Smith cited:

-- Educational needs. "Pastors know when they go from one community to the next there is no automatic guarantee there will be a good school system waiting for them. Pastors are parents, too, and they have to consider their children's education," he said.

Shelton agreed, adding: "One of the benefits (of my long tenure) here was that all three of my children went through the same school system from elementary school to high school. I think it provided solidarity both for my family and the church."

-- Health problems. "Some pastors can't just jump up and leave because they or someone in their family is suffering from poor health and needs to be near a certain health center or hospital for treatment," Smith said.

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-- Jobs held by other family members. "Many pastors' wives work; some have to, to make ends meet," Smith said. "Maybe they have good insurance or are in line for a promotion. Or, for example, if the wife is a teacher and it is in the middle of a school year, she would have difficulty finding another position until the next fall. Again, the financial dimensions are there and they have to be considered."

Although all of the above factors may encourage pastors to stay longer at one church, Smith said some congregations don't give their pastors a choice when it comes to length of service.

The most recent statistic on forced terminations -- according to research conducted by the Sunday School Board in 1988 -- showed 116 pastors were being fired each month by Southern Baptist congregations. In addition, a 1990 Sunday School Board survey of churches experiencing serious conflict found almost nine out of 10 resolved their problems with the resignation or firing of the pastor.

"I don't see any sign of those numbers decreasing," Smith said. "Sometimes those terminations are justified, as in cases of moral failure. But sometimes either the pastor or the church members just aren't willing to sit down and try to work things out."

Some congregations, Smith said, also have a "cultural agenda" against long pastoral tenure. "They have kind of a family situation and they are only going to let the pastor do so much (before asking him to move on). Three years is a good while for ministers to stay in those churches."

Morgan Ashworth, pastor of First Baptist Church in Lone Grove near Ardmore, Okla., said he has noticed church conflicts often arise at about the year-and-a-half mark in a pastor's ministry -- when the "honeymoon" stage is over.

"Anytime there is going to be change involved there is going to be a struggle because we get comfortable and we don't like change," he explained. "And I think pastors sometimes get the feeling, 'Hey, I'm not going to fight this anymore. I'm just going to move somewhere else that will maybe be a little easier.' But it isn't always easier. I don't think some people realize how difficult (pastoral) ministry can be."

A pastor's willingness to work through difficult periods with church members can bring rewards, though, said Ashworth, who has been pastor of Lone Grove Church for seven years. Greater openness to pastoral leadership in developing church programs and priorities, an acceptance of one's pastoral role in the community and a more stable family life are all benefits derived from longer tenures in one church, he said.

Longer pastoral tenures also provide unique challenges, Shelton said.

"The longer you stay the harder you have to work to challenge your people. You can solve problems as long as you have the 'followship' of your people, but once you cease to have that, your leadership is nullified."

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EDITORS' NOTE: Following is part two of a three-part series.

Both long, short tenures  
can be successful careers

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press  
2/19/92

LYNCHBURG, Va. (BP)--While Hugh Maynard and Jerry Webb do not know each other, they have common goals and achievements.

Both are musicians, contemporaries in ministry, have successful careers and credit following God's will with their job satisfaction. However, Maynard and Webb have reached the mature years of their careers in very different ways.

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Maynard has been music minister at two churches, having spent the last 26 years at West Lynchburg (Va.) Baptist Church. Webb has worked in 12 churches, including part-time positions while in college and seminary, and was a high school music teacher for four years. He has been at First Baptist Church of Calhoun, Ga., since 1986.

Figures released by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board in 1986 indicate ministers of music average 3.2 years in each church. However, Wesley Forbis, director of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's church music department, said he believes if such data were gathered today, average tenure might be even shorter.

By any comparison, Maynard has stayed in one church for what many ministers would consider an amazing length of time. His first experience out of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., however, would have discouraged most young ministers. He had been in a Florida church for only two months when the pastor resigned. When the new pastor arrived 13 months later, Maynard was removed from his position.

A call to West Lynchburg Baptist Church sent the Maynards from his adopted home and his wife, Carol's, native state.

Discouraged, Maynard recalls he and Carol "had thought the Lord would use us in Florida. We didn't really unpack for the next three years just knowing the Lord would call us back to Florida."

A graduate of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Webb has spent his career in the Southeast and Midwest. With the exception of a move to be nearer his parents when his father's health failed, Webb's progression from one church to another has related to changing circumstances and relationships.

In one situation, he chose to resign without another place of service rather than create additional relationship problems. In every case, he said, he tried to leave in such a way he could go back to visit and feel welcome.

