

VIRGINIA Baptists Committed

VOL. 8 NO. 1 FALL 2006

Three Virginia Baptists Nominated for BGAV Offices

Virginia Baptists Committed (VBC) selected an attorney and two pastors as a slate of candidates to be nominated for statewide offices at the Baptist General Association of Virginia annual meeting, Nov 9-10 in Virginia Beach.

- **Boyce Brannock**, current BGAV 1st vice president, to succeed **Bert Browning**, a pastor from Richmond, as president. Brannock, an attorney in Waynesboro, has been a member of First Baptist Church there since 1967.
- **Joe Lewis**, pastor from Petersburg, to succeed Brannock as first vice president. Lewis, pastor of Second Baptist Church since 1996, has served widely on Virginia Baptist boards and committees and also on the staff of Ginter Park Baptist Church, Richmond, and as pastor of Fountain Creek Baptist Church, Greensville County.
- **Steve Pollard**, pastor of Abingdon Baptist Church since 1998, to succeed current 2nd vice president **Barbara Filling**, pastor of Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church in Charles City. Pollard has also held pastorates in

Richmond and Scottsburg and served on Virginia Baptist committees and as moderator of the Dan River Association.

Brannock is a partner in the law firm of Timberlake, Smith, Thomas and Moses in Waynesboro. He has served FBC, Waynesboro, as a deacon, endowment committee chair and member of the long range and pastoral search committees. He is former chair of the BGAV's Religious Liberty Committee; former member and 1st vice president of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs; and charter member and former president of the board of The Center for Baptist Heritage and Studies.

The VBC nominating process reflects: (1) candidates who support the BGAV and its Kingdom Advance vision; (2) the BGAV custom of alternating presidential nominations between qualified clergy and laity; (3) the practice in recent years of nominating a successfully serving first vice president to succeed the president; and (4) nomination of candidates who support such core Baptist values as priesthood of the believer, autonomy of the local church, soul freedom and religious liberty. ■

VBC BREAKFAST—The pastor of a church in Georgia, now affiliated with the Baptist General Association of Virginia, will headline the Virginia Baptists Committed breakfast during the BGAV annual meeting in Virginia Beach.

Bill Wilson, pastor, First Baptist Church, Dalton, Ga., will speak at the VBC breakfast at 7:30 a.m., Friday, Nov. 10, at the Doubletree Hotel. He is former pastor of First Baptist Church, Waynesboro, and former BGAV president. [The BGAV will meet Nov. 9-10 at Virginia Beach Convention Center. Visit www.vbmb.org and click on "News and Events" and then "Connect:2006" for more information.]

Tickets for the VBC breakfast are available for \$15 each either on line or by postal mail. Visit www.virginiabaptistscommitted.org, click on "buy now" and go to the "Paypal" link to pay by credit card—deadline Nov. 6. You may also mail your check to Virginia Baptists Committed, P.O. Box 3446, Petersburg, VA 23805-3446.

MBN HALL OF FAME—Two Virginia Baptists—Petersburg pastor **Joe Lewis** and journalist **Robert O'Brien** of Richmond—were among 10 Baptists inducted into the national Mainstream Baptist Network's Hall of Fame, Class of 2006, honoring Baptists who have stood firmly over the years against efforts to abridge Baptist freedoms.

MBN 2007 NATIONAL CONVOCATION—February 23-24, 2007, at the Marriott Dallas/Fort Worth Airport North, 8840 Freeport Parkway, Irving, TX 75063. Call the hotel at 972-929-8800 or 800-228-9290 for room registration (\$99 each). Call MBN national office at 325-659-4102 for convocation registration (\$60, covering a Friday, Feb. 23, banquet and a Feb. 24 breakfast).] The convocation convenes at 1 p.m. on Feb. 23.



Boyce Brannock



Joe Lewis



Steve Pollard

VIRGINIA BAPTISTS COMMITTED

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"The mission of Virginia Baptists Committed is to preserve, enrich, and communicate our Virginia Baptist heritage of freedom and responsibility in Christ..."

Staying Connected By Michael Clingenpeel

An evening thunderstorm rolled through Richmond recently. In a brief, but intense, hour of pyrotechnics, trees toppled, gutters overflowed and electricity surged or ceased. The intermittent current fried the power supply to my office computer, plunging me into a five-day cyber blackout.

Being disconnected has its advantages. It provided a quick excuse for being out-of-touch with matters I didn't particularly want to know about anyway, and it was a relief to be spam-free for the better part of a week. Out of sight, out of mind.

On balance, however, staying connected is a blessing. My return to webworld brought me greetings from an acquaintance with whom I had no communication for years. It produced information from our church family where I had missed an opportunity to care for someone. It tied me to a larger world that is the arena of God's work.

One of the most alluring temptations of 21st century discipleship is the appeal to disconnect, to hunker down in our homes, offices and congregations, to rivet our attention on our immediate sphere of responsibility while we divert our attention from our larger world.

Our generation of Baptists in the South has disappointed us with its aversion to tested Baptist convictions and capitulation to culture. We do

church with over 25 years of tawdry denominational backstory. Moderate Virginia Baptist—all moderate Baptists for that matter—find it easy to keep our hearts at home where needs and opportunities are significant rather than risk our hearts in cooperation where the needs are urgent. Our money follows our hearts.

In our best moments, Baptists have resisted this urge to provincialize our ministries. We have not allowed the Baptist value of voluntary connectionalism to be sacrificed on the sacred altar of congregational autonomy. These precious principles were not mutually exclusive for our Baptist ancestors, nor should they be in our time.

Our generation has survived a denominational storm. One of the sad reminders of its swath across the Baptist landscape is the extreme localism that threatens to disconnect moderate Virginia Baptists from participation in a larger fellowship and broader mission.

Care about your congregation. It's the place that butters your bread and blesses your life. But care about larger Baptist connections, such as your association, the Baptist General Association of Virginia, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, the Baptist World Alliance, and others of your choice. **Stay connected.**

Michael Clingenpeel, pastor of River Road Church Baptist in Richmond, is co-chairman of Virginia Baptists Committed. He is former editor of The Religious Herald.



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Check one: Supporting Member \$25 Sustaining Member \$50

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Mail to: Virginia Baptists Committed, P.O. Box 3446, Petersburg, VA 23805-3446
Email contact: vbcommitted@hotmail.com; VBC treasurer, **Joe Lewis**