

SBC messengers re-elect Page president; select Richards, Redmond as vice presidents

June 14, 2007

Posted: 6/13/07

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By Lonnie Wilkey

Baptist and Reflector

SAN ANTONIO—South Carolina pastor Frank Page was elected unopposed June 12 for a second one-year term as president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Messengers also elected Jim Richards, executive director of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, as first vice president, and African American pastor Eric Redmond of Hillcrest Baptist Church, Temple Hills, Md., as second vice president.

SBC says doctrinal statement “sufficient,” but impact on hiring remains unclear

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SBC says doctrinal statement ‘sufficient,’ but impact on hiring remains unclear

By Greg Warner

Associated Baptist Press

SAN ANTONIO—The Southern Baptist Convention affirmed the Baptist Faith & Message June 12 as the “sufficient” doctrinal guide for its agencies and institutions. But SBC leaders immediately disagreed over whether the action will keep those agencies from adopting more restrictive policies.

The motion was supported by messengers who worry the SBC’s conservative leaders have gone too far in limiting participation in the 16 million-member convention. They cite controversial hiring guidelines, adopted last year at the International Mission Board, that exclude missionaries who practice a “private prayer language”—a type of speaking in tongues.

Texas Baptist disaster relief workers join drill, provide special-needs assistance

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Texas Baptist disaster relief workers join drill, provide special-needs assistance

By Barbara Bedrick

Texas Baptist Communications

DALLAS—Forecasters predicted Hurricane Brett would hit the Texas coast in less than 72 hours. But the impending disaster was only a lesson in survival, as Texas Baptists and hundreds of city, county and state disaster response teams raced through Texas' first simulated hurricane under its revamped state disaster and evacuation plan.

In the wake of Hurricanes Rita and Katrina, Texas emergency management officials reworked the state's response plan to make it more effective. In the recent drill, crews rushed to coordinate the simulated evacuation of more than 1 million people along the Texas Gulf Coast.

Southern Baptists have been ‘fighting the wrong battles,’ president insists

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Southern Baptists have been ‘fighting the wrong battles,’ president insists

By Charlie Warren

Arkansas Baptist

SAN ANTONIO—Southern Baptist Convention President Frank Page challenged Baptists to lay aside factionalism and cold-hearted legalism to develop a new strategic battle plan that goes beyond doctrinal rightness to speak the truth in love to a lost world.

To illustrate his message from Psalm 51:1-13, Page referred to France just prior to World War II. French leaders, particularly André Maginot, minister of war, poured enormous financial resources into a state-of-the-art defense system along the nation’s eastern border, with the exception of dense forests they considered impenetrable.

Global warming debate generates resolutions heat

June 14, 2007

Posted: 6/14/07

Global warming debate generates resolutions heat

By Marv Knox

Editor, Baptist Standard

SAN ANTONIO, Texas—Southern Baptist Convention messengers generated some heat during their annual meeting as they debated the government's responsibility to address global warming.

They also stood by the SBC resolution committee's decision not to address how many people actually populate Southern Baptist churches.

SBC strategist for gender issues

coordinates ministry to homosexuals

June 14, 2007

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SBC strategist for gender issues coordinates ministry to homosexuals

By Trennis Henderson

Kentucky Western Recorder

SAN ANTONIO—Pastor Bob Stith—who said God convicted him more than a decade ago about his judgmental attitudes and how he condemned homosexuals—has been named Southern Baptists' national strategist for gender issues.

Stith, pastor of Carroll Baptist Church in Southlake, Texas, since 1970, accepted the newly created position effective June 1. LifeWay Christian Resources is funding the post, and the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission is providing administrative oversight.

Zinn: Catch vision for Great

Commission

June 14, 2007

Posted: 6/14/07

Zinn: Catch vision for Great Commission

By Bill Webb

Word & Way

SAN ANTONIO—California Pastor Rob Zinn bemoaned Southern Baptist baptism statistics and challenged messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting to catch a vision for winning people to Christ.

In the annual convention sermon, Zinn, senior pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Highland, Calif., charged that believers have fallen short of the demands of the Great Commission, and many churches deliberately have chosen not to grow.

SBC re-elects Page, hears motions on agency policies,

clergy sex abuse

June 14, 2007

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SBC re-elects Page, hears motions on agency policies, clergy sex abuse

By Greg Warner & Charlie Warren

Associated Baptist Press & Arkansas Baptist

SAN ANTONIO (ABP)—Frank Page was re-elected without opposition to the traditional second one-year term as president of the Southern Baptist Convention during the first day of the denomination's annual meeting, which also featured efforts to curb clergy sexual abuse and to prevent hiring criteria that are more restrictive than the SBC's official doctrinal statement.

Page, pastor of First Baptist Church of Taylors, S.C., was elected last year on a pledge to oppose more restrictive parameters for participation in the 16 million-member denomination. Last year, the SBC's fundamentalist establishment opposed Page's election, which they saw as a threat to the SBC's 27-year rightward shift.

Cooperative Program definition sparks messenger debate

June 14, 2007

Posted: 6/13/07

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By Trennis Henderson

Kentucky Western Recorder

SAN ANTONIO—A proposal to define what constitutes Cooperative Program giving sparked lengthy debate during the opening session of the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting, including a charge that the measure “goes against historical Baptist polity.”

The recommendation from the SBC Executive Committee defines the denomination’s 82-year-old giving plan as “Southern Baptists’ unified plan of giving through which cooperating Southern Baptist churches give a percentage of their undesignated receipts in support of their respective state conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention missions and ministries.”

Chapman urges SBC: Don't make every doctrinal issue a 'political football'

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Chapman urges SBC: Don't make every doctrinal issue a 'political football'

By Trennis Henderson

Kentucky Western Recorder

SAN ANTONIO—Warning that Southern Baptists “must not make every doctrinal issue a crusade or political football,” SBC Executive Committee President Morris Chapman declared it is a waste of time to “harshly debate disputable doctrines that lead to destructive distractions.”

Chapman offered his assessment in the wake of widespread debate about recent actions by the Southern Baptist International Mission Board regarding believer's baptism and private prayer language.

Bush thanks SBC for support

June 14, 2007

Posted: 6/13/07

Bush thanks SBC for support

By Tony W. Cartledge

Biblical Recorder

SAN ANTONIO—Judging by the reaction he received at their annual meeting, President George W. Bush's popularity remains strong among Southern Baptists, whom he thanked for their support June 13.

Bush was greeted with a standing ovation of sustained applause, punctuated by whistles and cheers, as he spoke via a live satellite feed to messengers attending the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in San Antonio.

Messengers raise questions about IMB finances, trustees

June 14, 2007

Posted: 6/13/07

Messengers raise questions about IMB finances, trustees

By Grace Thornton

The Alabama Baptist

SAN ANTONIO—International Mission Board President Jerry Rankin presented an upbeat report to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting about advancement of the gospel. But he still was unable to escape concerns addressed by messengers during the Tuesday night session.

A concern about embezzlement resurfaced when messenger Ron McGowin of Fairfield, Texas, questioned the outcome of a motion he introduced at last year's annual meeting. McGowin's motion had called for an external audit of the Central Asia Region's monetary dealings between 1999-2005.