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Phone: (904) 396-0396 Fax: (904) 396-4441 CServe: 70420,73

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Quayle invited
to address SBC

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES
Historical Commission, SBC
Nashville, Tennessee

By Lacy Thompson

ALEXANDRIA, La. (ABP) -- Vice President Dan Quayle has been invited to welcome the 1992 Southern Baptist Convention to his home state of Indiana next June, a meeting organizer announced recently.

An invitation to the vice president was recently extended or soon will be, said Joe Aulds, an evangelist from Ruston, La., and a member of the SBC Committee on Order of Business.

However, convention planners already have been told Quayle "would like to address the convention," Aulds told the Louisiana Baptist Message.

At this point, the committee plans to ask the vice president to visit the convention during its opening session and welcome Southern Baptist messengers. The 1992 convention is scheduled for June 9-11 in Indianapolis.

Quayle's election-year appearance would mark the second year in a row that one of the nation's highest leaders has visited the Southern Baptist Convention. Last year, President George Bush addressed messengers during the final session of the annual meeting in New Orleans.

In addition to inviting Quayle to welcome messengers, convention planners also will ask Christian artist Sandi Patti to appear before the gathering, Aulds said. The tentative schedule calls for Patti to sing on Wednesday evening, following the report of the SBC Foreign Mission Board.

Aulds said convention planners also have been told Patti is interested in visiting the convention gathering.

Committee members plan to ask Charles Stanley of Atlanta to address the closing session of the convention on Thursday morning, Aulds said. "We know Charles Stanley is probably the most visible Southern Baptist outside of Billy Graham," Aulds said, "and he has a tremendous appeal in Indiana." Stanley is pastor at First Baptist Church of Atlanta but also has an extensive cable TV ministry.

Convention planners want to schedule a recognition service for Harold

Bennett, who will retire next year as president of the SBC Executive Committee. The service likely will come on Tuesday evening, Aulds said.

The report of the SBC Home Mission Board also is scheduled for Tuesday evening, as has been tradition. Last year, however, the report was reduced to 10 minutes with the agreement of HMB officials so Southern Baptists could participate in a "solemn assembly" gathering at the convention.

Two traditional addresses remain on the schedule as well. Lewis Drummond is scheduled to deliver the annual convention sermon. Drummond is president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. And Morris Chapman, who is serving his second one-year term as SBC president, will deliver the president's address. Chapman is pastor of First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls, Texas.

The convention will feature a range of music, Aulds said. "We're going to have more choirs and people involved this year than last year, and last year was a precedent-setting year in that area anyway."

Overall, however, convention planners have sought to reorder the convention schedule to allow more time for messenger business, Aulds said. For instance, no theme interpretations are planned.

"Many people have said they want more time for business," Aulds said. "So what we want to try to do in this convention is to allow more time for things to be discussed."

In fact, the committee considered ending the annual meeting on Wednesday night, since Thursday sessions usually are poorly attended. "But we decided if we were going to come to the convention and give people more time to speak, we would not be able to do that by ending on Wednesday night," Aulds said.

He added committee members have no estimate on how many messengers will attend the annual meeting. He recalled that as late as last November, planners expected 20,000 messengers for the 1991 meeting. More than 38,000 persons eventually registered.

The 1992 convention is scheduled in the Hoosier Dome in Indianapolis. The dome seats some 65,000 and has 5,000 adjacent parking spots, Aulds noted. Transportation and lodging also is adequate for the convention, he added.

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Evangelist temporarily barred
from speaking in public schools

By Ken Camp

DALLAS (ABP)--Evangelist Jay Strack of Dallas was barred from speaking at anti-drug assemblies in public schools in Nacogdoches, Texas, after a local university professor filed for a temporary restraining order, charging violation of church-state separation.

"This is an aberrant situation," countered Strack, who said he typically brings his anti-drug message to almost a million students in a year. "It's the first time this has happened in my 17 years of speaking to school assemblies."

Strack preached an area-wide evangelistic crusade Sept. 29-Oct. 3 in a Nacogdoches university coliseum. He was scheduled to bring his "Straight Talk" anti-drug messages -- based in part on his personal experiences as a recovered drug addict -- to the local high school and middle school that same week.

However, at nearly 5 p.m. on Sept. 26, an attorney for the Nacogdoches Independent School District received notice of intent to file a temporary injunction barring Strack from speaking in the public school assemblies for

30 days. Stan Alexander, a professor of English at Stephen F. Austin State University and father of a seventh-grade student in the NISD, then had legal counsel seek a temporary restraining order.

In evidentiary hearings, Nacogdoches school officials said they had reviewed a taped presentation of Strack's anti-drug program, had determined that it was not religious, and had granted permission for the assemblies.

However, those opposing Strack's appearance in the schools presented photos of billboards and copies of advertisements that had appeared in Nacogdoches promoting the evangelist's "Deep East Texas Area Crusade," sponsored by 18 local churches and the Baptist Student Union at Stephen F. Austin.

