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April 13, 1995

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Atlanta SBC June meeting  
forecast: near 25,000

By Herb Hollinger

Baptist Press  
4/13/95

ATLANTA (BP)--Southern Baptists will return to Atlanta for the ninth time for a national convention meeting -- the first time in the Georgia Dome -- with as many as 25,000 messengers expected June 20-22, according to SBC Registration Secretary Lee Porter.

The SBC met last in Atlanta in 1991 but the most memorable meeting was in 1986 when 40,987 messengers registered, the second-largest annual meeting in the SBC's 150-year history. The previous year, 1985 in Dallas, set the record of 45,519 messengers, while last year in Orlando, Fla., 20,370 messengers were registered. The figures do not include guests and visitors.

Porter said there are two primary reasons the messenger count may approach 25,000 in June: 1) the 150th anniversary celebration for which a personal invitation was extended to all 3,000 churches existing at the time of the SBC organization in 1845 and 2) interest and concern about the proposed new SBC structure in a recommendation from the SBC Executive Committee.

Porter, a retired Baptist Sunday School Board official living in Panama City, Fla., has had an impressive record in correctly predicting messenger registration numbers since 1978 when he was elected registration secretary.

Churches must get their messenger cards and have them filled out prior to the annual meeting, Porter said. Messenger cards are available at state convention offices or, in some states, association offices. He said churches should use the new messenger cards and not the outdated cards, which say "revised 1967."

"If at the last minute a church cannot secure messenger cards, write a letter to the credentials committee and have the messenger bring it to the convention," Porter said. However, a messenger could save from 30 minutes to an hour by coming with a properly filled-out messenger card, he said.

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The number of messengers a "missionary Baptist" church can send to the annual meeting is dictated by Article III of the SBC constitution. Each church can have one messenger when (1) "in friendly cooperation with the (SBC) and sympathetic with its purposes and work. Among churches not in cooperation with the convention are churches which act to affirm, approve, or endorse homosexual behavior. And, (2) has been a bona fide contributor to the convention's work during the (SBC) fiscal year preceding."

Article III also allows one additional messenger from the church for every 250 members; or "for each \$250 paid to the work of the (SBC) during the fiscal year preceding the annual meeting." No church is allowed more than 10 messengers. Churches' gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas and Annie Armstrong Easter offerings and to world hunger funds channeled to SBC agencies would qualify in meeting the constitutional requirement.

Porter said the SBC does not register "alternate" messengers. A church decides who will be its messengers but, he added, the registration process does not allow for "alternates."

Registration will be in the Georgia Dome, near entrance C. Doors will open at 4 p.m. on Sunday, June 18, and 8 a.m. on Monday and Tuesday.

Porter also released statistical information from the 1994 annual meeting in Orlando which revealed 7,318 churches sent messengers. Of that total, 195 sent the maximum allowed number of 10 messengers while 3,312 churches, the largest grouping, sent two messengers.

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HMB gives revival priority over  
proposal to reorganize SBC

By Martin King

Baptist Press  
4/13/95

ATLANTA (BP)--Prayer for revival took precedence over discussion of a proposed restructuring of the Southern Baptist Convention during the Home Mission Board directors meeting April 10-12.

Two sessions were planned for board members to discuss the SBC Program and Structure Study Committee report which will be presented to the SBC in June. That report recommends combining the HMB with the Brotherhood and Radio and Television commissions. A question-and-answer session with three members of the SBC Executive Committee was held as planned on Monday evening. HMB directors said the session was very productive.

However, instead of discussing the proposal again the next evening as scheduled, directors spent the time listening to news of revival and in prayer for revival. "God's Spirit was moving in such a way that it would have been disruptive to bring up (reorganization)," said Bob Curtis of Ballwin, Mo., board chairman.

John Avant, HMB director and pastor of Coggin Avenue Baptist Church, Brownwood, Texas, told how revival has spread through his church, city and state of Texas since January. Discussion of the restructuring plan was scheduled to follow Avant's address, but never happened. Board members spent the remainder of the evening in prayer, testimony and hymn singing.

"It was a marvelous demonstration of God showing us where our priorities need to be," said Larry Lewis, HMB president.

The board's final session Wednesday was consumed by necessary business affairs, leaving little time for discussion of the proposed reorganization. Several directors expressed a desire to hold a special meeting for that purpose. Curtis polled members and announced a special called meeting of the board in May to discuss the proposal. The exact date will be dictated by availability of a majority of directors as well as Mark Brister, chairman of the study committee who will be invited.

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Curtis cautioned those in attendance, including members of the news media, not to characterize the called meeting as a negative statement concerning the report. "We want to be supportive of the process, and we commend Dr. Brister and his committee. Anything we do next month is for information only and not to divide," Curtis said.

Charles Fuller, director from Roanoke, Va., joined in the appeal for understanding of the board's motives. "Please understand that we do not disfavor the ideas of change and progress. This should not be interpreted as protection of turf or defensive ... and is not in a negative spirit at all. We have a responsibility to ask questions and understand as much as possible."

