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May 4, 1992

92-77

**CBF focuses on missions,
sets course for future**

By Ken Camp & Orville Scott

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--At its general assembly in Fort Worth, Texas, the fledgling Cooperative Baptist Fellowship adopted a guiding statement for its own missions program, approved an annual missions offering, welcomed four former Southern Baptist missionaries as the fellowship's first "missioners" and approved a \$2.5 million goal for CBF global missions causes in 1993.

About 6,000 persons attended the largest single session of the CBF general assembly, April 30-May 2 at Fort Worth's Tarrant County Convention Center.

The CBF was organized last year in Atlanta, by moderate Southern Baptists who said they have been excluded from significant decision-making roles in the Southern Baptist Convention since conservatives gained control of SBC agencies and institutions.

The fellowship adopted a guiding statement on global missions, stating in part, "Our purpose is to glorify God by leading people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, sharing Christ's love and mercy, and carrying out the Great Commission through inclusive global missions in which all Baptists can participate."

As part of its missions emphasis, the fellowship welcomed its first four missioners: Charles "T" and Kathie Thomas, former Southern Baptist missionaries to Romania, and John David and Jo Ann Hopper of the Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland.

Hopper, president of the Ruschlikon seminary, announced his resignation as a Southern Baptist missionary at a press conference prior to the opening session of the CBF assembly. Trustees of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board last October withdrew the board's \$365,000 annual support for the seminary in Ruschlikon.

In the wake of the trustees' action, Foreign Mission Board President Keith Parks, the board's two top administrators for Europe, Isam Ballenger and Keith Parker, and several other missionaries resigned or retired earlier than they had originally planned.

When Parks, who was not a speaker on the CBF assembly program, was recognized in the crowd by moderator John Hewett of Asheville, N.C., the veteran missionary received a lengthy standing ovation.

Thomas expressed thanks to the fellowship for its support, brought formal greetings from Baptists in Europe and underscored the need for an indigenous approach to global missions.

"Genuine partnership means that sharing Jesus Christ is more important than being American," he said. Echoing the Apostle Paul's words about becoming "all things to all men," Thomas said, "Let's do missions the way Paul did missions -- the biblical way."

Of a total \$2.5 million CBF missions goal approved for 1993, half is devoted to European Baptist projects, with the remainder devoted to urban ministries, ministry with internationals and evangelization of unreached people groups in areas closed to traditional missions outreach.

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The CBF hopes to provide financial support for 20 former Southern Baptist missionaries serving as CBF missionaries in Europe by the end of 1993, according to Jimmy Allen of Big Canoe, Ga., co-chairman of the fellowship's global ministry group. A portion of that financial support will come from a global missions offering, the details of which have not yet been developed.

The fellowship unanimously affirmed the European Baptist Federation's Dorfweil Statement of Principles, which was sent to trustees of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board but, as yet, not affirmed by them.

The statement, drafted last January by leaders of 22 Baptist unions meeting in Dorfweil, Germany, calls for mutual respect, spiritual freedom, moral integrity, genuine consultation and reciprocal sharing in partnerships between European Baptists and missionaries.

Allen called the Dorfweil Statement "a mirror reflection of the spirit of this group," adding, "We come as servants and partners, not as dictators of what you must affirm and believe in order to get our money and support."

The statement is expected to be part of an upcoming consultation between Foreign Mission Board trustees and European Baptists. The consultation has been delayed by European Baptists waiting to see what policies the board will implement and who they will name to fill key personnel vacancies.

The general assembly heard a report from the CBF finance committee that receipts from the fellowship's three giving plans are expected to total more than \$6.5 million in 1992, with about \$5 million directed to traditional SBC programs and the remainder devoted to fellowship operations and causes.

Distancing itself further from the SBC, the CBF assembly voted to revise its "regular" giving plan -- the most conservative of three financial options offered to churches -- to devote more money for fellowship causes and to decrease funding for Southern Baptist entities.

In other business:

-- The CBF endorsed a statement on racial reconciliation, confessing the racist history of Southern Baptists and repenting of that legacy.

-- Hardy Clemons, pastor of First Baptist Church, Greenville, S.C., was chosen as moderator-elect for 1993-94. Patricia Shield Ayres, a layperson from Austin, Texas, is CBF moderator for 1992-93.

