



-- BAPTIST PRESS
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES
Historical Commission, SBC
Nashville, Tennessee

SBC will celebrate 150th year,

hear Graham, vote on structure

By Herb Hollinger

Baptist Press

3/22/95

ATLANTA (BP)--Messengers to the 138th session of the Southern Baptist Convention will celebrate the denomination's 150th anniversary, hear evangelist Billy Graham and take a first vote on whether to reduce the size of the SBC structure.

The annual meeting of the nation's largest evangelical body, June 20-22 in the Georgia Dome in Atlanta, also will elect a president, conduct other business and hear devotions on the theme from Matthew 28:19-20, "Empowered for The Unfinished Task."

Although the sesquicentennial celebration promises to be entertaining and inspiring with special presentations the evenings of June 20-21, interest also will center around a proposal to reduce the denomination's 19 agencies to 12.

And to conclude the historic meeting, the most well-known Southern Baptist, evangelist Billy Graham, will close the meeting June 22. Longtime co-worker and friend, George Beverly Shea, will provide the special music prior to Graham's sermon, as he has done for decades in Graham crusades.

President Jim Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla., has announced he will allow his nomination for a traditional second one-year term, apparently without opposition.

As has become the tradition at these large once-a-year meetings, an evangelistic campaign, "Crossover Atlanta," will precede the convention meeting as will a host of smaller meetings such as the Pastor's Conference and the Woman's Missionary Union annual meeting.

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Because of the anniversary celebration, the proposal to reduce the number of agencies and Graham's appearance, organizers are expecting more than 25,000 messengers plus guests to attend.

The proposal to reduce the size of the SBC's structure comes from a study commissioned by the Executive Committee in response to a referred motion at the 1993 SBC annual meeting. The committee approved it in February and recommended it to the annual meeting. Because it would dramatically change the convention's structure, it will take approval by messengers at two SBC annual meetings -- at Atlanta and next year in New Orleans. That proposal will be submitted during the Executive Committee's report at 10 a.m. June 20.

Some of Southern Baptists' most visible personalities will bring theme devotions: Robert E. Naylor, former Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary president; W.A. Criswell, senior pastor emeritus of First Baptist Church, Dallas; Herschel H. Hobbs, pastor emeritus, First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City; James L. Sullivan, retired president of the Sunday School Board; Roy J. Fish, professor of evangelism at Southwestern Seminary; Alma Hunt, former executive secretary of the Woman's Missionary Union; Paige Patterson, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary; layman Greg Horton, Simpsonville, S.C.; and Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the Executive Committee.

The convention sermon Wednesday morning will be given by R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. The president's address will be Tuesday morning.

The first election of officers is slated for 2:40 p.m. Tuesday followed that evening by a "Sesquicentennial Presentation," Part I, which will take a "look at the past through music and drama." Part II will be a joint presentation the next night by the Foreign and Home Mission boards, titled "A Challenge for the Future."

The three-day meeting will be kicked off at 8:15 a.m. Tuesday by the adult choir and orchestra of First Baptist Church, Orlando, led by Ragan M. Vandegriff III, director. A variety of music will be heard by the messengers, coordinated by John V. Glover Jr., convention music director and minister of music at First Baptist Church, Atlanta. John Innes, director of keyboard ministry at First Baptist, Atlanta, and Gary Menzies, pianist at Peachtree Corners Baptist Church, Norcross, Ga., will be the convention's organist and pianist, respectively.

The end of the meeting will come following Graham's sermon Thursday about noon with the benediction by Alan Cox, pastor, First Baptist Church, Moore, Okla.

Atlanta's Georgia Dome, site of major athletic and entertainment events, will host the SBC meeting for the first time. The playing field will be split, with the front platform sitting about on the 50-yard line. With seating on the floor, organizers hope to accommodate about 30,000 in the Dome. Last year in Orlando, Fla., there were more than 20,000 messengers.

The SBC met last in Atlanta in 1991 but the Dome was under construction and the meetings were held in the adjacent Georgia World Congress Center. The exhibits, offices and some smaller meetings will again be held at the GWCC.

Organizers said hotel rooms are still available in the Atlanta area, but to guarantee reservations the SBC housing form needs to be returned. Because of some possible construction work with Atlanta's 1996 Olympics, convention-goers also are encouraged to use Atlanta's Metropolitan Area Rapid Transit (MARTA) system which has a stop in front of the Dome.

Food service is planned in the Dome and Congress Center for lunches and dinners at reasonable prices, a spokesman said.

'95 SBC logistics changed
from last time in Atlanta

By Art Toalston

ATLANTA (BP)--It won't be the same Atlanta as 1991 when the Southern Baptist Convention last convened here.

The 1995 SBC annual sessions will be in the new Georgia Dome, June 20-22, not the adjacent Georgia World Congress Center, where the SBC met in '91.

Additionally, Atlanta will be spotted with construction projects for the Olympic Games slated for the summer of 1996.

Construction could tie up International Drive, a key traffic artery for the Dome and GWCC, where the SBC exhibits will be housed in Hall D, noted Jack Wilkerson, SBC convention manager and Executive Committee vice president for business and finance.

A key alternative for messengers from Atlanta hotels to the Dome and GWCC will be Atlanta's mass transit system, MARTA, Wilkerson advised.

Special four-, five- or six-day MARTA passes for unlimited travel will be available at \$8, \$9 and \$10, respectively, he said. Advance order blanks will be in the April issue of SBC Life journal or can be requested by writing to MARTA Marketing-SBC, 2424 Piedmont Road, Atlanta, GA 30324. All requests must be received by June 1. MARTA passes also will be sold in the vicinity of the SBC registration area in the Dome.

Otherwise, each MARTA trip costs \$1.25.

Messengers and others riding MARTA to SBC sessions should exit MARTA at the Omni/Dome/GWCC station -- the first stop, W1, on MARTA's west line -- and enter the Dome through Gates C and D. The SBC registration area will be at the lower level of the Dome at Gate C.

On other logistics for the '95 SBC meeting in Atlanta, Wilkerson said:

-- Parking will cost \$6 per day at the Dome/GWCC parking decks; \$4 per day at the "Green" lot on Northside Drive; and varying amounts at independently owned lots in the vicinity.

-- Food will be sold at concession stands in the Dome; restaurants in the GWCC; and the food court of the nearby CNN Center/Omni hotel.

-- To visit the exhibit area from the Dome, exit Gate C for GWCC's Hall D.

-- A day camp for children who have completed grades one through six, available by pre-registration only, is operated by the Brotherhood Commission, at (901) 272-2461, with registration to be confirmed on site during the SBC.

-- Registration forms for on-site child care for preschool children of out-of-town messengers are available by writing to: SBC Preschool Child Care, c/o Briarlake Baptist Church, 3715 LaVista Road, Decatur, GA 30033. Included with the registration form will be sessions available and a medical form. Cost is \$10 per child per session. Each registration form must be accompanied by a non-refundable deposit of 50 percent of the anticipated cost. Child care registration will be confirmed on a first-come, first-served basis.

-- The telephone number for the SBC office at the convention will be (404) 865-7300.

SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

Annual Meeting
June 20-22, 1995

Georgia Dome
Atlanta

Theme: Empowered for The Unfinished Task

Scripture: Matthew 28:19-20

Tuesday Morning, June 20

- 8:15 Music for Inspiration -- Adult Choir and Orchestra, First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla., Ragan M. Vandegriff III, minister of music, director
- 8:30 Call to Order
Congregational Singing -- John V. Glover Jr., convention music director, minister of music, First Baptist Church, Atlanta; John Innes, convention organist, director of keyboard ministry, First Baptist Church, Atlanta; Gary Menzies, convention pianist, pianist, Peachtree Corners Baptist Church, Norcross, Ga.
Prayer -- Jim D. Prock, pastor, Central Baptist Church, Clovis, N.M.
- 8:35 Registration Report and Constitution of Convention -- Lee Porter, SBC registration secretary, Panama City, Fla.
- 8:40 Committee on Order of Business (First report) -- Fred Powell, chairman, president, Communicator Ministries, Inc., Richmond, Mo.
- 8:45 Welcome -- Larry W. Wynn, pastor, Hebron Baptist Church, Dacula, Ga.
- 8:50 Response -- Paul Box, retired foreign missionary, Oklahoma City
- 8:55 Announcement of Committee on Committees, Credentials, Resolutions, and Tellers
- 9:00 Crossover Atlanta -- Darrell W. Robinson, vice president, evangelism, Home Mission Board, Atlanta
- 9:05 Theme Devotion -- Empowered in our Cooperation, Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer, Executive Committee, Nashville, Tenn.
- 9:15 Report -- Denominational Press, Herb Hollinger, vice president for convention news, Executive Committee, Nashville, Tenn.
- 9:25 Report -- Commission on The American Baptist Theological Seminary, Stephen P. Carleton, secretary/treasurer, Nashville, Tenn.
- 9:35 Introduction of Business and Resolutions
- 9:50 Theme Devotion -- Empowered in the Churches, Robert E. Naylor, president emeritus, Southwestern Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas
- 10:00 Report -- Executive Committee (Part 1), Morris H. Chapman
- 10:55 Report -- Stewardship Commission, Ronald E. Chandler, president, Nashville, Tenn.
- 11:05 Congregational Singing -- Larry McFadden, music evangelist, Orlando, Fla.
- 11:10 Special Music -- Adult Choir and Orchestra, First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla.
- 11:15 Special Music -- Kitty Henry Campbell, soloist, First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla.
- 11:20 President's Address -- James B. "Jim" Henry, SBC president, pastor, First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla.
- 12:00 Benediction -- Bruce A. Perkins, pastor, Memorial Baptist Church, Grapevine, Texas

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Tuesday Afternoon, June 20

- 1:00 Music for Inspiration -- The Specks, music evangelists, Owaso, Okla.
 1:10 Music for Inspiration -- The Stone Brothers, music evangelists, Huntsville, Ala.
 1:20 Congregational Singing -- Bud Lee, music evangelist, Blue Springs, Mo.
 Prayer -- John L. Dees, pastor, Willowbrook Baptist Church, Huntsville, Ala.
 1:25 Business
 Committee on Order of Business (Second Report) -- Fred Powell
 Introduction of Business and Resolutions
 1:35 Theme Devotion -- Empowered in the Scriptures, W.A. Criswell, senior pastor emeritus, First Baptist Church, Dallas
 1:45 Report -- Southern Baptist Foundation, Hollis E. Johnson III, president, Nashville, Tenn.
 1:55 Congregational Singing -- Irvin Pearre Jr., minister of music, First Baptist Church, Jonesboro, Ga.
 2:00 Report -- Radio and Television Commission, Jack B. Johnson, president, Fort Worth, Texas
 2:10 Messenger Information Survey -- David W. Atchison, SBC recording secretary, director, Turning Point Ministries, Brentwood, Tenn.
 2:20 Introduction of Fraternal Representatives
 2:30 Committee on Nominations Report -- Bob Hutcherson, chairman, pastor, First Baptist Church, Austell, Ga.
 2:40 Election of Officers (First)
 2:55 Executive Committee Report (Part 2) -- Morris H. Chapman
 3:55 Theme Devotion -- Empowered in our Distinctives, Herschel H. Hobbs, pastor emeritus, First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City
 4:05 Special Music -- The Fairchilds, music evangelists, Atlanta
 4:10 Committee on Committees Report
 4:20 Denominational Calendar Report -- W. Wade Burleson, chairman, pastor, Emmanuel Baptist Church, Enid, Okla.
 4:25 Introduction of Business and Resolutions
 4:40 Election of Officers (Second)
 4:55 Benediction -- Michael P. Calvert, associate pastor, Hillcrest Baptist Church, Pensacola, Fla.

Tuesday Evening, June 20

- 6:00 Music for Inspiration -- Sanctuary Choir and Orchestra, First Baptist Church, Atlanta, John V. Glover Jr., director,
 6:10 Music for Inspiration -- Sanctuary Choir and Orchestra, SBC Hymnody/Heritage Youth Choir, Milburn Price, director
 6:25 Congregational Singing -- L. Mark Blankenship, director, music department, Sunday School Board, Nashville, Tenn.
 Prayer -- Stanley A. Nelson, professor of theology, Golden Gate Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif.
 6:30 Report -- Sunday School Board, James T. Draper Jr., president, Nashville, Tenn.
 6:40 Sunday School Board Presentation
 7:00 Theme Devotion -- Empowered in Sunday School, James L. Sullivan, retired president, Sunday School Board, Nashville, Tenn.
 7:10 Committee on Order of Business (Third Report) -- Fred Powell
 7:15 Congregational Singing -- W. Hines Sims, retired secretary, church music department, Sunday School Board, Nashville, Tenn.
 7:20 Previously Scheduled Business and Introduction of New Business and Resolutions

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- 7:35 Election of Officers (Third)
 7:45 Sesquicentennial Presentation -- "Empowered for the Unfinished Task" (Part I) -- A look at the past through music and drama
 8:45 Benediction -- Joe K. Taylor, pastor, South Reno Baptist Church, Reno, Nev.

Wednesday Morning, June 21

- 8:30 Music for Inspiration -- Sons of Jubal, Georgia Baptist Convention ministers of music, Warren C. Fields, director
 8:40 Congregational Singing -- Larry White, minister of music, Calvary Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, N.C.
 Prayer -- Daniel McCrosky, pastor, First Baptist Church, Arlington, Ky.
 8:45 Introduction of Local Arrangement Committee -- John R. "Jack" Wilkerson, vice president for business and finance, Executive Committee, Nashville, Tenn.
 8:50 Theme Devotion -- Empowered in Evangelism, Roy J. Fish, professor of evangelism, Southwestern Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas
 9:00 Report -- Baptist World Alliance, Denton Lotz, general secretary, McLean, Va.
 9:10 Congregational Singing -- Warren C. Fields, director, church music department, Georgia Baptist Convention, Atlanta
 9:15 Bold Mission Thrust Report -- Ernest E. Mosley, executive vice president, Executive Committee, Nashville, Tenn.
 9:25 Election of Officers (Fourth)
 9:30 Introduction of Past Presidents -- Jim Henry
 9:35 Seminary Presentation and Reports -- William O. Crews, president, Golden Gate Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif.; Milton Ferguson, president, Midwestern Seminary, Kansas City, Mo.; Kenneth S. Hemphill, president, Southwestern Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas; Landrum P. Leavell II, interim president, New Orleans Seminary, New Orleans; R. Albert Mohler Jr., president, Southern Seminary, Louisville, Ky.; Paige Patterson, president, Southeastern Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C.
 10:35 Congregational Singing -- Lloyd L. Mims, dean, school of church music, Southern Seminary, Louisville, Ky.
 10:40 Business
 Committee on Order of Business (Fourth Report) -- Fred Powell
 Introduction of Business (Last Time)
 10:50 Previously Scheduled Business
 11:10 Committee on Resolutions (First Report)
 11:20 Election of Officers (Fifth)
 11:25 Special Music -- Seminary Choir, Southern Seminary, Louisville, Ky., John H. Dickson, associate professor, church music, director
 11:35 Convention Sermon -- R. Albert Mohler Jr.
 12:15 Benediction -- Jim G. Butler, pastor, Trinity Baptist Church, Southhaven, Miss.

No Wednesday Afternoon Session

Wednesday Evening, June 21

- 6:00 Music for Inspiration -- Adult Choir and Orchestra, Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Birmingham, Ala., Aubrey D. Edwards, minister of music, director
 6:25 Congregational Singing -- F. Lindsay O'Ray, minister of music, First Baptist Church, Taylors, S.C.
 Prayer -- J. Mark Bond, pastor, First Baptist Church, LaCenter, Ky.

