
A S S O C I A T E D B A P T I S T P R E S S

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***** NOTICE *****

Associated Baptist Press will open its Jacksonville office July 1. Because of the move and the July 4th holiday, ABP does not plan to have an issue June 27 or July 4. Here is how you can contact us after July 1:

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EDITORS' NOTE: This is an updated version of a story released June 19.

Draper expected to take
Sunday School Board post

By Greg Warner

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (ABP) -- Texas pastor Jimmy Draper is expected to become the next president of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Members of the board's presidential search committee reportedly will announce their choice Friday, June 21. Draper has declined to discuss the position publicly but has told several close associates that he has decided to take it.

A special meeting of all board trustees will be held in the next few weeks to elect the new president, according to trustee sources. A letter mailed to trustees this week profiles the candidate, according to a report in the Tennessean, a Nashville newspaper.

If elected, Draper, 55, would replace Lloyd Elder, who agreed Jan. 17 to retire from the post rather than face probable firing by trustees. The Sunday School Board is the agency responsible for church programming, curriculum and publishing for the 15 million-member denomination.

Draper has been a leader among fundamental-conservatives in the Southern Baptist Convention, serving as president of the SBC in 1983 and 1984. His election to the Sunday School Board would likely please fundamental-conservatives, who have insisted that the post go to someone committed to their campaign to turn the SBC in a more conservative direction. Draper would be the most prominent leader of the movement

elected to lead an SBC agency.

Yet Draper, who during the 12-year SBC controversy has played a more conciliatory role than other fundamental-conservatives, is not considered as volatile a choice as others under consideration.

"He's a fundamentalist but he's not mad about it," said Euless evangelist Freddie Gage, a member of Draper's church.

Draper released a statement June 18 in which he said he had "been asked to consider a position in another city that would necessitate a move from Euless." He declined to identify the position since "no formal offer has yet been extended."

Draper delivered the same message to church members June 16, according to Dan Taylor, minister of education at the 9,000-member church, which is located between Dallas and Fort Worth. He also discussed the position in greater detail with church deacons June 12 and with his staff, Taylor said.

Two of Draper's close associates told Associated Baptist Press the pastor has said he will accept the Sunday School Board post. "He definitely is going to go," said one colleague, who spoke on the condition that his name be withheld.

Wayne DuBose of Shreveport, La., chairman of the board's search committee, was not available for comment.

But trustee chairman William Anderson, who also serves on the search committee, confirmed the recommendation of a new president is imminent.

"We're down to one person," Anderson, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Clearwater, Fla., told Associated Baptist Press.

Draper has been considered a leading candidate for the job ever since it became vacant. He was interviewed by the search committee early on but told friends in May that he had turned down the job.

"He was hesitant to talk to us at first," confirmed Anderson. However, it is "not really" true that Draper first turned the committee down, Anderson said, since the committee couched its discussions with candidates carefully.

But the search committee reportedly returned to Euless in late May and convinced Draper to consider the position.

At the time, sources say, the committee also was considering John Sullivan, executive director of the Florida Baptist Convention, and Ralph Smith, pastor of Hyde Park Church in Austin, Texas.

Anderson confirmed that Sullivan was "a very top candidate." He would not say if the job was offered to Smith. Neither man has taken a high-profile role in the fundamental-conservative movement.

The committee "was impressed with many" of those considered and with the quality of leaders available, Anderson said. "I think I can say we would have been happy with several of the people."

In recent months, most rumors about the Sunday School Board position have focused on Paige Patterson, president of Criswell College in Dallas and a key strategist of the fundamental-conservative movement. Although Patterson reportedly had many supporters among board trustees, others -- including members of the search committee -- considered him too controversial a choice.

Anderson declined to say if Patterson ever was a candidate.

But in an interview with ABP June 6, Patterson acknowledged he was interviewed for the job. He added, however, he did not consider his selection likely.

"It's hard to believe that any agency in Southern Baptist life would call me because of the baggage I carry from the Southern Baptist controversy," he said.

While Patterson's selection would have alienated many Southern Baptists, Draper's election is expected to quiet some critics who feared the choice of a new president would signal a radical redirection at the Sunday School Board.

