

National Baptists reelect Shaw as president: Pulled the church out of scandal and disarray

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One of the nation's largest black religious denominations handed a second five-year presidential term to a Philadelphia pastor who pulled the church out of the scandal and disarray left by his predecessor.

At the annual meeting in New Orleans, delegates of the National Baptist Convention U.S.A. reelected William Shaw in the face of a challenge by W. Franklyn Richardson of Mt. Vernon, New York, who failed for a third time to win the office.

The balloting took place September 9 between speeches by Housing and Urban Development Secretary Alphonso Jackson, representing the Bush campaign, and Democratic presidential nominee Senator John Kerry.

Shaw pledged to continue to rehabilitate the convention, whose business affairs were left in a "shambles" by his predecessor, Henry J. Lyons of St. Petersburg, Florida. Lyons served nearly five years in prison for grand theft racketeering. Shaw, pastor of White Rock Baptist Church, forswore his \$100,000 president's salary to demonstrate his commitment to serving the convention. Shaw, 70, ran on his record, which included paying off a debt of nearly \$3 million on the convention's headquarters in Nashville, retooling its constitution and bylaws and instituting new financial controls.

Leaders of the National Baptist Convention U.S.A. are scheduled to participate in a historic summit in Nashville in January to discuss cooperating on a national agenda with leaders from three other black Baptist denominations that separated from it years ago. *-Religion News Service*