-- Cecil Sherman, formerly pastor of Broadway Baptist Church, Fort Worth, was installed as CBF coordinator.

In his message as outgoing CBF moderator, Hewett, pastor of First Baptist Church in Asheville, N.C., said, "God's people are reclaiming the liberty and responsibility of the priesthood of every believer and the autonomy of every local congregation.

"We're restoring accountability to mission action, respectability to theological education and credibility to curriculum.

"We're doing Christian ethics the Baptist way -- with open Bibles, open hearts, open hands and open minds. We hold our meetings in public, with the doors wide open, guarded only by the truth."

Hewett added, "Because we believe Baptists who love the truth, live the truth and preach the truth ought to tell the truth, we're helping strengthen a free and unfettered press."

Hewett read a telegram of greetings from evangelist Billy Graham during the assembly's opening session.

"It is my prayer that the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship will make a significant contribution to renewal in the churches and a renewed emphasis on evangelism and foreign missions," Graham wrote.

Phil Lineberger, immediate past president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas and pastor of First Baptist Church in Tyler, Texas, said, "There has come a time in the lives of free and cooperative Baptists when we have begun to realize that if our lives are going to be lived redemptively, we must make personal, redemptive and daring commitments."

While the CBF met to develop its own mission and shape its own identity, John F. Baugh of Houston called a press conference in a nearby hotel to announce his plan for "reclaiming the heritage" of the SBC.

Baugh, who recently moved his membership from Second Baptist Church of Houston to Tallowood Baptist Church, announced the formation of Southern Baptist Denominational Relations Information, Inc. The goal of the new enterprise, he said, was to help laypersons understand "the ultimate goals of New Age Fundamentalism."

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CBF repents of racist past,
calls for reconciliation

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press
5/4/92

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--As fires blazed and National Guardsmen patrolled the streets of Los Angeles in the aftermath of the Rodney King beating trial verdict, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship endorsed a statement confessing, repenting and renouncing Southern Baptists' legacy of racism.

"We reject forthrightly the racism which has persisted throughout our history as Southern Baptists, even to this present day," the statement said.

Pledging prayers and efforts to work against racism, fellowship participants confessed they were "too white, too middle-class and too insulated from the seething racial problems confronting our society."

By a narrow margin, participants at the CBF General Assembly on May 2 in Fort Worth, Texas, approved the "Statement of Confession of Repentance," introduced by Tim Turnham, pastor of Luther Rice Memorial Baptist Church in Silver Spring, Md. Rather than disputing the intent or language of the statement itself, most debate centered on whether the fellowship should begin the practice of adopting resolutions.

CBF moderator John Hewett of Asheville, N.C., told the assembly the fellowship's administrative committee had decided proposed resolutions on sexuality and ecological concerns should be referred to appropriate "ministry groups" for review. However, he allowed Turnham to offer the statement on race for consideration by the general assembly.

"Keenly aware that the verdicts ... in the cases of four Los Angeles police officers accused in the savage beating of Rodney King have called into question the fundamental integrity of the American system of justice and provoked a wave of violence in cities across the nation, we are compelled to address publicly an issue of profound moral and theological import too long neglected by white Baptists in the South," the statement said.

Noting the Southern Baptist Convention was formed to protect the positions of slave owners, the statement said, "The sins ... committed by our Southern Baptist ancestors remain spiritual blights on the relationship between African-Americans and Caucasian-Americans to the present generation. The time is long overdue for us to repent of these sins."

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Participants at the fellowship assembly stated, "we ... do publicly confess and repent of our historic complicity in condoning and perpetuating the sin of slavery before and after the Civil War and do hereby apologize to all African-Americans for that sin."

The statement also said, "We confess that for too long we have remained aloof to what are now full-fledged crises in our cities, many of which are firmly rooted in racism, and pledge to seek ways and means of working with our Christian sisters and brothers in the African-American churches in addressing the critical needs of all people of color."

Walter Shurden of Macon, Ga., spoke in favor of the resolution, saying it allowed the fellowship to address "the most pressing issue before our nation."

While most participants who spoke against the statement argued against any resolutions, one messenger from Tyler, Texas, said, "I cannot apologize for the sins of my forebears. I cannot repent for them. I'm not a Mormon."