Although Draper has taken an active role among fundamental-conservative leaders, he also was instrumental in working out a compromise in a dispute between the president and trustees of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, where he serves as trustee chairman.

Draper holds a master of divinity degree from Southwestern, in Fort Worth, Texas. He has a bachelor's degree from Baylor University in Waco, Texas, which he also served as trustee chairman, and an honorary doctor of divinity from Howard Payne University in Brownwood, Texas.

Born in Hartford, Ark., Draper is the son and grandson of Southern Baptist preachers. He and his wife, Carol Ann, have three grown children.

Before becoming pastor of the Eules church in 1975, he was associate pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas and pastor of five churches in Texas, Missouri and Oklahoma. He is the author of several books, including Foundations of Biblical Faith.

Like other recent SBC presidents, Draper has been active on social and political issues. In 1988 he hosted a rally for then-presidential candidate Pat Robertson during the Southern Baptist Convention. He is an advocate of school prayer and has been involved in anti-abortion organizations.

Draper also wrote the Sunday School Board's special-emphasis lesson on abortion, which was mandated by trustees and taught in many Southern Baptist Sunday schools last January.

The Sunday School Board post is considered one of the most influential positions in the SBC. The 100-year-old publishing agency, based in Nashville, Tenn., reports a 1990-91 budget of \$190 million and net sales of \$172 million in 1989.

Elder, 57, has served as president of the board since 1984. In January he agreed to take early retirement after trustees accused him of mishandling publication of a controversial history of the board, poorly managing the finances of three board ventures, and secretly tape recording three telephone calls involving trustees.

While Elder was considered a hands-on administrator, Draper is expected to take a less active role in running the board, leaving many of the operational details to a second-in-command. Associates say Draper is less comfortable with the job's administrative duties and will place more emphasis on public speaking and other duties outside the office.

Anderson confirmed the committee is open to such a style of leadership. "The job is too big for one person," he told ABP in May. Other recent presidents have relied heavily on a chief operating officer for the day-to-day operations of the board, he noted.

--Contributing to this story was Ken Camp

ATS delays action on Southeastern,
threatens accreditation withdrawal

By Greg Warner

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (ABP) -- Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary has averted loss of its accreditation, but the reprieve may only be temporary.

Many observers, including some seminary trustees, expected the Association of Theological Schools to place the Wake Forest, N.C., seminary on probation during the June 10-12 meeting of the ATS accrediting commission.

Instead, the commission delayed action on the seminary's status until February while at the same time raising the stakes. Southeastern must now try to convince ATS not to remove its accreditation entirely.

During its recent meeting, the commission decided to visit the

seminary campus again in February 1991, at which time the school "is to show cause why it should not be placed on probation or have its accreditation withdrawn," the commission's action said.

This is the first time an ATS action has raised the specter of accreditation withdrawal. A similar "show cause" letter in June 1989 suggested ATS might place the troubled seminary on probation. The "show cause" order was removed in June 1990 after the seminary "made several positive steps" to resolve its problems, said Daniel Aleshire, associate director for accreditation for ATS.

However, the most recent action of ATS said "the situation at the seminary may very well be worse" than when ATS began its investigation in 1988. Instead of resolving differences between faculty and trustees, "some administrative judgments and actions have seriously impeded progress toward resolving the differences," ATS said.

Associated Baptist Press obtained a copy of the ATS commission's action, which was reported in a June 13 letter from Aleshire to seminary President Lewis Drummond.

The ATS action is based primarily on three separate reports submitted by the seminary's trustees, administrators and faculty. The reports describe what progress if any has been made in resolving differences between the three groups.

"The reports led the commission to think the situation may be worse" than in 1988, Aleshire said. "Our visit (in February)...is to investigate whether or not that is the case."

The ATS commission said disagreements between the groups are "profound," resulting in "a troubling erosion of mutual trust and confidence."

The faculty and trustees have been at odds over governance of the seminary since 1987, when then-President Randall Lolley and the school's top administrators resigned after trustees instituted changes to ensure that only biblical inerrantists are hired to the faculty.

The Association of Theological Schools, one of two agencies that accredits the seminary, requires that a seminary demonstrate that its three internal constituencies -- trustees, administrators and faculty -- share responsibility for governing the school.

