

# (BP)

## BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

### NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee  
901 Commerce #750  
Nashville, Tennessee 37203  
(615) 244-2355  
Herb Hollinger, Vice President  
Fax (615) 742-8919  
CompuServe ID# 70420,17

#### BUREAUS

ATLANTA Martin King, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 898-7522, CompuServe 70420,250  
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 333 N. Washington, Dallas, Texas 75246-1798, Telephone (214) 828-5232, CompuServe 70420,115  
NASHVILLE Linda Lawson, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300, CompuServe 70420,57  
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151, CompuServe 70420,72  
WASHINGTON Tom Strode, Chief, 400 North Capitol St., #594, Washington, D.C. 20001, Telephone (202) 638-3223, CompuServe 71173,316

November 21, 1995

95-187

LOS ANGELES--3-day meeting's focus: a world of prayer requests.  
LOS ANGELES--Baptists voice prayers during L.A. sessions.  
ALABAMA--WMU's new adult organization designed to meet women's needs.  
ALABAMA--WMU's new 'Missions Mosaic' blends 2 magazines' traditions.  
WASHINGTON--Partial-birth abortion bill to return to Senate calendar.  
CALIFORNIA--Authors urge Christians to minister to homosexuals.  
LOUISIANA--Conservative is president of Louisiana convention.  
CALIFORNIA--California Baptists boost Southern Baptist giving.  
SOUTH CAROLINA--South Carolina meeting begins, ends quietly.  
IDAHO--Utah-Idaho Baptists commit to more prayer for revival.  
CONNECTICUT--New England Baptists address missions, budget shortfall.  
GEORGIA--'Senior Partners' launched to help start churches.  
TENNESSEE--Friend, faith restored marriage to country singer; photo.  
MINNEAPOLIS--Race relations resolution yields lighthearted exchange.

3-day meeting's focus:  
a world of prayer requests

By Jon Walker

Baptist Press  
11/21/95

LOS ANGELES (BP)--Imagine a Wednesday night prayer meeting that lasted 18 hours. That's an idea of what happened in Los Angeles at "Prayer and Fasting '95," a gathering of evangelicals seeking God's face and praying for the world's needs.

Sponsored by Campus Crusade for Christ, the meeting drew participants from all over the world and across the denominational spectrum. Rather than a conference on prayer, it was a conference of prayer as the 2,900 participants broke into small groups charged with interceding for themselves, their families, their churches and then the whole world.

"Everybody really understands what we're here for," said Mike Arrington, a Baptist Sunday School Board administrator in attendance. "It's not to hear speakers; it's not to listen to denominational leaders; but it's to really focus on the Lord and for you to open your own heart to what God has for you."

Prior to the conference, Campus Crusade founder Bill Bright said God had told him to call 2 million people to 40 days of prayer and fasting. In part, the conference was intended to prime the pump for such an event. Starting at 6 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 16, the meeting ran through Saturday at noon with no breaks except to sleep each night. Participants were allowed to come and go as they pleased, creating breaks of their own.

Although many nationally known speakers shared throughout the conference, their time was limited, with few exceptions, to five minutes. They would then lead the crowd through a 15- 20-minute prayer time concerning a particular issue such as world evangelism, national leadership, disintegrating families or clean hearts among Christians.

"I've been in many, many meetings where people have preached about prayer and talked about prayer but only given the most minute time to prayer," said Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in suburban Memphis, Tenn. "I have even presided over some of those meetings and preached some of those sermons, but the people here have no other agenda than to seek the face of God."

--more--

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

Many participants said they had come to receive a touch from God or to be a part of something they believed would be significant in its influence.

John Lee, a campus minister in Irvine, Calif., said the conference had changed his perspective on Christian service. Convicted by God his ministry was one of convenience, he said he will now yield his agenda completely to God.

Jack Auwetter, a member of Second Baptist Church, Houston, said he had come not knowing what to expect. Diagnosed with leukemia, Auwetter said he was a different person as a result of three days of prayer and fasting, noting, "I want to use my remaining days to serve God to the best of my ability."

Damaris Knobler, a member of Prestonwood Baptist Church, Dallas, said she had come because she "was real stressed out and wanted to seek God and commune with him a few days." She was struck by the message of repentance presented by Bible teacher Kay Arthur.

Arthur, speaking before the conference in black sackcloth, read from the Old Testament Book of Joel, noting people rarely are grieved the way God is grieved by sin and complacency.

"Worldy sorrow leads to regrets," she prayed. "Godly sorrow leads to repentance. God, give us godly sorrow." She then encouraged the pray-ers to allow the Holy Spirit to intercede through them.

April Bradshaw, also a Prestonwood Baptist Church member, found the conference educational in that it showed her, through the breadth of the prayer requests, just how many concerns there were for fervently focused Christians. Citing prayers for the witness of Christian athletes, Bradshaw said it showed her "Christ touches people through the things they're interested in."

Arrington added, as a result of his time in prayer, he was going to approach each day with a renewed sense of urgency and boldness, knowing "that can only happen if I start each day right and clean before the Lord." He said he also was deeply impressed a small group of people, committed to repentance and prayer, can make a difference for the kingdom of God.

Another topic of discussion among the pray-ers was the considerable time spent praying for racial reconciliation. Tony Evans, an African American Dallas pastor and national speaker who often addresses urban problems, said as he led the conference in prayer for reconciliation: "We have not seen revival because of our horizontal failure (to truly reconcile), despite our vertical expressions of commitment."

Michelle Melchor, a Campus Crusade staff member from Atlanta, said the prayers for reconciliation helped open participants' eyes to the notion "God is not a middle-class, white man in a three-piece suit." Adding she came to the conference because the state of the nation is such, "It's going to take more than another program or another book to fix; it can only be fixed by prayer."

--30--

Baptists voice prayers  
during L.A. sessions

By Jon Walker

Baptist Press  
11/21/95

LOS ANGELES (BP)--Several Southern Baptist leaders were among those who led in prayer for key concerns during "Fasting and Prayer '95" Nov. 16-18 in Los Angeles.

Larry Lewis, president of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, noted there are an estimated 185 million lost people in America, making it the fourth-largest pagan nation in the world. He said 50 percent of all Americans will live in 44 cities by the year 2000, and later in an interview, he noted only 18 percent of all Southern Baptist churches are in those cities.

It's going to take all denominations and para-church groups working together to evangelize the nation by the year 2000, Lewis told the crowd of 2,900, noting, "God will not use any one denomination. We're going to have to put aside our denominational nuances to get this done."

Any goal of such massive evangelism also requires prayer, Lewis added.