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Ruschlikon seminary president
resigns as SBC missionary

By Orville Scott

Baptist Press
5/4/92

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--In a news conference when John David Hopper and his wife Jo Ann announced their resignations as missionaries of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship moderator John H. Hewett of Asheville, N.C., announced the Hoppers would become missionaries of the new organization of Baptist moderates.

Hopper, who is president of the Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland, said he and his wife were compelled to resign as a result of "a creedal agenda" of Foreign Mission Board trustees "and a reversal of the honored and effective mission principles of partnership and cooperation with which we have worked in Europe."

Since Europeans bear financial responsibility for the guidance of the school in Ruschlikon, Switzerland, "I alone cannot force any agenda or creed on the school, nor would I want to. This, in my opinion, is not the Baptist way."

European Baptists are dedicated to the Bible and to the task of bringing Christ to the people of Europe, Hopper said. "They want to be respected partners with the world's Baptists in the global evangelistic effort," he said.

Hopper said that against the advice of FMB President R. Keith Parks and the board's European staff, and without consultation with European Baptists, a majority of foreign mission board trustees broke two of three commitments made by the board in 1988.

These commitments, he said, were to support the Ruschlikon seminary with a full subsidy, ending with the amount of \$365,000 in 1992, and a gradual reduction of this support for up to 15 years to allow for proper financial transition of the seminary to European Baptists.

Foreign Mission Board trustees voted last October to cancel all financial support to the seminary, beginning in 1992.

Trustees, who had disagreed on the seminary's theological stance for years, felt the seminary showed it was continuing in a "liberal" direction by allowing Glenn Hinson, a professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., to teach there on sabbatic leave. At the time, trustee Ron Wilson, pastor of First Baptist Church in Thousand Oaks, Calif., said the seminary and its leaders had neglected to keep promises made in 1978 and 1983 regarding a more conservative philosophy for the school.

Hopper said, "Friends for Ruschlikon across the United States have more than replaced the funds which the FMB denied us."

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Hewett called Europe the first in what CBF hopes will be many steps in missions "at a time when walls are dropping all over Europe."

Emphasizing commitment to the principle of indigenization in missions, he said, "Our goal is not to go to make Baptists of the South of these people. We sometimes forget there were Baptists in Europe before there were in America."

Hopper said, depending on how hard the Foreign Mission Board pushes its new agenda, he expects to see 15-20 resignations among the 260 SBC missionaries in Europe.

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Baptist Women in Ministry urged
to minister despite barriers

By Orville Scott

Baptist Press
5/4/92

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Southern Baptist Women in the Ministry were urged at their annual meeting in Fort Worth April 30 not to allow labels and artificial barriers to keep them from ministering.

Their newly elected president, Carolyn Hale, associate pastor of Faith Baptist Church in Georgetown, Ky., cited as a barrier the term "inerrancy" of the Scriptures used as a rallying cry by conservatives to gain control of the 15-million-member Southern Baptist Convention.

Hale said a couple who inquired about membership in the church she serves asked about the church's stance on inerrancy. She explained to them the church adheres to the Baptist Faith and Message but the couple left.

She concluded they did not return because she did not say she believed in "inerrancy."

"We show our love for God by how we treat one another," she told more than 100 women and men at Broadway Baptist Church.

"We still need to be a voice for women. Where injustice exists, we need to be a voice against it."

Hale urged the women to be mentors for women and men who feel called to the Lord's ministry.

Other new officers elected by Southern Baptist Women in the Ministry include vice president Terry Huneycutt, minister of education at Greenwood Forest Baptist Church in Carey, N.C.; treasurer Philip Christopher, pastor of Highland Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky.; recording secretary Dixie Lea Petrey, deacon at First Baptist Church in Knoxville, Tenn; and membership chairman Mary Zimmerman, who on June 1 will become assistant to the dean of Christian education at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

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New NBC documentary to premiere
via satellite in five sites

By Doug Dillard

Baptist Press
5/4/92

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--"New Pioneers," an NBC documentary produced by the Radio and Television Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, will stage premiere benefit showings in five cities May 19, according to Bob Thornton, vice president for television production for the RTVC.

"New Pioneers" begins airing on NBC television affiliates Sunday, May 24. Viewers are urged to check local listings for times and stations.