Chief Judge Robert Parker of the U. S. District Court for Eastern Texas, stated: "The court concludes that under all the circumstances created by a highly publicized religious crusade in a small town atmosphere, a web of excessive entanglement between church and state is created when the preacher is afforded use of state facilities and access to students for the delivery of his message even though the message itself standing alone outside the spotlight of publicity accompanying the crusade might well be appropriate."

Parker further concluded that by permitting Strack to address students, the NISD at least by implication "endorses the crusade and breaches the barrier between church and state." Consequently, Strack was barred from any NISD appearance for 30 days.

Strack insists the public-school assembly programs do not violate legal guidelines regarding the separation of church and state.

"These are free, voluntary assemblies," he said. "When I speak in the schools, I'm introduced as 'Mr. Strack,' not 'Reverend Strack.' I don't mention the Bible or Jesus, and I don't say 'God' even if somebody sneezes."

Although civil-liberties activists have questioned the propriety of Strack's speaking appearances in public schools, he maintains that none has been able to find fault with the content of his presentations.

Strack said he is discouraging his friends from turning the temporary injunction into "a cause," fearing that too much publicity could frighten away other school districts where he has speaking invitations.

"This is just a little skirmish that should not be blown out of proportion," he said, attributing the problems to "one village atheist."

"In any city, anytime you put up a nativity scene downtown or the school band plays 'Amazing Grace,' somebody is going to protest," he said.

Alexander, the professor who filed the injunction, told Associated Baptist Press that Strack's scheduled appearance at the public schools was "an unnecessary and unwarranted entanglement of religion in the business of tax-paid public school education." He also questioned Strack's credentials as an expert on drug and alcohol abuse.

"It seemed to me that Mr. Strack could not escape his identity as a leading religious figure, and inviting him into the school was tantamount to inviting a certain religious perspective," Alexander said.

Alexander said he had been contacted by "dozens" of local residents on both sides of the church-state issue.

"There's been an element of ugliness in some of the messages -- threats and implications of such -- but for the most part, people have been calm, though some are quite passionate in their beliefs," he said. He added his daughter has not been subjected to any verbal or physical abuse.

Strack said he had encouraged crusade-goers not to be "ugly" or un-Christian in their response to Alexander or his family.

Although Strack maintains the anti-drug presentations and the evangelistic crusades are not related, he acknowledges that crusade attendance in the 6,000-seat coliseum was less than 3,000 per night -- considerably below the expectations of the sponsoring churches.

Allen Reed, pastor of First Baptist Church of Nacogdoches and general

chairman of the area crusade, said he was "very disappointed" that Strack was unable to speak in the public schools, and he was "very much in disagreement with the judgment that was rendered."

He pointed out that similar public-school assemblies featuring ministers -- including one by Southern Baptist evangelist Jerry Johnston two years ago -- never had been challenged.

Reed noted that local pastors contacted the Rutherford Institute, a conservative legal research organization devoted to church-state issues, to seek advice.

After conversations with Rutherford Institute lawyers, Reed said he was convinced that Nacogdoches was being discriminated against because of its size and that Strack was the victim of discrimination on the basis of his occupation.

"It appears the rights of the students were violated, as well as the rights of Jay Strack," said Kent Pate, pastor of Northwood Baptist Church in Nacogdoches.

Kelly Shackelford, an attorney with the Rutherford Institute's Dallas office, said the current situation with the court order in place is unconstitutional.

"Something needs to be done," he said. "The message seems to be, 'Don't dare be in the public schools if you are religious in your private life, or the government will be hostile to you.'"

Shackelford said the Rutherford Institute has not been retained to pursue any legal action but had simply given legal advice to concerned individuals in Nacogdoches.

The judge's ruling was "plainly wrong," according to Brent Walker, associate general counsel for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs in Washington, D.C.

"As long as Jay Strack's remarks on drug abuse were not advancing or promoting religion, he is just as entitled to speak as anybody else," Walker said. "The fact that he is an evangelist is absolutely beside the point."

"It is this kind of overreaction to what the Supreme Court has said about religion in public schools that is giving church-state separation a bad name."

Larry Wade, president of the Nacogdoches School Board and pastor of the predominantly black Zion Hill Baptist Church, said the school board deeply regrets the injunction and restraining order.

"Speaking as a minister, I believe it is going beyond the point of protecting rights to the point of denial of rights," he said.

Kyle Childress, pastor of Austin Heights Baptist Church -- the only Southern Baptist church in the city that did not help sponsor Strack's crusade -- said he had "mixed emotions" about the situation.

"I wonder if the folks who brought the injunction about might have jumped the gun a bit," said Childress, president of the Texas chapter of the Southern Baptist Alliance.

"I admit my hair stands on end sometimes when some of these crusades come through town, and Jay Strack and I are at totally different places when it comes to politics within the Southern Baptist Convention...but I respect what he is at least trying to do in the school assemblies when it comes to drugs."