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- 6:30 Business
Committee on Order of Business (Fifth Report) -- Fred Powell
Election of Convention Sermon Preacher, Alternate, and Music Director 1996
- 6:35 Congregational Singing -- D n B. Snell, music missionary, Foreign Mission Board, Richmond, Va.
- 6:40 Theme Devotion -- Empowered in Missions, Alma Hunt, former executive secretary, Woman's Missionary Union, Birmingham, Ala.
- 6:50 Report -- Woman's Missionary Union, Dellanna W. O'Brien, executive director, Birmingham, Ala.
- 7:00 Report -- Brotherhood Commission, James D. Williams, president, Memphis, Tenn.
- 7:10 Report -- Home Mission Board, Larry L. Lewis, president, Atlanta
- 7:20 Report -- Foreign Mission Board, Jerry A. Rankin, president, Richmond, Va.
- 7:30 Foreign & Home Mission Board Presentation -- Empowered for the Unfinished Task" (Part II) -- A challenge for the future
- 8:30 Commitment Invitation -- Jim Henry
- 8:40 Benediction -- Joe Porter, retired director of missions, Excelsior Springs, Mo.

Thursday Morning, June 22

- 8:30 Music for Inspiration -- The Crossmen, First Baptist Church, Moore, Okla.
- 8:40 Music for Inspiration -- Babbie Mason, music evangelist, Marietta, Ga.
- 8:50 Congregational Singing -- Dick Barrett, music evangelist, Bremen, Ga.
Prayer -- Marcus Sizemore, retired pastor, Pleasant Garden, N.C.
- 8:55 Report -- American Bible Society, Eugene B. Habecker, president and chief executive officer, New York
- 9:05 Memorial Service
- 9:10 Report -- Education Commission, Stephen P. Carleton, executive director, Nashville, Tenn.
- 9:20 Report -- Annuity Board, Paul W. Powell, president, Dallas
- 9:30 Theme Devotion -- Empowered in the Laity, Greg Horton, layman, Temple Baptist Church, Simpsonville, S.C.
- 9:40 Report -- Historical Commission, Lynn E. May Jr., executive director, Nashville, Tenn.
- 9:50 Report -- Southern Baptist Convention Canada Planning Group, Larry L. Lewis
- 10:00 Report -- Christian Life Commission, Richard D. Land, executive director, Nashville, Tenn.
- 10:10 Theme Devotion -- Empowered in Education, Paige Patterson
- 10:20 Presentation of Outgoing SBC Officers -- Morris H. Chapman
- 10:25 Introduction of Newly Elected SBC Officers -- Morris H. Chapman
- 10:30 Congregational Singing -- John V. Glover Jr.
- 10:35 Previously Scheduled Business
- 10:45 Committee on Resolutions (Final Report)
- 10:55 Tribute to Billy Graham -- Morris H. Chapman
- 11:00 Special Music -- George Beverly Shea, soloist, Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, Minneapolis
- 11:10 Introduction -- Jim Henry
- 11:15 Message -- Billy Graham, evangelist, Montreat, N.C.
- 12:00 Benediction -- Alan Cox, pastor, First Baptist Church, Moore, Okla.

**Presidential role gave Jim Henry
view of 'deep-down love' for SBC By Barbara Denman**

ORLANDO, Fla. (BP)--Jim Henry has traveled the globe this year, attending every meeting and gathering possible as he examined the threads in the weaving of a group called Southern Baptists.

"The great heartbeat of Southern Baptists is strong," said Henry, president of the 15.6-million-member Southern Baptist Convention. "They want to be Southern Baptists. They're grateful to be Southern Baptists and they feel like our best can be before us."

Henry, who was elected to the post during the 1994 SBC annual meeting in Orlando, Fla., called his year of service "absolutely incredible. It has been a very enriching experience -- just to touch the warp and woof of this multifaceted people called Southern Baptists."

During the past year, Henry took time from his pastorate at First Baptist Church, Orlando, to attend meetings of state conventions, associations, almost every SBC agency, board and commission, the Woman's Missionary Union and the Baptist World Alliance. A self-proclaimed historian, Henry said he was thrilled to attend the signing of the Mid-East Peace Agreement.

"As president, I thought one of the most important things I could do is represent Southern Baptists as many times as I could," he said. It became the "fastest year of my life -- most demanding and most fulfilling."

He has liked what he has seen. "There has been the greatest spirit I have found across the board. It made me love being a Southern Baptist more to see that spirit. It's a can-do attitude that's good to taste and good to see."

To that end, Henry said he will allow his name to be placed in nomination for a second term as SBC president when the convention meets in Atlanta, June 20-22. "More than likely I will if I can find somebody to nominate me, if the Lord wants me to do it again and the people trust me and choose me. If they don't, it's been a great year."

On numerous occasions this year, Henry has sounded a call of reconciliation between factions within the denomination. Although he said the past 15 years of controversy in the SBC were necessary, he likened it to a wound that now needs healing. His message has not always been well received.

Henry said he did not sense pastors in leadership positions "not wanting to be conciliatory, but at the same time there is sense we should not compromise on the progress we've made to keep the Bible in its integrity as a facet of who we are and what we're about."

"I think there are some people who will not be reconciled back into mainstream Southern Baptists," Henry continued. "To me there is a different priority, a different sense of direction, a different philosophy."

However, he called for less rhetoric, less of an attack on these individuals. "In dealing with them, I think we should always do that in the spirit of Jesus Christ.

"Attacking, condemning individuals, that's out of order with the way I understand forgiveness, love and grace in the New Testament. Taking a stand on principles -- yes, but always in the spirit of Christ. Conciliation should be in spirit and attitude but not in compromise in the basics in the faith."

Conservative Southern Baptists are "grateful for the fact that we have taken a stand on Scripture and that we've kept our focus on evangelism and missions," Henry said. "But they have felt that some people -- and I don't think it's been among the leadership (of) Southern Baptists and the conservative resurgence, but some people who have identified themselves with conservatives -- have at times been unduly harsh in conversation and rhetoric. That's hurt before the world who we are as believers. We shouldn't treat fellow believers that way even when we disagree with them.

"My thrust has been -- don't compromise in the varieties of the faith, but in the spirit of Christ have our differences," he said.

As a historian Henry said he is excited about the sesquicentennial SBC meeting in Atlanta when the convention marks its 150th anniversary. Noting the 100th anniversary took place during World War II, Henry said this year's convention will give opportunity "to celebrate God's blessing on the group of people called Southern Baptists."

A highlight of the meeting will be a message from evangelist Billy Graham. There will be "times of tears, times of laughter, time of renewal, times of commitment," Henry promised.

The meeting will be "stimulated by the Brister report," he said, which will ask messengers to approve a reorganization of the denomination's agencies. According to Henry, every 40 years the SBC has dealt with a report that changes the denomination's structure, adding the 40-year time span is also "biblical."

"It's good for our people to look at who we are, are we doing it efficiently and effectively, and can we get the job done better."

Although he has heard some concerns expressed about the recommendations in the Brister report, Henry said he had been able to ask enough questions of the committee to relieve his concerns. He said he expects the report at the SBC to "clarify some of the points of concern that I've heard."

Henry compared the reorganization to a church building program where many of the details "have to be fleshed out in the future. But you have to set a pattern and direction that gives an umbrella for what will take place later."

Calling the mission statement "one of the grandest things I've seen," Henry said he was surprised that until this time the SBC had no mission statement. "Once you establish a mission statement, you are purpose driven at that point. Then you can flesh out the details."

Adding "anytime there is change, there is going to be some pain and concern," Henry said, "If there was any political ax to grind in that committee's heart, I did not discern it at all."

Although members of the Woman's Missionary Union have expressed concerns about the organization's omission from the report, Henry said "the committee did the only thing they could do. They could not expect the WMU to be accountable to them because the WMU had made a choice not to be an agency. That being true, it would have been wrong for them to have come in and demanded it."

He predicted little will change with WMU's support of SBC missions. "I think it goes back to a thing that's very important to Southern Baptists -- and that's cooperation and trust. As long as we can keep those levels at a high point, I don't see any major changes."

Henry said he had made a number of observations as he has met and studied Southern Baptists this past year.

"The respect that Southern Baptists are held in by outsiders has been a very fascinating experience to me." As he has represented Southern Baptists in non-denominational meetings, he has found instant respect "not because who I am but because I represent this body. And it gives us this platform, which to me is a thing we need to be very sensitive to, and a responsibility about who we are and how we portray ourselves before the Christian world and the non-Christian world."

Henry said he was impressed with the quality of young pastors preparing to assume the reins of leadership in the future and has found a "gratitude that we've taken a stand on the Bible."