"I feel good about going to visit at any of them (churches)," he said. "Two have invited me back for reunions."

Maynard could not have known a quarter of a century ago he would work with the same organist for 25 years and see members of his children's choirs become members of the adult choir. And although he has had an average of one offer a year to move, he said "only two did I seriously consider."

"On one, I left my resignation with the chairman of deacons at West Lynchburg while I went to my final interview but I just didn't feel it was what the Lord wanted me to do.

"I always felt I shouldn't quit a job until it was through and I guess I never felt I was through here," Maynard reflected. "But I don't mind. The only way we (ministers) climb the ladder of success in worldly terms is to change churches. I've never sought that kind of thing.

"I don't think anyone starts out thinking 'this is it,'" he observed. "We felt confident this was where the Lord called us at that time. When I first came here, I hoped I wouldn't have to leave again because of a change in pastor."

Webb agreed churches "are all different in their styles and customs."

"One particular church would want to use more hymn arrangements and gospel songs, while others preferred classical anthem music," Webb said. "But in all situations, we need to give all of the members something they like. There's not one church music program adaptable to all situations. You have to be flexible."

At age 59, Herb Maynard continues to seek God's will for his career.

"If I felt the Lord was opening up another area for me there would be no hesitancy to go, even with five and a half years left to work!"

And Webb, 56, agreed he is "still open to move if circumstances lead. I serve God; I don't serve a particular church."

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

EDITORS' NOTE: Following is part three of a three-part series.

Youth ministers building  
tenure in their field

By Chip Alford

Baptist Press  
2/19/92

NASHVILLE (BP)--Something is happening to those Southern Baptist men and women who spend their days ministering to young people. They're getting older.

Not only is youth ministers' tenure at individual churches increasing -- the most recent study showed an average stay of 3.2 years -- but a Southern Baptist Sunday School Board consultant claims youth ministers are choosing to stay longer in youth ministry itself.

"In the conferences I do around the country I have seen a dramatic difference in the ages of the youth ministers coming for training in the last five years," Richard Ross, youth ministry consultant for the board's church administration department, said. "They are staying in the field longer. We are getting a lot of folks now in their 40s, and a few, usually two or three at each conference, in their 50s. That is something you would never have seen a few years ago."

Explaining the change, Ross said many youth ministers now are viewing their ministry as a career calling instead of a "stepping-stone" to other church staff positions. He cited a five-year-old Sunday School Board survey in which more than half the full-time youth minister respondents said they anticipated staying in youth ministry another 16 years or more. Ross believes that figure would be even higher if the survey were taken today.

Why are more people deciding to make full-time youth ministry a career in the 1990s? Ross said one key is the changing approach and/or role of the youth minister.

"When (youth ministers) were just babysitting and playing with the kids, they would eventually become bored with their ministry and begin to outgrow it. They would begin to question whether their ministry was making any difference," he explained.

"But now many youth ministers are buying into a concept that says you give about a third of your time to the teen-agers, a third of your time to their parents and a third of your time to your adult leadership team -- the adults in your church who work with the youth. That means the older you get, the more effective you are likely to become with two-thirds of your ministry. The only question is, 'Are you going to lose rapport with the teen-agers?'"

Forty-two-year-old Ross, himself a part-time youth minister, believes the answer to that question could and should be 'no.'

"Sure, teen-agers like someone who can be a best friend, who can be a buddy, someone who can hang out with them. And college-age youth ministers can use that to their advantage. But that is not the only kind of relationship teen-agers are open to," Ross said.

"Many teen-agers today are not from wonderful homes. A great many of them don't fit in well or don't even have contact with adults in the community much. Some don't relate well to adults at school.

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"Teen-agers in that kind of world are likely to warm up to a 50-year-old youth minister who is very affirming, encouraging and loving. They are hungry for that kind of relationship," Ross continued. "They don't necessarily long for a youth minister who looks like them, talks like them and dresses like them."

A 20-year veteran of youth ministry, Larry McGuire admits he doesn't "hang out" much with the teen-agers at his church.

"I take an organizational approach to youth ministry," the 43-year-old minister to youth at First Baptist Church of Plano, Texas, explained. "I work through the program organizations to plan activities, events and programs for our youth."

"In fact, I've always been amazed God has called me to do youth ministry at all. I don't see deep relational skills as my strong point. I come from an engineering background and my personality is such that kids don't exactly flock to me all the time."

"But I think it is important for people to just be themselves. I feel I am a good administrator and coordinator and can enlist others to do the jobs that require strengths I don't have."