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Fellowship participants united
on need for new ventures

ATLANTA (ABP) -- Although most are lifelong Southern Baptists, the vast majority of the people associated with the new Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

are looking for a new way to do missions and the other activities that have defined their identity as Southern Baptists.

That's the conclusion drawn from a scientific survey of about half the 6,000 people who participated in the Fellowship's May convocation in Atlanta. Results of the survey were presented recently to the Fellowship's Coordinating Council by researcher Nancy Ammerman, a council member and professor of sociology at Emory University in Atlanta.

The Fellowship is a national organization of moderate-conservatives displeased with the current direction of the SBC, which has been under the control of fundamental-conservatives since 1979.

So displeased are Fellowship participants that 59 percent are ready to explore alternatives outside the Southern Baptist Convention structure. However, that does not necessarily mean the Fellowship will become a new denomination -- an issue over which Fellowship participants are themselves divided.

Another 32 percent said they want to explore new ways to relate to like-minded Baptists within the SBC. But only 3.4 percent said they want to keep on fighting to regain control of the convention.

Ammerman said her research suggests the 2,648 people who participated in the voluntary survey provide an accurate picture of the estimated 6,000 people who attended the May meeting, during which the Fellowship adopted a constitution and drafted plans for sponsoring its own mission efforts. The survey results were compiled by the Center for Religious Research at Emory.

Fellowship participants are in many ways typical Southern Baptists, the survey showed. They are mostly lifelong members of SBC churches, with 85 percent joining before the age of 19. They are 99 percent Anglo and they average 52 years of age.

Where they differ from other Southern Baptists is in their educational background and their views on Scripture and women's ordination, the survey said.

Almost three fourths of the laity surveyed have a college degree or more (74 percent), compared to one fourth of SBC laity in a similar survey (26 percent). While 91 percent of Fellowship clergy have at least a seminary degree, only 54 percent of all SBC clergy do.

Fellowship participants were less likely to consider the Bible inerrant than were the rest of their Southern Baptist brethren. In the May survey, only 2.3 percent said the Bible is inerrant in everything. A third (33 percent) said the Bible contains no errors in matters of faith and morals, while 58 percent preferred the view that the Bible is inspired and true.

In a 1985 survey of Southern Baptist clergy and lay leaders, 39 percent said the Bible is inerrant in everything. Another 47 percent said they believe in inerrancy but not in a literal interpretation of Genesis. The rest (14 percent) identified with neither view.

On the issue of women's ordination, Ammerman said, there was "remarkable uniformity" among Fellowship participants. Almost all survey participants (94 percent) endorsed ordaining women to the ministry. "This appears to be one of our defining issues," Ammerman said.

Another 3 percent said women should be ordained as deacons only, while 3 percent were opposed to all forms of women's ordination.

In the 1985 survey of SBC clergy and lay leaders, 63 percent said women should not be ordained. A fourth (26 percent) favored ordaining women to the ministry, while 11 percent would ordain women as deacons only.

Of the churches represented in the Fellowship convocation, one fourth have ordained women to the ministry and almost half (46 percent) have ordained women as deacons. Nearly a fifth of the clergy at the Fellowship meeting were women, the survey said.

Survey participants were asked to rank the priorities for the new Fellowship. Finding new ways to do missions was rated as "very important" by

71 percent. Nearly that many said new sources of Christian education materials are very important (66 percent), as are "new settings" for theological education (62 percent). Less high on participants' lists of priorities were worship/fellowship (49 percent) and education on public issues (33 percent).

To make some of those new ministries possible, about a third of survey participants said their churches already are giving to the Fellowship's alternate-funding plan. About half of the churches represented are giving to mission causes outside the SBC and using non-SBC curriculum materials.

Although about a third of the churches represented have reduced their contributions to the SBC Cooperative Program in recent years, the reduced levels are still equal to the average giving for all SBC churches, the survey indicated. The average church in the survey has a budget of slightly more than \$500,000 and gives slightly more than 10 percent of its budget to the CP.

The Fellowship represents many of the SBC's larger churches, if statistics from the May convocation are an indication. Almost 20 percent of all churches with 1,000 or more members were represented among Fellowship participants.

According to the survey, people attending the May meeting came from 1,555 churches in 34 states. Urban churches were better represented than rural churches.

"Our constituency is dramatically well educated and urban," Ammerman concluded, "and the most educated and urban are also the most progressive."

The Fellowship was begun as a coalition or merger of moderate-conservative groups in the SBC. The two largest are Baptists Committed and the Southern Baptist Alliance. Baptist Committed members accounted for 33 percent of participants in the May convocation, while Alliance members accounted for 24 percent.

While differences of opinion do exist between the two largest groups, Ammerman said, the differences are "more a matter of degree than of kind." The majority of both groups agree on what is important, she said.

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-- By Greg Warner

South Carolinians form statewide Fellowship

COLUMBIA, S.C. (ABP) -- More than 450 Baptists met at St. Andrews Baptist Church in Columbia Oct. 1 to organize the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of South Carolina.