--more--

"I'm speaking about prayer marches, prayer walks, driving through cities and saturating them with prayer," Lewis said. "I'm talking about taking the phone book, tearing it up and asking prayer warriors to pray through the lists, and then rotating them with prayer partners."

Darrell Robinson, HMB vice president for evangelism, told the Los Angeles pray-ers he's been told only about 5 percent of church members actively share their faith in Christ. "How can we imagine revival coming to a church where 95 percent of its members are in disobedience to the main thing God has called us to do?" Robinson asked before leading the group in prayer for evangelism of the lost.

Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in suburban Memphis, Tenn., said he hopes the prayer conference would ripple across the Christian community: "My heart's desire is that each of us will get right with God" and carry that renewal back to their spheres of influence.

"Unity comes not by trying to bind ourselves together transdenominationally, but by seeking God first," Rogers said.

"This world will see John 17 come into focus, not by ecumenicity that crucifies convictions, but by a mighty work of God. Then, as a result of that, I believe pulpits will become a flame of fire and the gospel message will have more authenticity than it has ever had."

--30--

WMU's new adult organization  
designed to meet women's needs By Teresa Dickens

Baptist Press  
11/21/95

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Southern Baptist women involved in Woman's Missionary Union's adult women's organization did things differently in October.

For one thing, they no longer were members of Baptist Women and Baptist Young Women, which had been the names of WMU's women's organizations since 1970. Instead, they signed up to be charter members of Women on Mission, which is designed to involve women 18 years and up in missions.

To start the new year, a celebration experience introduced Women on Mission to all the women of the church through worship, music, testimonies, prayer and other elements.

In addition to the celebration experience, many of the women also met in small groups. Women on Mission differed from Baptist Women and Baptist Young Women in that small groups were based on the needs and interests of the women instead of their age. While one small group was an exercise group that prayed for missions, another group spent their time together doing crafts to prepare for a missions project, while other groups chose to do Bible study or improve their witnessing skills. Each church or campus organization customized their Women on Mission small groups.

Another difference was their magazine. No longer was Royal Service or Contempo delivered to their mailbox. Instead, subscribers to the two magazines received the first copy of WMU's new adult magazine, "Missions Mosaic."

Why, one might ask, all the changes in WMU's women's organizations? "The simple answer is that Woman's Missionary Union is committed to assisting every woman to see that she can live out God's purpose for her right where she is," said Andrea Mullins, WMU adult program specialist. "Women on Mission is an opportunity for women to develop spiritually toward a missions lifestyle, whether they are in college, at home, in the workplace or retired."

The major concern, added Betty Merrell, missions program system special projects coordinator, was that missions education survive in the local church.

"The old methods were no longer attractive," she said. "If missions education was going to happen in the churches, we had to make changes."

Both Mullins and Merrell were involved in the restructuring of WMU's organization for women. They explained discussions about needed changes began as early as 1988 and involved literally hundreds of women.

"The request for change came from the grass roots," Mullins noted. "Every time I was with a group of Baptist Women and Baptist Young Women, I was asked, 'How can we get more women involved in missions?'

--more--

"The women wanted to ensure that other women discovered the purpose of missions in their lives," she continued. "And they knew that the challenges of today's society meant providing new ways of reaching women with the message of missions."

In developing the new structure for Women on Mission, a variety of research techniques revealed what women wanted in an organization, Merrell said.

Among the concepts that repeatedly surfaced in the research was that women wanted an organization that was simplistic and flexible in structure; offered a wide variety of approaches to involvement; included all women in the church; was strong on spiritual development, ministry and evangelism; and was relevant to everyday life.

"The new structure and options offered through Women on Mission meet all of these needs and more," Mullins said. "We believe that Women on Mission will help women see the relevance of missions to their lives and to the world."

Laura Savage, Women on Mission specialist for WMU, is hopeful the new options will make the organization more appealing on the college campus. "Women on Mission can enhance any Baptist student ministry program on the campus," she said. "Missions is such a vital part of any Baptist campus ministry, and Women on Mission is one way a BSU can encourage more women students to find their place in missions, both locally and globally."

The response to Women on Mission has been overwhelmingly positive, Mullins shared.

"Among women nationwide, there is a lot of excitement about these changes," she said. "We are receiving numerous letters and calls reporting explosive growth, both in the number of women involved and the variety of approaches offered by churches for women."

"We are grateful that women are finding their place in Women on Mission," she concluded. "We believe that the history of missions education and involvement through Woman's Missionary Union will be continued and strengthened as women catch the vision for what God is doing in the world and how he wants to use them."

--30--

WMU's new 'Missions Mosaic'  
blends 2 magazines' traditions      By Teresa Dickens

Baptist Press  
11/21/95

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Together, they served Southern Baptist women for 106 years. Their words challenged women of all ages to be not only supporters of missions, but doers of missions as well.

"They" are Royal Service and Contempo, Woman's Missionary Union's magazines for women 18 and older. September 1995 marked the end of the publication of the two periodicals and ushered in WMU's new magazine for women, "Missions Mosaic."

The introduction of Missions Mosaic is part of WMU's launch of its new women's organization, Women on Mission. The new organization, which replaces Baptist Women and Baptist Young Women, includes women ages 18 and older under one organizational umbrella, allowing women to meet in small groups customized according to women's interests and needs, as well as groups formed around missions purposes.

The decision to cease publishing Royal Service and Contempo was not made easily or quickly, said Cindy Dake, managing editor for Missions Mosaic.

One of the most significant issues was the magazines' history, Dake said. Royal Service, which had served women for 81 years, was one of WMU's signature names and had a large, faithful readership.

Contempo, although only 25 years old, also was important to younger women, she explained. It was started in 1970 to compliment WMU's then-new organization for young women, Baptist Young Women. It also had historical and sentimental value to its readership.

However, despite the magazines' historical significance, Dake continued, "Research proves that if you plan to launch something new, it has to be perceived as new."

--more--

"That told us that if we were going to launch a new women's organization, we couldn't bring along Contempo and Royal Service and hope that the new organization would really be perceived as new," she said. "The launch of Women on Mission would have lost a lot of its energy if we had said, 'This is new, but we're still using our old magazines.'"

With the decision made to start a new magazine to match the new approach offered through Women on Mission, the next question was, "What about a name?" Dake recounted.

The name, Missions Mosaic, was suggested by Mary Susan Parker, state WMU secretary/historian for Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention. She was a participant in one of the focus groups held in her state related to the new organization. WMU held more than 60 grassroots discussion groups to ensure that its new organization was on target in meeting the needs of women.