McGuire said he encourages other youth ministers to resist the temptation to become "a one-man dog-and-pony show."

"I think there is a real danger in that. You need to involve other people in your work with the young people. If you don't, it hurts your credibility and it can end up making your ministry short-lived," he said.

Another factor which may be encouraging youth ministers to stay longer in their field is improved salaries being offered by some SBC churches.

"In the past we had short tenures partially because youth ministers couldn't support a family on the salaries they were making," Ross said. "For both men and women the salaries were so inadequate that some felt pressured to move into other areas of ministry or leave church work altogether."

SBC churches offering improved salaries for youth ministers, are doing so because they want leaders with maturity, experience and an educational background, Ross said.

"Some churches are tired of the revolving door of youth ministers coming and going," he said. "Because of that they are beginning to say, 'Let's have a salary that would enable a young person to come here (as a youth minister), buy a home, become part of the community, meet normal adult obligations and just stay here.'"

When it comes to youth ministry, staying put is exactly what Ross and McGuire plan to do.

"I enjoy working with teen-agers today more than ever before," Ross said. "It is my intention to stay involved in youth ministry for the rest of my adult life, or at least as long as they'll let me."

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Pioneer Oklahoma Baptists  
honored in hall of fame

By Dave Parker

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--One was a native of Wales, another of Georgia. One was native American and another was an immigrant. All were active Southern Baptists before Oklahoma became a state.

To honor those early pioneers and to give Oklahoma Baptists a better sense of their history and tradition, the Oklahoma Baptist Historical Society in 1991 started the Oklahoma Baptist Hall of Fame.

Retired pastor Anson Justice was instrumental in forming the Hall of Fame, which was first proposed in 1971. At that time, it met opposition from some who felt it was wrong to honor anyone for doing the Lord's work.

In 1990, however, Historical Society members felt they needed a good project to revive interest in state Baptist history and the Hall of Fame was resurrected. To help allay the earlier concerns, nominees are not eligible until 15 years after their death.

There were 10 inductees in 1991 and there will be 10 in 1992, all of whom served before Oklahoma became a state. After 1992, five will be inducted each year.

"The purpose of this is to lead us to appreciate our history and heritage," Justice said. "Too many people in our churches have no idea what it means to be Baptist."

He said his interest in the hall was sparked by his own deep appreciation of history. "I just love our Baptist history and heritage," he said. "I was born in Indian Territory. This is my native home."

Nominations for the 1991 Hall of Fame were received until July, then the Society voted on which ones to induct. Once 10 were selected, members researched the nominees and wrote a brief history of each person. Writers were Justice, former Director of History J. Marvin Gaskin, current Director of History J.D. Dowdell and Justice's son, Laurence, pastor of Hillcrest Baptist Church in Midwest City, Okla.

The histories were submitted to the Baptist Messenger, the state Baptist convention's newsjournal, where they were proofread, edited and printed in a column entitled "Heroes of the Faith."

Also, a banquet was held at the state convention in November to officially induct nominees into the Hall of Fame. Invitations were sent to any known relatives and two inductees were represented by their descendants at the banquet.

Justice said the Hall has been well-received. "I have not heard one negative reaction," he said. In fact, he said one man who had originally opposed the idea later backed it.

"All nominees are chosen on the basis of service," Justice said. "There are positively no quotas relative to sex or race; they are based on merit only. And, since all inductees are dead at least 15 years, there can't be any politicking."

The 1991 inductees were:

-- Almon C. Bacone. Born in Scott, N.Y., he worked at several Indian Territory schools and formed Indian University, which was renamed Bacone College in 1910. The college, located in Muskogee, still has a student body that is largely Cherokee Indian.

-- Jesse Bushyhead. Born in Amohee, Ga., he married a Cherokee woman. In 1838 he led a train of Cherokees on the Trail of Tears to Oklahoma. A gifted statesman and scholar, he helped Sequoyah with the Cherokee alphabet and served on the nation's supreme court. He helped establish the Cherokee Female Seminary at Baptist, Okla., in 1842.

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-- Joseph Islands. Born in Georgia, the Creek Indian went west with the removal to Indian Territory in 1840. He was a gifted preacher who led in the "Great Awakening" of 1845, which brought about an end to persecution of Christians by Creeks.

-- Evan Jones. Born in Wales, he moved to Philadelphia and was appointed a missionary to Cherokees in North Carolina. He led a wagon train on the Trail of Tears and printed the first newspaper in Indian Territory, The Cherokee Messenger. He was a preacher, pastor and evangelist.