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Confirmed sites for the May 19 premieres include Ridgecrest Baptist Church in Montgomery, Ala.; Olive Baptist Church in Pensacola, Fla.; Calvary Baptist Church in Alexandria, La.; and First Baptist Church in Paducah, Ky.; in addition to the RTVC communications center in Fort Worth. Each premiere begins at 5:30 p.m. Central, 6:30 p.m. Eastern, with a reception and brief program. A half-hour later the special will be beamed by satellite to each location.

"The unique multiple-site showing grows out of the nature of the program. It focuses on the aging of America and the powerful impact retirees are making as volunteers in humanitarian causes," Thornton explained. Veteran stage, film and television actor Joseph Campanella is host for the documentary and will participate in the premiere.

The commission's unprecedented opportunity to begin broadcasts this summer to as many as 110 million Russians also will be presented at the premieres. "We believe many of those attending will want to participate in making it possible to translate and dub the two to seven hours of weekly programming now being prepared for Russia," Thornton said.

Stories in "New Pioneers" range from retired preacher and educator W.E. "Bill" Thorn, who retired years ago but still fills more than 300 speaking engagements a year as a humorist, to the Shepherd's Center retirement facilities in Kansas City, Mo., where the retirees themselves organize and staff their own recreation and ministry activities."

The title, "New Pioneers," was inspired by the words of Joseph Campanella, according to Rosser McDonald, producer and director of the documentary. Campanella observed, "Developments in science and in society are changing the significance of counting years. Actually, we're being led into fresh lifestyles by a generation of new pioneers."

There is a poignant segment in the special in which a gathering of campers is compared to the covered wagons of pioneers crossing the great American West. They have converged on a huge retirement center in Texas' Lower Rio Grande Valley, not for retirement, but for a medical mission to the underprivileged on both sides of the Texas-New Mexico border.

"We are confident all senior citizens will be inspired to new levels of involvement by this," said Thornton, "and churches will find models to mobilize elderly members in ministries as well as models for ministries to them."

One such model featured in "New Pioneers" is Green Acres Baptist Church in Tyler, Texas, which reaches almost a thousand seniors and involves them in active ministries to others. Because of the great untapped potential for ministry they represent, Thornton said each premiere host has urged neighboring churches of all denominations to attend.

And since TV stations often schedule their documentaries when many are attending church services, Thornton said, the RTVC is making the special available on videotapes which may be ordered at modest cost after NBC has aired the program.

Thornton expressed hope the multiple premieres can be a model for still wider coverage on future RTVC documentaries produced for ABC and NBC through the commission's participation in the Interfaith Broadcasting Commission, Inc.

"This is a significant witness and a multiplier of our mission efforts," said Thornton said. RTVC's most recent ABC special, the Christmas Eve showing of "Night of Nights," was a Christmas pageant from First Baptist Church in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., to what was potentially the largest worldwide audience ever to see an RTVC program, he said.

"The air time for that special cost Baptists nothing," he said. "It was aired just after Nightline by 89 percent of ABC's affiliates, some of whom reran it on Christmas day. And it ran nationwide in Japan on NHK television, plus worldwide exposure on Armed Forces television."

Thornton also noted the networks, which once provided production expenses of as much as \$250,000 per special, have cut that supply in an economy move. "We struggle to produce these on a shoestring," he said, "but the multiplication of the gospel message through this powerful medium makes it worth the sacrifice."

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(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Radio and Television Commission.

Patterson meets students, faculty
in visit to Southeastern

By Jon Walker

Baptist Press
5/4/92

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Paige Patterson, nominated as the next president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, visited the North Carolina campus April 28-30 to meet with administrators, faculty and students.

While addressing students April 29, Patterson said he would consider students uneducated if they graduated unaware of other viewpoints. He said he no problem with professors "presenting" various points of view within the classroom. His concern is when professors "advocate" a point of view different from the constituency who hired them.

Second-year divinity student Joe Haigler, originally concerned about the Patterson nomination, said, "If he sticks to the academic freedom promised at the (student) forum, then he's OK with me."

Patterson said he is excited about Southeastern's location and the school's ability to influence the entire East Coast. He said he could envision a student population of 3,000-4,000 with spiritual renewal "resonating" from the campus.

