

# Witness Florida Baptist

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## IN THE NEWS

### GODLY MEN

■ Stories of men of courage and of faith in honor of Father's Day, June 20. **Pages 8-9**

### Nudity ban referendum dismissed without vote

■ Hillsborough County commissioners refuse to consider Nov. referendum despite 10,000 signatures. **Page 6**

### Bush interview touches on faith, prayer



■ President Bush talks to religion reporters about a constitutional marriage amendment. **Page 10**

### SBC leaders recall memories of Reagan



■ Baptists remember the legacy of President Ronald Reagan. **Page 12**

### Quote of the week

A recommendation issued from a committee that is perceived as being stacked in favor of a name change will not be legitimate and would not likely convince grassroots Southern Baptists that a new identity for the SBC is actually warranted.

**James A. Smith Sr.**  
Executive Editor

## FLORIDIAN MAKES PLANS FOR SBC PRESIDENCY

### ■ Welch to call for renewed evangelism; endorses one million baptisms in one year

BY JAMES A. SMITH SR.  
Executive Editor

DAYTONA BEACH (FBW)—Bobby Welch believes he knows what ails Southern Baptists and desires to lead the Southern Baptist Convention to a time of renewed focus and commitment to evangelism that will fix a “malaise” which afflicts the nation’s largest Protestant denomination.

“Here’s the headline on me: This Convention does not have one problem that soul winning will not solve. You put that in big, capital letters, quotes, three exclamation points and underline it in red,” the 61-year-old pastor of First Baptist Church, Daytona Beach, said in an

extensive interview with *Florida Baptist Witness* three weeks before he stands for election as president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

If elected during the SBC annual meeting next week in Indianapolis, he promised “to give the greatest effort that I have ever given to anything in my life to ... unify this Convention for the sake of souls.”

Although there is no other declared presidential candidate, Welch was careful to make clear that he does not take for granted his election to the denomination’s highest post. Still, in the three-hour interview May 23, for the first time he disclosed his plans for a 25-day bus tour of every state in America as a means of hearing the

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### ■ Prospective SBC president plans 25-day bus tour to meet ‘grassroots’ Baptists

BY JAMES A. SMITH SR.  
Executive Editor

DAYTONA BEACH (FBW)—Although he has not yet been elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention, Bobby Welch has already been busily planning a 25-day bus tour to visit every state in America, as well as one

city in Canada, to “further extend the Convention” and to hear the ideas of “grassroots” Southern Baptists.

In a May 23 wide-ranging interview with *Florida Baptist Witness*, Welch disclosed for the first time his plans for the tour, which will not be

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Bobby Welch



■ Bobby Welch, pastor, prays with visitors to First Baptist Church, Daytona Beach, after a morning service.  
Photo by James A. Smith Sr.

## Arab pastors share Gospel message

### ■ Ministry grows despite threats

By HEATHER ISEMINGER  
Correspondent

KISSIMMEE (FBW)—In 1954 Syrian-born Peter Shadid stepped off the USS Constitution onto American soil knowing that his “dream to go to United States” was finally a reality. Shadid came to this country with a desire to freely teach others about Christ.

Shadid has recently come under fire

by the very community the 82-year-old pastor is reaching out to. He has been threatened by hateful notes on his car and menacing knocks at his front door from aggressive Muslim men who he says strongly protest his ministry.

“I still trust God to protect me,” Shadid, pastor of Arabic Evangelical Church in Orlando, told *Florida Baptist Witness*. “The Bible says that the one who is in you is greater than the one that is in the world.”

Statistics from an *Interfaith Evangelism Belief Bulletin* produced by the Southern Baptist Convention’s North

American Mission Board show there are an estimated one billion adherents to the Islamic faith worldwide and five to eight million Muslims living in the United States. These numbers are rising, making the Muslim faith one of the world’s largest religions.

Shadid and co-pastor, Nasser Barakat, work hard to combat the statistics by sharing the Gospel with Arabs in Kissimmee.

“It is with me all the time that I have to do something for the Arabs and

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### OFFICIAL NAME: ISLAM

**Key Figure in History:**  
Muhammad (A.D. 570–632)

**Date of Its Establishment:**  
A.D. 622

**Adherents:**  
Worldwide: Estimated 1 billion;  
69 percent live in South and Southeast Asia;  
27 percent in Africa;  
4 percent other;  
United States: Estimated 5 to 8 million

## International missions ‘Lottie’ offering tops \$133 million goal

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Southern Baptist churches — and their 5,376 missionaries around the world — are celebrating a monumental \$136.2 million response to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions.

When the books on the 2003 offering closed May 31, Southern Baptists had given \$136,204,648 — an increase of almost \$21.2 million, or 18.4 percent, over 2002 — the largest dollar increase in the offering’s 115-year history.

“Southern Baptists are shouting ‘Glory to God!’ over this marvelous response to the needs of a lost



RANKIN

world,” said International Mission Board President Jerry Rankin. “God’s people feel His heartbreak over 1.6 billion people with little hope of even hearing about Jesus Christ. They were distressed that qualified missionaries were being held back for lack of finances. And they responded with a vision and passion only God’s Spirit can inspire.”

“We are especially grateful to Woman’s Missionary Union for their wholehearted partnership in encouraging Southern Baptists to step up to this tremendous challenge.”

“We are grateful for the priority

that Southern Baptists have placed on missions support by giving sacrificially to the Lottie Moon Christmas offering,” said Wanda Lee, executive director/treasurer of national WMU. “It is a privilege to partner with state WMU offices, WMU leaders, the International Mission Board, and missions advocates in our churches as we collectively seek to engage literally everyone in the mission of God.”

Rankin appealed to the churches for sacrificial giving because financial support had been lagging behind the increasing numbers of church members coming forward for overseas missionary service. The IMB was forced to limit missionary appointments and

cut stateside staff in June 2003 to keep expenses in line with income.

The board now can loosen restrictions on missionary appointments, Rankin said. After projections indicated the offering would surpass its \$133 million goal, the agency’s trustees voted in May to send 200 more long- and short-term missionaries than previously had been planned.

“Because Southern Baptists gave so unselfishly to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, we are sending out more missionaries this year,” Rankin said. “The result will be that more people groups will be engaged and more

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Not going to Indianapolis?  
Check out the Witness Web site for breaking news during the SBC

Visit: [www.FloridaBaptistWitness.com](http://www.FloridaBaptistWitness.com)