"The imagery that 'Missions Mosaic' conjures up is very appropriate," Dake said. "Just as a mosaic in art form is small pieces of tile that make up a big picture, we saw the similarity of individual Christians making up the body of Christ. Another picture is all of us bringing our gifts together for work in the kingdom of God."

"It also represented the different kinds of missions work that missionaries, and our membership, are involved in," added Carol Causey, WMU magazines editorial group manager.

Along with a new name, other important questions had to be addressed, especially those related to content. Would the new magazine's purpose remain a curriculum piece or would it be broadened for a more general readership? Would popular elements of Royal Service and Contempo be pulled into the new magazine or would editors start with a clean slate?

Based on the end product, the answer to all these questions is "Yes." Missions Mosaic is a magazine for any woman interested in missions and spiritual growth, while it doubles as a curriculum piece for Women on Mission. In addition, the magazine includes favorite elements from the old magazines and new features all its own.

The foundational approach to the magazine has been designed around spiritual growth, with the outcome being missions involvement, Dake explained. "Missions Mosaic has been designed to help women grow in their relationship with the Lord wherever they are along their spiritual journey," she said. "We believe that spiritual growth leads to fulfilling the Great Commission, which is missions in a nutshell. Missions Mosaic is the most comprehensive tool in magazine form available for women who want to grow spiritually."

"Many of the changes have been gradual," Causey noted. For example, beginning with the 1993-94 church year, WMU began publishing two editions of Royal Service, one for leaders and one for members.

The publication of two editions continues with Missions Mosaic. The leadership edition, tagged "Executive," includes all the pages in the member's edition plus a 32-page insert for teaching helps, copy-ready handouts, leadership suggestions and promotional ideas.

The content of the magazine is now written with a much broader purpose, Causey said. Whereas articles once focused on a missionary in a certain country, the magazine now focuses on contemporary missions efforts and often features several missionaries, both home and foreign, who are involved in that ministry.

"The central emphasis of the magazine remains missions," Dake said. "Part of the difference is that now the articles are written as feature articles that could be of interest to any Christian woman. We've tried to make it the kind of magazine that a woman could feel comfortable giving to someone who is not a part of missions involvement. Missions Mosaic is a tool that leads to action."

"We have a greater number of women today who did not grow up in a missions organization," she acknowledged. "If we are going to involve more women in missions, we have to provide something that is going to meet them where they are and help them discover what it means to grow in the Lord. On the other hand, for those women who have been with us through the years, the magazine provides challenging material for their spiritual journey, too."

Noting the introduction of Missions Mosaic has been received positively, Causey said, "Our grassroots women are far-sighted and have a burden that the next generation of women have the same kind of experiences in Women on Mission that they have had."

Vision is something today's members share in common with their foremothers, Dake said.

"The women who started Royal Service in 1914 were risk-takers," she said. "They took a huge financial risk in starting a monthly magazine. It is easy to tell from their writings that they knew they were women living on the edge."

"I think they would wholeheartedly affirm retiring the names of Royal Service and Contempo for an opportunity to reach more women and to provide improved resources," she said. "They were not the kind of women who hung on to something for tradition's sake."

The spirit of the founding editors and writers, and those who followed, will not be forgotten, Dake assured. "They have, and will continue to serve as our role models."

Dake and her staff celebrated the contribution of their predecessors with the publication of commemorative editions of both Royal Service and Contempo in September. Part of the celebration included the recognition of the longest continuous subscriber to Royal Service. Grace B. Land of Lilesville, N.C., took the honor with 76 years. Eighty-six other women were recognized as subscribers for 60 or more years.

For information about subscriptions to Missions Mosaic, write WMU Customer Service, P.O. Box 830711, Birmingham, AL 35283-0711 or call 1-800-968-7301.

--30--

**Partial-birth abortion bill  
to return to Senate calendar**

By Tom Strode

**Baptist Press  
11/21/95**

WASHINGTON (BP)--The struggle over a bill designed to prohibit a gruesome, late-term abortion procedure will continue on the U.S. Senate floor without action by the chamber's Judiciary Committee.

The Partial-birth Abortion Ban Act, H.R. 1833, is slated to return to the full Senate's calendar Nov. 27.

The Judiciary Committee held a hearing which lasted about six hours Nov. 17. At the hearing, some pro-choice senators indicated they would introduce amendments, including some to provide exceptions for use of the procedure, according to an Associated Press report. Those amendments will be attempted on the Senate floor.

The Senate voted Nov. 8 to refer the legislation to the Judiciary Committee for a hearing. The action followed by only a week the House of Representative's 288-139 vote in favor of H.R. 1833.

A day before the Senate's referral to the committee, the White House announced officially President Bill Clinton's opposition to the bill. In a policy statement released through the Office of Management and Budget, the Clinton administration said:

"The President believes that the decision to have an abortion should be between a woman, her conscience, her doctor, and her God. ... The President has long opposed late-term abortions except where they are necessary to protect the life of the mother or where there is a threat to her health, consistent with the law. ... Therefore, the Administration cannot support H.R. 1833 because it fails to provide for consideration of the need to preserve the life and health of the mother, consistent with the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in Roe v. Wade."

An exemption to allow the procedure in order to protect the mother's health would render the bill meaningless, the bill's supporters argue. The Supreme Court's definition of health in Doe v. Bolton, the 1973 companion case to Roe v. Wade, includes emotional and familial health, thereby permitting abortion for a wide variety of reasons throughout pregnancy.

--m re--

While the bill does not provide an exception in case of a threat to the mother's life, it does allow as an acceptable defense for the doctor the necessity of saving her life.

The overwhelming House vote marked the first time a chamber in Congress has outlawed an abortion procedure since the Roe and Doe rulings. Some House members who normally cast pro-choice votes supported the bill, including Rep. Richard Gephardt, D.-Mo., the minority leader.

The Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission supports the legislation.

In September, the American Medical Association's legislative council unanimously recommended the AMA's board of trustees support the bill. In October, however, the AMA's board split on the recommendation and decided not to take a position.

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists opposes the bill.

The procedure, named partial-birth by the bill's sponsors but commonly known as dilation and extraction (D and X), occurs in the second half of pregnancy. With ultrasound for guidance, an abortion doctor uses forceps and his hands to deliver an intact baby feet first until only the head is left in the birth canal. The doctor pierces the base of the baby's skull with surgical scissors. The doctor inserts a catheter into the opening and suctions out the brain. The collapse of the skull enables easier removal of the dead child. This method apparently is used by a limited number of doctors in the country.