In other business, Stephen Swofford, pastor of First Baptist Church, Rockwall, Texas, was elected HMB chairman. Swofford, currently chairman of the missionary personnel committee, has served on the board since 1988. He is a graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Texas.

Other officers are Greg Martin, pastor of Commission Road Baptist Church, Long Beach, Miss., first vice chairman; Kenneth Cheek, pastor of Northridge Baptist Church, Northport, Ala., second vice chairman; Cloma Odom, member of Central Baptist Church, Warner Robins, Ga., secretary; and Marti Hefley, member of Immanuel Baptist Church, Hannibal, Mo., assistant secretary.

Jimmy Anderson, Indian church developer and program leader for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma since 1981, was elected assistant director for Native American church growth in the language church extension division. Anderson, who was born in Kansas City, Mo., will continue to live in Oklahoma as he serves on the HMB field staff. He fills a position vacated by Russell Begaye who was elected director of the HMB's language church extension division in December.

Randy Wood was elected associate director of the missionary personnel department. The Ohio native has been director of missions for the Maumee Valley and Northwest Baptist associations in Ohio since 1990. He is a former church planter and pastor in Ohio. He takes a post held by Ron Holloway who is retiring April 30.

Holloway was one of six retiring HMB staff members recognized at the meeting. Holloway, an Ohio native, has worked in missionary personnel since 1983.

Other retirees recognized, their years of service and most recent position include Selma Dunagan, 32 years, executive assistant in the new church extension division; Ann Ellis, 13 years, receptionist/secretary for the student missions department; Hugh Gibson, nine years, computer operations specialist; Rosemary McMurray, 15 years, lobby receptionist; and Jerry Scruggs, 26 years, director of training and development.

HMB President Lewis also announced Bob Banks, executive vice president, operations, has moved up his retirement to Aug. 31, 1995. Banks had previously announced plans to retire Dec. 31, but will now retire Aug. 31 and provide contract assistance in fund development through the end of the year.

The board also voted to name the 500-seat auditorium in the new national office building in memory of Southern Baptist businessman Cecil B. Day whose estate established a \$12 million trust fund for home missions. Since 1981, the Day Fund has provided more than \$9 million to start churches, support evangelism projects and minister to needs of people.

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Sarah Zimmerman contributed to this story.

Survey results call for more  
counseling, diverse approaches By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press  
4/13/95

ATLANTA (BP)--For every person baptized due to a first-time commitment to Jesus Christ, another person is baptized after making a rededication, according to a survey of 1,350 Southern Baptists.

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The survey indicates the need for more counseling of those seeking baptism and supports the need for a diversity of evangelism approaches, said Darrell Robinson, HMB vice president for evangelism.

Conducted by the Home Mission Board's research department in cooperation with the evangelism division, the study included people ages 18 years and older who were baptized between Oct. 1, 1992, and Sept. 30, 1993.

Participants were asked to cite one of several reasons for their recent baptism. Their responses were conversion, 40.5 percent; rededication, 40.4 percent; and transfer of membership from another denomination, 13.7 percent.

If the survey results represent the 150,000 adults baptized in 1993, then only 60,000 baptisms represented conversions of the lost to Christ, according to the study's findings. An almost equal number were baptized for rededicating their lives to Christ.

Rededication as a motive for baptism raises serious questions, according to the study's authors. "Are pastors assuming responsibility for clarifying the response of people to the invitation call? Is the pressure to baptize so great that pastors are encouraging people to be rebaptized rather than counseling them on assurance of salvation? Is the true meaning of baptism being taught in our churches?"

When asked for names and phone numbers of adults baptized in 1993, the 840 churches in the survey indicated they had lost contact with more than one-third of the people they baptized that year.

"We are not carefully counseling those who indicate an interest in becoming Christians," said Thomas Wright of the HMB evangelism staff. "We need to be more careful that every step toward Christ is understood and that new converts are disciplined into becoming committed followers of Christ."

The recent converts in the survey were also asked, "Other than the Holy Spirit, what was the one, single most important influence that led you to accept Christ as your Savior?"

Nearly 34 percent of those questioned said another person had the most influence in their decision. Internal factors, such as the desire to go to heaven or have a positive influence on their children, were cited by 31.4 percent of those questioned. Life crisis was named by 13 percent, and church-related activities such as preaching and Sunday school were listed by 11.6 percent.

Another question asked of the recent converts involved 11 items which influence a person's decision for Christ. Respondents could list more than one item as making a major contribution to their decision.

Attending church worship services was listed as a major influence by 76.9 percent of the recent converts. The other most commonly named influences were reading the Bible on your own, 57.5 percent; someone personally sharing the plan of salvation, 56.6 percent; watching the way a person lived as a Christian, 53 percent; someone telling about their personal salvation experience, 47.2 percent; and attending Sunday school or Bible study, 46.4 percent.