"A school cannot function effectively for very long if these groups don't have some capacity for sharing responsibilities and trusting one another," explained Aleshire, a former professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Accreditation is the academic community's truth-in-packaging label. It means that a school has the resources, principles and commitment necessary to provide its students with the education it claims to offer.

Accreditation also is vital for the health of a school and the welfare of its graduates. Foundations and other charitable organizations look at accreditation when they think about providing funding to schools. And employers and academic institutions consider the validity of a graduate's degree -- as affirmed by accreditation -- when they consider offering that person a job or the opportunity to earn an advanced degree.

Although the recent ATS action revives fears that Southeastern will lose its accreditation, Aleshire said such a result is not a foregone conclusion.

"It would be unfair to say the commission has really made up its mind," Aleshire said. The school may yet demonstrate a reason for ATS to leave the accreditation intact, he said.

Aleshire said ATS's February visit to Southeastern, which will be combined with a regularly scheduled comprehensive visit, was not required before accreditation could be withdrawn. "By procedures and criteria of the agency, there is not a technicality that requires a visit," he said.

But he would not say why ATS delayed action until February.

Neither would Aleshire say what actions by seminary administrators

have "impeded progress" at the school. Since accredited institutions have the right of disclosure on ATS actions, he said, "it would not be appropriate for me to comment on that."

In a response to the ATS action, seminary President Drummond said he was grateful the school was not placed on probation. "We will do all in our power to show cause why we should not be placed on probation when the team from ATS visits our campus next year," he said.

Russ Bush, vice president of academic affairs and dean at Southeastern, said significant progress has been made at the school, despite ATS's assessment. He noted, however, that "shared governance is difficult to implement when 'mutual trust and confidence' are impaired and when visions for the future are in conflict."

During its June meeting, the ATS commission also reviewed the accreditation of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, which likewise has been under investigation for trustee decisions about faculty hiring.

The commission said Southern is addressing its problems and noted ATS will watch to see if trustees and administrators adhere to the "covenant" agreement reached earlier this year between trustees, faculty and administrators.

In an unusual turn of events, all six Southern Baptist seminaries were on the commission's heavy agenda for the June meeting. While ATS addressed specific concerns at Southeastern and Southern, Aleshire said, the other four seminaries were on the agenda for routine matters.

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--Contributing to this story were Gene Puckett and Marv Knox

SBC panel studying accreditation
will take wait-and-see approach

By Robert Dilday

ATLANTA (ABP) -- The recent report of the Association of Theological Schools on Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary may "take the pressure off" a Southern Baptist panel studying accrediting practices of the denomination's seminaries, say panel members.

Although serious, the accreditation report does not place Southeastern on probation. Many had expected a probation ruling would trigger a dramatic response -- perhaps even a call to sever ties with ATS -- by the institutions workgroup of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee.

"It sounds like the kind of thing we had anticipated and will give Southeastern time to make progress to satisfy the accrediting agencies," said David Hankins of Lake Charles, La., chairman of the institutions workgroup, which was assigned by the Executive Committee last February to study the accrediting issue.

Added workgroup member Paul Pressler of Houston: "This takes the pressure off the committee (to make a quick decision)."

The workgroup's assignment was sparked by investigations at two seminaries by ATS and the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges, which also accredits SBC seminaries.

The investigations, at Southeastern and Southern Baptist Theological seminaries, were prompted by actions taken by the seminaries' trustees to move the schools in a more conservative direction. Some faculty members have charged new guidelines in governance and teaching are being implemented that violate the agreements in effect when they were employed.

Fearing the ATS and SACS investigations could lead to probation, which in turn could lead to loss of accreditation, some Southern Baptists

have called for their denomination to set up its own accrediting agency and for all SBC seminaries to withdraw from affiliation with ATS and SACS.

Although such a proposal already has been studied and rejected by the SBC Education Commission, members of the Executive Committee authorized their own study last February. The workgroup met June 3 in Atlanta during the Southern Baptist Convention.

Hankins said prior to the ATS report that a "helpful" response from the accrediting agency would ease the work of the committee. "The catalyst for the timing has been Southeastern," he said at the time. "If that should smooth out, we'll have less impetus to be real aggressive to meet before September."

After hearing of the ATS report, Hankins confirmed it is "not likely" the group will meet.