The group will be aligned with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, a national organization of moderate-conservatives displeased with the current leadership of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Presiding at the meeting was E.C. Watson of Elgin, retired executive assistant to the executive secretary-treasurer of the South Carolina Baptist Convention.

Program personalities included John Hewett, pastor of First Baptist Church, Asheville, N.C., and moderator of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, and Jimmy Allen, president of Faith and Family Ministries in Fort Worth, and a former SBC president.

Hewett said the Fellowship's function is not to give birth to a new denomination but to preserve endangered Baptist distinctives. He encouraged the South Carolinians to organize their branch of the Fellowship "not with clenched fists but with open arms."

Allen told his audience the time for re-examination has come for

Southern Baptists. "We must learn from the past without living in it," he said, adding that the SBC will "never again be what we knew."

The SBC has "done some good things," Allen said, "and we must not walk away from them."

Allen, who serves as co-chairperson of the national Fellowship's global missions group, called for a "restoration of missions participation" by local churches. And he called for more decision-making by individual churches rather than by a Baptist bureaucracy.

"God is working anew to get us back to the local church," he said. "We might be standing on the edge of one of the greatest spiritual awakenings God can give us."

The South Carolina group unanimously approved a slate of officers presented by its nominating committee, chaired by John Cothran of Greenville, a layman and former member of the SBC Executive Committee.

Elected were William Coates, pastor of First Baptist Church, Orangeburg, moderator; Donna Forrester, associate pastor at First Baptist Church of Greenville and former chaplain at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, moderator-elect; and Thomas Benning, a layman and member of First Baptist Church of Clemson, secretary-treasurer.

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Two more professors
leaving Southern

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (ABP) -- Two more professors are leaving Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in part because of the increasing influence of fundamental-conservatives at the school.

Bill Leonard, professor of church history at Southern since 1975, has been named chairman of the department of religion and philosophy at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala.

John Johnson, professor of missions and world religions, will become professor of world religions at Baylor University in Waco, Texas.

Both appointments take effect in January. And both professors said the 12-year-old controversy among Southern Baptists was the key factor in their decisions to leave.

"I would never have gone (to Baylor) if it wasn't for this controversy," Johnson told the Louisville Courier-Journal.

Three Southern professors who left earlier this year also cited denominational conflict as their primary reason for leaving.

Leonard told the Louisville newspaper that the departures of professors Alan Culpepper, Andrew Lester and Karen Smith influenced his decision.

"I'm 45," Leonard said. "Do I want to be 55 and still dealing with these issues in this faculty in this place, particularly as I may become an increasing minority?"

In April Southern's trustees and faculty adopted a "covenant agreement" that commits the school to becoming more conservative. The compromise agreement loosens strict hiring guidelines adopted earlier by trustees but also ensures that only "conservative evangelical scholars" will be added to the faculty.

The covenant "bought some time," Leonard said, so that students and teachers can make adjustments. But it also set Southern on an increasingly conservative course.

"If I stayed I would have to keep speaking out about issues," Leonard said.

Johnson, 66, said he voted against the covenant. "I just felt that with this covenant we had surrendered something which was very, very precious to my concept of religious freedom," he told the Courier-Journal.

Southern Seminary has been spared the disruption that has rocked

Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in recent years. Fundamental-conservative trustees have exerted increasing control over that school, prompting more than half of its 27 faculty members to announce plans to leave the Wake Forest, N.C., school by the end of the school year.

The departures from Southern have not been nearly so dramatic. But while Southern may avoid the open conflict that has crippled Southeastern, many observers say the Louisville seminary -- Southern Baptists' oldest -- will never be the same.

Many Baptist professors consider universities such as Samford and Baylor -- which are affiliated with state Baptist conventions and not subject to control of the Southern Baptist Convention -- to be more insulated from the pressures of the SBC controversy.

Leonard will succeed W. T. Edwards Jr., who will relinquish the Samford religion chairmanship but continue to teach full time in the religion department. Leonard's wife, Candyce, will teach Spanish at Samford -- a factor he said also influenced his decision.

Leonard holds a doctoral degree in American church history from Boston University, the master of divinity from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and a bachelor's degree from Texas Wesleyan College. He is the editor or author of eight books and has taught at Southern for 16 years.

Johnson, a native of South Africa, has taught at Southern since 1982. He holds five degrees, including a bachelor's, master's and doctorate from the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, where he also has taught.

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Charter change could have averted
trouble at Southeastern, group told

By Greg Warner

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (ABP) -- The accreditation problems of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary probably could have been avoided if seminary trustees had changed the school's charter before trying to change its faculty.

That was the clear signal given by accrediting officials who met Sept. 16 with members of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee who are studying accreditation at the denomination's schools.