-- Chief Charles Journeycake. After becoming Principle Chief of all the Delawares in 1861, he led the final removal of Delawares from Kansas to Indian Territory in 1867-68. Four years later, he was ordained to the Gospel ministry and began evangelizing the Delawares. He led in establishing Delaware Baptist Association in northeastern Oklahoma.

-- Isaac McCoy. Born the son of a Baptist preacher in Fayette, Pa., he was ordained in Indiana and preached the first Baptist sermon in Chicago. In 1832 he organized the first Baptist church in Indian Territory, Muskogee Baptist Church at Ebenezer Station. He organized the American Indian Mission Association in 1842 and was its first secretary.

-- John McIntosh. An ordained minister, he was sent by the Baptist General Convention of Texas to evangelize the Wichita Indians in 1874. He preached the first sermon to the Plains Indians and organized Rock Springs Indian Church of Anadarko.

-- Joseph Samuel Murrow. Sent as Baptist missionary in 1857, he started the first Baptist church among the Seminoles. He was an Indian agent and chaplain of a Seminole Confederate Army regiment, baptizing more than 200 Seminoles during the Civil War. Due to his influence, by 1881 three-fifths of all Seminoles were Baptists. He published two newspapers, The Indian Missionary and The Indian Orphan. He also helped found the Indian Orphans Home in Atoka and Bacone College.

-- Kate Ellett Murrow. Third wife of J.S. Murrow, she continued to serve as a missionary in the American Baptist Home Mission Society even after his death. She traveled from church to church, organizing women's missionary societies and in 1891 was elected first president of the Women's Baptist Missionary Society of the Indian Territory Convention and was corresponding secretary for the women's territorial convention.

-- J.C. Stalcup. Born in Athens, Tenn., he was president of the Baptist General Convention of Indian Territory 1900-03, then as corresponding secretary until it merged with the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma in 1906. He led the BGC0 into "single alignment" with the SBC, ending its affiliation with the Northern Baptist Convention in 1914, and helped found Oklahoma Baptist University.

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Evan Jones of Wales: missionary  
who won Cherokees to Christ

By Dave Parker

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OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--He was born in Wales of Anglican-Methodist parents but Baptist missionary Evan Jones became one of the greatest missionaries ever known to the Cherokee Nation.

Jones was one of 10 early Baptist leaders inducted into the Oklahoma Baptist Hall of Fame in 1991. The Hall of Fame was started by the Oklahoma Baptist Historical Society to honor great Baptist leaders -- and teach church members their history in the process.

Jones moved to Philadelphia in the 1800s to start a new life in the United States at age 33. Within four months, he became a Baptist, was ordained and appointed a missionary to the Cherokees. He reported on the field at Valletown, N.C., Sept. 21, 1821.

When he arrived on the mission field, some Cherokees already had moved west to Indian Territory as part of a voluntary resettlement. But gold was discovered on their land and in 1838 the state of Georgia forcefully began removing them with the help of the U.S. government.

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The Cherokees were driven west on a 300-mile march known as the "Trail of Tears." Of the 16,000 who began the march, 4,000 died on the way of exposure, disease and heartbreak.

At the end of the trail, Jones and one of his converts, Jesse Bushyhead, established a church, built a building and began evangelizing the Cherokees in the new land. They called the church and the town Baptist.

With Bushyhead, Jones started a seminary in Baptist; he also secured a printing press and founded the first newspaper in Indian Territory, The Cherokee Messenger.

The Cherokee Nation, which established its capital in Tahlequah, gave Jones 160 acres of land and he moved the seminary there. Soon the Cherokees were the most literate of all the Indian tribes.

Fluent in the Cherokee language, Jones was a capable translator and interpreter of the Scriptures. He worked with the great Indian leader Sequoyah, who developed the Cherokee alphabet, in establishing schools. Effective as a pastor, preacher and evangelist, he planted numerous churches and his converts became leaders of the Cherokee Nation. Through them, he influenced others for Christ.

Even though he was white and from another country, Jones identified with his adopted people, staying with them through good times and bad. With them he suffered over the Trail of Tears to Indian Territory. He helped them through the Civil War and Reconstruction.

He was their missionary, pastor, counselor, leader and friend for 51 years. The Cherokees trusted his judgment so much that no man could be elected chief without Jones' endorsement.

Because of that trust and confidence, the Jones families were granted full tribal citizenship by the National Council of the Cherokees in 1859. Jones died in 1872 and is buried in the National Cemetery at Tahlequah.