Pressler, a state appeals judge who has been critical of the accrediting agencies in the past, said, "I am delighted (Southeastern) was not put on probation."

He added he favors investigating "all options" for future seminary accreditation, including a separate denominational agency. "If the accrediting agencies place us in the position of having to respond, we are ready to do so."

However, he noted: "We do not want to intervene in a process that is working appropriately.... Our committee will not be pro-active but reactive."

During its June 3 meeting the workgroup recommended that its membership remain unchanged until the Sept. 16-18 Executive Committee meeting, although four of its members' terms on the Executive Committee ended this month.

The action, approved by the full Executive Committee later that day, essentially created a special study committee to examine accreditation matters until September. Hankins, who later was elected chairman of the Executive Committee, will continue to chair the study committee until that time.

The Executive Committee could renew the study committee's authority in September or it could return the assignment to its institutions workgroup, effectively ending the expanded study committee's existence.

Pressler, who made the motion to retain outgoing members for the study, is one of those whose Executive Committee terms have ended. Others are James Jones of Campbellsville, Ky.; Frank Lady of Jonesboro, Ark.; and Sam Pace of Antlers, Okla.

Since Pressler was not an original member of the institutions workgroup, confusion developed June 3 about his status on the panel.

Hankins said Pressler was named to the group by Sam Pace, former Executive Committee chairman. However, Pace said he asked Pressler, who at the time was vice chairman of the Executive Committee, to "sit in my place

on one occasion (in February) when I was unable to attend."

As the group began to deal with complicated accrediting matters, Pace said, members decided to keep the group intact to preserve expertise. "He (Pressler) is on there by virtue of having been there from the first

meeting."

The practice of permitting former Executive Committee members to officially participate in Executive Committee business is not common but has been done on occasion over the past few decades.

When asked about the four outgoing members' involvement, Hankins said "irregular" action such as retaining outgoing members should occur only "in an unusual situation." He added, "It could be that this (accreditation study) could develop into that."

The accreditation study recently completed by the Education Commission and presented at the SBC annual meeting in June discouraged calls for a separate accrediting agency and recommended an "alternative to address concerns" raised by critics of ATS and SACS.

A new motion presented at the SBC annual meeting to examine the pros and cons of current seminary accreditation was referred to the Education Commission.

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FMB trustees adopt
relocation criteria

By Robert Dilday

RICHMOND, Va. (ABP) -- Speculation that the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board will move out of Virginia may diminish for the time being following action by the agency's board of trustees.

Meeting June 17-19, trustees decided not to conduct a study of board's facilities at this time. Instead, they limited themselves to adopting criteria for use in assessing any offer to move that may come later.

Trustees would have to respond to future offers to move. However, board officials said they are unaware of imminent offers.

Action on the board's location was one of several items of business at the June meeting, which included naming 43 missionaries, approving guidelines for responding quickly to unusual evangelistic opportunities, and hearing a report on Southern Baptist assistance to Kurdish refugees in the Middle East.

Trustees also elected two new area directors and approved a study of the missionary-selection process.

The issue of relocating the board's headquarters was raised last October when trustee Ron Wilson of Thousand Oaks, Calif., asked the board to "develop the criteria to decide the merits of moving" the FMB.

The motion was later expanded to include a study of all future FMB space needs. Executive Vice President Donald Kammerdiener was assigned the task of determining how to undertake such a study.

Wilson contended his request was motivated by a desire for efficient board operation, not by political or theological issues in the Southern Baptist Convention.

However, his motion was made one month prior to the 1990 annual meeting of the Baptist General Association of Virginia, which was considering a proposal -- subsequently approved -- to reduce contributions to Southern Baptist causes through the SBC Cooperative Program.

The timing of Wilson's motion raised speculation that FMB trustees might "punish" Virginia Baptists by moving the board from the state. Both Wilson and board chairman William Hancock vigorously denied the contention, but public and private comments by some board members appeared to confirm it.

Kammerdiener's study, presented to trustees' administrative committee last week, recommended a study of the board's current facilities before consideration of any move was made and suggested 10 criteria for use in

assessing the merits of a relocation offer.

However, administrative committee members, apparently eager to conclude the matter, quickly accepted an alternative recommendation from Wilson that omitted a facilities study and included six of the 10 suggested criteria as guidelines for considering future offers. That proposal was later adopted by the full board.

