
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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EDITOR'S NOTE: The following two articles about the Baptist Center for Ethics are intended to follow up on the story released July 29 through ABP. Editors who published the July 29 article may want to consider these. To avoid confusion and redundancy, we chose not to repeat much of the information from the earlier story in these articles.

However, editors who couldn't run the July 29 article at the time may wish to publish it now, since little new information is available. Added to the list of directors is John Dunaway, pastor of First Baptist Church, Corbin, Ky. Added to the list of associates is Furman Hewitt, professor of Christian ethics at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Mark Jenson, pastoral counselor at East Tennessee Baptist Hospital in Knoxville, Tenn. Contact ABP if you need another copy of the July 29 article.

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Ethics center promises comprehensive approach

By Greg Warner

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (ABP) -- Southern Baptists looking for "a new way to do ethics" can unite around the new Baptist Center for Ethics, organizers of the center say.

The center's formation was announced July 30 during a press conference in Nashville, Tenn.

The ethics center is the latest in a series of new ventures launched by SBC moderate-conservatives, who have lost control of similar Southern Baptist agencies during a decade-long battle with reform-minded

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fundamental-conservatives.

Although its organizers say the Nashville-based center is not intended to counter the increasingly conservative bent of the Christian Life Commission, they are clearly dissatisfied with the way Southern Baptists -- through the CLC -- have conducted their ethical agenda in recent years.

"We felt there was a vacuum concerning New Testament ethics in Baptist ranks," Bill Sherman, a Nashville pastor and board member of the new center, told reporters and supporters at the press conference.

Sherman and others suggested the Christian Life Commission has confined its attention to a narrow list of pet issues -- particularly abortion and pornography -- and neglected the broader range of ethical concerns. Suffering neglect, they say, are such issues as personal morality, business ethics, the environment, the health-care crisis and hunger.

Southern Baptists -- and presumably the CLC -- also are guilty of excluding differing ethical viewpoints, favoring moral indoctrination to ethical education, and trampling on the individual's right to determine ethical conduct, critics said.

Richard Land, executive director of the Christian Life Commission, disputed those claims, however. Contacted by Associated Baptist Press after the press conference, Land said he was "surprised" to hear criticism from the new centers' organizers that the CLC's agenda is limited.

He said the CLC has conducted seminars in recent years on race relations, AIDS, addictions, citizenship and the environment, and has planned seminars on biomedical ethics and genetic engineering. "That's a fairly broad agenda," he said.

Concerning the agency's openness to opposing viewpoints, Land said, "I think our methodology would stack up pretty well with our predecessor's."

The new director of the Baptist Center for Ethics, Robert Parham, said the BCE will not spend its time criticizing the CLC, his current employer.

"The Baptist Center for Ethics is about the future rather than the past," said Parham, 38, who will resign Sept. 1 as associate director of the CLC to lead the new ethics venture. "We are a pro-active, positive, practical voice rather than a counter voice."

He said the new center should not be viewed merely as a product of the SBC controversy. "If you only understand the world through the Southern Baptist controversy, you misunderstand what's relevant to most of the world," he said. "We are attempting to be positive. The water that has gone under the bridge has gone on. And we're not going to try to recapture any of that water."

Parham said Christians are often viewed as being "anti-everything" because of their vocal opposition to certain social ills. The Baptist Center for Ethics, he said, will try to "reverse the equation" by emphasizing the positive angle on ethical issues.

"The Baptist Center for Ethics is pro-life, not just anti-abortion," he explained. The center likewise will be pro-family, pro-health and pro-public education, he said.

"We believe church folks are ready to be for something rather than always against everything," Parham said.

Parham described the Baptist Center for Ethics as "a pro-ethics network" that will use the expertise of unpaid associates -- mostly college and seminary ethics professors -- to provide "careful moral reflection and practical solutions to real social and moral problems."

"We're not going to be a pontifical group," he said.

One of those 21 associates who was present for the July 30 announcement was Paul Simmons, professor of Christian ethics at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. Simmons hailed the center's formation as "a positive development."

"Now there will be another way of looking at ethical perspectives, thanks to the center, other than those that are provided through the structural patterns of the Southern Baptist Convention," he said.