Punishment of up to two years in prison and fines could be levied on any doctor found guilty under the legislation.

Opponents of the bill have charged it is part of a strategy to reverse abortion rights. They have said the procedure is used only in cases of severely defective children or a threat to the mother's life.

Martin Haskell, one of the leading practitioners of the procedure, has said, however, about 80 percent of his D and X abortions are "purely elective," according to a 1993 interview with American Medical News, a journal of the American Medical Association. In a 1992 speech, Haskell said he had performed about 700 D and X abortions.

Haskell, from Ohio, and another physician identified with the technique, James McMahon of Los Angeles, both have said the majority of babies are alive until near the conclusion of the procedure. Haskell has said he performs D and X abortions until about the 26th week of pregnancy. McMahon said he did abortions through all 40 weeks. McMahon died Oct. 28.

--30--

Authors urge Christians  
to minister to homosexuals

By Ken Walker

Baptist Press  
11/21/95

SAN RAFAEL, Calif. (BP)--Fear is the No. 1 factor preventing churches from ministering to homosexuals, the coauthors of a new book say.

"We can't pretend homosexuality isn't wrong, but we have to minister in a spirit of compassion," said Mona Riley, whose husband, Mike, is pastor of the Church of the Open Door -- a San Rafael, Calif., congregation known nationally in the homosexual and ex-homosexual communities for its outreach. "A lot of good, Bible-believing churches are either ignorant or afraid to commit on this subject," she said in an interview.

Riley and Brad Sargent's "Unwanted Harvest?" was released in October by Broadman & Holman Publishers. Although taking a scripturally based stand against homosexuality, the authors emphasize Christians need to reach out to those who have known past rejection or abuse.

Sargent sees an urgency to this stance. Without church action, the problem will get much worse, he said in an interview.

"This is the leading edge to a much bigger wave that is on the way," said Sargent, resource-publication specialist for Exodus International, a referral network of ministries to ex-homosexuals, and a member of BayMarin Community Church, a Southern Baptist congregation in San Rafael.

--more--

"Ten to 15 years from now, today's problems in dealing with homosexuality will seem like kindergarten compared to what we'll have to deal with then -- things like bisexuality, androgyny and cross-dressing. I hope churches can see the value of working with this issue if they haven't already."

"The gay community won't like this book," added Riley, "and the church won't like it either. But I think it's the truth and both sides need to hear it."

"Unwanted Harvest?" refers to the surfacing of homosexuality in an individual, often stemming from hidden sexual molestation, incest or rape during childhood.

The book cites current estimates that one in every three girls and one of four boys in the United States will be sexually abused by age 18. Half the time, the offender is a parent, significantly older sibling or caretaker, the book reports.

Approximately 80 percent of Christian women working to overcome lesbianism have been sexual abuse victims, according to conservative estimates. So have 35 percent of men, the book says, although the actual numbers may be higher.

Given this reality, Riley said it is little wonder so many in Christian circles struggle with same-sex attraction and go to great lengths to hide it. She termed it "amazing" how many male seminary students get married to camouflage their homosexual life style.

"Over and over men come through (counseling) and say, 'I was at youth camp and the youth worker molested me,' or 'The pastor molested me.' It's a sad commentary on the church and we're not dealing with it." The authors classified churches as responding to homosexuality in one of six ways:

-- Permissive: not necessarily endorsing the sin, but taking a no-see, no-tell attitude toward homosexuality and many other sins. The book told of one pastor asking, "Who are they hurting?" and the leader of a ministry to homosexuals replying, "I was in homosexuality for four years. Believe me, it is sin and it brings a person to death."

-- Rebellious: accepting such relationships, having openly homosexual members and rewriting the Bible to fit the congregation's beliefs.

-- Judgmental: a congregation that stands on the side of truth but displays no compassion. Sadly, most theologically conservative churches fall into this camp, Riley said.

-- Uncommitted: neither helping homosexuals out of their sin, nor teaching a message to convict them of it.

-- Ignorant: churches that know homosexual involvement is wrong and people wanting out need help, but don't know how to offer help.

-- Healing: taking positive action to help people leave the homosexual lifestyle, as well as working with those who are HIV-positive or suffer from AIDS.

Riley cautioned against jumping into this ministry without the support of the pastor and church leaders. "If the pastor doesn't get behind it, it won't go. The pastor has to believe the church is called to do it or they will get hurt. It's the same as ministering to any other problem."

However, Sargent said churches are more capable of dealing with same-sex problems than they realize.

At Exodus, he has fielded numerous calls from pastors terrified about an upcoming counseling situation with a homosexual. He advises them the truth of 2 Corinthians 1:4 still applies; persons don't have to be familiar with every topic to listen and offer their support.

"Number one, a person wants to know you're willing to listen and walk through the problem with them," he said. "There's pastoral care and counseling, Christian discipleship and helping people with gender issues. Serious cases can be referred to counselors and therapists who believe change is possible. The church can fit in, in so many ways."

Helping people overcome same-sex attraction and leave that lifestyle is a difficult, long-term process, Sargent said.

Yet there is a need for the church to commit to it because of the reactions observed during a recent Promise Keepers conference in Oakland, Calif., he noted. Half the men who picked up literature at Exodus' booth wanted to know how to help a homosexual family member or friend, he said.

"There's a lot of interest in this issue," Sargent said. "Many want to help, because practically everyone knows someone who is gay."

In addition, Riley hopes the book will help many put a personal slant on the issue of homosexuality.

"One of the most important things to me is for Christians to see a face and reach out to the person," she said. "A lot of times people have scary images. We don't realize there are many beautiful men and women who have been saved, but are struggling with this sin."

--30--

Conservative is president  
of Louisiana convention

Baptist Press  
11/21/95

LAKE CHARLES, La. (BP)--A conservative-backed nominee won the Louisiana Baptist Convention's presidency during the Nov. 13-14 annual meeting in Lake Charles.

Michael Claunch, pastor of First Baptist Church, Slidell, received 1,256 votes, or 52.37 percent, over Eddie Simmons, pastor of Sale Street Baptist Church, Lake Charles, who received 1,136 votes, or 47.33 percent.

Claunch had been endorsed by a conservative group named "Louisiana Baptists Speaking the Truth in Love." Simmons, meanwhile, had been endorsed by a group of pastors and laypeople advocating "staying the course" in convention work.

Prior to the convention, Claunch had spoken in favor of the convention clearly affirming its commitment to the Bible and conducting its ministries in accordance with that commitment.