The six criteria have to do with protecting the financial integrity of the FMB, maintaining the Missionary Learning Center in Rockville, Va., and ensuring that other locations would provide an equal or superior labor pool and work environment.

Although trustees did not rule out a future facilities study, the board action appears to put the issue to rest, at least until a proposal to move is made. Wilson, Hancock and other trustee leaders said they know of no pending offers.

"I do think an offer may be made at some point in the future," Wilson said, adding he had heard of businessmen in Oklahoma City, Okla., who might be interested in making a proposal. However, he noted such offers may not be "good ones."

"Most board members don't want to move out of Virginia or Richmond," said FMB vice chairman John Jackson. He noted, however, that some are concerned the current facilities, built in 1959, may prove inadequate in the next 10 years. If that proves to be true, a move within the Richmond area might at some point be considered, he added.

The 43 new mission workers -- 37 appointed and six reappointed -- bring the total number of Southern Baptist foreign missionaries to 3,920 serving in 121 countries.

New policy guidelines for responding quickly to unusual evangelistic opportunities around the world will allow top board administrators and trustee officers jointly to declare a "Green Alert," permitting personnel and resources to be transferred to strategic areas without full board approval.

The guidelines were created by a trustee subcommittee working with the FMB staff in response to concerns expressed by some board members that the FMB's operating practices do not permit it to take immediate advantage of unexpected ministry opportunities, such as those brought about by political changes in Eastern Europe and by the impact of the Persian Gulf War in the Middle East.

FMB President Keith Parks and other board administrators have refuted the charges, saying staff response in both regions has been prompt. However, both trustees and staff said they found the new guidelines helpful.

In other matters, an update on Southern Baptist assistance to Kurdish refugees in the Middle East highlighted the kind of unusual opportunities the "Green Alert" designation is intended to include.

Tim Brendle, who has coordinated the FMB's response to opportunities created by the end of the Persian Gulf war, told trustees herculean efforts were made to channel food, clothing, blankets and medical care to the Kurds, who fled Iraq for Turkey and Iran following unrest there.

Through the undertaking, the total cost of which may exceed \$2 million, the 60-plus volunteers offered a "quiet witness" which resulted in a number of Kurds and others making professions of faith in Christ, Brendle said. In addition, copies of scripture were widely distributed.

Trustees elected Bill Phillips and Ronald Wilson as area directors. Phillips, who has been associate to the area director for Eastern and Southern Africa, will serve in the West Africa area. Wilson, who was associate to the area director for Brazil and the Caribbean, will now serve as director for that area.

In addition, trustees approved a request that their mission personnel committee study the possibility of permitting trustees to interview missionary candidates earlier in the candidate-selection process.

The practice since at least the end of World War II has been for FMB staff members to examine applicants' qualifications, including doctrinal integrity and psychological stability, and later discuss that with a trustee committee. If approved by the committee, candidates meet briefly with trustees in the regional committees the day before the appointment service, when the full board votes on their acceptance.

William Sutton of McAllen, Texas, who made the study motion, said he wanted to meet earlier with candidates in order to "get to know their heart and let them know mine." He said later his motion wasn't critical of the selection process but that he wanted an opportunity to discuss doctrinal issues with candidates at an earlier stage.

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Bailey Smith accepts
Jacksonville pastorate

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (ABP) -- Former Southern Baptist Convention president Bailey Smith has accepted the unanimous call of North Jacksonville Baptist Church to serve as pastor.

Smith paid an unexpected visit to the church Sunday, June 16, to accept the call and issued three challenges to the congregation -- to be debt free in 1993, fill the 3,500-seat worship center within six months and lead the state in baptisms next year.

Jacksonville's First Baptist Church, where former SBC president Jerry Vines is co-pastor, has been the perennial statewide leader in baptisms, totaling 989 in 1990.

For the past six years, Smith has been in full-time evangelism, based in Atlanta. Formerly, he served as pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of Del City, Okla. The Texas native is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University in Arkansas and Southwestern Seminary.

The North Jacksonville congregation moved to a new 43-acre, \$7.5 million facility north of Jacksonville in 1983 but remains heavily in debt.