"One of the great regrets that some of us have felt among Southern Baptists in recent years is we didn't feel that we had a place, and that the way ethical perspectives were articulated was as if there was only room for one point of view," Simmons said.

Another BCE associate -- and former CLC staff member -- said the new center will help restore Baptist freedom of expression. "The fundamentalist demand for conformity has stilled the voice of Baptist freedom that used to be represented by the Christian Life Commission," said Ron Sisk, pastor of Tiburon Baptist Church in Tiburon, Calif., in a telephone interview July 31. Sisk is one of at least four former CLC ethicists who will work with the Baptist Center for Ethics.

Land, however, contended for the CLC's fairness. He noted several of the new center's organizers have spoken at CLC events at his invitation and that he has initiated regular pro-and-con articles on ethical topics in a CLC publication. "To be honest with you, I think we've been more balanced" than previous CLC administrations, he said.

Still several of the center's directors who were present for the July 30 announcement said the openness promised by the BCE will be a departure from current practice among Southern Baptists.

Carolyn Dipboye of Oak Ridge, Tenn., said the center will respect the diversity of opinion that exists among Baptists on ethical issues and will "trust Southern Baptists to think for themselves."

"I feel that we are opening the door to people among Southern Baptists who for too long have been told to stay silent," she said.

"We want to get back to being biblical Baptists," said Sherman, pastor of Woodmont Baptist Church, where the press conference was held and where Parham is a member.

"I'm not really sure that in the past several years the people who call themselves Baptists are truly biblical and historic Baptists," he charged.

For example, he said, the current emphasis on pastoral authority has distorted the historic Baptist approach to ethical decision-making.

The proper role of the pastor, rather than being "a certainty merchant" on ethical issues, is to interpret the Bible, Sherman said. "There each Baptist, led of the Holy Spirit and Scripture, determines personal convictions concerning what is right and what is wrong."

"In the past dozen years in the Southern Baptist Convention, I've not seen that by those who are in control."

Joel Snider, BCE board chairman and pastor of Nashville's Crieewood Baptist Church, said the center will educate, not indoctrinate. "Our

efforts are not to necessarily provide the end-all viewpoint but to help people make for themselves responsible Christian moral and ethical decisions," he explained.

Gene Lovelace, a director of the center and minister of education at Immanuel Baptist Church in Nashville, said he is opposed to the "funnel approach" to ethical education, in which official opinions are poured into the heads of church members.

Lovelace said the BCE will provide materials for teaching about ethics -- resources he said are lacking in the SBC. "Among Baptists, there really is only one resource, which deals with a very limited number of ethical issues," he said.

Sherman said the CLC's recent shift away from traditional Christian ethics is evidenced by the fact the agency, which once had seven staff members with doctoral degrees in ethics, now has none.

Parham, who holds a doctorate in ethics from Baylor University, went to work at the CLC in 1985 -- the last professional staff member hired by retired executive Foy Valentine. He served as interim executive director before Land was hired in 1988.

Land defended the changes made to the CLC staff. "It never was the best thing for all the staff to be trained in one academic field," he told ABP July 31.

Land said Parham's replacement, who will be recommended to CLC trustees soon, holds a bachelor's degree in ethics and is working on his doctoral dissertation.

The CLC executive discounted the suggestion the new ethics center will create confusion among Southern Baptists.

"I don't think there is any confusion over who speaks for the majority of Southern Baptists in the year of our Lord 1991," Land said. "It is not the Baptist Joint Committee. It is not the Baptist Center for Ethics. It is the Christian Life Commission...."

Land said Southern Baptists have affirmed the current direction of the CLC by their response to CLC initiatives and "record" purchases of CLC materials.

Sisk, however, suggested popularity is not the best way to judge the work of an ethics agency.

"Biblical positions on issues must sometimes necessarily be unpopular because they challenge our comfortable cultural assumptions," Sisk said. "The CLC as presently constituted parrots popular positions rather than searching for biblical integrity."

"You would have to say at least the majority of Southern Baptists have indicated support for the present direction of the CLC, but that doesn't make it right," he said.

"Baptist freedom of conscience has never been based on popularity," he continued. "It has been based on the conversation between the individual conscience and the Holy Spirit. I would hope that the BCE would continue that tradition rather than bowing to the winds of popular opinion."