"No single approach or program alone reaches all nonbelievers. A comprehensive strategy using varied approaches is required for maximum effectiveness," Robinson said.

Another concern of Robinson is that 61 percent of those questioned had been baptized before; only 29 percent had little or no prior church experience.

"Southern Baptists are reaching relatively few of the unchurched, nonreligious, nonbelievers in our nation," Robinson said. "We need to be more intentional in outreach to people wholly separated from Christian influence."

All those surveyed were asked why they chose the church they joined. More than half, 52.7 percent, said because it was a warm, friendly congregation. Other factors were the influence of family and friends, 44.5 percent; influence of the pastor, 39.9 percent; location, 11.8 percent; and spiritual reasons, 9 percent.

**'Movement of God' in Haiti  
awaiting more volunteers**

By Steve Barber

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--There's a "movement of God" afoot in rural Haiti, but it could come to naught unless more Southern Baptist volunteers answer the call to serve there, and soon, according to Mickey Caison of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission.

Caison, who has served as project coordinator of the Haitian relief effort since it began last November, said he has only about half of the volunteers he needs to help with water well repairs.

The work has proven to be a highly effective tool for evangelism.

"When our food distribution teams were there over the winter, they were concerned because they didn't see evangelism. Working in the warehouse, we didn't have an opportunity to interact with the people," Caison said.

But the well repair teams have been out among the people every day in locations all over the countryside, he added, with many opportunities to reach people with the gospel message. The people are responding.

"There's a movement of God going on down there in those mountains that no one is seeing or hearing about with all the bad things about Haiti coming out in the newspapers and television programs," Caison said. "There are going to be many more opportunities at those wells to win people to salvation, but we're not going to be there like we should if we don't have the team members"

Dick Talley, a Dallas layman who returned home April 11 after a two-week stay, said the Haitian people "are so hungry for the Word."

"There are always from 30 to 100 people waiting to get water, and they are easy to talk to and give your testimony to," Talley said.

Jim Ziler, Southern Baptist missionary to Haiti, said every opportunity to witness at a wellhead had resulted in several decisions.

The Brotherhood Commission and the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board are jointly sponsoring the work in Haiti, in conjunction with the Baptist Convention of Haiti.

The recently concluded food distribution effort in Haiti involved a total of 161 volunteers serving on 16 teams. They distributed more than 32,000 "family packs" of basic food commodities.

Fourteen-day slots for volunteers are available through the month of June. Teams are set to depart on April 29, May 13, May 27, June 10 and June 24.

Medical-dental support personnel also are being sought for teams in Haiti. Team members will depart for seven-day trips on May 6, May 13, May 20 and May 27.

Prospective volunteers should contact Beth Huneycutt, the Brotherhood Commission's volunteer recruiter, at 1-800-280-1891 for more information.

Contributions for the relief effort may be sent to Southern Baptist World Relief at the Brotherhood Commission, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, TN 38104-2493 or to the Foreign Mission Board, P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, VA 23230-0767.

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**Hispanics commend Lewis, Land  
for removing names from ECT**

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press  
4/13/95

DALLAS (BP)--Texas Baptist Hispanic leaders have commended the two Southern Baptist Convention agency heads who recently removed their signatures from the controversial "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" document.

On April 6, Larry Lewis, president of the Home Mission Board, and Richard Land, executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, announced they were withdrawing their signatures from the document.

They were among the 40 original signers of the accord, drafted one year ago to highlight areas of common concern for Catholics and conservative Protestants.

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On April 12, officers of the Mexican Baptist Convention of Texas and presidents of the state's 30 Hispanic fellowships issued a statement commending Lewis and Land for withdrawing their names from the evangelical-Catholic document.

The Hispanic leaders acknowledged that the original intent of the accord may have been "noble." However, the endorsement of it by Lewis and Land had created "an unnecessary disturbance" in Hispanic Baptists' work and witness, "as evidenced by their withdrawal from the document," according to the officers.

"Perhaps we could say that it is a lesson well learned," the statement said. "We applaud their courage to make necessary changes and we look forward to working together to reach Hispanics and others for Christ."

Roland Lopez of McAllen, president of the Mexican Baptist Convention of Texas, said he received a letter from Lewis dated April 6 confirming the removal of his and Land's signatures from the evangelical/Catholic document and asking Lopez to communicate that action to Hispanic Texas Baptists.

In mid-March, officers of the Mexican Baptist Convention of Texas and presidents of the regional Hispanic Texas Baptist fellowships had released a statement distancing themselves from the evangelical/Catholic document and urging Lewis to rescind his endorsement of it. They claimed the document had been used by Roman Catholic priests to hinder the Baptist witness to Hispanics.