The Association of Theological Schools in the U.S. and Canada, which accredits the six Southern Baptist seminaries among its 211 theological schools, has threatened to withdraw Southeastern's accreditation. In February a team from ATS will visit the Wake Forest, N.C., school and ask administrators to "show cause" why the seminary should not be placed on probation or lose its accreditation altogether.

In announcing the visit in June, ATS said Southeastern's administrators "have seriously impeded progress toward resolving differences" between the seminary's faculty and its trustees and administrators, creating a situation that "may very well be worse" than when ATS began its investigation in 1988.

Southeastern's accreditation woes began in 1987, when seminary President Randall Lolley and other top administrators resigned after trustees changed the hiring policies to ensure that only biblical inerrantists would be added to the faculty.

Both of the agencies that accredit Southeastern -- ATS and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools -- launched investigations of the turmoil at the seminary. With accreditation threatened, trustees and others suggested Southeastern and the other SBC seminaries should pull out of ATS and form a new SBC-only accrediting agency.

Both the SBC Education Commission and the Executive Committee have been studying those suggestions, which have been the subject of several motions at recent SBC annual meetings. Although the Education Commission rejected the idea in a report to the SBC this summer, the Executive Committee has continued to study alternatives.

On Sept. 16, just prior to the Executive Committee's fall meeting, the committee's program workgroup met with officials from the Association of Theological Schools and the Education Commission to discuss accreditation and the Southeastern situation.

Several workgroup members said Southeastern has been persecuted because of its commitment to the inerrancy of the Bible.

Any Southern Baptist seminary "that replaces a liberal professor with a conservative professor" will have trouble with ATS, said Kenneth Barnett, a pastor from Lakewood, Colo.

But Daniel Aleshire, ATS associate director, said accreditation "has nothing to do with theological position" but whether a school is abiding by its charter and other governing documents.

Since Southeastern's charter and statement of faith don't limit the faculty to inerrantists, critics say, neither should the trustees adopt a policy that sets such limits.

"If any institution is going to operate differently, it should change its guidelines first," said Aleshire, a former professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Accreditation is the academic community's proof-in-packaging label, guaranteeing that a school has the resources and commitments necessary to deliver the education it promises. Accreditation is critical for the school to receive government or foundation funding and for students to transfer credit to other schools or receive endorsement for the chaplaincy and some other vocations.

The Sept. 16 workgroup meeting was held under the Executive Committee's background rules, which forbid direct quotations from participants. But Aleshire and Barnett agreed to allow Associated Baptist Press to quote their comments, although Aleshire declined to disclose privileged information about Southeastern's situation.

The discussion, which took up almost all of the workgroup's two-and-a-half-hour meeting, produced spirited exchanges between workgroup members and the visiting educators, who included Jim Waits, executive director of ATS, and Arthur Walker, executive director of the Education Commission.

Waits and Aleshire explained ATS is not a licensing agency, which sets arbitrary minimum standards for educational institutions to meet, but an association of schools that sets goals and guidelines for themselves and fellow institutions to achieve. All standards are adopted by the member schools, each of which participates voluntarily, they said.

Southeastern ran aground of ATS's principle guideline -- that an institution must operate according to its own self-imposed standards -- when trustees decided to hire only inerrantists for the faculty.

Had trustees first amended the school's charter to make inerrancy a part of the school's official documents, the new policy of hiring inerrantists "would not have been a concern," Aleshire said.

If an institutional change is properly made and does not violate ATS's general guidelines, Aleshire said, then it is appropriate and poses no threat to the school's accreditation.

"What if it does not abide by your standards?" asked Barnett.

"ATS is a voluntary association...", Aleshire responded.

"So either abide by your standards or get out?" Barnett asked.

Before Aleshire could respond, others in the meeting pointed out ATS accredits other conservative and inerrantist seminaries -- including Fuller Theological Seminary, Denver Conservative Baptist Seminary and Gordon-Conwell

Theological Seminary -- without similar conflicts.

What is different about Southeastern, the workgroup was told, was the climate created by the administrative upheaval.

When a school undergoes "a complete turnover of administration" during a period of conflict, it raises questions that can influence accreditation, Aleshire said. Effective education can't take place in a context of institutional turmoil, the ATS officials said.

One workgroup member challenged that conclusion, however, suggesting turmoil need not inhibit education.

Workgroup members argued that while other schools in transition were not investigated, Southeastern was singled out for ATS scrutiny because of the new conservative theological direction adopted by trustees.

Barnett suggested ATS should be more patient with SBC seminaries, which are undergoing "some very significant theological renewal" as a result of the conservative trend in SBC leadership.

"Why can't you wait to see what the changes are instead of going into the middle of it?" Barnett asked.

"It has nothing to do with theological position or theological renewal," said Aleshire. The issue of accreditation is "whether or not an institution is abiding by its documents," he said.

"No mission statement, current or past, has been the focus of ATS attention (at Southeastern)," Aleshire said.

In the past two years, Southeastern's problems with ATS have focused on the concept of "shared governance," whereby trustees, administrators and faculty share responsibility for decisions affecting the seminary.