Organizers said the Baptist Center for Ethics is currently looking for office space in Nashville. Its mailing address is P.O. Box 22188, Nashville, Tenn. 37202.

The center will operate on a budget of \$25,000 for the remainder of the year and an annual budget of \$100,000 next year. Money to fund the center will come from donations from individuals, churches and

organizations.

Chairman Snider said cash and commitments received to date total \$10,000. As director, Parham will receive annual compensation, including benefits, of \$45,000.

Parham holds a bachelor's degree from Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., a master of divinity from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and a doctor of philosophy in ethics from Baylor.

He is the son of retired Southern Baptist missionaries to Nigeria, Robert and JoAnn Parham of Duncanville, Texas. And two of his brothers are missionaries. He and his wife, Betsy, have two young children.

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New center may become
ethics arm of Fellowship

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (ABP) -- Organizers of the new Baptist Center for Ethics say they would welcome the chance to become the ethics arm of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Formation of the ethics center was announced July 30 in Nashville, Tenn.

The Fellowship, an organization of moderate-conservative Southern Baptists, will be invited to name three people of its choosing to the new center's 21-member board of directors, which already includes at least three members of the Fellowship's Coordinating Council.

That "overlap" is intentional, said Wilmer C. Fields of Nashville, chairman of the BCE's advisory council, which will raise money for the ethics center.

Organizers say they also will ask the Fellowship for financial support for the center's annual budget of \$100,000.

"I feel confident the Fellowship will give a hearing to the Baptist Center for Ethics and perhaps include it...in the funding," said Bill Sherman of Nashville, who serves as a member of both the BCE board and the Coordinating Council of the Fellowship.

"As to whether it should become the ethics wing of the Fellowship, that's up to the Fellowship, but I do know there is an empathy and sympathy there," said Sherman, pastor of Woodmont Baptist Church in Nashville, who also serves on the Fellowship's ethics and public policy panel.

Joel Snider, chairman of the BCE board, predicted the center's directors "would be open" to a formal tie with the Fellowship. "But now that we are officially chartered, that would be a decision that the board would make," said Snider, pastor of Crieviewood Baptist Church in Nashville.

John Hewett, moderator of the Fellowship, predicted his organization will be "very, very interested in giving support to this center." It would be "presumptuous" to say the two groups will establish formal ties, Hewett added, since such an arrangement would have to be approved by the Coordinating Council.

But Hewett, who serves as a director of the Baptist Center for Ethics, said he already has discussed the new center with some members of the Coordinating Council, who responded "with real enthusiasm."

Hewett said he sees no reason why the Fellowship will not contribute to the center's funding. "I don't know how much it will be, but we should be able to generate substantial support," said Hewett, pastor of First

Baptist Church of Asheville, N.C.

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--By Greg Warner

Fellowship, Alliance
talk about merger

RALEIGH, N.C. (ABP) -- The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and the Southern Baptist Alliance have begun discussions that may result in a merger of the two moderate-conservative organizations under a new name.

Representatives of both groups met for three hours July 20 in Raleigh, N.C., where they agreed a merger may be in the best interests of both parties.

In a joint statement to be published in the Aug. 9 issue of the SBA newsletter, the negotiators said: "In light of a very candid and harmonious dialogue, we agree unanimously that there is a possibility we can accomplish our goals and mission more effectively together than separately and that we will work toward that goal with the expectation of making a definitive decision about the future of the Southern Baptist Alliance and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship by the spring of 1993."

The two five-person negotiating teams will ask their respective governing bodies for permission to continue the merger talks. Any agreement would have to be approved by the membership of both organizations.

The talks were suggested in March by Fellowship leader Daniel Vestal, pastor of Dunwoody Baptist Church in suburban Atlanta.

Although leaders of the Alliance have helped organize the Fellowship and serve on its Coordinating Council, no formal connection between the two organizations exists.

The negotiators agreed that any new organization that results will need a new name. The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, which was officially constituted in May, already has changed its name once.

Meanwhile, the SBA executive committee agreed to propose changing the name of the Southern Baptist Alliance to the Alliance of Baptists to reflect the growing distance from the Southern Baptist Convention.