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**Missionaries survive close calls  
with robbers in Africa, S. America**

**Baptist Press  
4/13/95**

By Mary E. Speidel & Mark Kelly

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Two Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board missionaries on different continents recently survived close calls during robbery attempts in cities where they work.

Missionary Ken Baker of St. Augustine, Fla., was accosted April 10 in Abengourou, Cote d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast), by four men who ordered him into his car at gunpoint. A few weeks earlier, missionary Johnny Burnett, from Terrell, Texas, also faced a life-threatening brush with a robber in Belem, Brazil.

The four men forced Baker to drive about 15 miles out of the west African city. Baker, a dentist, works in a rural dental project in the area.

During the incident, one robber held a gun to Baker's head and terrorized him by repeatedly threatening to kill him and occasionally firing into the air. Eventually, the assailants ordered him from the car and stole his billfold, wedding ring, glasses and about \$500 of mission money.

Police found the car several hours later where it had crashed into a tree at a high rate of speed. Evidence at the scene indicated at least two occupants of the car had been seriously injured, police said.

Burnett's troubles began when he came home March 15 to find an outside door had been broken into. Burnett entered the house and found an intruder in an upstairs bathroom.

Seeing the robber, Burnett turned and ran down the steps, yelling at the intruder to get out of the house, said fellow missionary Loretta Williams, from Knoxville, Tenn.

The robber fired a shot at Burnett but missed. Then he ran down the steps after Burnett, shooting and missing again. Outside, Burnett retreated to the back corner of the house while the assailant fled the scene.

"Afterwards I realized I shouldn't have gone upstairs when I saw the front door was broken into," said Burnett. "I should have gone to call the police. But in my not thinking well, God protected me."

"Johnny had always said that if he ever found (a robber) in his house, he wouldn't fight with him. He'd run," said Williams, who lives with her family a few blocks away from Burnett and his wife, Barbara, from Kansas.

"I had always thought I'd rather be a live coward than a dead hero," added Burnett.

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Mrs. Burnett was out of the country at the time of the robbery. A caretaker living behind the couple's home also was away, Williams said. Burnett, who teaches at the Equatorial Baptist Theological Seminary in Belem, discovered the robber when he returned home in the afternoon.

Another missionary family living on the same street had reported that their neighbors recently had been robbed, too, Williams said. "Apparently that street is being targeted right now by a gang. Gangs are very common in our city, and they're getting worse and worse," she said.

"Because of the extreme poverty here, robberies occur frequently, even though we all have bars on our doors and windows," said Williams. "We've all been very fortunate. That usually happens when (missionaries) aren't home. Better our goods than us."

"We're really grateful (Johnny) wasn't hurt," added Williams.

Later Burnett found in the house a plastic sack of goods the robber apparently had planned to steal. The assailant also had tried to break into a safe and had ransacked the Burnetts' bedroom. However, nothing appeared to be missing.

The Burnetts were appointed in 1966 as missionaries to equatorial Brazil by the Foreign Mission Board. He earlier was minister of education and music for First Baptist Church, Dimmitt, Texas. He also has served several other churches in Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas. In Brazil he also has been executive secretary-treasurer of the Baptist State Convention of Para and Amapa.

Baker and his wife, Lynn, were appointed missionaries in 1991 by the Foreign Mission Board. He previously had worked as a dentist in public health services in Honolulu, Hawaii, and Asheville, N.C., and in private practice in St. Augustine.

In Cote d'Ivoire, his mobile dental clinic plays a strategic role in evangelism and church-planting efforts in the Abengourou vicinity of southeast Cote d'Ivoire.

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Miss. College athletics  
to drop to Division III

By Shannon T. Simpson

Baptist Press  
4/13/95

CLINTON, Miss. (BP)--Mississippi College's intercollegiate athletic program will drop from the National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) Division II to Division III by 1997, according to President Howell Todd.

Todd cited concerns regarding budgetary commitments and the overall mission of the school among the reasons for the decision, which was made jointly with trustees in March.

"It is very important that we take some steps to bring the university into harmony and balance with our mission," Todd said.

Of the school's overall operating budget of \$27 million, \$2 million goes to the athletic program. Out of that \$2 million, \$940,000 is awarded in athletic scholarships.

"I believe this to be disproportionate to what we can afford when there are so many needs at the campus," Todd said. "We cannot continue in this posture and make the necessary improvements to our academic programs."

Membership in NCAA's Division III requires a school to give only financial aid based on need, not aid given solely on the basis of athletic ability.

"I believe that an NCAA Division III program more clearly reflects the historical mission of Mississippi College in renewing a primary emphasis on outstanding academically talented students who can also play competitive athletics," said Todd.

"Athletic programs cost money. Moving to Division III will not erase the need for funding the program out of the operating budget," he continued. "It is a matter of degree of support rather than whether to support."

Todd said the school will file a notice of intent to change divisions by the June 1 deadline. NCAA regulations require MC to continue to play sports under Division II rules for two full years before becoming full members of Division III.