Although trustees acknowledged in early 1990 that Southeastern will operate on the principle of "shared governance," there is still disagreement over where that commitment originated. While ATS says the concept of "shared governance" already was part of Southeastern's operating policies, Barnett and others say it was "imposed" by ATS, giving faculty veto power over trustee-endorsed changes.

Despite the differences, few workgroup members seem intent on starting a new accrediting agency. The study by the Education Commission suggested such an undertaking would cost Southern Baptists \$625,000 a year and have little chance of being recognized by the Council for Post-Secondary Accreditation, an essential step in gaining credibility.

In a survey of 52 Southern Baptist colleges and seminaries, only Southeastern said it would be interested in a new accrediting agency.

Workgroup members, however, still expressed a desire to "hold ATS accountable" for what they consider to be mistreatment of Southeastern. Several members of the workgroup and Executive Committee said the issue will remain alive until ATS shows more flexibility and equity in its treatment of SBC schools.

To that end, critics of ATS see the financial support of Southern Baptists, who have more seminary students than any other denomination, as a factor that should convince -- or coerce -- ATS into more favorable treatment.

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Turmoil at Southeastern
unavoidable, dean says

By Greg Warner

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (ABP) -- There was no way to avoid the turmoil that resulted when trustees of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary moved to

make the school more conservative, according to seminary dean Russ Bush.

"Any way you did it, there would have been a problem," said Bush, vice president of academic affairs and dean of the faculty.

Bush and Southeastern President Lewis Drummond observed the Sept. 16 meeting of the SBC Executive Committee's program workgroup, during which workgroup members were told Southeastern could have avoided many of its accreditation troubles by first incorporating the desired changes into the institution's charter or other governing documents.

Instead, trustees decided in 1987 that only biblical inerrantists would be added to the faculty -- despite the fact inerrancy was not part of the school's statement of faith. After the seminary's administration resigned in protest, its two accrediting agencies launched investigations which now threaten to remove or restrict the school's accredited status.

But Bush said Southeastern's trouble has not been a question of procedure. "It's been a question of people not happy with the change," he told Associated Baptist Press.

The Association of Theological Schools, one of the seminary's two accrediting agencies, would have required the faculty to concur with the trustees' changes, Bush explained. That requirement gave a trump card to the faculty, which was "adamant" in its opposition, he suggested.

The ATS requirement, Bush said, is based on the concept of "shared governance," whereby the seminary's trustees, administrators and faculty share in the decision-making process. While ATS says shared governance is required by Southeastern's own operating guidelines, Bush said ATS is requiring a "higher level of faculty involvement" at Southeastern than at other accredited schools.

Many of the seminary's current accrediting problems focus on its attempts to apply shared governance to decision-making. While trustees, administrators and the faculty have committed themselves to the concept, they haven't agreed on what shared governance is and how it should work, Bush said.

Disagreement over the definition only further complicates attempts to resolve Southeastern's accreditation disputes, Bush said. "ATS doesn't say, 'The definition is bad,' but 'We detect there is not agreement.'"

As long as the faculty is opposed to the seminary's new conservative course, Bush suggested, agreement will be next to impossible.

Bush acknowledged ATS has not criticized Southeastern's new conservative theological direction. "ATS has never come down and said, 'We don't like your theology,'" Bush said. "But you can't get away from the fact that if there wasn't disagreement over theology, there wouldn't be a problem (with accreditation)."

The question Southern Baptists must ask about the accreditation of their seminaries, Bush said, is: "Are they all being treated the same or is Southeastern being treated differently because we went through the transition?"

Although the theological changes instituted by Southeastern's trustees and new administrators were painful and imperfect, Bush said, they were necessary to redirect the school onto the course desired by Southern Baptists. "At Southeastern this was the only solution," he said.

The transition would have been even more painful, Bush said, if not for a recent rash of resignations and retirements among professors. The departures -- about half the current faculty -- will make room for inerrantists committed to the seminary's new course.

"I couldn't have asked for this," said Bush, who will play a key role in selecting new professors. "It's a manageable scenario. And we didn't have a manageable scenario. We had plans, but they were all going to be hard."

Joel Gregory blasts Baylor,
but Reynolds 'not surprised'

By Ken Camp

DALLAS (ABP)--Joel Gregory used the pulpit of the nation's largest Southern Baptist church to blast Baylor University for removing itself from Texas Baptist control.

The Sept. 29 sermon by Gregory, pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas, also lambasted Texas Baptist officials for drafting the compromise proposal that endorses the new affiliation with Baylor.

Gregory pledged to send copies of his stinging sermon to every Texas Baptist pastor prior to the Nov. 11-12 meeting of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, during which the new Baylor-BGCT relationship will be voted.

Gregory ended his sermon by expressing the hope that "thousands" of Texas Baptists would come to the November meeting to reject the agreement and offer a substitute motion requiring Baylor "to fulfill its historic responsibility and returning the school to Texas Baptists."