"I've seen a wellspring of Southern Baptists praying for revival that I haven't sensed in a lot of years," he said. He cited True Love Waits, Promise Keepers and recent experiences at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Texas as evidences of a yearning for revival.

He also has seen a growing financial support of the Cooperative Program and Southern Baptist mission efforts. "I believe several of our conservative churches and brothers are saying, 'If we have conservative leadership we need to support it, and we need to put some dollars in the plate.' I think that's finally dawned on some people. And that's been healthy."

Henry has been surprised by the "de p-down love for the SBC that I think the majority of Southern Baptists feel. It is deeper than I thought. I knew it was there, but I didn't realize the depth of it until listening, talking and visiting.

"That's why I think when we have pain, it's like in your family. Southern Baptists are unique -- we're like a huge family. I think we feel our struggles more than other denominations do because there's such an inter-connection between our roots."

Roots are important to Henry -- always the historian. Recalling how often the Bible says to remember, Henry added, "If we don't remember our past, it's going to hurt us in the future." The SBC sesquicentennial anniversary will present just that opportunity, he said.

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Graham's high-tech 'mission'
had not-so-complicated message By Terry Mattingly

Baptist Press
3/22/95

SAN JUAN, P.R. (BP)--After a half century in the pulpit, it may seem as if Christendom's most famous evangelist goes into auto-pilot mode as he ends a sermon -- reciting familiar phrases urging people to bow their heads, close their eyes and pray for sinners to get up out of their seats and come forward. However, Graham often makes subtle changes, depending on the culture in which he is preaching.

On March 14, he made a change of historic proportions.

"No matter what language you speak, no matter what culture you are from, no matter what situation you find yourself in -- all around the world -- come and give your heart to Christ," said Graham, during a San Juan, Puerto Rico, crusade that was the launching pad for his most ambitious multimedia project.

This was, literally, an international altar call. Two nights later, this sermon was included in a three-day "Global Mission" that used 30 direct satellite links to reach more than 10 million people gathered daily at 40-foot screens at 3,000 locations, in 29 time zones, in 185 nations, in 116 languages. By the time follow-up broadcasts are completed, Graham's team hopes the project will have reached 1 billion people. The 1995 Super Bowl was beamed to 750 million people, in 13 languages.

Graham's flock ranged from British college students to Rwandan refugees, from prisoners in what was Yugoslavia to earthquake survivors in Kobe, Japan. Satellite services were fine-tuned so the music and special guests would appeal to participants in eight cultural regions -- Western Europe, Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, Latin America, Oceania, Southeast Asia, Central Asia and Africa and the Caribbean.

The project's most true legacy may have been its efforts in religious education. Before the crusade, the satellite system was used to offer classes to 1.5 million clergy, missionaries and volunteers, including 500,000 who served as counselors who assisted those making spiritual decisions.

"This was an example of using some very advanced technology and doing a lot of very complex work in order to deliver a very simple message," said Larry Ross, Graham's media liaison.

Graham has, while circling the globe many times, become a master of simplifying his biblical images and homespun stories into punchy phrases that can be handled -- in a kind of musical call-and-response fashion -- by a translator. Texts of his "Global Mission" sermons show that he responded to this new multicultural challenge by sticking to the basics.

"When he speaks through a translator, you end up with classic, vintage Billy Graham," said Rice University sociologist William Martin, author of the 717-page "A Prophet With Honor: The Billy Graham Story."

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"For one thing, he sticks to his script and doesn't improvise as much as when he speaks ... to Americans," Martin said. "His sermons are always simple, especially his best ones. He gets up there and says that God loves you so much that he sent his son to die for you, so that you can have eternal life. That's Good News. Now you can say that this is pure Billy Graham; Billy would just say that it's the pure and simple essence of Christianity."

Thus, the Global Mission sermons focused on stories about love, anger, joy, shame, forgiveness, life and death. Graham talked about the lessons that parents learn while raising children. He dug into his farm-boy past for agrarian images. He offered hope to alcoholics, drug addicts, prostitutes, thieves and murderers. He talked about the despair that can haunt the lives of rulers, millionaires and bishops.

And as people walked the aisles, worldwide, Graham said, once again: "I want to say a word to all of you that are coming. ... You did not come to Billy Graham; I have no supernatural power to do anything. You've come to Christ. You've come by faith to the cross and he's the one that will come into your heart and forgive your sin and change your way of life. You've come by faith. ... It's so simple. It's not complicated."

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Mattingly, who writes this weekly column for the Scripps Howard News Service, teaches communications at Milligan College in Tennessee. Used by permission of the author.

Visit to hairdresser
was divine appointment

By David Winfrey

Baptist Press
3/22/95

COLUMBIA, S.C. (BP)--Kim Hardy found divine appointments with eternal results can occur even at the hairdresser.

Hardy, who was commissioned to be a Southern Baptist home missionary March 18 during a service in Columbia, S.C., told those attending she found God can use simple incidents as witnessing opportunities.

Seven years ago, Hardy went to her hair stylist but found the usual person was not in and Hardy would have to trust a substitute. Hardy recently had taken a Continuing Witness Training course at her church.

She said while she worried whether her hair would turn out all right and the hair stylist talked about her troubles relating to her teen-age son, God told Hardy to witness. "I said, 'Not today Lord, I'm getting my hair done.'" But the feeling would not go away, she said. "God continued to say, 'Kim, witness.'"

Hardy did witness and the stylist replied it was the first time someone explained Christianity as Hardy had. The woman accepted Christ as her Savior and Hardy's hair looked fine and she drove home.

Listening to the evening news that day, Hardy heard about a fatal car wreck. Recognizing the name, she called her hair shop to learn the person she had witnessed to was the woman who had died.

Hardy acknowledged witnessing can be scary. But "it's a scarier thought to think that might be the last opportunity for that person to hear about Christ."

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HMB's Lewis: 'Win All'
a worthy strategy

By David Winfrey

Baptist Press
3/22/95

COLUMBIA, S.C. (BP)--It's going to take all to win all, Home Mission Board President Larry L. Lewis told those attending a missionary commissioning service March 18.

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More than 2,000 Southern Baptists attended the service at First Baptist Church, Columbia, S.C., for 57 missionaries commissioned for work in 20 states. The service was held during the annual meeting of Woman's Missionary Union of South Carolina.

Embracing the "Win All" theme from this year's Season of Home Missions, Lewis reminded that Christ issued the Great Commission -- not a recommendation or suggestion -- to every believer. "This is the task of every Christian: to be on mission for our Lord."

Referring to Southern Baptist missionaries, Lewis noted the denomination's strategy for world evangelism is based on cooperation. "You and I are investing in the only place I know where we can have eternal dividends," he said. "If we put the pictures of our missionaries on the wall, we'd have more than 9,000 of them."

But Southern Baptists must not overlook their own responsibility for sharing Christ with an unsaved and under-churched nation, he added. "Our assignment is to the uttermost parts of the earth, but also let us remember our Judea -- the United States."

HMB researchers estimate the number of lost Americans could be as high as 183 million, Lewis said.

"Are you aware that the United States of America is perhaps the third largest unsaved nation in the world?" he said, listing China, India and perhaps Indonesia as having more lost residents. "The mission field is here."

The number of churches in America has not kept pace with the country's population in the past 30 years, Lewis said, adding a map of America in his office pinpoints 20,000 locations where new churches are needed.

"Every time I walk in the door, I'm reminded again that ours is an under-churched nation," he said.

But while Southern Baptists' evangelism strategy must be global and national, it must also be individual, Lewis reiterated.

"Our mandate is all-inclusive," he said. "Anywhere there's a lost person, that's a mission field."

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Southwestern dean Corley
resigns, joins Truett faculty By Jan Johnsonius

Baptist Press
3/22/95

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Bruce Corley, dean of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's school of theology, announced March 21 his resignation from the nation's largest theological seminary to join the faculty of Baylor University's George W. Truett Theological Seminary as professor of Christian scriptures, beginning in June.

Corley, dean since 1990 and a Southwestern faculty member for 19 years, made his decision public in a regularly scheduled meeting of the school of theology faculty. He emphasized the move was "not reactionary" but admitted rumors and speculation about his role at the seminary have been running rampant since the dismissal of Russell Dilday as president in March 1994. Dilday, a faculty member of Truett Seminary, recently has been named interim dean of that institution.