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MC intends to honor its financial commitments to student athletes in the meantime, Todd said. They will receive their financial aid for the next two years. However, athletic director and football coach Terry McMillan said there will not be any new scholarships available, including to this year's football signees.

"We'll have to tell them to go straight to the financial aid office now," McMillan said.

McMillan said he was disappointed by the action of Todd and the trustees. The Choctaws football team would be off NCAA probation for the first time in two years this fall and eligible to win the Gulf South championship and enter the Division II playoffs.

President Todd reiterated, however: "We can still have good athletic programs and reflect our mission for academic success."

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**Baker envisions new generation  
of prophets for hurting world**      **By Brenda Sanders**

**Baptist Press  
4/13/95**

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--In a world of brokenness and pain, the church is called to fulfill its ministry by sharing God's word of hope with hurting humanity.

How can this be accomplished? By raising up a new generation of prophets, according to N. Larry Baker, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pineville, La.

During the recent C.W. Scudder "School of the Prophets" Lectureship at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo., Baker, a former academic dean of the institution, urged ministers of the 1990s to "rediscover the Old Testament prophets."

"All of them served in days of darkness and tragedy," Baker reminded an audience of Midwestern students, faculty and staff. "The whole stretch of their ministry was one of almost unbroken calamity. ... Each of them confronted a social order that was full of corruption and a political situation that would invite despair on the part of anyone. ... Yet, the prophets came under the call of God. ... They uttered God's truth as it was given to them to know, and they did so in utter disregard of the popular mood. They brought their message to bear on political and social problems; they spoke ... urgently to definite moral emergencies in personal and social life. They related their understanding of the person and the will of God to concrete human situations."

The social and personal sins which the prophets condemned are, in essence, the same as those that "degrade individuals and corrupt society in our day," said Baker, former executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission. "The truths that have their source in the holiness and the justice of God still apply in our 20th century technological western world. The way of repentance and return to God's Word and will remain as our only hope of redemption and salvation in this information age."

If, in that age, the prophets could point the way to salvation, Baker suggested, "then they show us that all is not lost, even in our day. If the prophets could show society how recovery could come through the power of God, then they show us that that power of recovery is not lost in our own time. If the prophets could show people that the hope of redemption still remains, no matter how far they fall, then they show us the possibilities of the prophet's message in our time."

Said Baker: "The church can raise a new generation of prophets. The church can call forth in God's name, and send forth with its blessings and in God's power, prophets. They will have an ear that is continually open toward God, to hear what God has to say to weary, broken, stumbling humanity and they will have a tongue that is ready and disciplined to speak cauterizing and healing words."

What characteristics might be exemplified by prophets of the '90s?

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First, Baker said, prophets will identify with the oppressed. "Today," he said, "those on whom the prophetic mantle falls fix their eyes on hurting humanity, tune their ears to the cries of the downtrodden and link their hearts with the broken. They plead the cause of the oppressed, the homeless, the helpless and the hungry. They plead the cause of children and aged alike, of developing nations and of victims of all kinds."

Like the prophets of the Old Testament, modern prophets also act as critics, he continued. "The prophet believes in ultimate standards which no amount of clever, modern manipulation can change or distort. The prophet believes that she has a duty to someone beyond herself. She believes that loyalty to that One is more desirable than personal popularity or profit.

"The Christian gospel then, comes with a word of judgment," Baker said. "We need to remember that no order can survive, much less thrive, without the critic. The minister-prophet has an ultimate obligation to truth and to the maintenance of truth. . . . It is easy for us to be touched by the slow stain of corruption without any sense of the disaster that is taking place. The hunger for purity can be dulled. . . .

"But once those seductive voices are heeded, it is only a question of time until a nation is debauched and a generation is destroyed. Against this tendency, there is a need for clear-thinking critics who will warn against the ultimate outcome of such policies and practices."

In addition, Baker said the modern prophet must challenge the axioms of the age. "They are the propositions, the principles, the rules and maxims that capture popular acceptance and become the ground rules for doing life," he said. "We hear them in our day, sometimes expressed in folk wisdom, sometimes heard in contemporary music, sometimes hawked by the hucksters of Madison Avenue, sometimes peddled by self-pronounced heroes. These axioms pervade our common life in the work-a-day world and contaminate the bloodstream of the church's life as well.

"The prophet knows that most contemporary idioms are at odds with the thought and the ideals of the kingdom (of God) and of its Scriptures. . . . The prophet knows that the wisdom of this world is folly with God. The prophet knows that it is a dark and tragic day for the church when the notes of challenge, warning and dissent are silenced or allowed to lapse."

The prophet acts with a sense of urgency, Baker continued. "Most of the people with whom I live and work and among whom I minister are people who don't get excited about a great deal of anything, unless it is athletics," he said. "We think about the tragedies and the suffering of the world at a distance, without feeling very deeply about any of that.