Claunch also had called for steps to clarify what is taught theologically at the convention-sponsored Louisiana College in Pineville. The school was the target of public criticism of the Louisiana Baptists Speaking the Truth in Love group in the weeks prior to the convention.

Ballots were cast by all but 38 of the messengers registered at the time of the presidential election. Final messenger registration totaled 2,456, topped only by 1993's total as the highest in convention history.

An amendment was proposed to the convention's constitution to add a section, stating, "This Convention shall do its work in accordance with the principle that the Bible is the Word of God and is truth without mixture of error in every area of which it speaks."

It fell short of the needed 66.5 percent by seven votes, with 1,435 voting in favor, or 66.47 percent, and 724 against, or 33.53 percent.

Before the vote, a substitute motion to affirm the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message as the convention's confession of faith was ruled out of order.

Later in the convention, a constitutional amendment was submitted for a vote at next year's annual meeting.

The proposed amendment combines both the amendment that was defeated this year along with a statement affirming the Baptist Faith and Message as the convention's statement of faith.

A \$17.6 million budget was approved that will continue allocating 65 percent for Louisiana Baptist causes and 35 percent for Southern Baptist Convention causes.

In other business, messengers:

-- elected as first vice president Waylon Bailey, a former New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary professor who now is pastor of First Baptist Church, Covington, and second vice president, Nelda Seal, recently retired director of the Louisiana Woman's Missionary Union and member of Calvary Baptist Church, Alexandria. Both Bailey and Seal were elected in two-nominee races.

-- approved a motion stipulating "a person shall not serve in more than one elected or appointed position at a time" on the state level.

--more--

-- approved a motion stipulating "upon the expiration of the term of any board member of a board or committee, no person who is a member of the same church as the person whose term is expiring may serve on that same board or committee until one year following the expiration of the serving member's term. Membership on all boards and committees collectively shall in all cases be limited to no more than two members from any church at any one time."

-- approved resolutions denouncing acts of domestic violence; expressing grave concern about corruption regarding legalized gambling; urging a special session of the legislature to repeal various forms of legalized gambling and to allow local-option elections on all gambling; expressing appreciation to legislators who helped pass measures in line with Louisiana Baptist sentiments on key issues; urging participation of Christians in the political process; and opposing all abortions except to save the life of the mother.

Next year's meeting will be Nov. 11-12 at Louisiana College.

--30--

C. Lacy Thompson contributed to this story.

**California Baptists boost  
Southern Baptist giving**

By Mark A. Wyatt

Baptist Press  
11/21/95

MODESTO, Calif. (BP)--Increased giving to home and foreign missions was approved during the 55th California Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting Nov. 14-15 in Modesto.

California Baptist officials will consider further increasing the state's Cooperative Program percentage under a motion proposing a move to a 50-50 CP division between state and Southern Baptist Convention causes within five years.

The 1996 CSBC budget of \$13,153,116 is up nearly 3.7 percent from 1995. It includes a .15 percent increase in the state's SBC CP allocation, boosting California's SBC total to 29 percent, the convention's first CP allocation increase in four years.

Ron Wilson, pastor of First Baptist Church, Thousand Oaks, introduced the motion to increase California Baptists' CP allocation to 50 percent "by the end of the year 2000." Wilson's motion called for the CSBC president to appoint a committee to develop a plan to achieve the 50-50 CP split and present a report to the state convention's 1996 meeting, Nov. 12-13 in Pasadena.

However, messengers voted to refer the motion to the CSBC executive board, which is responsible for proposing the convention's annual spending plan.

Convention leaders expressed sympathy with Wilson's proposal but stopped short of endorsing the 50-50 CP split.

Roger Spradlin, pastor of Valley Baptist Church, Bakersfield, and 1996 CSBC executive board chairman, called Wilson's view "a legitimate concern" that is shared by the board.

"We are contributing more money," Spradlin stressed in his response to Wilson, "and to the causes that you've brought up. It is the commitment of the leadership of this convention to move in that direction."

In an apparent reference to this year's recommended CP increase, CSBC President Milton Steck added, "I'm glad that we are moving in the right direction."

Steck, pastor of Trinity Baptist Church, Vacaville, also noted no Southern Baptist state convention currently gives 50 percent of its budget to the SBC Cooperative Program.

Wilson called that "a good argument for us to be the first to go back to the 50-50 split. Unless we have voted not to do that, someone needs to explain why we are not moving towards it in rapid fashion."

When discussion on Wilson's motion resumed Nov. 15, some indicated the proposal to reach a 50-50 CP split within five years is unrealistic.

--more--

"I agree with the principle about the need but I'm opposed to it, given all of the exciting things happening in our convention," said Wayne Stacks, associate pastor of music and youth at First Southern Baptist Church, Lompoc. Stacks moved Wilson's motion be referred to the executive board.

E.W. McCall, pastor of St. Stephen Baptist Church, La Puente, said he opposed referring the motion and spoke against the motion itself. A number of messengers applauded McCall's suggestion that if the "pastor who made the motion will commit to give 50 percent of their church budget to run this convention, then maybe we will be able to do this."

McCall said mandating a 50-50 CP split would "handicap" CSBC mission efforts and "cause our convention to go down the tube."

Jim Murcray, director of missions for Mendo Lake Southern Baptist Association, cautioned the convention to consider how any recommendation growing out of the study may be received. Murcray said the motion "will send a strong message to churches. We need to be very careful now that this Pandora's Box has been opened."

California Baptists also elected a new slate of officers, selecting a new president on the first ballot in a three-way race.

Harry Lewis, pastor of Immanuel Southern Baptist Church, Ridgecrest, captured 51 percent of the vote in the presidential ballot with Ed Collier, CSBC first vice president and pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of Prunedale, Salinas, and Bob Rooks, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Chula Vista.

This year's convention meeting marked the end of Lewis' four-year term on the CSBC executive board. In September he presided over his final meeting as board chairman. Lewis also is one of California's two representatives on the SBC Executive Committee.

John May, co-pastor of Westchester Baptist Church, Bakersfield, was elected first vice president by acclamation when no other candidates were nominated, as was Don Taylor, pastor of Central Baptist Church, Alameda, and immediate past president of the California Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference, as second vice president.

Barton Young, music minister at Palm Baptist Church, Riverside, was elected music director over Laura Fonville, music minister at St. Stephen Baptist Church, La Puente.

In a departure from custom, the three presidential candidates were asked to state their churches' Cooperative Program allocation percentages. Although such information sometimes is given by those nominating candidates for office, it is not required.