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--By Jack Brymer

House votes full funding
for postal appropriation

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- The U.S. House of Representatives has taken a step toward rejecting a Bush administration proposal to raise second- and third-class non-profit postal rates -- the rates paid by many churches and Baptist publications.

The House voted 349-48 to approve a \$20 billion Treasury-Postal Service appropriations bill that allocates \$649.3 million for the non-profit mail subsidy for fiscal 1992. That is the amount the Postal Service says is needed to keep rates at their current level.

Despite the House action, the postal appropriations measure still faces serious obstacles.

"The \$649 million has to get through the Senate, which is a bigger problem," said Dan Doherty, executive director of the Alliance of Nonprofit Mailers. A Senate appropriations panel is expected to take up the bill Tuesday, June 25.

Doherty noted that the House bill exceeds its budget target, increasing pressure on the Senate to find places to cut. Doherty said he agrees with the assessment of some observers that the non-profit postal subsidy may be a likely target.

House appropriations panels rejected the administration's proposal to spend only \$183 million for subsidy. That amount would result in an

additional 33 percent rate increase for non-profit mailers this fall. That increase would come on the heels of increases ranging from 25 percent to 40 percent that went into effect in March.

The subsidy, known as the "revenue foregone" appropriation, reimburses the Postal Service for the non-profit mailers' share of overhead expenses. Non-profit mail rates reflect only the cost attributable to handling that class of mail.

The March rate increase was the result of an overall rate hike approved by the Postal Rate Commission and Postal Service Board of Governors in February. At that time first-class rates went from 25 cents to 29 cents. In addition to the increase in non-profit rates, the Postal Rate Commission assigned higher overhead expenses to non-profit mailers.

Congress appropriated \$473 million for revenue forgone in fiscal 1991, but the higher overhead calculation means the Postal Service could need as much as an additional \$97 million for the subsidy.

Some observers predict the actual fiscal 1991 shortfall will be considerably less than \$97 million because of a decline in mail use by non-profit groups. Whatever the amount of the shortfall, it could be passed on to non-profit mailers if Congress fails to appropriate funds to cover it.

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--By Larry Chesser

Alexander defends 'choice'
before House subcommittee

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- Education Secretary Lamar Alexander responded to concerns about the "choice" aspect of the Bush administration's educational reform package when he testified before a House subcommittee June 18.

Alexander, speaking before the House Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary and Vocational Education, outlined the administration's America 2000 proposal (H.R. 2460). Alexander testified June 10 before a Senate committee considering the same proposal.

While elements of the proposal have gained acceptance, the choice components have drawn fire since President George Bush first announced the package April 18.

Educational choice, which was endorsed in principle by Southern Baptists during their annual convention June 4-6, has become the primary point of debate in the House and the Senate panels considering the reform package.

The bill would allow the use of tax dollars to help parents send children to private and parochial schools. The plan offers incentives to school districts to run choice programs, allowing parents to select which schools their children attend.

Federal remedial-education funds (Chapter 1 program) also would go with the students to public, private and parochial schools.

The America 2000 plan calls for a transformation of the country's educational system by strengthening existing schools and creating a new generation of schools for tomorrow. The initiatives also emphasize lifelong learning and the development of communities that foster a learning environment.

Alexander told the House subcommittee that America 2000 is not just a federal program, but it is a "nine-year crusade to help America move itself toward the national education goals."

Rep. Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.) said the term "crusade" made her nervous "because some of us take seriously (the) separation of church and state."

Critics of the choice components have said the use of public monies for parochial schools would breach the wall of church-state separation.

Alexander said he cannot understand why choice is an issue in a society based on personal freedoms, predicting that in five years the issue

will be non-existent. In the future, students will be studying that "odd period in American history" when there was no educational choice, he added.

Rep. Patsy Mink (D-Hawaii) asked Alexander to explain his contention that the use of remedial-education funds primarily would impact disadvantaged children, offering them the same choice that privileged children have. Mink noted most families are limited in school choice by their neighborhoods -- not their economic situation.

Alexander responded that wealthy families frequently examine school districts before they locate in a community. The poor families do not have such an option, he added.

Alexander was referring to only 10-to-20 percent of the population, Mink countered. Most people locate near their workplace, she said.

It is a common practice in America to move to a place and search for the best schools in the area, Alexander reiterated.