"But the prophet knows that time is running out. 'Now' is her word; tomorrow is too late for action. Reasoned, rational, measured, calculated actions are the way of bureaucrats and managers, but not of prophets," Baker said. "A dispassionate manner is out of character for the prophet."

Further, the prophet embodies the message that is delivered, Baker suggested. "You and I have more than words with which to work. We also have ourselves, our bodies, our presence. The One who calls us and places our assignment on us requires that we pay attention to what we do, as well as what we say."

The prophet celebrates the "way of non-adjustment," he said. "Our culture pressures us to fit in; prophetic faith calls us to stand apart. Our culture says, 'You have to go along to get along;' prophetic faith says, 'Do not let the world press you into its mold.'

"The prophet is the one who encourages us, reminds us and strengthens us at the point of the joy of being 'odd.'"

The prophet declares the potential and the possibilities of God's way, Baker said. "The prophet knows that life with God, through faith and devotion, makes possible the preservation of freedom, the reformation of society and the establishment of justice. ... The prophet also has a vision of what God's tomorrow will look like. God envisions a world where swords are turned into plows ... where the implements of war become garden tools to produce food; where dollars now spent on bombs are spent on babies; where the money set aside for space weapons provides therapy for drug users, health care for the elderly and medical research for AIDS patients; where the only thing we store in silos is grain to feed the world's hungry."

Prophets also call people to action, Baker said. "The prophet calls us to live today on the basis of what we believe about tomorrow, to shape our lives in the present in ways that are consistent with God's vision for the future, to stop living on the basis of what has always been and to start living on the basis of God's new way of justice, mercy and peace."

Further, the modern prophet anchors words and actions in God's Word, Baker said. The Old Testament prophets were "interpreters and ambassadors of God's mind, of God's present will and ultimate purpose for his people and for the world," he explained. "In an ancient situation, the prophet stood alone. ... The prophet was the medium by which the Word of God came to others. The Word of God was the standard by which nations and individuals were measured."

Finally, the prophet is nurtured by the practice of the spiritual disciplines, Baker said.

"Modern prophets appear to run out of energy early and withdraw from prophetic action quickly; their ministries are often short-lived," he said. "If we take judgment and prophetic challenge seriously, we find that we need new measures of spiritual support."

"Prophets need ... to be grasped by the reality of God's presence, regardless of which way the tide is currently flowing," Baker said. "They need to be inspired and healed by the vision of God's ultimate rule, without allowing that vision to undercut their sense of urgency. They need to see life under the signs of the cross and the resurrection."

"Spiritual disciplines give us strength and pull us continually into engagement with the enemy," Baker said. "Practice of the disciplines keep us from settling only with encouragement and coping. The disciplines give us nurture and nourishment, food for the soul, strength for the day's battles and energy for the long haul. Practice of the disciplines will keep us in touch with the truth at the heart of our calling."

Baker concluded, "The world in which we live and the God before whom we stand need prophets. ... All of us are called in our own way to make known in our world the living truth of God."

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**BPRA updates standards,  
begins minority scholarship**

**Baptist Press  
4/13/95**

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. (BP)--Members of the Baptist Public Relations Association adopted updated professional standards and established a scholarship for minorities during their April 6-9 meeting in Williamsburg, Va.

The nine-point set of standards are:

- 1) Each member of the Baptist Public Relations Association shall first be a committed Christian, seeking to fulfill God's call through the ministry of Christian communications.
- 2) Each member shall place ministry and service above personal gain or recognition, striving to glorify Christ and extend the ministry of his kingdom.
- 3) Each member shall adhere to the highest standards of truth, accuracy and fairness in every area of communications, regardless of personal or professional costs.

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4) Each member shall maintain personal and professional integrity as well as respect for free inquiry and the opinions of others.

5) Each member shall seek to produce the highest quality work possible while maintaining appropriate stewardship of available time, resources, skills and personnel.

6) Each member shall demonstrate loyalty to the purpose and objectives of his or her organization.

7) Each member shall seek to strengthen his or her professional competence through ongoing professional development.

8) Each member shall respect and affirm the rights and opportunities of others without regard to race, color, gender or age.

9) Each member shall seek to affirm and advance the professional responsibilities and opportunities of fellow members through a spirit of partnership and cooperation.

The new BPRA scholarship will be named the Alan Compton and Bob Stanley Scholarship for Minorities, for those pursuing studies to serve in Baptist communication positions.

Louis Moore, associate vice president for communications at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, made the motion to honor Compton, who recently retired as FMB vice president for communications, and Stanley, who recently retired as FMB director of news and information office.

BPRA officers will discuss avenues to recommend for funding the scholarship.

Part of Moore's motion stated, "We, the members of the Baptist Public Relations Association, need to move forward more aggressively in including in our ranks people of various ethnic minorities in America today, specifically African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Hispanic-Americans and Native-Americans."

