

# RELIGION

## Jury chosen for trial of National Baptist Convention president

By FRED GOODALL  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LARGO, Fla. — Five women and one man were selected as jurors for the state racketeering trial of the president of National Baptist Convention USA.

Three women and a man were chosen as alternates Thursday.

The Rev. Henry Lyons, a St. Petersburg minister, and co-defendant Bernice Edwards of Milwaukee are accused of diverting money to secret accounts from corporations, seeking to do business with their organization.

Defense attorneys representing the two black defendants had expressed concern Wednesday that a pool of 50 potential jurors



Rev. Lyons (left) with Bernice Edwards.

included only one black and at least one Hispanic.

After the all-white jury was

seated, the attorneys said their client was comfortable with the jurors.

"We feel we picked a jury that is intelligent and will keep an open mind," lawyer Denis de Vlaming said.

Jurors were instructed not to discuss the case or review any news accounts. They will not be present when pending motions are discussed on Tuesday.

Opening statements were scheduled to begin on Jan. 25.

Lyons, 56, is charged with racketeering and two counts of grand theft. Edwards, 42, the convention's public relations director and Lyons' alleged mistress, is charged with racketeering.

Prosecutors contend they used

the funds to buy a waterfront home in Florida, a time-share in Lake Tahoe, Nev., a 20-carat princess-cut diamond, two Mercedes-Benz automobiles and a Rolls Royce.

Earlier in the day, one of George Steinbrenner's sons was excused as a prospective juror after expressing concerns about the privacy of his family.

"I've worked hard for nine years to make sure my kids have a private life," said Henry Steinbrenner, whose father owns the New York Yankees.

"My concern is not myself," he said of trying to maintain a low profile as a Steinbrenner. "Even my father is toning it down."

Steinbrenner, a horse breeder,

was worried about the stigma that might be attached to his family name and his children if he were selected.

"There should be a law that high-profile people don't serve in high-profile cases," he said during questioning by Circuit Judge Susan Schaeffer.

That is a decision left to the state Legislature, the judge responded.

As potential jurors were being whittled from the pool, de Vlaming asked if they had a problem with a religious leader making money through endorsements.

"You should be able to make as much money as you can, as long as it's legal," a woman said.

De Vlaming asked about the

panelists' attitudes toward a minister or religious leader driving luxury cars or acquiring other material wealth.

"I believe a church body needs to take care of a minister but not to excess," a woman said.

Lyons has survived attempts to oust him as leader of the Nashville, Tenn.-based National Baptist Convention, which claims an estimated 8.5 million members — making it the largest black church organization in the country. His parishioners at Bethel Metropolitan Baptist Church steadfastly defend him as a human being with frailties, but the right to be forgiven and move forward.

If convicted, he could face 30 years in prison.

## Ladies of Virtue and Excellence hold annual women's conference

Special to THE CHRONICLE

Are you tired of the some old thing in your life? No freedom, peace, hope or love? Then this is for you.

The Ladies of Virtue and Excellence also known as LOVE, will be having their 6th annual Women's Conference Jan. 29-31, a spiritually uplifting three-day event. The celebration will take place at A Resting Place Pentecostal Church, which is located at 3006 Kernersville Road, where the Rev. Alvin E. Carlisle is pastor and founder.

The theme this year will be "A

New Thing for a New Woman" and will be presented by some of the most anointed women of God in North Carolina, with a life-changing word in their mouths.

Jan. 29 at 7:30 p.m. there will be initial services with first lady Catherine Newsome of Spirit-filled Ministries of Goldsboro as the speaker for the evening.

Jan. 30 at 7 a.m. prayer breakfast will be lead by first lady B. Mack of Can

You Hear the Cry Ministries. There will be a \$10 registration. Later that day, from 9-10 a.m. there will be a service titled "Morning Glory" with first lady

Ernestine Miller of Holy Trinity Full Gospel Baptist Church, as the keynote speaker. Then that evening at 7:30 p.m. there will be "A Night of New Things" with first lady Gloria Samuels of Goodwill Baptist Church, of Arcadia. Samuels will be the minister for the hour.

Jan. 31 at 5 p.m. there will be an evening of colorful women with Evg. Tammy Simon, of A Resting Place Pentecostal Church, as the speaker for the evening.

For more information or directions call (336) 784-0194 or 519-4166.

## Inner-faith worship at New Jerusalem

Special to THE CHRONICLE

Jan. 30 at 7 p.m. the S.J. Cornelius Ensemble of New Jerusalem Baptist Church will present Phase I of "An Evening in Songs and Praises," featuring the Inner-faith Chorale from Hoffman in concert.

Currently, the Inner-faith Chorale consists of members of the United Methodist, Freewill Baptist, COGIC and Holiness backgrounds. Other affiliations include the late James Cleveland's Gospel Music Workshop of America.

Based out of Pinehurst the chorale has spent much of this past year traveling throughout the states of North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia spreading God's Word through song.