The SBA executive committee, which discussed the possible merger during its own meeting July 19-20, agreed any new organization that results should, among other things, affirm the principles of the Alliance covenant, support the SBA's Baptist Theological Seminary of Richmond, unite CBF and SBA efforts for missions and literature development, and take on a new name.

In other news, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and Baptist Cooperative Missions Program announced they are now sharing office space in Atlanta.

The BCMP was set up last year as a conduit for churches to use to bypass normal Southern Baptist channels with their missions contributions. But BCMP funds are controlled by the Fellowship, which was constituted this year. A merger of the two entities is planned.

Duke McCall of Jupiter, Fla., chairman of the BCMP board, said the two organizations "share a common purpose and a common budget."

"BCMP is merely a vehicle, a conduit for getting mission monies to the places desired by the Fellowship, or by donors of the funds," McCall said in an article in the newspaper Baptists Today. "It is only logical that we share offices with the Fellowship."

The joint office is temporarily located at 403 West Ponce de Leon Ave., Decatur, Ga. 30030. The mailing address is P.O. Box 450329, Atlanta, Ga. 30345.

Meanwhile, the Fellowship reportedly is receiving an average of \$300,000 in contributions per month and expects to take in \$4-5 million in 1991.

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House votes to lift ban
on fetal-tissue research

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- The U.S. House of Representatives approved a bill July 25 that would lift a ban on federally funded research using fetal tissue from induced abortions.

The bill (H.R. 2507) reauthorizes \$4.4 billion for the National Institutes of Health and was approved 274-144. The bill, which would strike down a Bush administration-supported ban on medical research using fetal tissue from abortions, includes research safeguards to protect against potential abuses.

Southern Baptists, in a resolution passed at their convention in June, endorsed the Bush ban on fetal-tissue research.

In addition to authorizing tissue research, the bill gives approval to NIH research in several other areas. Improvement in women's health research is a primary goal of the bill, said its sponsor, Rep. Henry Waxman, D-Calif.

Waxman said the ban has stopped research on promising treatments of Parkinson's disease, juvenile diabetes, Alzheimer's disease and spinal cord injuries, as well as research on correcting genetic defects.

Opponents of fetal-tissue research used emotion-packed words, such as "Hitlerian," "Nazi," "grisly" and "Frankenstein," to describe their objections to the bill. They said such research would encourage women to have abortions.

Waxman said the idea that a woman would get an abortion just to donate tissue to research is ludicrous.

"How would the American public react if we said we would not permit organ transplants because organ transplants may encourage people to die by accident or suicide?" Waxman asked.

Rep. Bill Richardson, D-N.M., noted the legislation codifies the recommendations of a Reagan-appointed commission that concluded fetal-tissue transplantation is ethically permissible. The recommendations included several safeguards, such as statements that the decision to have an abortion be made separately from the one to donate fetal tissue and the prohibition of the purchase of such tissue.

Rep. Tom DeLay, R-Texas, opposed the bill, saying the current ban on fetal tissue research only prohibits funding of transplantation of tissue from induced abortions. Tissue obtained from spontaneous abortions, tubal pregnancies and cell cultures begun from such sources are permissible for research under the current moratorium, he said.

Rep. Christopher Smith, R-N.J., also opposed the bill. He said the "unethical use of aborted babies in medical research establishes the pretense that an abortion can be a humane and almost charitable act."

Comparing the Holocaust tragedy involving human experimentation to fetal-tissue research, Smith said "reversing the moratorium marches this country further down the road of dehumanizing vulnerable people. The government should not associate itself with the practice of fetal-tissue research when it is obtained from induced abortions."

The Bush administration has promised to veto any legislation that weakens current abortion regulations, which includes several bills before the 102nd Congress.

Another controversial provision of the bill would allow the Department of Health and Human Services to conduct national surveys on sexual practices of Americans.

The language, approved 283-137, would allow such surveys if the information obtained in them could help reduce the number of sexually transmitted diseases or improve health conditions. It also said surveys should be reviewed.

The language was offered by Waxman as a substitute for an amendment offered by Rep. William Dannemeyer, R-Calif. Dannemeyer's amendment would have prohibited the HHS department from ever conducting or supporting any national survey of human sexual behavior.

The House action came after HHS canceled a national survey on sexual practices of teen-agers.