"I'm going in view of a call to Baylor. If it were reactionary, I would have made the move much earlier," Corley stated. "The firing of Russell Dilday and the election of Robert Sloan (president-elect of Baylor University) have been factors in my decision.

"Lot was called out of Sodom and Gomorrah and he fled. Abraham was called to the land of Canaan and he went in obedience. There is a difference in the two kinds of calls. Mine is the latter," Corley explained.

"I viewed the firing as a tragic event, but it did not make my decision for me because I am committed to theological education. Robert Sloan leading Baylor University is much more a factor.

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"It signals the commitment of Baylor University to Baptist distinctives. Robert and I have been friends for more than 15 years and shared a vision of Baptist education, and I'm going to help him flesh it out."

Corley noted he has received personal affirmation from Hemphill and other officers of the Fort Worth, Texas, seminary, and his decision was not influenced by the two-year probation recently handed down by the Association of Theological Schools.

"A very important key is that during the probation period the trustees take up a sympathetic and constructive role with the administration and faculty. A good outcome of the probation will be a viable future where governance is in lockstep with the faculty, walking together."

Corley added, however, there are "substantive issues that need to be negotiated between faculty and trustees regarding academic freedom, and the probation period is the time when constructive changes can be made.

"I think we're well on our way already. I see no reason why probation would not be lifted within the calendar year," Corley said.

Seminary President Ken Hemphill said he is saddened that Corley will be leaving Southwestern. "He has been an integral and beloved member of the Southwestern family for 19 years. All of us will miss him and his wife, Linda.

"Bruce has greatly assisted me as president during my first year in office. I appreciate both his personal friendship and his helpful insights into the nuances of theological education. He has been a great help to me and I will always be grateful to him. He remains a valued colleague."

Hemphill added he believes Corley's primary desire is to be in the center of the Lord's will. "I know Bruce as a man of integrity and believe that this has been a difficult but prayerful decision. He is fine scholar and will continue to make a great contribution to the academic community. We desire for him the very best."

Hemphill said he has no plans at present to name an interim dean and has asked Corley to serve until his designated resignation date of June 1. As for the selection process of a new dean, Hemphill said he is asking the theology faculty for specific input on good candidates internally and externally.

Dilday said he has been talking with Corley for the last year in relation to Truett's needs and Corley's potential role there. "We are delighted to welcome Corley to the faculty, with his widespread reputation and appreciation for biblical studies," Dilday said. "A teacher and research specialist, he is known in Baptist circles and in the broader world of the guild of theological education as an equipper of ministers for the next century."

Dilday added he doubts Corley's departure will mean a stream of people coming to Truett from Southwestern or any other school. "We are in the beginning stages, but our eventual plans are for additional campuses and added faculty."

Of Corley's addition at Truett, Sloan said, "He is very committed to Texas Baptists and theological education, and that's what we're looking for. We had an opening in Christian scriptures and he has a background in New Testament. It's a position that has been on the boards for quite some time."

Southwestern trustee chairman Ralph Pulley said trustees greatly appreciate Corley's 19 years of service to Southwestern. "He is an exceptional academician and theologian and has been a marvelous influence during the transition time of Dr. Hemphill. We know he accepted this new position with much prayer and thought and we certainly wish him well."

Reaction of faculty to the resignation has ranged from deep sadness and a sense of uncertainty to respect for Corley's decision as "the will of God".

"In the faculty meeting today (March 21), their biggest question was, 'How much stability will there be after you leave?'" Corley said.

"I told them that Southwestern is God's Baptist aircraft carrier seminary, and such large boats are not deflected easily. The stability of the school is witnessed in the longevity of the faculty.

"Southwestern must keep its hands on the plow. I will advise Ken and the faculty on that. It's a two-handed kingdom plow. On the right hand is missions and evangelism and on the left is academic excellence. Neither hand can be taken off the plow. That is the historic charter of Southwestern," Corley said. "I think both hands are on the plow now. The question is if they will stay there."

Corley emphasized there has not been a defection of the faculty since the firing of Dilday, reflecting solidarity and stability of those academicians.

Hemphill stated the faculty of Southwestern are people of integrity and capability who have a commitment to know and follow the Lord's direction. "They came to Southwestern because of God's call and have remained here because the Lord directs them. Not because of individuals who come or go."

Corley added he and his wife made the decision after much discussion and prayer. "We finally sealed the decision to our hearts and the Lord. I made the decision the same way I make all decisions. I said yes when I felt bound by the Spirit of God to do it."

In a letter of resignation to Hemphill, Corley stated a big part of his heart is in Southwestern and always will be. "You cannot bury your wife (referring to his first wife), raise three kids and go through 15 years of conflict without having a place firmly etched in your soul."

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(BP) photos available on SBCNet and upon request through Southwestern Seminary's office of public relations.

Faculty, student emotions mixed
in wake of Corley resignation

By Jan Johnsonius

Baptist Press
3/22/95

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Sadness, grief, uncertainty, peace. Emotions were mixed among faculty and students in the wake of the March 21 resignation of Bruce Corley as dean of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's school of theology.

Corley's resignation is effective June 1 when he will join the faculty of Baylor University's George W. Truett Theological Seminary as professor of Christian scriptures.

For Bert Dominy, professor of theology, Corley "was the glue that held this faculty together. We trusted him implicitly. He will be missed, but I'm very pleased for him personally."

When asked if he expected other faculty to follow Corley's departure, Dominy said he didn't look for a "mass exodus. A trickle probably. The faculty has a deep sense of grief, but a love for the institution."

Dominy did express that there is a deep sense of uncertainty and anxiety about the future.

Jim Spivey, associate professor of church history, said there is a sadness among faculty but a real sense of peace that what Corley decided is the will of God. "Anytime there is change of any nature it affects our perception of stability, but it's more our uncomfortableness with change than instability itself," Spivey said. "God will provide someone else to come in and we will learn to work with them."

George Milton, a master of divinity and religious education student from Jacksonville, Texas, said the loss is unfortunate but added "if he feels the call of God to go to Truett, then I think it is definitely necessary."

"It's going to be difficult to replace a man such as himself, who is as established as he is. So, on one hand, we're losing someone who is very valuable to this institution, but this school will continue to go on," Milton said. "Still, as William Carey said, 'Expect great things from God, do great things for God.'"

For C.W. Brister, distinguished professor of pastoral ministry, Corley's resignation has been particularly difficult.

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"In my 42-year association with Southwestern Seminary, as a doctoral student and faculty member, I have experienced the departure, dismissal or death of numerous administrators and faculty colleagues. Any loss affects a social system. Some defining losses, like Dean Bruce Corley's resignation, may prompt a grave crisis in an institution's history."

Brister said Corley represents the strength, spirit, style and scholarship of Southwestern's faculty heritage at its best. "He has been a linchpin leader -- essential to this enterprise. His departure will raise many other issues in wider circles."

Brister added determining Corley's successor is crucially significant for Southwestern's future. "The 'world beyond' awaits an appropriate resolution of this key leadership challenge."

Steve Tipton, a master of divinity student from Mountain Home, Ark., said he has studied under Corley and has much respect for him. "He was a good friend and he shared his heart with us. He had a lot of the most practical things to say about how to love people in the church and how to minister to people at ground zero where people really live. I'm really going to miss him."

James Leo Garrett, distinguished professor of theology, described Corley as remarkably gifted and competent as a theological dean.

"A good New Testament scholar, he has undergirded every facet of the curriculum. Committed as a Baptist and as an evangelical, Dr. Corley has been innovative in launching new degree programs and has encouraged professors and students toward their best," Garrett said.

"Few leaders are his equal in analyzing all aspects of a problem, setting out the alternatives, opting for the most desired answer and leading others to follow in that direction."

William Tolar, vice president for academic affairs, said he knew Baylor had been after Corley for many years. "Robert Sloan went from the Southwestern faculty to Baylor in 1983. I urged Dr. Corley to stay, but when Dr. Sloan was made president of Baylor, I knew it would put him in the position to come after Dr. Corley again."