While meeting with faculty, Patterson said he viewed student and faculty recruitment, academic accreditation and building endowment as the seminary's four greatest needs. Patterson said, if elected president, his top priority would be the seminary. However, he said he intends to remain involved in other Southern Baptist issues.

Southeastern professor Wayne McDill said the visit may not have changed the minds of those opposed to Patterson, but they were able to meet a man with a "winsome, delightful" personality who was "unthreatened by differences of opinion."

Another faculty member said Patterson told him, "If everything that had been printed about me was true, I wouldn't like me either."

Second-year divinity student and pastor Larry Burns said Patterson is not the person portrayed in the media. Burns said he is personable and fits the criteria necessary to be president of Southeastern.

A few students continued to express concern about Patterson's nomination. Third-year divinity student Lynn Porter Horne said she was glad to be graduating.

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SBC Conference of the Blind
sets August meeting in Nashville

Baptist Press
5/4/92

NASHVILLE (BP)--The third meeting of the Southern Baptist Conference of the Blind is scheduled Aug. 14-16 in Nashville.

The conference, which will meet at the Clubhouse Inn, 920 Broadway, will hear an update on a Southern Baptist inter-agency task force appointed to work for a strengthened emphasis on ministry with blind and other disabled Southern Baptists, according to conference president Charles Couey, director of blind ministries at Park Avenue Baptist Church in Nashville.

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The task force was appointed after the Conference of the Blind last year asked the Home Mission Board for changes in its program statement in Christian social ministries for work with the blind. The task force has had one meeting and currently is seeking data on as many blind and visually impaired Southern Baptist as possible, Couey said.

A report on deliberations at the Sunday School Board on transcribing the new Baptist Hymnal into braille also will be presented during the conference.

The conference also wants to utilize leadership skills of blind and visually impaired Southern Baptists not yet active in its work, Couey said.

Room rates at the Clubhouse Inn are \$52 per night, single or double occupancy. If there are three or more in a room, children 12 and under are free and people over 12 are charged a rate of \$10 per night. Room rates include a buffet breakfast.

For reservations write or call Jim Keenan, Clubhouse Inn, 920 Broadway, Nashville, TN 37203; (615) 244-0150.

People unable to attend the conference but wanting their names included in the list of blind and visually impaired Southern Baptists should write to Couey at 103 Brenda Lane, Antioch, TN 37013. Braille, print or tape are all acceptable means of writing.

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Sunday school literature
available in braille

Baptist Press
5/4/92

NASHVILLE (BP)--Several editions of Southern Baptist Sunday School literature in braille have been made available for purchase from Park Avenue Baptist Church's ministry to the blind in Nashville.

The lesson materials are prepared and shipped weekly for a cost recovery price of \$9.75 per quarter, according to Charles Couey, the church's director of blind ministries. Appropriate copyright permission has been obtained from the Sunday School Board, he said.

Materials available in braille are Bible Book Study Adult Teacher; Youth in Discovery and Bible Study Cards; Bible Searchers, the pupil booklet; Preschool Bible Teacher C and the Growing leaflets.

Churches or persons interested in receiving any of the materials should contact Couey at Park Avenue Baptist Church, 4301 Charlotte Avenue, Nashville, TN 37209. Correspondence in print or braille may be used. Checks should be made payable to Park Avenue Baptist Church and noted for Braille SS Literature.

For blind and visually impaired Southern Baptists attending the June 9-11 meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Indianapolis, a braille copy of the SBC agenda will be available at registration, Couey added.

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TIME correspondent discusses
faith at Houston Baptist Univ.

Baptist Press
5/4/92

HOUSTON (BP)--The idea of "Christian ministry" is a redundancy, TIME magazine's senior foreign correspondent told a Houston Baptist University audience.

David Aikman, who has worked as TIME bureau chief in Moscow, Beijing, West Berlin and Jerusalem, said all Christians are in ministry as a result of their salvation. "I believe the Lord called me to journalism and I am constantly telling others of my Christian faith," Aikman said during HBU's Spirit of Excellence Award Dinner April 28.

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An evangelical Christian since age 21, Aikman told of instances when he felt an angelic or supernatural security in assignments in heavily guarded former Soviet territories, Vietnam and other hot spots. At times in dangerous situations, he said, he was shuffled away at just the right moment or taken in by a compassionate family. He credited the prayers of fellow Christians for such protection.

