

Emmett Till's church requested

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHICAGO—It was the site of a seminal event in the civil rights movement, where a photograph was taken that gave the country a glimpse of the horrors of racism.

Today, a half century after scores of mourners filed into Roberts Temple Church of God in Christ and past the open casket of a brutally beaten 14-year-old boy named Emmett Till, there is hope the church will become to this chapter in American history what places like Gettysburg are to the Civil War.

"This is part of the civil rights trail," said Jonathan Fine, president of Preservation Chicago, which is pushing for the city to give the church landmark status. "The civil rights trail begins in Chicago and it began in this church."

It was here that Mamie Till-Mobley decided to make what historians and activists say was one of the most significant statements about civil rights. After her son's body was brought back to Chicago from Mississippi where he was murdered, allegedly for whistling at a white woman, Till-Mobley insisted the casket remain open. She wanted the nation—the tens of thousands who descended on the church to pay their respects and the millions who saw the photographs in Jet Magazine—to see firsthand the brutality directed at blacks in the South.

Rosa Parks was among those influenced by the images. About three months later, on a bus in Montgomery, Ala., the seamstress refused to give up her seat to a white man. It was a simple decision

that became one of the most significant acts of defiance in American history.

"I once asked Mrs. Parks, 'Why didn't you go to the back of the bus?'" said the Rev. Jesse Jackson. "She said, 'I thought about Emmett Till and I couldn't go back.'"

"If Rosa Parks was the mother of it (the civil rights movement) ... Emmett Till was the martyred son of it," Jackson said.

Today, it is no accident that there is an effort to gain landmark status for this nondescript church on the city's South Side. Across the nation, more and more houses, churches, hotels and other structures bound together by the struggle for equality are being designated as landmarks, listed on the National Register of Historic Places and turned into museums.

S.C. Baptists discuss church growth

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

COLUMBIA—Southern Baptists in South Carolina are trying to reach out to young people and minorities as some in the church complain that the state denomination is not on track to meet ambitious growth goals.

More than 1,000 delegates met at the two-day South Carolina Baptist Convention

Protest

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"If he wants to do it, it's a free country," said Jason Sakamoto, who disagrees with Newdow but isn't offended by his efforts. "It's more historical just to keep it there. Why remove it if it's part of history?"

Dick Johnson said Newdow is entitled to his opinion and people in the quiet, tree-lined neighborhood were getting used to the publicity.

"It's getting to be a non-event," Johnson said.

that began Tuesday at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center.

In the effort to bring in those who might otherwise be turned off by a denominational church, some Baptist congregations have stripped the designation from their names altogether.

Blythewood's Village Church and Columbia's Southeast Community Church both are Southern Baptist churches.

"Some people see the word 'Baptist' or 'Presbyterian' or anything like that on a church sign, and they look at that church with any prejudices they might already have about those denominations," said Rev. Tom Fillingim, pastor of the 75-member Southeastern Community Church. "A name like ours doesn't deter them from coming. It's just one part of our challenge to build a bridge between the church and the community."

On Wednesday, delegates elected Don Wilton, the pastor at First Baptist Church Spar-

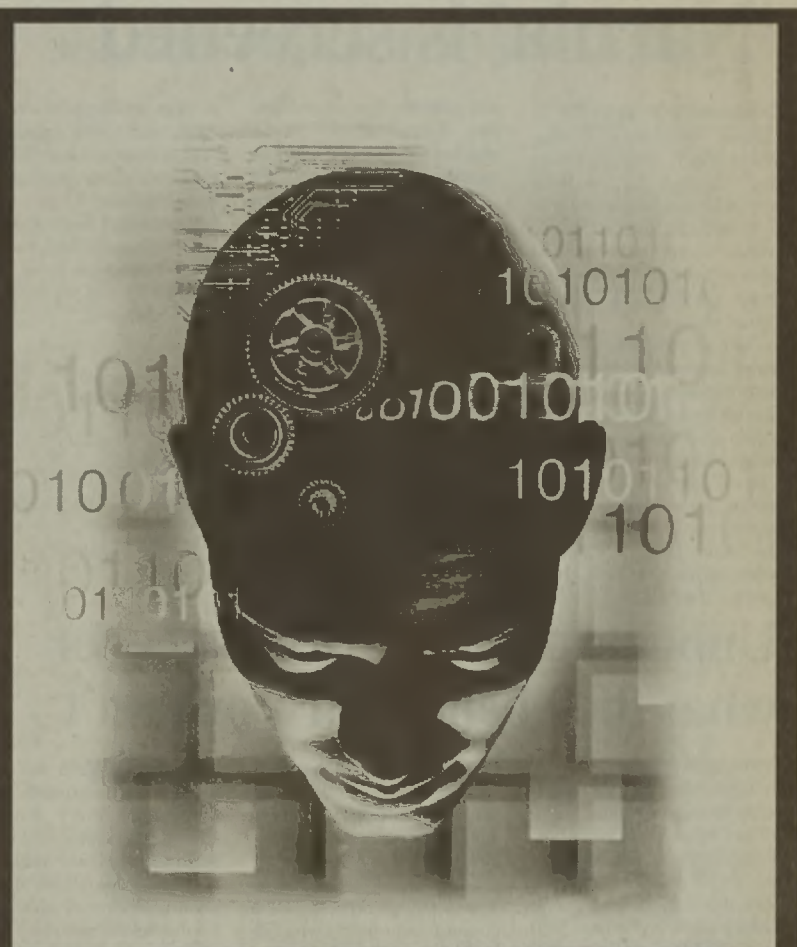
tanburg, the convention's 2006 president.

Wilton was born in South Africa and came to the Upstate in 1993 after serving in churches in Mississippi and Louisiana.

During its meeting, delegates also passed resolutions supporting the teaching of intelligent design in South Carolina schools and endorsing a proposed state constitutional amendment banning gay marriage, according to a report of meeting activities on the convention's Web site.

"...we encourage pastors and church leaders to support, and to communicate to their members, the urgency of voting for the proposed constitutional amendment in the 2006 General Election," reads the resolution on the marriage amendment.

While state law already prohibits gay marriage, voters will decide next year whether there should be a constitutional amendment that would prevent changes to the law in the future.



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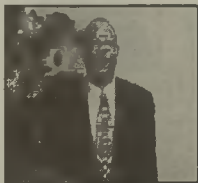
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