But Baylor President Herbert Reynolds said Gregory was exploiting the Baylor issue "to establish his credentials as a bona fide fundamentalist" and to "feather his nest."

In his sermon, Gregory said the Baptist General Convention of Texas stands "at the greatest crisis in its history" because of the action by Baylor's governing board to give the Waco school more autonomy.

Baylor trustees, citing fears of a "fundamentalist takeover" of the BGCT and loss of academic freedom for Baylor, revised the school's charter in September 1990 to establish a self-perpetuating, autonomous governing board of regents, removing itself from BGCT control.

But Gregory called the threat of fundamentalist takeover "a red herring." Claiming the Texas convention owns Baylor, Gregory said the trustees' plan to protect the school from Texas Baptist interference is like "foxes guarding the chicken coop from the interference of the farmer."

He said the trustee action was made without BGCT notification and in violation of the convention's constitution.

"In one brief session with suspended rules and unsuspecting trustees, 145 years of Texas Baptist -- world Baptist -- history was suddenly ended by a self-appointed college of cardinals," he said.

Last October, the BGCT Executive Board named a special committee to examine the Baylor actions. The committee offered a "bottom line" proposal in May which was endorsed by the Executive Board but promptly rejected by Baylor.

In July, three BGCT officials -- president Phil Lineberger of Richardson, Executive Board chairman Robert Parker of Houston and administrative committee chairman George Gaston of Houston -- met with leaders of Baylor to draft a new agreement.

The officers proposal -- approved by the BGCT's special committee and Executive Board -- allows the BGCT to elect 25 percent of Baylor regents and allows Baylor to elect the other 75 percent, giving "due and careful consideration to the suggestions of the BGCT."

The proposal also makes virtually non-amendable provisions in the Baylor bylaws that all regents be Baptist, that the school be operated within Christian and Baptist ideals, and that Baylor assets be transferred to the BGCT if the school ever closes.

Gregory labeled the actions by the BGCT officers "unexcusable" and "unprecedented."

In a Sept. 30 press release, Reynolds claimed Gregory used the pulpit of

the 28,000-member Dallas church to "slander the reputations" of the BGCT officers, the Baylor regents and the university president.

Reynolds noted that Gregory, who for years was not aligned in the SBC controversy, also never expressed any criticism of Baylor during his time as an undergraduate and graduate student -- from 1966 to 1983.

However, since the mid-1980s, Reynolds said, "when he apparently began to covet the First Baptist Church of Dallas position, Joel has been willing to hammer his alma mater, his former professors and me, and now his fellow pastors, to establish his credentials as a bona fide fundamentalist."

Reynolds labeled Gregory a purveyor of "distortions and lies," a man of "tremendous ego," a "Presslerite," a "fundamentalist" and an heir apparent to extremist Fort Worth pastor J. Frank Norris, not a worthy successor to George W. Truett, longtime pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas.

Reynolds noted Gregory's televised sermon came on a Sunday when many Baylor students and alumni were in Dallas for the Baylor-SMU football game, which Baylor won. "I am deeply disappointed, but not surprised, that he would attempt to exploit Baylor's victorious weekend in Dallas as Southwest Conference guests of Southern Methodist University to unleash his tirade," Reynolds said.

"Baylor University will remain true to its mission of service to Texas Baptists and to the Kingdom of Christ no matter how viciously we are opposed by him (Gregory) or other fundamentalists or any other extremist group."

In a Waco press conference the day after Gregory's sermon, Reynolds charged that just as the SBC takeover was launched in 1978-79 by Judge Paul Pressler of Houston and Paige Patterson of the Criswell College in Dallas, the BGCT-Baylor controversy was launched publicly by Gregory in his 1988 president's address to the BGCT meeting in Austin.

Following Gregory's 1988 speech and subsequent visits by an unnamed "high-ranking Baptist official" who urged Baylor leaders to implement changes, Reynolds met with attorneys to determine ownership of the university and the extent of the BGCT's control.

Reynolds underscored his position that Texas Baptists have never owned Baylor. But he said Baylor will cooperate with Texas Baptists in carrying out their ministries "because we believe in them," not because of legal obligation.

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Welfare for the well-off
not education answer, Dunn says

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- Welfare for the well-off will not solve America's education problem and could jeopardize religious freedom, the Baptist Joint Committee's executive director told members of the Woman's National Democratic Club Sept. 30.

James Dunn participated in the organization's education workshop at its national headquarters in Washington, D.C. He addressed the constitutional impact of President Bush's educational "choice" proposal. Choice is part of the administration's educational reform package that would allow federal tax dollars to help parents send their children to private and parochial schools.

Federal funding for private and parochial schools involves blatant economic injustice, Dunn said. The country's top earners have removed or will remove their children from public schools, spending money on private tuition that they might have given in higher taxes, he said.

Private schools by definition are elitist, Dunn said. Such institutions have the right to exist, he said, but the people have every right to deny tax

support to them.