Inner-faith is currently working on its first recording and is looking forward to traveling to Wisconsin in the spring of 1999 to appear in concert with John P. Kee and the New Life Community Choir at the University of Wisconsin at Madison.

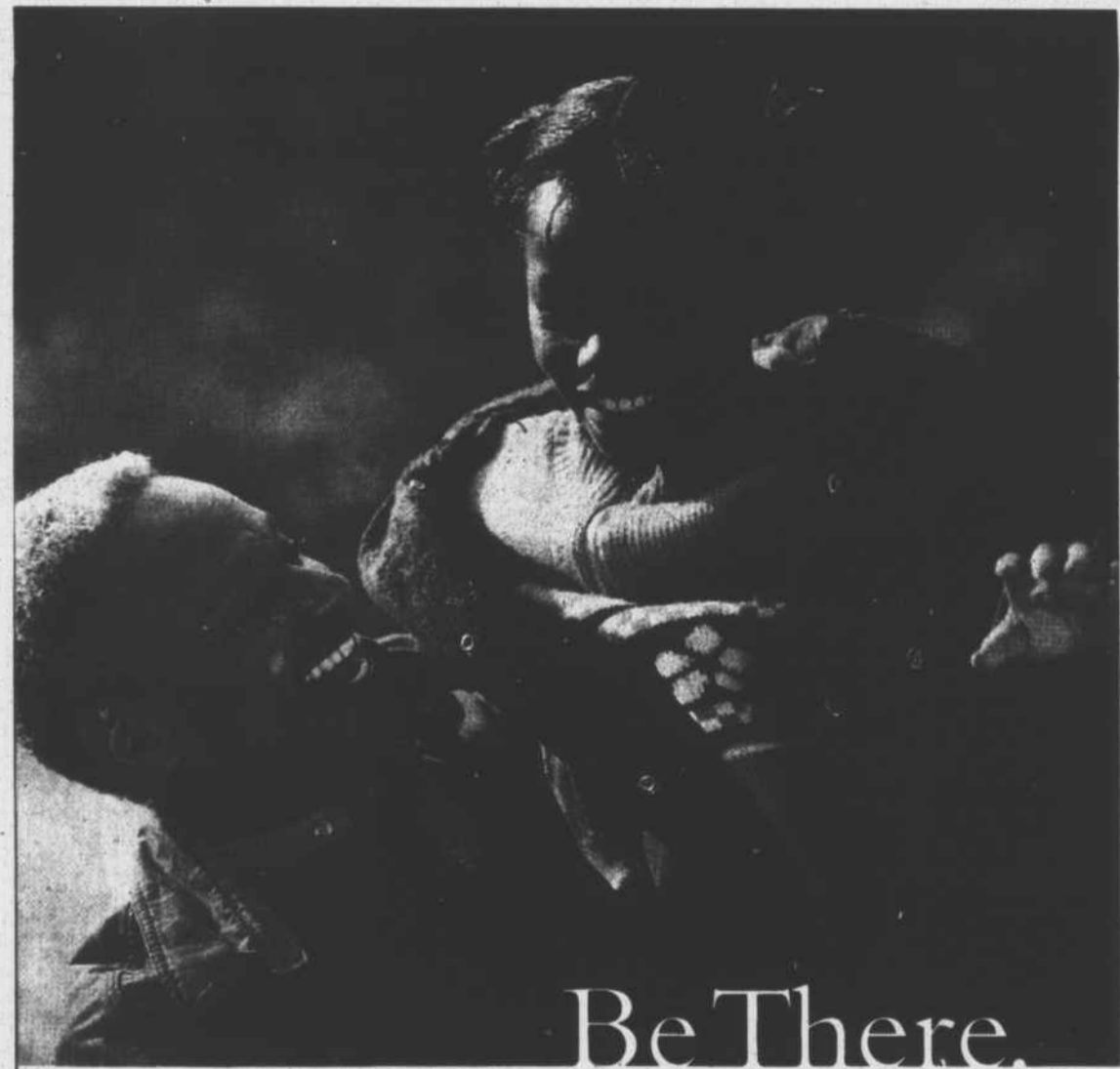
"Total Dedication and Praise" is IFC's motto and they

are just that — totally committed and ready to render their praise unto God in song.

Other guests scheduled to appear are the A.W. McCloud Ensemble under the direction of Minister Sandra McCloud of the Tabernacle of Faith, Sister Gail T. Couthen of Saint Stephen Baptist Church, the Cherry Street Ensemble from Forsyth Advancement Center and the Community Fellowship Mass Choir from Lexington.

The church is located at 1212 N. Dunleith Ave. The Rev. James Cornelius is the host pastor.

## The Religion deadline is Monday at 5:00 p.m.



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It's a fact.

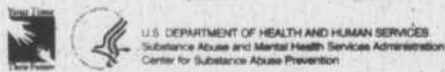
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