As for the possibility other theology faculty will follow Corley to Truett, Tolar acknowledged if Corley's presence at Baylor causes growth, "it will make it more attractive for Southwestern faculty to go there."

Boo Heflin, professor of preaching, said he is saddened in one sense because Corley has been an outstanding leader at Southwestern. "On the other side of the coin, I'm pleased for him. I think he'll do a marvelous job at Truett. You can't stand in the way when God is leading in a particular direction."

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Mike Hooker, newswriter at Southwestern Seminary, contributed to this story.

Religious plurality requires
tolerance, professor says

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press
3/22/95

ATLANTA (BP)--As America becomes more religiously pluralistic, Christians should demonstrate tolerance and knowledge of different philosophies about God, said an Atlanta researcher, author and professor.

Tolerance, however, does not mean Christians must accept other religious claims as true, Bill Craig told Southern Baptist interfaith witness leaders March 20.

"The concept of tolerance implies that you disagree," Craig said. "You can't tolerate something you agree with."

"Toleration is treating those with whom you disagree with respect and charity. The correct basis of tolerance is the inherent worth of the individual, who has rights to free speech."

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Free speech includes sharing the gospel, but Christians should be prepared to encounter people with radically different views of God, Craig said.

To know what others believe, "do a lot of listening," Craig recommended. They may not have the principles of their beliefs logically formulated, and by listening Christians can find opportunities to witness.

For example, some people practice a principle Craig called "verificationism." They doubt claims that God exists and that God created the world because they cannot be proven with the five senses.

Yet Craig noted many ethical, metaphysical and aesthetic statements cannot be proven with the five senses either.

"Mystical anti-realism," common in the New Age movement and many Eastern religions, is the burning issue of today, Craig said. This belief is that God cannot be understood by human thought, so all people can do is have a mystical experience with him.

Mystical anti-realism teaches thoughts about God -- such as God exists -- are meaningful, but are neither true or false, Craig said. The theory denies a philosophical teaching called the principle of "bivalence" which says statements must be either true or false.

"No reason could ever be given for adopting mystical anti-realism. It could only be embraced by an irrational leap of faith," he said.

The philosophy Craig defined as "perhaps the most wild" is radical pluralism. This contends each person constitutes reality for himself, and objective truth does not exist. The basic attitude is, "That may be true for you, but not for me."

People who adhere to radical pluralism for their theology would have to refuse science and law as well, Craig said, because they also are based on principles of truth.

A group Craig called "skeptical agnostics" don't know what to believe about God, he said. They would say the existence of God and the meaning of life are issues too deep for humans to understand and it is impossible to know the truth.

That approach is "personally unlivable," Craig said, because "it leaves undecided man's deepest questions." It offers no objective standard of what is right and wrong and no hope of life after death, so people live totally for themselves.

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Roberts: Educating members
key to preventing cult inroads By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press
3/22/95

ATLANTA (BP)--Rather than reaching people for Christ, Southern Baptists will lose members to other religions if members are not taught sound doctrine, interfaith witness leaders said during a March 18-21 workshop.

"The problem is, people are undisciplined," said Phil Roberts, director of the Home Mission Board interfaith witness department. Christians who understand the basic tenets of their beliefs will be able to identify errors in other beliefs, he said.

Americans adhere to a myriad of religions, including paganistic practices based on natural instincts and cult groups, Roberts said.

Such pluralism gives Southern Baptists a "wonderful opportunity. We have the world mission field right here," Roberts said. "But we cannot be serious about evangelizing America unless we're serious about interfaith witness."

Mike Ruptak, pastor of Hall Boulevard Baptist Church, Tigard, Ore., said he became interested in interfaith witness when Mormons tried to convert his daughter.

"I realized a lot of folks wanted my kids more than the church did sometimes," Ruptak said.

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Ruptak is among more than 600 volunteers serving nationwide as interfaith witness associates. They are trained to lead conferences on what people of other religions believe and how to witness to them.

Information on scheduling an associate to lead a conference is available from state Baptist conventions and the HMB interfaith witness department at (404) 898-7403.

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'Word of faith,' despite appeal,
is unbiblical, researcher says By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press
3/22/95

ATLANTA (BP)--Promises of physical health and material prosperity are appealing but unbiblical, an Atlanta author and researcher told Southern Baptist interfaith witness coordinators.

Such health and wealth theology is taught by popular television evangelists Kenneth Hagan, Kenneth Copeland and others, said Rob Bowman, research director of the Atlanta Christian Apologetics Program.

"The bottom line is their claim that through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, every Christian ought to experience in this life physical health and material prosperity. If they don't, they're told they lack faith," Bowman said.

The movement is sometimes called "word of faith" or "name it and claim it." Leaders teach God made the world by speaking words of faith and created people to have the same power, Bowman said. People are taught to claim physical healing, for example, just as they claim the biblical promise of forgiveness of sins, he said.

Followers expect God to serve them as quickly as they are served at a fast-food restaurant, Bowman said. Many people abandon Christianity when they don't get blessings they have claimed.

Southern Baptists should teach what the Bible says about money and health, Bowman said. "The key is wisdom, the application of biblical principles to life."

Rather than viewing faith as a way to hold God to his promises, faith should be taught as believing, trusting and putting confidence in God, Bowman said.

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Screening procedures can reduce
churches' risk of sexual abuse By Debbie Von Behren

Baptist Press
3/22/95

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. (BP)--In its own way, it is like cancer. It can strike children from every social background, race and age. And child sexual abuse is indiscriminate not only in victims, but in where it happens.

Sadly, child sexual abuse occurs most frequently in settings where children and youth trust adults completely -- in homes, schools, camps, park programs, athletic programs. It also takes place in churches.

But: "The evidence is now clear that this terrible risk can be all but eliminated with screening," said Richard Hammar, a Springfield, Mo., attorney and author of "Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in Your Church."

"Churches can all but eliminate the risk of litigation if they follow certain procedures," said Hammar, who also authors Southern Baptist Annuity Board's yearly tax guide.

In his book, Hammar addresses four major areas in which policies and procedures must be established to provide safeguards against child sexual abuse. These areas are worker selection, worker supervision, reporting obligations and response to allegations.

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Hammar recommends all paid church employees undergo a thorough screening process as part of the job application procedure. The procedure should consist of an employment application, a screening form, a personal interview, reference checks and completion of a criminal records check authorization form, when deemed appropriate.

The screening form should ask the following questions:

- The applicant's name. Identity should be confirmed by a driver's license or other photographic identification.
- A full explanation of any prior criminal convictions for sexual abuse, molestation or related crimes.
- The area of youth work the applicant is interested in.
- Any training or education in youth-related work.
- A description of church membership over the past five years.
- A description of church volunteer work over the past five years.
- A description of any youth work in churches or other organizations over the past five years.
- Names and addresses of two references.

People applying for higher risk positions -- boys' groups, camps, overnight or largely unsupervised activities involving children or youth -- should be interviewed by a responsible staff member trained to screen children and youth workers.

Additionally, Hammar recommends screening be used for all workers, both paid and volunteer, and volunteer workers be permitted to work with children or youth only after they have been members of the church for a specified time, perhaps six months.

Adults who were convicted of either child sexual abuse or physical abuse should not work with children in a volunteer capacity. Adult survivors of child abuse must meet with a pastor before working with children.

Current conservative estimates are that from 500,000 to over 1.5 million are sexually abused each year in this country. Many church leaders assume child molesters are typically strangers, a stereotype that can lull a church into falsely thinking it is safe.

"Churches need to be concerned about strangers," Hammar said, "but from my experience, the majority of cases have been people associated with the church for a long time. It comes as an utter shock."

Statistics show that strangers account for less than 20 percent of abusers. Churches should be aware of the following facts:

- Over 80 percent of the time, the abuser is someone known to the victim.
- Most abuse takes place within the context of an ongoing relationship.
- The usual offender is 20-30 years old.
- Twenty percent of sex offenders begin their activity before the age of 18.
- Child abusers often are married and have children.

"If abuse occurs in your church, a respected member will most likely be the molester," Hammar writes in his book. "Emphasis on 'stranger danger' will leave your church ill prepared. While it's uncomfortable even to consider this, the most likely assailants include Sunday school teachers, religious educators, nursery or preschool workers, teachers in a church-operated school, camp counselors, scout leaders, 'concerned' adults who volunteer to transport children to church, and clergy."