His faith also has buffeted the cynicism he sometimes feels as a journalist. "It has ... kept me from wondering why I am here," Aikman said.

Aikman encouraged the audience to continue growing as Christians. "It is important in our own walks of faith to take time to smell the flowers," but "if we stop walking or moving, we will never come to the next rosebush," he said.

A native of England, Aikman has worked for TIME for 20 years, covering assignments in more than 50 countries on five continents.

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Rhonda Lester, newswriter for Houston Baptist University, provided information for this report.

Historical Commission celebrates
missions heritage, looks to future By Carol Woodfin

Baptist Press
5/4/92

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--"If Southern Baptists are to be faithful to the reason for being and doing church there is no alternative to doing missions," a Baptist leader told participants at the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Historical Commission and the Southern Baptist Historical Society.

More than 220 people met in Birmingham April 28-29 to celebrate the theme "World Missions: Two Centuries of Baptist Achievement." The conference, hosted jointly by Samford University and Woman's Missionary Union, drew historians, educators, archivists, home and foreign missions personnel and others to mark the 200th anniversary of the founding of the Baptist Missionary Society and the sending of William Carey to India. Reginald G.S. Harvey, general secretary of the BMS, sent video greetings to the assembly.

William R. O'Brien, director of Samford's Global Strategies Center, addressed the question: "Why Do Missions in the 21st Century?" "The needs of the world are almost overwhelming," he said, citing 1.2 billion people who have never had opportunity to hear and respond to the gospel.

The mission of God today and in the 21st century should be the yardstick by which the church measures itself, he said. But he stated: "If (missions) is only an opportunity to project a programmatic and dogma-controlled agenda into non-Christian cultures, probably Southern Baptists should recall their missionaries with the turn of the millennial dial." O'Brien concluded, "If we can be sensitive to the mission and movement of God, we can experience the pruning and correctives necessary to be adaptable, usable servants."

Charles L. Chaney, Home Mission Board vice president for extension, answered the question, "Why Do Missions in the 21st Century?: A Home Missions Perspective." In what he termed the "Babylonian captivity of the Great Commission," Chaney claimed: "The distinction made in this country, since about 1820, between 'home' and 'foreign' missions is fractious and fictitious ... (and) has led to a distorted view of the mission of the church." The "need to make disciples and gather believers into churches is the same at 'home' or 'abroad'," Chaney said.

He noted the massive "revolution" in the SBC over the past century "from a sectional, white, English-speaking denomination in cultural captivity to a national, multiracial, multiethnic denomination involved in cultural permeation." The 21st century will bring equally dramatic changes, he predicted.

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Justice C. Anderson, director of the World Mission Evangelism Center and professor of missions at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, outlined "Changing Patterns of World Mission Work" since the beginning of the Foreign Mission Board in 1845.

Nineteenth-century missionaries showed "impressive commitment, but a minimum of cross-cultural mentality," Anderson said. Since World War II, he said, Southern Baptist missions philosophy has generally shifted "from paternalism to partnership." But, he said, "The kind of global partnership needed will be possible only on the basis of honest recognition of cultural differences and real willingness to learn from one another across cultural barriers."

Churches in countries once considered "objects of missions from Europe and North America" are now sending missionaries, Anderson said. Christians in Africa, Asia, and South America "insist on being participants in the mission," he said. And countries once closed to Carey's movement -- such as the former Soviet Union and Albania -- are requesting missionaries. Christianity has survived and even thrived under regimes which sought to eliminate it, he said.

Meanwhile, Western Europe and the United States, the countries from which Carey's mission movement spread, are now mission fields, Anderson said. "Western culture has become the most resistant to the gospel."

Anderson warned against what he termed an "alarming trend" in "the move from staff administration to board direction" in several SBC boards. He claimed "missiological disasters" can result when trustees "inexperienced in cross-cultural matters ... usurp the legitimate place of the elected staff ... of cross-cultural experts."

"A lack of local church missionary education, a lack of trust spawned by the denominational controversy and a lack of stewardship by a new generation of Southern Baptists are threatening to dismantle the SBC missions structure at the precise moment of its greatest opportunity," Anderson claimed.