Still, each presidential candidate responded to the request by June Tate, messenger from First Southern Baptist Church, Fountain Valley. Lewis said his church contributes 13 percent of its undesignated receipts to the Cooperative Program, Rooks said his church gives 11 percent and Collier said his church gives "about 5 percent."

The precedent of questioning candidates about their churches' CP giving drew a sharp admonition from a former state convention president. Rob Zinn, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church, Highland, spoke against the practice in a later convention session.

"Yesterday we did something I have never seen happen in our convention and I'm a little mixed about it," Zinn said. "I'm very pro-Cooperative Program (but) we've never put a candidate on the spot to say what they give to the CP."

Zinn said being a "card-carrying Southern Baptist means you cooperate. We have never told any church what you have to give to be a cooperating church."

He called the practice of voluntary cooperation "our integrity and our genius as Southern Baptists." And Zinn encouraged messengers to "vote on the merits of the person."

Resolutions approved by messengers included a strongly worded condemnation of abortion and opposition to women pastors.

Two of the six resolutions were prompted by actions at the Southern Baptist Convention last summer in Atlanta.

CSBC Resolution Number 2 affirmed the Resolution on Racial Reconciliation adopted during the SBC's 150th anniversary meeting. The California resolution cites the state convention's "diverse" racial makeup, supports the SBC resolution and asks God "for His leadership in our state to continue to share the Gospel with all those who are drawn by His Holy Spirit to the Gospel message."

Another California resolution asked the Southern Baptist Convention to protect California's representation on SBC's boards and agencies. That concern arose from the reduction and reorganization of SBC agencies resulting from the "Covenant for a New Century" convention restructuring approved by messengers last June.

CSBC Resolution Number 5 stated reducing the total number of trustees "could adversely affect" California Baptists' influence and requested all SBC agencies and boards "not to reduce California representation."

Arguably the strongest language in any of the resolutions came in one condemning a particular form of abortion as "not only murder but a barbaric act." Citing the biblical presentation of life as "God-designed," the statement denounced so-called "partial-birth abortions" and called on President Clinton, California Gov. Pete Wilson and congressional representatives "to encourage and support legislation that will end this slaughter."

A resolution concerning women pastors declared "any church which has a woman as senior pastor is in violation of the Articles of membership and cannot be considered a cooperating Southern Baptist Church." It was one of several actions targeting women pastors considered during this year's California convention meeting, the third consecutive meeting which has dealt with the issue.

--30--

South Carolina meeting  
begins, ends quietly

Baptist Press  
11/21/95

NORTH CHARLESTON, S.C. (BP)--The 175th annual meeting of the South Carolina Baptist Convention began and ended quietly at the North Charleston Coliseum Nov. 14-15.

James "Skip" Owens, pastor of Pinecrest Baptist Church, Charleston, was elected president. Since there were no other nominations, this convention marked the first time in recent memory for a president to be elected by acclamation. Four nominations were made in last year's presidential election.

All other officers were elected by acclamation as well: Joe Mack, a member of Shandon Baptist Church, Columbia, first vice president; Wayne Dickard, pastor of Southside Baptist Church, Greer, second vice president; Kenneth Spain, pastor of Park Street Baptist Church, Rock Hill, recording secretary; and Ross Robinson, minister of education at Northside Baptist Church, West Columbia, registration secretary.

Almost 1,800 messengers registered, the lowest attendance since the 1968 annual meeting held in Myrtle Beach.

A 1996 budget of \$23.73 million was approved, which represents a 1 percent increase above last year's budget. The budget retains the current division of 60 percent for South Carolina Baptist causes and 40 percent for Southern Baptist Convention causes.

Messengers voted to begin a missions partnership with the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists in 1997, and to increase the number of trustees at Anderson College from 20 to 25.

A resolution expressing continued opposition to gambling was passed, as well as one expressing opposition to a recent National Education Association resolution concerning the issue of homosexuality in sex education curriculum. Also passed was a resolution on saving marriages.

John Roberts, editor of the state Baptist weekly magazine, the Baptist Courier, was recognized for 30 years of service as editor. Roberts retires in December.

Next year's meeting -- the convention's 175th anniversary -- will be Nov. 12-13 in Florence.

--30--

Utah-Idaho Baptists commit  
to more prayer for revival

By Debbie Ward

BOISE, Idaho (BP)--An emphasis on prayer for revival was among the highlights of the Utah-Idaho Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting, attending by 159 messengers Nov. 14-15 at Calvary Baptist Church, Boise, Idaho.

A "solemn assembly" held in August to pray for revival in Utah and Idaho was received as such an important event that the convention's resolutions committee called for the continuation of a solemn assembly of prayer throughout the convention -- in its churches, associations and homes -- until revival is evident.

In another resolution, messengers agreed to join Jim Harding, convention executive director, and the state staff in working and praying together for "revival throughout the convention" -- "shouldering our responsibilities as well as praying for theirs."

Another resolution welcomed three new churches uniting with the convention: Falls Baptist Church, Idaho Falls, Idaho; Angel Rock Baptist Fellowship, Moab, Utah; and Bethany Korean Baptist Church, Clearfield, Utah. The congregations were accepted unanimously into the convention during the Tuesday afternoon business session.

In addition to the new churches, 21 pastors and staff members who are new to the convention since last year's meeting were recognized. As they were introduced, Harding called for someone in attendance to come stand with each new pastor. "By standing with this person, you will be pledging your support for him throughout this next year," Harding said. "Be there for them, take them to dinner if you can, make them feel welcome."

Harding expressed optimism about the potential of Baptist work in Utah and Idaho during his executive director's report. He also outlined several areas of concern, including the need for revival; the convention's finances and the fact that Cooperative Program giving is not meeting budget; and a lack of planning for the 1998 Southern Baptist Convention or the 2002 Winter Olympics.

"However, steps have been taken to address each of the concerns," Harding added. "We are making significant progress toward getting well financially, while effectively planning for the future. To the extent that we seek revival and continue to support missions, God will bless this area beyond our imagination," Harding said.

A 1996 budget of \$1,521,076 was approved during the Wednesday afternoon business session. Of that total \$419,324 are Utah and Idaho Cooperative Program dollars, \$47,132 less than the 1995 budget. The convention will continue to send 21 percent of the Cooperative Program receipts to help fund Southern Baptist Convention national and international missions and ministries.

"No programs were cut in order to reduce the budget," Harding said. "Funds were reallocated and unnecessary expenses were eliminated to bring the budget more in line with receipts."