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--By Pam Parry

Survey shows upward trend
in attendance, membership

By Larry Chesser

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- Churches in the United States may find encouragement in survey results that show gains in church attendance and membership during recent months and that forecast continued growth in religious activity by Americans.

A May 1991 Gallup Poll released by the Princeton Religion Research Center shows that more than half of the 1,012 adults surveyed attend religious services more frequently (27 percent) or as frequently (32 percent) as they did five years ago. Thirty-one percent of Protestant respondents and 26 percent of Catholic respondents indicated they now attend services more frequently.

Since 1990, the percentage of those who identify themselves as church members has grown from 65 percent to 69 percent. That figure matches the membership averages for the 1980s but still is as much as five percentage points lower than the "historical highs" of the 1930s to the 1960s, according to the Princeton center.

In the May survey, 43 percent of respondents had attended church within the past seven days, compared with 40 percent in 1990.

The Princeton center attributed much of the increased religious

activity to the arrival of "baby boomers" at the age "when people traditionally take a greater interest in church affairs." Much of the increase in religious activity found in the May survey was among 30- to 49-year-olds. Thirty-four percent of respondents in this age group reported more frequent church attendance, and 31 percent reported the same level of church attendance as five years ago.

A Gallup Poll of 477 baby boomers (adults ages 26-45) conducted in February showed that Americans in this age group expect to increase their religious activities during the next five years. Thirty-six percent of baby boomer men and 39 percent of women expect to attend church more frequently during the next five years, while 56 percent of both sexes predicted their attendance will remain level. The survey also showed most baby boomers expect to maintain or increase levels of Bible reading and study, prayer and meditation. More than 40 percent indicated they would focus less on exploring New Age and other alternatives to religion.

Most men (61 percent) and women (66 percent) in the baby boomer survey indicated religion would become more important during the next five years, while 38 percent of men and 39 percent of women who are not church members indicated they expect to join a church within five years.

Most baby boomers (73 percent of men and 78 percent of women) want their children to receive a religious education.

The importance of children was also reflected in the May survey which asked respondents to give reasons for attending church more or less frequently. Eighteen percent indicated they attend more frequently "for our children."

Other reasons cited for increased church attendance include "now have stronger faith, belief" (18 percent), "worship as a family" (11 percent), "I like going, makes me feel good" (10 percent), "I am older, maturer, wiser" (10 percent) and "the current world situation" (6 percent).

Reasons for less frequent attendance included "have no time, too busy" (19 percent), "conflicts with work, study schedule" (14 percent), "disagree with policies, teachings" (8 percent) and "illness" (6 percent).

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Sex, lies and videotape
taint Gilyard's ministry

By Ken Camp

DALLAS (ABP)--Plagued by charges of sexual misconduct and lying about his background, Darrell Gilyard -- described as the most sought-after black preacher in Southern Baptist circles -- is trying to rebuild his ministry as pastor of a new non-denominational church in the Dallas suburbs.

On July 10, Gilyard resigned as pastor of the multiracial Victory Baptist Church in Richardson, Texas, following recurring allegations of sexual misconduct with female members of his church. Less than two weeks later, he and about 125 members of his former congregation announced the formation of the new Grace Community Church at a hotel in Richardson.

And one week after Gilyard returned to the pulpit, a Dallas newspaper reported that the preacher's oft-repeated story of living under a bridge as a homeless teenager in rural Florida was untrue.

Gilyard, who by all accounts has tremendous pulpit abilities, was "discovered" in the early 1980s by Jerry Vines, pastor of First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla., who later became president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

After learning that Gilyard wanted to prepare for the ministry but lacked the financial resources for college or seminary, Vines called his friend Paige Patterson, president of Criswell College in Dallas, who secured a scholarship for the young preacher. Vines then put Gilyard on a Greyhound bus bound for Dallas.

Although Gilyard took only one class under Patterson and he never completed his degree at Criswell College, the dynamic young preacher remained in close contact with his new mentor after leaving school and -- with Patterson's endorsement -- Gilyard became a rising star on the predominantly white Southern Baptist speaking circuit.