"Missions has been called the largest word in the Baptist vocabulary," observed H. Leon McBeth, professor of church history at Southwestern Seminary. "No other ministry has done more to define who Baptists are and what we are about," he said.

But Baptists were not always missions-minded, McBeth claimed, speaking on "The Legacy of the Baptist Missionary Society." English Baptists went 183 years without organized missions work and Baptists in America waited 175 years before sending their first overseas missionaries. Baptists often held the view that the Great Commission applied only to the apostles' generation and not to modern Christians.

William Carey was pivotal in changing that view. His constant pressure and challenge to Baptists to take the Great Commission seriously led to the formation in October 1792 of the Baptist Missionary Society, which still sends missionaries today. "This proved to be a major turning point in Baptist history and indeed in all Christian history with the launching of the world missions movement," McBeth said.

Carolyn Weatherford Crumpler, executive director of the North American Baptist Fellowship, recalled "The Role of Women in Baptist Missions." "From the beginning," she said, "women have played a phenomenal role." Many felt a strong sense of call. Others, such as Dorothy Carey, suffered for a cause to which their husbands -- and not they -- were committed, Crumpler said.

"William Carey was not the solitary figure in the beginning of the era of missions," she noted, explaining it was in the parlor of Mrs. Beeby Wallis in Kettering, England, that a group of young men met to pray and form the Baptist Missionary Society. Crumpler observed: "Perhaps the Widow Wallis had unwittingly set the pattern for women, that of prayer support for the missions effort."

A century after William Carey, women outnumbered men in the missions force by two to one, Crumpler said.

Southern Baptists must continue to further missions education in the churches, utilize the full potential of women, strengthen missions and theological education in the seminaries for both women and men and appoint more women missionaries. "Never before in history have doors been as wide open for missions. . . . Southern Baptist women must rise to the challenge," Crumpler said.

Eljee Bentley, WMU retired archivist, spoke on "Personal Responses to the Call to World Missions." She noted 20th century women have responded in a variety of ways, which reflect the changing role of women as well as the growth of opportunities for service.

The magazine Royal Service, published by the WMU since 1914, has played an important role in missions education, encouraging women to respond to the call to missions and reflecting ways they have responded. Women in the magazine's first decade, Bentley recounted, sought to remedy some of the ills of society through Good Will Centers, mothers clubs and industrial schools. Financial crises of the 1930s forced Southern Baptists to curb their missions effort. "Readers were no longer urged to change the world," Bentley said, "but asked to 'realize that the faith that moves mountains may abide in your tiny mustard seeds of trusting, faithful, hopeful effort.'"

The dominant message in the 1950s, according to Bentley, "was not to do but to be." Women were to provide an example of "unselfish constructive Christian living." The years after World War II saw tremendous missions advance for Southern Baptists. Readers of Royal Service could enlist missionaries through prayer, teaching missions in churches and "by being good mothers."

Volunteer and other short-term opportunities since the 1970s have provided women an outlet for service in addition to career missions. Women have increased missions awareness at home as they wrote and spoke about their experiences, Bentley said.

The Historical Commission presented three awards for excellence in Baptist history. Lee Norcross Allen received the distinguished service award for outstanding contributions to Baptist history. Allen, professor of history at Samford University since 1961 and currently university historian, has written numerous books on Alabama Baptists, including the history of the Birmingham Association and First Baptist Church of Montgomery. He is currently working on the third volume of the history of Samford. Allen has been editor of The Alabama Baptist Historian since 1990 and is a former president of both the Alabama Baptist Historical Society and the Southern Baptist Historical Society,

He was recognized for "promoting the high ideals of our Baptist heritage, in building the quality of Baptist history programs and especially in ministering to Alabama Baptist institutions, churches, associations and individuals."

The Alabama Baptist Historical Commission received the Davis C. Woolley Award for outstanding achievement in state Baptist history work. During 1991 the ABHC celebrated its 25th anniversary, participated in Samford's Sesquicentennial, served as consultant to the new Alabama Baptist Children's Home Museum, assisted churches celebrating 100th and 125th anniversaries and distributed more than 2,500 "Alabama Baptist Heritage Tour" brochures at highway welcome centers.

The Norman W. Cox Award for the best article published by the Historical Commission in 1991 went to Bryan Thomas Ross, history teacher at West Hills High School in El Cajon, California. Ross's article, "'Rouse! Stand! and Take the Alarm!': Baptist Justifications for the American Revolution," appeared in the October 1991 Baptist History and Heritage.