Top givers to the Cooperative Program were recognized. Southeast Baptist Church, Salt Lake City; Calvary Baptist Church, Idaho Falls; and Cherry Lane Baptist Church, Meridian, Idaho, were the top three contributors in total giving. Silver Sage Baptist Church and Centennial Baptist Church, both of Boise, and First Baptist Church, Fillmore, Utah, were honored as the top per capita giving churches.

For the fifth consecutive year, all officers were elected unanimously by the messengers: Dan Walker, pastor of University Baptist Church, Boise, Idaho, president; David Carver, pastor at First Southern Baptist Church, Caldwell, Idaho, first vice president; Ron Smith, assistant pastor at Southeast Baptist Church, Salt Lake City, second vice president. Lavoid Robertson, pastor of First Baptist Church, Kearns, Utah, was elected to a second term as recording secretary.

The 1996 annual meeting will be Nov. 12-13 at First Baptist Church, West Valley City, Utah.

New England Baptists address  
missions, budget shortfall

By Dan Nicholas

HARTFORD, Conn. (BP)--Several speakers urged New England Baptists to foster "a first-century passion for our 21st-century world."

Foreign missions was the central message at the 13th BCNE annual meeting and the first "MissionsFest New England," which added a third day to the schedule.

Messengers approved a \$2.5 million budget that includes a large deficit, elected Richard Wright of Rhode Island as president and approved plans to build a new multipurpose office and conference facility.

"We are less than 1,500 days from the end of the century and the beginning of another millennium," said Foreign Mission Board President Jerry Rankin at BCNE's missions banquet, which both concluded the annual meeting and opened MissionsFest. "It excites me to think what God is planning in the future."

Asking his audience to "be available for (God's) empowering and to keep your yes on Jesus," Rankin commented, "We have a responsibility to share Jesus with a lost world. None of us is exempted from the Great Commission."

Denton Lotz, general secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, said, "You will never know who Jesus is unless you are involved in missions." He urged those interested in 21st-century missions to answer three essential questions that are on the minds of millions of people around the world: "Where is God? Who will fill our empty souls? Why only Jesus?" Lotz then reviewed the world scene and attempted to answer a fourth question: "Where are the Baptists?"

BCNE Executive Director Ken Lyle noted, "The world has boundaries no longer. God is bringing people to us from all over the world. ... I believe, to the core of my being, that the future (of the church) is very bright."

Lyle asked for "spiritual watchfulness and growth," stating, "Only Christ's power can keep us loving a world that's so easy to hate."

"We need each other to keep going, to stick it out," Lyle said. The "only thing that will last when history comes to an end is a healthy soul. We need a first-century passion for a 21st-century world," he said.

A total of 195 messengers from 74 congregations and at least 120 non-voting guests were present for the three-day convention at the Holiday Inn in downtown Hartford.

After lengthy debate, messengers approved by a vote of 90-17 the 1996 annual budget of \$2.5 million, that includes a deficit of \$289,229.

Bob Remick, pastor of Victory Baptist Church of Brant Rock, Mass., urged all BCNE congregations to increase their Cooperative Program giving by 1 percent as a means to balance the budget. Steve Mentzer, pastor of Lighthouse Baptist Church, Ware, Mass., called churches that do not contribute to the fund "a real problem." Earl Edgerly, pastor of Farmington (Maine) Baptist Church, asked messengers to "step out in faith and accept this budget." Messengers opposing the proposed budget expressed concern about "spending beyond our means."

The budget includes an anticipated \$565,000 in Cooperative Program giving by New England churches, with 21 percent allocated for Southern Baptist Convention causes, the same percentage as 1995.

Richard Wright, pastor of Faith Baptist Church, Warwick, R.I., was elected BCNE president, filling the position held by Mary Beth Caffey, a travel planner in Auburn, Maine, who was not eligible for another term.

Messengers authorized the board of directors to develop a multipurpose, two-story BCNE office and conference building on property across Oak Avenue from the current Northborough, Mass., office.

The work will be completed with funding over and above BCNE's operational budget and will utilize volunteer labor. The current office building would be remodeled for use as the Northeastern Baptist School of Ministry's Boston Center.

MissionsFest New England offered participants sights and sounds, smells and tastes and the people and places of contemporary Southern Baptist foreign missions. Participants talked with some 25 missionaries from around the world, enjoyed the FMB parade of flags and explored a "Global Walkaround" missions exhibit.

Jack Parrott, pastor of New Colony Baptist Church of Billerica, Mass., was elected first vice president and Patty Golden, a member of Grace Baptist Church, Marlborough, Mass., cl rk.

But messengers decided not to fill the second vice presidency after no written nominations were received.

A constitution and bylaws change was approved that allows two board members from each association plus one member for each 1,000 resident church members. Currently, each association is allotted just one board member plus one for each 1,000 resident members. New board members will be elected at the next annual meeting, Nov. 7-8, 1996, in Worcester, Mass.

A history committee was established to communicate BCNE's heritage, promote learning from that history, and aid associations and churches in gathering and safeguarding their historical records. Judy Ouellette of Maine will chair the committee.

Msingers named the annual States Mission Offering after Beulah Peoples, BCNE's WMU and mission ministries director the past 11 years.

--30--

'Senior Partners' launched  
to help start churches

By David Winfrey

Baptist Press  
11/21/95

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP)--"Senior Partners," a new fellowship launched for senior adults interested in planting churches, hopes to prove no one really retires from the ministry.

Volunteers are needed for a variety of jobs in starting churches, said Floyd Tidsworth, director of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's new church extension department. "Just about anybody could do something with this," he said.

Most projects will probably be outside the Southeast, although Tidsworth said he expects most volunteers will come from the South, where Southern Baptists are strongest. Needs include help with visitation, music, worship leadership and organizing such things as Vacation Bible School or Sunday school. Even those who can't go on a trip are needed for prayer support, he added.

The group already has helped start one congregation in Iowa, said Larry Wartsbaugh, the associational missionary for Cedar Rapids. Wartsbaugh calls retired volunteers an "untapped resource" for church starting. "People who are retired have the freedom to come and spend an extended time on a church field," he said.

"They're just a gold mine of resources when it comes to wisdom and experience and skill and ministry," he added. "The reason that they're so efficient in starting churches is because they have a lot of experience in people skills. They feel comfortable with almost everyone."

The Iowa mission was started in Jackson County, which had no Southern Baptist presence before volunteers started working with church planter apprentice Doug Holloway and his wife, Myra, Southern Baptist home missionaries.

Volunteers primarily helped with outreach visitation, letting the community know a church was being started, Wartsbaugh said. Their help also was an encouragement for the congregation, which has moved from a storefront into rented building, he said.