Also, under Gilyard's leadership, Victory Baptist Church -- though not a member of the local association -- began contributing financially to Southern Baptist causes in 1990, strengthening its ties to the SBC and the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Patterson, a key leader of the fundamental-conservative movement in the SBC, has been widely criticized for his role in the Gilyard dispute.

"My relationship with Darrell was the same as with many former students," Patterson said. "I try to maintain an on-going interest in as many of our graduates and former students as I can."

However, "from the very word 'go'" Patterson said he took a special interest in Gilyard because he recognized the young man as an unusually gifted preacher who would have to guard against "temptations that (could) ruin him."

Nevertheless, according to a copyrighted July 14 Dallas Morning News report, Patterson brushed aside Gilyard's firing as assistant pastor at Concord Missionary Baptist Church of Oak Cliff in 1985 on grounds of sexual misconduct. And he reportedly ignored the repeated allegations of Gilyard's sexual impropriety from women members of Hilltop Baptist Church, Norman, Okla.; Shiloh Baptist Church, Garland, Texas; and Victory Baptist.

The Dallas Morning News article quoted one former Criswell College student who said she made an appointment with Patterson in 1989 to discuss the advances Gilyard had made toward her and several friends from Shiloh Baptist Church. She maintained that Patterson told her to refrain from speaking to anybody about the matter unless she had substantial proof to verify her story.

Another woman, who claimed that Gilyard attempted to rape her in a church sanctuary one night, told the Dallas Morning News that she tried to tell Patterson about the alleged sexual assault, but he refused to return her calls and instructed his secretary to tell her not to call back unless she had substantive proof.

The report said Patterson repeatedly refused to initiate any action against Gilyard unless two or more witnesses could testify to his adultery. Patterson also requested tangible proof, such as laboratory tests, snapshots or videotapes.

Patterson told Associated Baptist Press that contrary to the published report, he was confronted directly only once, last year, by a woman claiming that Gilyard had sexual relations with her, and he said several factors "gave me reason to doubt it was true."

Darrell DeBoard, administrator and minister of education at Victory Baptist Church, confirmed that to his knowledge, only one woman brought to Patterson charges of adultery against Gilyard.

DeBoard said that when he and others had questioned Gilyard about the charges at Concord and the Oklahoma church, Gilyard dismissed them as stemming from petty jealousy by leaders in those congregations. But last November, when DeBoard heard allegations from a woman whom he believed to be credible, he confronted Gilyard.

"Before the sound of my voice left that office, he swore before God that he had not touched her in any wrong way," DeBoard told ABP. "What man of God who could preach with such power would lie when he swore before God? I could not imagine such a thing. But I've seen one now."

In the months that followed that profession of innocence, at least six other members of Victory Church directly confronted Gilyard with allegations of adultery, DeBoard said, but all were based on second- or third-hand accounts.

However, in late June while Patterson was out of the country, a meeting was called at Criswell College in which Gilyard was brought face to face with a woman who accused him of calling her late at night for lengthy, sexually explicit conversations. Though he denied the charges, telephone records substantiated the woman's charges that he had placed long, late-night calls not only to her, but also to two other married women.

The evidence later was brought to Patterson, who called Gilyard into his office on July 9 to discuss the charges of adultery.

"I had nothing other than circumstantial evidence, but there was a mountain of that," Patterson said. "I called him in, and he came clean. In retrospect, I believe he thought I knew more at that time than I really did."

Patterson counseled Gilyard to resign from his church immediately, to go with his wife to a retreat center in Colorado for counseling and a time of prayer together, and to refrain from preaching for at least two years to "rebuild relationships...and have time to prove himself."

Gilyard did resign from Victory Baptist Church the following evening, but he returned to a pulpit 11 days later to launch a new congregation saying he wanted to help others "who have fallen into crisis situations."

Associated Baptist Press was unable to reach Gilyard for comment.

On July 24, a resolution was approved by the deacons of First Baptist Church, Dallas, and the trustees of Criswell College disassociating both entities "from any support, encouragement or connection with any gospel minister or ministries that refuse repentance, restoration and accountability in ministerial conduct and life." Church leaders later acknowledged the resolution was directed at Gilyard.