Supervision policies Hammar recommends include adopting a "two-adult" rule for any church activity involving children or youth, obtaining parental permission for times when a worker would be in an unsupervised situation with their child, and discussing suspicious behavior immediately.

"Adequately screen all people working with children, then adequately supervise those workers once you begin using them," he said.

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JoEllen Witt, pastor of an American Baptist church in Marysville, Kan., who makes presentations to ministers' groups on the subject, echoes Hammar's suggestions. "You should never have one person working with young people," she said. "Overnight stays should be carefully supervised, and young people and adults need seminars in their own churches about the warning signs of child sexual abuse."

Church leaders also should develop a line of reporting to be followed in each and every case of suspected abuse -- and knowing the state rules regarding reporting abuse to the proper authorities is crucial.

When a church has a doubt about whether it should report, it would do well to remember studies suggest a pedophile may have hundreds of victims over the course of a lifetime. The church's duty is to protect other innocent victims, so Hammar recommends "when in doubt, report."

Finally, because an accusation of child sexual abuse can occur in any church, a strategy must be in place for response to any allegations.

"If you have an allegation of molestation, the most important thing you can do is not to deny, or minimize, or blame the victim," Hammar said. "Take all allegations seriously. Let the family know you are going to investigate. You don't want them to feel they have to go to court to have their story heard. You want to act as Christ would in the same situation."

Abuse in a church setting is hard enough to deal with on its own, and Hammar said the wrong response from a church can make the situation even worse.

"Hardly a day goes by that I don't talk to a church about this issue," he said. "It is devastating for the church, for the victim and for the parents."

"Churches face loss of membership and media publicity. Ninety-nine percent of the time, churches deny the situation, shun the family and erect walls. That is the typical church response. If you want to end up in court, you can't take a better course of action."

In a church where Witt and her husband formerly were members, they and other members did what they could to handle an abuse situation in a caring and sensitive way.

"We tried to contact people in the youth group to see if they possibly had been victimized," she said. "We had a psychologist who came in and had open meetings in the church, and we had group counseling meetings for parents."

Because of the strong pastor-member bond, Witt realizes that many people still think the problem does not exist.

"A minister holds a unique position of power, because they are the parishioners' link to God," she said. "They believe the minister would not do anything to harm them."

But Witt has seen the harm inflicted upon children reflected in the eyes of grown men who now have children of their own.

"If you see the kids as adults, with tears streaming down their face telling what had happened," she said, "it's awful."

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Von Behren is a correspondent for Missouri Baptists' Word & Way newsjournal.

Sexual abuse: churches without
precautions risk costly damages By Debbie Von Behren

Baptist Press
3/22/95

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. (BP)--No longer can churches afford to have their heads in the sand, so to speak, when the issue at hand is child sexual abuse. Litigation at an all-time high and juries are making multi-million-dollar awards. Churches have not only a moral obligation to prevent child abuse from happening, they must take solid measures to protect themselves or face devastating legal ramifications.

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Experts such as Richard Hammar, Springfield attorney and author of "Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in Your Church," say that churches, for a variety of reasons, are especially vulnerable to the problem of child sexual abuse.

"Churches are institutions of trust," Hammar pointed out. "People enter the premises, which are pervaded with an atmosphere of trust, and we assume the best of others. You don't put metal detectors above the doors of churches. They are communities of trust."

Hammar also said churches are vulnerable because of ample opportunities for contact with children.

The third reason he cited is one that most people would be surprised to hear.

Hammar said he believes because most pedophiles have been pushed out of other organizations by newly adopted employment and volunteer regulations designed to curb the problem of child sexual abuse, the pedophiles have shifted their gaze toward the church. He cites a finding that prior to new screening practices, as many as 10 percent of all Scout leaders may have been pedophiles.

"Other non-religious charities like Big Brothers and the Boy Scouts have adopted excellent screening practices, which flushes out pedophiles to churches," Hammar said. "These organizations have reduced their risk; when these people find out they will be screened, they can easily access churches because so many are desperate for workers."

While hundreds of churches have been sued as a result of the sexual molestation of children by church workers, some church leaders ignore this fact and do not see the need to implement a prevention program in their church. This leaves children, the church and its leaders in a vulnerable position.

Hammar is well aware that many church leaders, and people in general, have a hard time believing child sexual abuse could occur in the church.

"There is an attitude of denial, that it could never happen here," he said.

Asking sensitive questions of potential employees is difficult for many churches. "We don't want to deter workers," Hammar said. "That is a very pervasive attitude, that we don't want to make it hard to work for the church."

At best, only one out of four churches in the country do any screening of workers, said Hammar, who takes one or two calls daily from churches seeking advice about child sexual abuse litigation. The book he has written is part of a kit available to churches. It includes an audiocassette, a videocassette and a leader's guide to help churches establish a prevention program and avoid litigation.

"A single incident of child molestation can devastate a church and divide the congregation," Hammar writes in the leader's guide. "Members become outraged and bewildered; parents question whether their own children have been victimized; the viability of the church's youth and children's programs is jeopardized; and church leaders face blame and guilt for allowing the incident to happen."

"Such incidents often result in massive media attention ... but far more tragic is the emotional trauma to the victim and the victim's family, and the enormous potential legal liability the church faces."

Hammar is not just talking about large, metropolitan churches. "Absolutely not," he emphasized. "It appears that those most at risk are churches with 500 to 1,000 in Sunday morning worship. Over that, they have more paid professional workers. The risk seems to be smaller in the smallest churches, but is really pretty equal across the board."

He pointed out that size of a church is irrelevant when it comes to jury awards.

"Regardless of size, one incident of child sexual abuse in a church can mean a multi-million-dollar verdict," Hammar said. "That's why every church needs to take it seriously."

The number of child sexual abuse lawsuits brought against churches has risen dramatically over the last decade. Hammar cites several reasons for the sharp increase.

"Litigation is on the increase largely because of media publicity and astronomical jury verdicts," he said. "People think, 'This is my chance.' Also, the statutes of limitation have been extended in many states."

The financial consequences for churches involved in litigation can be devastating. There are attorney fees and court costs. Punitive damages are possible. Even to settle out of court, a church may have to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Another aspect of the problem that churches must consider is the fact that insurance may cover only a portion of the final total. Some churches may be surprised to find that they have no coverage for child sexual abuse.

"Most of the church insurance companies limit coverage for this type of risk," Hammar said. "The potential damage of a single case can be many times the insurance. Churches are facing an immense uninsured risk."

Generally, lawsuits filed against churches for instances of child molestation center on either negligent hiring or negligent supervision.

Hammar said negligent hiring means the church failed to act responsibly and with due care in selection of workers, both volunteer and paid, for positions involving the supervision or custody of minors. Negligent supervision means that a church did not exercise sufficient care in supervising a worker.

In his book, Hammar uses the following illustration in showing why churches must be cautious and must consider the legal consequences of what they do, or don't do.

"Assume that an incident of abuse occurs at your church, and that the minister is asked to testify during the trial. The victim's lawyer asks, 'What did you or your staff do to prevent this tragedy from occurring? What procedures did you utilize to check the molester's background and supervise his/her work with children?'

"If the answer is 'nothing,' you can well imagine the jury's reaction. The only question in the jurors' minds at this point is the size of the verdict."

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**Churches take various measures
to screen potential abusers**

By Debbie Von Behren

**Baptist Press
3/22/95**

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. (BP)--Just as each church is different, so are approaches to preventing sexual abuse from happening to children in their care. While sexual molestation in the church is not a new problem, it has come under the glare of media attention in the last decade, making it a topic for open discussion.

"The media has made us better informed," said Ann Frieze, minister of childhood education at Second Baptist Church, Springfield, Mo. "Up until the past few years, we've been isolated. These things have always been happening, but I think sometimes things were covered up. Now the word is out."

The Springfield church has 12 to 15 paid children's workers and a weekday preschool that serves 80 children.

Frieze has noticed the change in awareness over the 12 years she has supervised children's workers.