Senior Partners is one of more than 15 national fellowships for various missions opportunities, said William S. Rhodes, president of the National Fellowship of Baptists in Missions. Among the fellowships are groups for doctors, dentists and other specialists who can use their skills in ministry.

Rhodes said he hopes to start a fellowship soon for Christian businessmen and women who can help newly started churches with advice about such subjects as finance, real state, building construction and architecture.

More information about Senior Partners is available from the Home Mission Board's new church extension department at (770) 410-6348 or from Rhodes at (770) 934-4818.

--30--

Friend, faith restored  
marriage to country singer      By Chip Alford

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Five years ago, Bettye Shelton should have been on top of the world.

Her husband, popular recording artist Ricky Van Shelton, was at the top of the country music charts with album sales going through the roof and dozens of awards coming in at every turn.

The couple had everything money could buy: a nice home, a new car, a boat.

"But we were living a nightmare," Shelton told employees at the Baptist Sunday School Board during a Nov. 17 chapel service. "There was no happiness in our lives and there was no love between us."

Ricky was constantly on the road and he had begun drinking heavily, Bettye said. They grew increasingly distant.

Lonely and rejected, Shelton said she found herself making a call to an old boyfriend. She dialed the number twice, hanging up before anyone answered.

"I was so desperate to feel loved, to feel like a woman again. I cried out to God: 'What's happening to me? What's wrong? Please help me!'"

At the moment she cried out, her phone rang.

On the other end was a woman she barely knew, a woman who would eventually become a lifelong friend and play a key role in saving her marriage.

"I just felt something in my spirit; I knew something was wrong (with Bettye)," singer/songwriter Andy Landis said in the same chapel service, explaining the reason for her call. She had met Bettye only twice, introduced through her then-fiance and now-husband Steve Buckingham, a record producer who had played a pivotal role in making Ricky a star.

"I couldn't get my mind off her for weeks. Literally, I would wake up in the middle of the night crying for her. ... I just felt like she might need someone to talk to."

No stranger to heartache herself, Landis had survived cancer, rape and sexual molestation as a child. She knew the struggle of facing troubles alone.

Determined to reach out, she visited Bettye the very next evening at the Sheltons' farmhouse located on a 150-acre ranch just outside Nashville. After a dinner party with friends, the two women stayed up talking until early in the morning. Landis listened as Bettye poured out her heart about her failing marriage.

"The next morning we ended up getting together for prayer on their farm," Landis recounted. The two women watched the sunrise and Landis led Bettye in a prayer that turned her life and her marriage over to God.

"I knew that God's Son had risen in my heart," Shelton said, "and I surrendered my problems to him. I knew that only God could save me from the mess I'd made out of my life."

Landis also made a commitment as she drove away from the Shelton farm that morning -- to stick by her new friend "no matter what." That would turn out to be a serious pledge, as things got worse before they got better for the Sheltons.

"Ricky came home and my husband said to me: 'I just don't love you anymore.' I remember the pain and disappointment I felt that morning. I felt that my Father had let me down."

Eventually, the Sheltons separated and Bettye learned her husband had been unfaithful. Landis stood by her friend, frequently meeting together in person or over the phone to share Scripture and pray.

Through her faith in God and encouragement and support from Landis and other friends, Shelton stood by her husband and they later reconciled. Ricky gave up drinking and committed his life both to Christ and his wife. In recent years, the couple has shared their testimony with thousands of men and women across the country.

"I'm so thankful today that God has blessed me with a godly husband. And he's blessed me with an incredible friend (Landis) who has taught me how to give and how to live, no matter what," Shelton said.

With her husband's blessing, Bettye coauthored a book with Landis that details the Sheltons' marital struggles and eventual triumph. The book, "She Stays," is subtitled, "How God Inspired a Friendship That Saved Bettye and Ricky Van Shelton's Marriage."

Landis also wrote a song by the same title. She sings it as a duet with Ricky Van Shelton on the new album, "Common Ground," a compilation of religious and inspirational songs performed by some of today's top country stars.

The two women told Sunday School Board employees they are thankful to be able to share their story of hope and commitment with others who may find themselves in difficult situations.

"If you think we are courageous or something special, we are not," Landis said. "We have just given our lives over to the Lord. ... It takes two people standing together to overcome all kinds of trials. The Lord has taught me through this, he will be faithful to me."

Shelton agreed. "What he has done for me, he can do for anybody and everybody!"

--30--

(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the BSSB bureau of Baptist Press.

Race relations resolution  
yields lighthearted exchange

Baptist Press  
11/21/95

MINNEAPOLIS (BP)--The Southern Baptist Convention's resolution last June repenting of racism and asking African Americans for forgiveness brought various responses across the nation, but perhaps none more unusual than a column, "Ask Dr. Jabazz about discrimination," Aug. 18 in the Minneapolis Star Tribune.

Writer Syl Jones printed a letter he had received on the subject. The letter reads, "Did you see where the Southern Baptist Church apologized for slavery in the United States? And asked for forgiveness, too? I'm impressed."

Jones' response: "You know why they apologized? Because the kind of hell Southern Baptists believe in ain't just hot -- it's humid! Some of them got a whiff of that sulfur and brimstone this overheated summer and panicked. Meanwhile, I'm still waiting on my bouquet of roses and a box of chocolates. I mean, if you really gonna apologize, send me something!"

The column did not go unnoticed by Southern Baptist readers of the paper.

John Tanner, pastor of Southtown Baptist Church in Bloomington, called the Twin Cities Metro Baptist Association office to mention the column and suggest a response.

Thus, a box of chocolates was sent to Jones on behalf of the association with the following note, coauthored by Tanner and director of missions Wayne Bandy: "Dear Mr. Jones, ... thanks for the wit and wisdom directed toward Southern Baptist believers and churches. Our 27 Twin Cities Metro Baptist Association congregations rarely receive any media acknowledgment, either positive or negative.

"The chocolates are truly heartfelt (sorry, flowers wilt in this heat and humidity). Perhaps a more practical indication of our desire to include all God's children in our fellowship is the list of signatory churches representing seven different racial backgrounds."

How were the chocolates and note received?

Jones' reaction came Wednesday, Oct. 18, in a column titled, "Dr. Jabazz Has the Answer, Whatever the Question."

Jabazz noted: "A tip of my Foster Grants to the Twin Cities Metro Baptist Association, whose sense of humor is unparalleled. After I ragged on 'em about apologizing for slavery and not sending candy or flowers, a big box of Fanny Farmer chocolates arrived at my doorstep. How y'all expect me to keep my girlish figure with gifts like that?"

--30--

HOUSE MAIL