The motion noted that Compton and Stanley had "employed persons of color in their respective offices and set for the Southern Baptist Convention public relations operation as a whole a model for advancement of all people, regardless of race, color or ethnic origin."

Elected as BPRA officers for the coming year are president, Trennis Henderson, editor of the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine; program chair, Terri Lackey, Baptist Sunday School Board; newsletter editor, Sarah Zimmerman, Home Mission Board; membership chair, Brenda Sanders, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary; treasurer, Robert Allen, Associated Baptist Press; and historian, Polly House, Baptist Press.

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**BPRA names award winners  
at workshop in Virginia**

**Baptist Press  
4/13/95**

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. (BP)--Three Baptist communications specialists took top honors in the Wilmer C. Fields Awards Competition sponsored by Baptist Public Relations Association.

Garnering five awards each during the association's annual workshop April 6-8 in Williamsburg, Va., were Bill Bangham, associate editor of MissionsUSA magazine of the Home Mission Board; Jeff Bowman, publications director of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina; and Van C. Payne, director of the Audiovisual Department of the Foreign Mission Board.

Bangham received four of the possible five first-place awards in the photography division. He also received the Fon H. Scofield Award for exceptional achievement in photography. Bangham received first-place awards for single black and white photograph, black and white photograph series, single color photograph and editorial photography.

All of Bowman's awards were in the print media and design division of the competition. He received first-place awards for special print publications, logo design and design of letterhead/envelope/cards. He swept the graphic art design category by taking both first and second places.

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Five awards for video production were won by Payne. He garnered both first and second places in the news reports category. Payne also placed first in both feature production categories of over and under 10 minutes. And he placed second in the promotional productions category.

Two BPRA members each received four awards for their work in 1994. They were Teri Capshaw, art director, Brad Price Design Studio in Fort Worth, Texas, and Mark Wingfield, associate editor of Kentucky's Western Recorder.

Capshaw's awards were in the print media and design division for pieces designed for the Baptist General Convention of Texas and California Southern Baptist Convention. Capshaw placed first for brochures and books. She also placed second in categories for posters and direct mail.

Wingfield took top honors for investigative and interpretive writing. He placed second in categories for both news and feature newspaper series.

Besides Bangham, other winners of grand prizes were Robert L. Reeves, associate director of public relations for Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children, the Arthur S. Davenport Award for public relations and development; Randy Durham, director of video productions for Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, the M.E. Dodd Award for video productions; Rachael Gill, assistant editor of Missions USA magazine of the Home Mission Board, the Frank Burkhalter Award for writing; and Rebecca Woosley, director of marketing for Palm Beach Atlantic College, the Albert McClellan Award for print media and design.

Agencies/institutions topping the winners list were the Foreign Mission Board with 18 and Home Mission Board with 13. Other entities with more than five awards include the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina with eight awards and the Kentucky Western Recorder with six awards.

The awards competition is named for Wilmer C. Fields who served for more than 25 years as vice president for public relations for the SBC Executive Committee. The awards are presented annually at the association's spring workshop. The association's 1996 workshop and awards ceremony will be at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center.

Categories with first- and second-place award winners include:

-- Public Relations and Development Division

Total Campaign for Public Relations or Development: first, Don Hepburn, Barbara Denman and Tyrus Wood, Florida Baptist Convention; second, David R. Wilkinson, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Project and Special Events for Public Relations or Development: first, Reeves; second, D'Lesa Carroll, Woman's Missionary Union.

-- Video Productions Division

Feature Productions Under 10 Minutes: first, Payne; second, Durham.

Feature Productions Over 10 Minutes: first, Payne; second, Donna Carlson, Arizona Baptist Retirement Centers.

Video Magazines: first, Terry McMahon, Foreign Mission Board; second, Susan Watt, Brotherhood Commission.

Promotional Productions: first, Durham; second, Payne.

Commercials or PSAs: first, Craig Martin, Foreign Mission Board; second, none.

News Reports: first and second, Payne.

Music Videos: first, Trish Landers Ragsdale, Foreign Mission Board; second, none.

Other Videos: first, Wood; second, Ray Fetty, Foreign Mission Board.

-- Writing Division

News Writing: Single Article - Newspaper: first, Jan Johnsonius, Foreign Mission Board (now at Southwestern Seminary); second, Greg Warner, Associated Baptist Press.

News Writing: Series - Newspaper: first, Craig Bird, Foreign Mission Board; second, Wingfield.

Feature Writing: Single Article - Newsletter: first, Chip Alford, Baptist Sunday School Board; second, Brenda J. Sanders, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Feature Writing: Single Article - Newspaper: first, Warner; second, Johnsonius.

Feature Writing: Single Article - Magazine: first, Gill; second, Bird.

Feature Writing: Series - Newspaper: first, Shari Schubert, Missouri Word & Way; second, Wingfield.

Feature Writing: Series - Magazine: first, Mary E. Speidel, Foreign Mission Board; second, Bird.