Rep. Susan Molinari (R-N.Y.) said her concern with the choice proposal is that it will create "small pockets of children who will fall through the cracks."

The choice option requires parental involvement, she said. Some parents, perhaps who are single and work multiple jobs, will not or cannot spend the energy required to figure out the new system, she said. The plan may isolate the very children who need an educational system to provide the kind of stability they do not receive at home, she said.

Alexander acknowledged some parents may not do a good job of selecting schools for their children, but the cure is not to dictate where everyone must attend.

Rep. John F. Reed (D-R.I.) said, "This choice argument is a policy of avoidance" of substantive issues, such as funding and school structures.

"Are we just passing out parachutes instead of fixing the plane?" Reed asked.

"I think we are imagining the telegraph when we are using the pony express," Alexander responded.

The idea of assigning children particular schools is a mistake that never should have been made, Alexander remarked.

Reed said the system of choice is based on a flawed economic model that does not attack fundamental problems.

Subcommittee members voiced concern the two-hour hearing did not allow adequate time to cover the reform package.

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--By Pam Parry

High court declines bid
to review holy day ruling

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- The U.S. Supreme Court has declined to hear a Connecticut schoolteacher's request to increase the number of paid leave days he is allowed for religious observances.

Without comment, the high court let stand rulings by a U.S. District Court and the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals that the leave policies of the Ansonia, Conn., school district's collective-bargaining agreement adequately accommodated the teacher's religious practices.

The district provides three days of paid leave for religious observances. Teacher Ronald Philbrook, a member of the Worldwide Church of God, whose adherents are required to observe more than three holy days each year during which they are to refrain from gainful employment, sued the school district after his requests to use three "personal business" leave days for religious observances were rejected.

The agreement bars the use of allotted personal leave days for purposes for which leave is already provided, including religious observances.

Rather than approving Philbrook's proposal to use personal business days for religious observances or to let him pay the cost of a substitute teacher, the board allowed him to take additional days off without pay. Philbrook contended the policy violated a provision of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 requiring that employers "reasonably accommodate" an employee's religious practice unless the accommodation would create an undue hardship on the employer's business.

This is the second time the case has reached the Supreme Court. In November 1986, the high court rejected the 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals' holding that the employer was required to accept a reasonable accommodation proposed by the employee unless it demonstrated such accommodation created an undue hardship.

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--By Larry Chesser

High court declines to hear
challenge to tithing opinion

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- The U.S. Supreme Court has refused to hear an Oregon couple's challenge of a bankruptcy court's rejection of their Chapter 13 debt reorganization plan because it designated a tithe of their monthly income to their church as a reasonably necessary living expense.

In 1987, Steven C. and Charlene Ivy filed for Chapter 13 protection in U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of Oregon. The couple presented a reorganization plan showing they owed \$8,525 in back taxes and \$53,360 in unsecured debts. Under the plan, the Ivys would make 36 monthly payments to creditors totaling about 27 percent of their unsecured debt.

Under Chapter 13 provisions, debtors must pay creditors all their disposable income, which is defined as income "not reasonably necessary" to support the debtor or his/her dependent.

Bankruptcy Judge Henry Hess Jr. refused to approve the Ivys' plan, holding that the monthly tithe did not constitute a reasonably necessary living expense. Excluding the tithe from the Ivys' disposable income, Hess

held, would effectively require the creditors to contribute to the Ivys' chosen charity.

But in denying the plan, Hess told the Ivys he would approve a plan that allowed their proposed monthly tithe if they extended their \$745 Chapter 13 payments an additional 18 months. The extension would allow their creditors to receive the same amount from the Ivys that they would have received from non-tithing debtors, the judge reasoned.

On appeal, the U.S. District Court for the District of Oregon affirmed the bankruptcy judge's rejection of the plan. That court held that Hess did not require the Ivys to cease tithing but instead proposed a plan that would "allow the Ivys to freely practice their religion as well as satisfy their legal obligations."

The district court's ruling later was affirmed by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

In asking the high court to review the case, attorneys for the Ivys argued that the burden on their free exercise of religion was not avoided by the bankruptcy judge's amended plan.

The case is Steven Ivy and Charlene Ivy v. Robert W. Myers.

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