

Prophetic preachers take varied approaches

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Prophetic preachers take varied approaches

By Ken Camp & Jim White

Baptist Standard & Religious Herald

ATLANTA—One preacher offered an oblique endorsement of a presidential candidate, and another firmly defended the separation of church and state. One urged Christians to link prophetic imagination to concrete practices, and another cited the specific example of tearing down walls that divide.

The four preachers—two African-American, one Anglo and one Hispanic—participated in a conference on prophetic preaching during the New Baptist Covenant celebration in Atlanta.

Ethnically diverse churches

look like God's kingdom, speakers insist

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Ethnically diverse churches look like God's kingdom, speakers insist

By Sue H. Poss

CBF of South Carolina

ATLANTA—A Baptist church only resembles God's kingdom when it includes the diversity of people created in his image, according to participants in a special interest session at the New Baptist Covenant celebration.

"Whenever we are in a room where everybody looks like us, we are not in a room that looks like the kingdom of God," said Chuck Poole, pastor of Northminster Baptist Church, Jackson, Miss.

Christians called to 'welcome

the strangerâ€¦

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Christians called to ‘welcome the stranger’

By Robert Dilday

Virginia Religious Herald

ATLANTA - Church members may disagree over political solutions to the immigration issue, but they can unite around ministry to immigrants who already live in the United States, a Texas Baptist immigration services advocate said Jan. 31.

“Immigration has become a political issue,” said Richard Muñoz, director of the Immigration Service and Aid Center (ISAAC) in Dallas.

Global ills take center stage at Baptist convocation

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Global ills take center stage at Baptist convocation

By Hannah Elliott

Associated Baptist Press

ATLANTA (ABP)—Baptists focused attention on social and global ills—materialism, climate change, HIV/AIDS and apathy—during the second day of a unity meeting in Atlanta.

Tony Campolo, Al Gore and John Grisham provided the notable speeches of the day, speaking at the New Baptist Covenant meeting.

Novelist Grisham calls fellow Baptists to respect diversity

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Novelist Grisham calls fellow Baptists to respect diversity

By John Pierce and Tony W. Cartledge

Baptists Today

ATLANTA—Best-selling author John Grisham contrasted the Mississippi Baptist church of his childhood with the greater openness of his current congregation, University Baptist Church in Charlottesville, Va., in a rare public address concluding the Jan. 31 evening session of the Celebration of a New Baptist Covenant.

In a message titled “Respecting Diversity,” Grisham told of how his childhood church was not open to racial diversity or the inclusion of women in leadership roles. The biblical cases for exclusion were based on literal interpretations of selected scripture passages, he said.

Give students a cause worthy of their devotion, panelists urge

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Give students a cause worthy of their devotion, panelists urge

By Brian Kaylor

Baptist General Convention of Missouri

ATLANTA—Young people are bombarded with materialist and consumerist messages, but churches must respond to the challenge by giving them a cause worth following, panelists told a Baptist gathering in Atlanta.

Mitch Randall, pastor of North Haven Church in North Haven, Okla., moderated a session on “Youth at a Crossroad” during the celebration of a New Baptist Covenant.

Gregory admonishes Baptists to show concrete concern for “the stranger”

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Gregory admonishes Baptists to show concrete concern for ‘the stranger’

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

ATLANTA—Obedience to God’s command means showing specific acts of hospitality to “the stranger before you right now,” not just abstract concern for the marginalized of society or for the oppressed of the world in general, Joel Gregory told a gathering of Baptists from throughout North America.

“We like to generalize. God likes to particularize,” said Gregory, professor of preaching at Baylor University’s Truett Theological Seminary. He addressed the morning session of the celebration of a New Baptist

Covenant, Feb. 1 in Atlanta.

• [See latest photos](#) and the latest [video clips](#) from the New Baptist Covenant Meeting. ([And go here to see our complete coverage of the event](#)).

**College students unite to serve
Atlanta following Baptist**

celebration

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College students unite to serve Atlanta following Baptist celebration

By Patricia Heys

Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

ATLANTA—More than 80 students from eight colleges and universities will participate in a day of service Feb. 2, the day after more than 15,000 Baptists gathered in Atlanta for the celebration of a New Baptist Covenant.

The students, who attended the interracial meeting that drew Baptists from throughout North America, are part of the Baptist Collegiate Fellowship.

Mainstream Baptists hear Shurden, honor Lolley

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Mainstream Baptists hear Shurden, honor Lolley

By Brian Kaylor

Baptist General Convention of Missouri

ATLANTA—The New Baptist Covenant meets an important need, and historian Walter “Buddy” Shurden told Mainstream Baptists why and how.

Shurden addressed the Mainstream Baptist Network at a Feb. 1 breakfast held in conjunction with the celebration of a New Baptist Covenant in Atlanta.

Public servants & preachers challenge Baptists to welcome “the stranger”

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Public servants & preachers challenge Baptists to welcome ‘the stranger’

By Robert Marus

Associated Baptist Press

ATLANTA—The biblical command to “welcome the stranger” encompasses support for all of those on society’s margins, prominent preachers and public servants told participants at the celebration of a New Baptist Covenant Feb. 1.

In the Friday-morning plenary session of the Atlanta event, Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, Texas preacher Joel Gregory and former Surgeon General David Satcher insisted the plight of immigrants, the hungry and people lacking proper health care should be of utmost concern to followers of Christ.

Covenant participants close gathering with determination but few specifics

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Covenant participants close gathering with determination but few specifics

By Greg Warner

Associated Baptist Press

ATLANTA—"We don't want this to be a wasted moment," Jimmy Carter said, describing the excitement and concern he said he found among participants in the first-of-its-kind New Baptist Covenant, which wrapped up its three-day gathering in Atlanta Feb. 1.

As the unprecedented event came to a close, participants and organizers alike pondered the challenging task of turning energy and enthusiasm into tangible action.

Need for church response grows as HIV/AIDS pandemic continues to spread

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Need for church response grows as HIV/AIDS pandemic continues to spread

By Carla Wynn Davis

Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

ATLANTA—About ten years ago, when Wayne Smith stepped into his first HIV/AIDS education class, the other students started applauding. A

member of Central Baptist Church of Bearden in Knoxville, Tenn., Smith didn't realize how significant his church affiliation would be. For those gathered, Smith's presence sent a message.

"The church had come. It wasn't Wayne Smith. It wasn't Central Baptist Church Bearden. It was somebody from some church in this town has come," Smith said.