Advertising and Promotional Copy Writing: first, Terry Barone, California Southern Baptist Convention; second, Eddy G. Oliver, Home Mission Board.

Editorial Writing: Issues/Analysis: first, Marv Knox, Kentucky Western Recorder; second, Lynn P. Clayton, Louisiana Baptist Message.

Editorial Writing: First Person Op. Ed. Column: first, Clayton; second, Polly House, Baptist Press.

Investigative Writing: first, Wingfield; second, none.

Interpretive Writing: first, Wingfield; second, Knox.

-- Photography Division

Black and White Photography: Single: first, Bangham; second, Jim Veneman, Baptist Sunday School Board.

Black and White Photography: Series: first, Bangham; second, Mark Sandlin, Home Mission Board.

Color Photography: Single: first, Bangham; second, John Bailey, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Color Photography: Series: first and second, Warren F. Johnson, Foreign Mission Board.

Editorial Photography: first, Bangham; second, Sandlin.

-- Print Media and Design Division

Periodicals: Magazines: first, Charlie Warren, Baptist Sunday School Board; second, James Warren, Brotherhood Commission.

Periodicals: Newspapers, Newsmagazines, Tabloids: first, Reeves; second, James Dotson, Georgia's The Christian Index.

Periodicals: Newsletters: first, Rick Hooton, North Phoenix Baptist Church; second, Pat Centner, Baptist Foundation of Arizona.

Publications: Annual Reports: first, Rebecca Woosley, Palm Beach Atlantic College; second, Carroll.

Publications: Brochures and Booklets: first, Capshaw; second, Wilkinson.

Publications: Special Print Materials: first, Bowman; second, none.

Publications: Catalogues: first, Burriel Perry Jr. and Sondra Eply, Foreign Mission Board; second, David Porter, Home Mission Board.

Publications: Books: first, Capshaw and Cindy Rogillio, Brad Price Design Studio; second, Cindy McClain, Woman's Missionary Union.

Publications: Other: first, Brian K. Hardy, South Carolina Baptist Convention; second, Odette Buswell-Brewer, Carson-Newman College.

Graphic Art Design: Logo Design: first, Bowman; second, Tim Yarbrough, Brotherhood Commission.

Graphic Art Design: Letterhead/Envelope/Cards: first, Bowman; second, none.

Graphic Art Design: Other: first and second, Bowman.

Advertising and Promotional Materials: Posters: first, Pat Cravens, Home Mission Board; second, Capshaw.

Advertising and Promotional Materials: Direct Mail: first, Wilkinson; second, Capshaw, Rogillio and Barone.

Advertising and Promotional Materials: Other: first, Hooton; second, Diane Voss and Oliver, Home Mission Board

**Baptist college communicators  
launch professional organization**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Public relations and marketing officers from 12 Southern Baptist colleges and universities approved bylaws and elected officers at the first annual meeting of the new Association of Communicators in Baptist Education.

Marc C. Whitt, assistant to the president for public relations and marketing at Campbellsville (Ky.) College, was unanimously elected president of ACBE during the two-day session held recently at Belmont University, Nashville, Tenn.

"While we gain professional development and networking opportunities through national secular organizations, we often find that some of our concerns are only faced by other Baptist public relations and marketing practitioners," Whitt said.

"Indeed, it is hard to adequately articulate some of the issues to colleagues outside of the denominational infrastructure. Through ACBE, Baptist communicators now have a forum for sharing the unique challenges our institutions face. Additionally, we develop a strong and supportive network of professionals who share the same mission," he said.

Among the topics discussed at the ACBE conference were crisis communications, the impact of the Internet on marketing, working with Baptist Press and promoting Baptist education through advertising.

ACBE charter institutions include Belmont; Campbellsville; Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, Tenn.; Cumberland College, Williamsburg, Ky.; Georgetown (Ky.) College; Houston Baptist University; Louisiana College, Alexandria, La.; Mercer University, Macon, Ga.; Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee; Union University, Jackson, Tenn.; University of Mobile (Alabama), and Williams Baptist College, Walnut Ridge, Ark.

Whitt encouraged public relations and marketing officers to take advantage of the networking opportunities ACBE affords.

"As more public relations and marketing directors join ACBE, we become an even stronger network of communicators who share the same Christian commitment, the same joys, the same challenges," Whitt said. Interested persons may contact Whitt at (502) 789-5213.

Other officers elected to one-year terms are vice president and president-elect, Marty O'Gwynn, director of public relations at Oklahoma Baptist University; membership coordinator/treasurer, Odette Brewer, assistant director of news and publications at Carson-Newman; public relations coordinator/secretary, Kathy Dean, director of public relations at University of Mobile; newsletter editor, Sarah Myers, publications editor at Georgetown College; and historian, Tim Fields, assistant director of the SBC Education Commission.

Fields, who was instrumental in establishing ACBE, also was presented with a lifetime membership to the organization.

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