

# **BAPTIST BRIEFS: Rankin discusses private prayer language**

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**Birmingham church named national landmark.** 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Ala., the site of a 1963 bombing that killed four girls, has become a national historic landmark. The bombing brought national attention and outrage, speeding passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Three former Klansmen were convicted in the bombing. U.S. Secretary of Interior Gale Norton signed a proclamation that gives the church building the nation's highest historic distinction. National status protects the church from being destroyed for any federal project and could make it easier to raise money to maintain and restore the building. A church foundation has raised just under \$3.3 million in a \$3.8 million restoration campaign.

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**Yemeni executed for killings of Baptist medical workers.** The Yemeni gunman who killed three Southern Baptist medical workers in 2002 was executed by firing squad Feb. 27, according to wire reports. Abed Abdul Razak Kamel was shot in the central prison of the southern Ibb province as judicial officials observed, Yemen's Saba state news agency reported. Kamel was convicted for the Dec. 30, 2002, shooting deaths of Jibla Baptist Hospital director William Koehn, physician Martha Myers and purchasing agent Kathleen Gariety. A pharmacist was seriously wounded but later

recovered. Kamel admitted in court to coordinating the attack with Islamic militant activist Ali al-Jarallah. Al-Jarallah was executed Nov. 27 for plotting the medical workers' deaths and for assassinating a prominent national politician. The Jibla Baptist Hospital provided care for thousands of people in the impoverished Middle Eastern nation for more than 30 years after it was started in the Ibb province by Southern Baptist workers. It was reopened in 2003 by the Yemeni government's health ministry.

**LifeWay names VP.** Trustees of LifeWay Christian Resources named Tom Hellams vice president and executive associate to newly installed President Thom Rainer. Hellams will be chief coordinating staff member of the executive management team. Since 1997, he was executive assistant to President Al Mohler at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

**Mission Center names building for McWhorter.** A new building for Houston's Gano Mission Center has been named for home missionary Mildred McWhorter, who retired in 1992 after 30 years as director of the Houston Baptist Centers. The Mildred McWhorter Missionary Building will provide dorm rooms for short-term volunteers, three private apartments for long-term volunteers, two conference rooms, dining and kitchen facilities, offices and a prayer room. The 7,400-square-foot facility is scheduled for completion in May. The Gano Mission Center, just north of downtown Houston, is one of three Baptist mission centers in the city.

**CBF council approves \$17 million budget.** At its February meeting, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's Coordinating Council approved a \$17.05 million budget for 2006-2007—a 3.5 percent increase over the previous year's \$16.47 million budget. The council also adopted a motion to give the CBF's Advisory Council more oversight over the planning of the annual CBF general assembly. Bo Prosser, CBF's coordinator for congregational

life, reported the 2006 general assembly will begin with a summit on HIV/AIDS, featuring keynote speaker David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World, a Christian citizens' group that advocates for reduction of hunger and poverty.

**New Oklahoma editor named.** The Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma board of directors named Ray Sanders editor of the Baptist Messenger. He succeeds John Yeats, who now works as communications director for the Louisiana Baptist Convention. Sanders, 42, led the state convention's communications staff seven years. He will continue in that role in addition to his new task as executive editor of the Baptist state paper. He holds an undergraduate degree in broadcast journalism and mass communications from the University of Oklahoma, and he has worked in broadcast news, corporate communications and public affairs in Oklahoma and Washington, D.C. He is a member of Council Road Baptist Church in Bethany, Okla., where his wife, Stephanie, is minister to young adults. They have six children.

**South African Methodist keynote speaker at CBF.** A Methodist minister from South Africa will address the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship General Assembly June 22-23 at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta, Ga. Trevor Hudson of Northfield Methodist Church in Benoni, South Africa, will be the keynote speaker at the assembly. Other program highlights include presentations by CBF Moderator Joy Yee and Coordinator Daniel Vestal and a commissioning service for new Global Missions field personnel. For more information, visit [www.thefellowship.info](http://www.thefellowship.info).

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Texas Baptist churches, in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention ( SBC ) and around the world.