Gilyard responded by issuing a statement expressing his sadness "that the legalistic hierarchy of the First Baptist Church of Dallas, a church that has preached and practiced segregation since 1950 and a church that has never provided me, a black pastor, with anything other than superficial lip support in the establishment of the fully integrated Victory Church, cannot follow the word of God and recognize his gift of grace for those who have stumbled."

Noting he was "hurt deeply" by Gilyard's statement, Patterson said: "He went through Criswell College on a scholarship. The people of First Baptist Church have been very interested in him. I don't know what he

wanted from them. They welcomed him, prayed for him and loved him."

Gilyard gained the national spotlight on Jerry Falwell's "Old Time Gospel Hour" and at various Baptist state conventions and evangelistic rallies with his heart-wrenching story of growing up homeless beneath the St. John's River bridge in Palatka, Fla. The tale was recounted in "The Darrell Gilyard Miracle Story," a videotape produced and distributed by Falwell's ministry.

However, in a copyrighted story on July 28, the Dallas Morning News reported that Gilyard, who was abandoned as an infant, actually was raised in a comfortable Palatka home by a woman who reared him as if he were her son. The article included an interview with Barbara Davis, the 65-year-old woman who said that she helped rear Gilyard from age 8 months until he left home at age 19.

The paper also reported that Gilyard misrepresented his academic background; accepted a \$10,000 "love offering" from Falwell's ministry under false pretenses; and lied about repeated traffic offenses and a suspended driver's license in Florida.

In his July 28 sermon, Gilyard blamed Falwell for the promotion of the "under the bridge" story, claiming that the Lynchburg, Va., televangelist used the videotape version of his biography as a fund-raising ploy.

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Falwell reduces time
on RTVC networks

By Madge Hammond

FORT WORTH, Texas (ABP) -- Jerry Falwell's "Old Time Gospel Hour" will not be seen as often on the ACTS and FamilyNet television networks beginning in August.

The program, the flagship of the evangelist's TV ministry, has been aired Monday through Friday on ACTS and twice daily on the former Falwell-owned network since FamilyNet was purchased by the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission.

Worship services of Thomas Road Baptist Church of Lynchburg, Va., where Falwell is pastor, will continue to be seen Sundays on the two networks.

Network officials said the weekday schedule is being temporarily discontinued at the request of the "Old Time Gospel Hour." They said they were told by a Falwell staff member that Falwell did not have the time to produce new programs needed to reduce dependence on reruns of older broadcasts. Many recent weekday programs featured chapel speakers at Liberty University, the Falwell-founded college.

Prominent among chapel speakers seen on the two networks was Falwell protege and Dallas pastor Darrell Gilyard, who recently resigned as pastor of Victory Baptist Church of Richardson, Texas, amid allegations of sexual misconduct with female church members.

Videotapes of Gilyard's sermons and a documentary based on his life were offered for sale on the television programs. No mention was made of the Gilyard allegations in canceling the programs, however, according to officials of ACTS and FamilyNet.

When the RTVC purchased the financially troubled FamilyNet network earlier this year, it was announced that the bulk of the purchase price would be paid through use of program time by the "Old Time Gospel Hour" over a three-year period.

Richard McCartney, executive vice president of the Radio and Television Commission, said there would be no change in this part of the purchase agreement. "The program time must be used by the end of March 1994," he said.

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Retired RTVC official
Luke Williams dies

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (ABP) -- Funeral services for Luke E. Williams Jr., retired executive vice president of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, were held at First Baptist Church of San Antonio, Texas, Monday, July 29.

Williams, 66, died in a San Antonio hospital July 26 after suffering a massive heart attack.

At the time of his death, he was serving in the development office of Baptist Memorial Hospital System of San Antonio. He was executive vice president of the RTVC from 1980 to 1986. After retirement he served as a fund-raising consultant for the RTVC. Funeral services were conducted by Jimmy R. Allen, former president of the commission.

A graduate of the University of Chattanooga (Tenn.) and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Williams served numerous churches in Texas in the areas of music and education, including First Baptist Church of San Antonio, where Allen was pastor.

Williams' denominational activities included serving on the SBC Committee on Boards and chairing the Committee on Committees. He was a past president of the Southern Baptist Religious Education Association.

Williams is survived by his wife, Joyce, and three children -- daughters Virginia Johnston and Lydia Allen and a son, David.

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--By Madge Hammond

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