"One of the things we deal with the most carefully is the hiring of paid nursery workers," she said. "About two years ago we changed our policies, and now we ask these potential employees if they have been questioned about or accused of child abuse."

Potential children's workers must complete a formal, three-page application. Then Frieze carries the process a step further.

"We also do a police background check, for which they have to give you their signed permission," she said. "It's amazing what that does for you."

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When the background check was mentioned, Frieze said, a couple of people she has interviewed have spoken up and told her that something would be found in their records. At that point, Frieze has responded by telling them that she won't pursue their employment any further.

Other churches take a less formal approach. That doesn't mean they discount the potential for child sexual abuse to happen.

Lyndell Worthen Jr., pastor of First Baptist Church, Springfield, said he and other church leaders are aware of the need for caution. "We have discussed the fact that we have to be very sensitive," he confirmed.

Ron Cassaday, the church's minister of education, described how the church monitors the care of children.

"We have a child care coordinator, and she and I have met regularly for the past two years, dealing with all kinds of issues including the employment of workers," he said. "We do a screening and check out the background of these individuals. One of the things we have been encouraged to do but don't do yet is to specifically ask potential employees about being abused themselves."

Like Frieze, Cassaday doesn't just worry about employment practices. They both remain vigilant during church activities involving the church and youth.

"We watch things, and we try to keep at least two people in the room," Cassaday said. Frieze noted two workers go on all field trips.

Through it all, Cassaday seeks to maintain a responsible attitude toward a potentially devastating problem.

"We try to be sane and reasonable," he said. "We're not only dealing with paid employees, but also with a multitude of volunteers. We have an unwritten policy that new members wait six months for any job, not just one that involves working with children."

Frieze has educated herself through current literature on the issue of sexual abuse of children. She said the church's insurance company has been a resource.

Although Second Baptist in Springfield does not follow the same stringent application process with volunteer workers that it has for paid workers, Frieze does keep an eye on the situation. "I watch people for a long time before I put them in a leadership position."

As the Springfield churches and others deal with preventing abuse, another Missouri church already has faced such a crisis head-on.

George Steincross, pastor of Second Baptist Church, Liberty, Mo., said an allegation of sexual abuse was lodged against a former minister of youth in the church. Although the instances of abuse apparently did not take place at Second Baptist but at a former church, Steincross and his church leadership did what the experts in child sexual abuse and litigation strongly advise. They were open and honest.

"That has to be a must," Steincross said. "Within the church there has to be self-cleansing from within. We tried in every possible way to have anyone come forward who might have been abused. That triggered a lot of activity among our children, to let them know what is appropriate and what is not appropriate."

Although the church was initially of different minds about the situation, Steincross still feels going public is the only way to deal with an allegation of sexual abuse.

"It became a divided reaction for our church members," he recounted. "Some felt the person couldn't have done such a thing, while others said, 'Hey, we've got to act immediately.' I'd advise churches to take action swiftly and aggressively when action is warranted, and not just allow the person to move on to another church."

Although the church still does not have a formal policy, Steincross said prevention of child sexual abuse is definitely in staff and members' minds.

"We do it more naturally, because of the other thing," he said. "You have eternal vigilance, particularly after you've been stung."

The first step in prevention can be acknowledging child sexual abuse can happen in any church.

As Cassaday pointed out, "Satan is a professional at providing arenas for people to get caught up in."

Good communication with parents is something First Baptist, Springfield tries to provide.

"We try to let parents know we are on the cutting edge to provide safe, secure care for their children," Cassaday said. "Children are such a delicate, precious commodity to parents that when we accept that full responsibility for that child, we take it very seriously."

Frieze emphasized following the advice of experts in the prevention of child sexual abuse.

"I would encourage anyone who has not been doing investigations of potential workers to start doing that now," she said. "I think Christians can be very naive. I always want to believe the best about people, but the fact is you cannot trust everybody."

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Physical, behavioral signs
can point to sexual abuse

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SPRINGFIELD, Mo. (BP)--Church workers and staff members should be alert to the physical signs of abuse and molestation, as well as to behavioral and verbal signs that a victim may exhibit. Some of the more common signs are summarized below:

Physical signs may include:

- Lacerations and bruises.
- Nightmares.
- Irritation, pain or injury to the genital area.
- Difficulty with urination.
- Discomfort when sitting.
- Torn or bloody underclothing.
- Venereal diseases.

Behavioral signs may include:

- Anxiety when approaching church or nursery area.
- Nervous or hostile behavior toward adults.
- Sexual self-consciousness.
- "Acting out" sexual behavior.
- Withdrawal from church activities and friends.

Verbal signs may include the following statements:

- I don't like (a particular church member).
- (A church worker) does things to me when we're alone.
- I don't like to be alone with (a church worker).
- (A church worker) fooled around with me.

Source: "Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in Your Church" by Richard R. Hammar, Steven W. Klipowicz and James F. Cobble Jr. Churches can inquire about ordering Hammar's kit on prevention of child sexual abuse by writing to Christian Ministries Resources, P.O. Box 1098, Matthews, NC 28106.

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Religious educators inaugurate new time for annual meeting

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. (BP)--For its 40th annual meeting, the Southern Baptist Religious Education Association tried something different -- holding its annual meeting in February instead of its previous traditional time prior to the Southern Baptist Convention.

Leaders of the organization of local church, denominational and agency educators said they hoped the change -- which calls for a spring meeting -- will result in more local church educators attending the annual meeting.

The February meeting, in Williamsburg, Va., drew 300 participants, about the same attendance as last year in Orlando, Fla. -- and more attendees did come from local churches, said Michael Harton, 1994-95 SBREA president and director of the Virginia Baptist General Board's division of Sunday school and discipleship development.

"It'll probably take a couple of years to know" if the scheduling change will result in an ongoing increase, he said. Next year's meeting will be Feb. 8-10 in Louisville, Ky., with the 1997 meeting to be in San Antonio, Texas.

Carolyn Jenkins of Alexandria, Va., and former minister to students at First Baptist Church, Nashville, Tenn., will be SBREA president during the coming year.

Elected as new officers were president-elect, Jeter Basden, Waco, Texas; vice president, Ronald Palmer, Columbia, S.C.; eastern vice president, Dan Taylor, Orlando, Fla.; central vice president, Ken Mercer, Jefferson City, Mo.; western vice president, Gary Waller, Fort Worth, Texas; and secretary-treasurer, Lawrence Klemptner, Fort Worth.

Theme for the Feb. 9-11 SBREA meeting was "The Patriots Call: Revisiting the Past to Redeem the Future." Four periods of religious education history were highlighted: 1891-1945, a period of identity formation; 1945-60, "religious educator as mechanic" (an era of emphasis on organizations); 1960-75, "religious education as managerial process" (structures and programs); and 1975-90, "religious education as ministry" (religious educators as ministers who are gifted and called as specialists).

Featured speakers were Virginia WMU Executive Director Earlene Jessee, speaking on "Renewing Our Sense of Purpose" and "Claiming the Challenge of the Future;" William Hendricks, professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., "The Spiritual Development of the Congregation;" and James Wilhoit, professor at Wheaton College in Illinois, "Christian Education and the Search for Meaning."

Mavis Allen, Lucien Coleman and Bob Edd Shotwell received the SBREA's distinguished leadership award.

Allen served on the staff of the Baptist Sunday School Board for more than 30 years before her retirement in 1994. During her tenure, she edited study course, devotional and Bible study materials. She also served as a general administration consultant and as editor of Outreach magazine. After retirement, she held the position of senior coordinator of ministry development in the Bible teaching/reaching division and has been an active participant in the development of Sunday school work among Baptists in the former Soviet Union.

Coleman was professor of religious education at Southern Seminary for 17 years and professor of adult education at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, for 10 years before his retirement in 1993. His writings include eight books. He presently serves as editor of the SBREA Journal.

Shotwell, a veteran of more than 40 years of staff ministry in Texas churches, recently retired as minister of education and administration at Hyde Park Baptist Church, Austin, Texas, after 22 years of ministry there. He currently serves as a consultant with Ministers Mentoring and Consulting Service, Austin. Shotwell formerly was SBREA president, a trustee of the Baptist Sunday School Board and chairman of the Metro Religious Education Association.

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