In its April 27 business session, the Historical Commission approved a revised 1992-93 budget of \$630,482, down from the proposed \$672,462 due to a reduction in Cooperative Program allocations by the SBC Executive Committee. The commission approved a projected 1993-94 budget of \$647,274, including a Cooperation Program allocation request of \$564,724.

Commissioners elected 1992-93 officers: Marlene Rikard, professor of history at Samford, chair; Slayden A. Yarbrough, professor of religion at Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee, Okla., vice-chair; Johanna M. Dawson, past president, Woman's Missionary Union, New Mexico, recording secretary; and Lynn E. May Jr., executive director of the Historical Commission, treasurer.

The Southern Baptist Historical Society met jointly with the commission April 28-29 and reported a current membership of 856. The society elected Fred Anderson, executive director of the Virginia Baptist Historical Society in Richmond, president; Kathy L. Sylvest, associate director/archivist of the Louisiana Baptist Convention communications department, vice president; and May, treasurer.

Next year's Historical Commission and society meeting is scheduled April 26-28 in Nashville under the theme "Baptists and the News Media."

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Religion in South changing,
Leonard tells Samford audience

By Mary Wimberly

Baptist Press
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BIRMINGHAM (BP)--Religion in the American South is changing, Bill J. Leonard said at Samford University as he profiled southern religious life as it might appear beyond the year 2000.

"Southern religious traditions, even if they change more slowly, will change dramatically in the next decade," he predicted. "Those who institutionally or individually fail to recognize and prepare for the dramatic transitions which lie ahead will simply be carried along by forces they cannot control and choose not to understand."

Leonard, professor of religion at Samford, was a participant in Samford's "Celebration of the South" activities. The series of lectures and forums April 27-29 was an event of the Samford Sesquicentennial celebrating the school's 150th anniversary.

While certain aspects of religious life and thought are distinctively southern, those distinctives are increasingly less discernable, he noted. Religion in the South has become more generically American in the last decade. "The South, like other regions of the country, has been impacted by what might be called the MTVing or the Wal-martization of the American nation in which everything from shopping centers to rock videos contribute to a generic national culture.

"Southern religious life is currently in a state of transition if not major reorientation. We are living between the times, experiencing the end of one era and the beginning of another."

Leonard examined three basic categories of change: constituency, community and theology/spirituality.

"Southern churches face a society in which the number of nonaffiliated is increasing, where members have a more 'fluid' sense of denominational identity and where religious consumerism sets a powerful agenda with far-reaching institutional and theological implications," he said.

As denominational loyalties decline, Leonard observed, churches must find new ways to establish, develop and nurture Christian community. "Changing realities in contemporary culture mean that churches must reevaluate the way in which community gathers for worship, prayer, study and mission. Nurturing and sustaining community requires major reorientation of religious life in the South in the next century," he said.

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"Southern churches of all sizes will feel pressure to accept or respond to the megachurch agenda, adapting ministries and services to specific constituencies. Modifications in ecclesiastical communities mean that a growing number of southern churches will wear denominational affiliation more loosely than ever before."

In the latter days of the 20th century, he said, "Theological liberals and theological conservatives alike have lost their ability to address and provide meaningful response to the spiritual concerns of our time. Both are increasingly unable to speak to the issues of our time.

"Theological debates are important but not always pertinent, particularly when they distract the church from the spirit and its mission in the world. In Christian history, when rationalism gets out of hand, a renewal often follows," he said. A renewed spirituality could enhance the church's response to the issues of race, gender, the laity and pressing humanitarian concerns which will confront southern Americans, he noted.

Southerners, like other religious Americans, now live between the times theologically and spiritually. "They exist in a post-enlightenment, post-evangelical era," he said. "Theologians, dogmaticians, rationalists and propositionalists would do well to recognize this reality."

Until theological debates and rationalistic excesses are tempered by a renewed spirituality, denominational and congregational unrest will continue to dominate the ecclesiastical environment of the South, Leonard predicted.

Southern education institutions which claim the appellation "Christian" would do well to re-examine that identity in light of the massive cultural, ecclesiastical and even spiritual transitions already upon us, he said.

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