

MINUTES
Ad-Hoc Committee on Mission and Purpose of Southern Baptist Library Association
FOR SBLA NAME CHANGE AND REORGANIZATION
May 2, 2005

At the May 26, 2004, SBLA meeting in Vancouver, Washington, President Naomi Taplin appointed an ad hoc committee to study the mission and purpose of SBLA and make recommendations to present at the next annual meeting. The committee consisted of Cathy Adams (OBU), Ellen Brown (Baylor), Richard Cheek (OBU), Eldonna DeWeese (SBU), Mary Fox (DBU), Kenette Harder (William Jewell), Craig Kubic (MBTS), Alan Lefever (Texas Bapt. Hist. Collection), Bill Sumners (So. Bapt. Hist. Library and Archives), Naomi Taplin (Texas Bapt. Hist. Coll.) as immediate past president, and Elizabeth Wells (Samford). Eldonna DeWeese as 2004-05 President coordinated this study.

The committee met October 28-29, 2004 in Kansas City, MO at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, held a teleconference call February 23, 2005, and held numerous e-mail sessions.

We were dealing with these realities:

- 1) Dwindling attendance at annual meetings, making it difficult to secure and pay for quality programming with conference fees.
- 2) Dwindling library travel budgets making it difficult for us to compete with larger professional organizations with extensive professional development offerings.
- 3) New technological developments that have changed the way we communicate and network with professional colleagues were not reflected in the SBLA constitution and bylaws.
- 4) The inclusiveness we intended and hoped to communicate to all librarians and archivists at Baptist institutions was not adequately reflected in our name and organizational documents.
- 5) Our own puzzlement as to what could legitimately be our niche in the association/professional development marketplace that would fill a need not met by other organizations.

Most of the committee had "grown up" in SBLA and treasured the contacts and fellowship experienced over the years. After much discussion and wrestling with the above realities, prayer, and (yes some tears), we came to the conclusion that we needed to recommend a change in focus with a brand new name and a new constitution to reflect this. Revised bylaws could then follow with perhaps a more streamlined organization.

Yes, we wanted to retain the fellowship and professional contacts we had enjoyed in the past. But our uniqueness seemed to lie in the fact that our libraries, agencies, and organizations all dealt in some way with providing access to Baptist materials, whether such a collection was large or small, focused or dispersed in a larger matrix of materials. Identifying, preserving, and providing access to those materials no matter where they were or no matter what format or condition seemed to be a mission not fulfilled wholly by any other organization. It is in this spirit that we recommend the adoption of the proposed new name and constitution.