The economic injustice is heightened, he said, by the fact no proposed legislation would meet the total cost of the average private school tuition. Where, Dunn asked, do parents with no disposable income find the rest of the money for school? "It's really a thinly veiled welfare for the well-off."

Dunn said choice is a scheme that attempts "to launder public funds by passing them through parents' pockets in the form of vouchers." Vouchers also constitute a clear violation of church-state separation because church schools would have to comply with government regulations, he said.

"Government regulation follows government aid," he explained.

"How in the world, then, when vouchers promise a morass of governmental regulations that many 'choice' supporters oppose, can any reasonably well-informed church leader indirectly invite 'regs' and guidelines?" he asked. "Why would anyone who pays even token tribute to separation of church and state welcome this false advertising in educational reform?"

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-- By Pam Parry

Judiciary Committee splits on
vote for Thomas' nomination

By Pam Parry

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- The Senate Judiciary Committee split 7-7 on its vote to recommend U.S. Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas to the full Senate Sept. 27.

The Senate is scheduled to take action on the report Tuesday, Oct. 8, which means Thomas will not take his seat on the nation's high court in time for the first day of its next session, Oct. 7.

Since the motion on a favorable committee report failed to get a majority, the committee voted to report to the Senate without a recommendation. That vote passed 13-1, with Sen. Paul Simon, D-Ill., dissenting.

The split vote, while less than the positive outcome Thomas' supporters predicted, does not necessarily signal the nomination's defeat. It is uncertain whether opponents can muster the 51 votes needed to defeat the nomination in the full Senate. Thomas supporters are still predicting a victory for the nominee.

The Judiciary Committee's vote came seven days after the conclusion of the committee's confirmation hearings, which featured testimony from Thomas and more than 75 groups speaking for and against him.

For the most part, the vote reflected the partisan political makeup of the committee, composed of eight Democrats and six Republicans. Democratic senator Dennis DeConcini joined the six Republican members of the Judiciary Committee (Strom Thurmond, Hank Brown, Alan Simpson, Charles Grassley, Arlen Specter and Orrin Hatch) in voting in favor of Thomas. The remaining seven Democratic senators (Biden, Edward Kennedy, Howard Metzenbaum, Simon, Herbert Kohl, Howell Heflin and Patrick Leahy) voted against a favorable recommendation.

Democratic senators voting against Thomas generally noted the "burden of proof" was on the nominee who did not provide enough evidence to support a favorable vote. Noting Thomas' evasiveness on many issues, not just abortion, they said too much was at stake to "take a chance" or "play Russian roulette" with the court.

"Throughout his testimony, Judge Thomas gave us many responses, but too few real answers," Biden said.

Biden said he voted against Thomas with a heavy heart and acknowledged

"there is no question with respect to the nominee's character, competence, credentials or credibility."

"For me the question that concerns me the most is Judge Thomas' judicial philosophy, the approach he would bring to deciding how to interpret the ennobling phrases of the Constitution in matters of contention, on ambiguous questions confronting the Supreme Court," Biden added.

Kennedy of Massachusetts criticized what he said was Thomas' repudiation of his record and his refusal to answer fair questions. Kennedy also expressed doubt over the credibility of some of Thomas' testimony.

Thomas "asks the Senate and the American people to believe that an intelligent and outspoken person like himself has never discussed Roe v. Wade with another human being," Kennedy said. "If Senators buy the view that Justice Thomas, as a member of the Supreme Court, will approach Roe v. Wade with an open mind, there is a bridge in Brooklyn they might also like to buy.

"The Senate should not give its approval to a nominee who refuses to answer fair questions on issues of bedrock importance to the vast majority of Americans."

Hatch, however, defended Thomas as one who would "zealously safeguard the principle of equal justice under law for all Americans." He also said President George Bush "could not have sent us a finer nominee."

Hatch said the criticism of Thomas' "vanishing views" reflect instead the "vanishing liberal hope that the judiciary, under the pretext of interpreting the Constitution, will impose on the American people the same liberal policies that have been overwhelmingly rejected in five out of the last six presidential elections."

Hatch expressed frustration and irritation at the proceedings that he said focused too much attention on abortion. While acknowledging abortion as an extremely important issue, he said he was displeased that some senators tried to make it the only issue.

He said he is concerned that there is a "liberal litmus test operating to the denigration of minorities in this country." Unless minorities belong to or work on the right liberal plantation, Hatch said, this litmus test will obliterate their former record, ability and experience.

Though visibly agitated, Hatch said he is confident Thomas will be confirmed. He added he hopes the committee will review the confirmation process -- a view voiced by many committee members.

Simpson echoed Hatch's uneasiness about the proceedings, calling it a very disturbing ritual. A Thomas backer, Simpson said Thomas currently has more than 50 votes in the full Senate.

If confirmed, Thomas would become the 106th justice and second African American to sit on the nation's high court. He would replace Justice Thurgood Marshall, who was the first African American on the court.

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***** END *****