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Romanians question endorsement  
of Ruschlikon defunding

By Greg Warner

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

BUCHAREST, Romania (ABP) -- The Romanian Baptist Union, which bucked the tide of European opinion in November to applaud the Foreign Mission Board's defunding of the Ruschlikon seminary, may not have endorsed the controversial FMB action after all.

A Dec. 10 letter from Vasile Talos, Romanian union president, and Nic Gheorghita, general secretary, said the union's general council "agreed to this (FMB) decision" during a meeting Nov. 26. The letter has been used by FMB trustees to demonstrate support for their decision to cut \$365,000 from the Swiss seminary.

But according to several Romanians who were in the November meeting, the Ruschlikon issue was discussed but nothing was decided. No vote was taken, according to some who were in the meeting and others who have seen the minutes.

That didn't keep Talos and Gheorghita from writing their letter to the Foreign Mission Board, however, positioning the Romanian union as the only European body in support of the defunding. Their action was interpreted by many as an attempt to raise support for an independent Bible school in Oradea, Romania.

Talos, who has been traveling in the United States, returned to Romania Jan. 23 and discussed the issue with a group of 42 pastors in Bucharest, including about 10 council members who participated in the Nov. 26 meeting. The pastors cancelled classes they were attending at the Baptist seminary in Bucharest to confront Talos about the letter.

Talos, a lawyer, reportedly acknowledged no vote was taken by the 51-member general council. But he said the letter reflected the council's consensus to rely on Romanian schools rather than Ruschlikon for theological education.

Some of the pastors later called for Talos and Gheorghita to retract their earlier letter to the FMB, according to sources at the seminary.

Talos was unavailable for comment. But Gheorghita, who is traveling in the United States, told Associated Baptist Press the letter was justified even though no vote was taken by the council.

"Everyone was agreed and no one said 'no,'" Gheorghita said of the Ruschlikon discussion. "When there is no argument, there is no reason to vote."

Gheorghita said he favors the defunding decision because of the increased potential for Romanians to train their own church leaders.

However, some pastors and other Romanian Baptists have complained that the letter represents neither the action of the general council nor the opinion of many Romanians, and puts Romanians in opposition to their European brethren.

Some European Baptists have accused the Romanians of endorsing the Ruschlikon action in exchange for a promise of FMB funding for their own theological schools. Some FMB trustees have said the independent Oradea Bible Institute, which Gheorghita serves as vice chancellor, should receive the money cut from Ruschlikon.

But Gheorghita denied he and Talos were involved in any "deal" with trustees to exchange the endorsement for money. "They did not try to buy us," he told ABP.

Gheorghita also denied telling Charles Thomas, an FMB missionary in Romania, that Romanian Baptists were "first in line" for the Ruschlikon money.

"Definitely no, and I am sorry to hear this," Gheorghita said. "If he (Thomas) said this, I have a big question mark.... He has to answer for that."

However, Gheorghita acknowledged he probably discussed the Ruschlikon money with Thomas. Since that discussion would have been conducted in English, which is a "second tongue" for Gheorghita, the Romanian executive suggested: "I could have said something that seemed to express that the money will come to Romania."

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Thomases want to stay in Romania;  
Fellowship hints it may help

BUCHAREST, Romania (ABP) -- Charles and Kathie Thomas hope to stay in Romania -- perhaps under the auspices of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship -- even though the Southern Baptist missionary couple has resigned from the Foreign Mission Board.

"We feel like God has called us to Romania to work," said Charles Thomas, who resigned Jan. 11 in protest of Foreign Mission Board actions that prompted the resignations of top FMB administrators for Europe.

The Thomases, veteran missionaries who began work in Romania last September, were the first Southern Baptist missionaries assigned to the former Soviet-bloc country.

The Thomases may also become the first missionaries of the fledgling Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, an organization of moderate-conservative Southern Baptists.

The Fellowship recently said it will try to pick up FMB missionaries in Europe who are dissatisfied with the FMB's current direction. Fellowship officials said Jan. 22 they would like to hire the Thomases first.

Although the Thomases' resignations already have created tension with some leaders of the Romanian Baptist Union, the missionary said other Romanians have urged them to stay.

"The president of the Bucharest (Baptist) Association came to me this afternoon and said they will invite us to work with the association regardless of what the national convention does," Thomas told ABP Jan. 23.

The Baptist seminary in Bucharest, where Thomas has taught, also has asked him to continue teaching, he said.

Thomas said he and Kathie won't be able to stay without financial help from outside Romania, however. To fill that need, he said, he is willing to work with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship if asked. "We'd be happy to talk to somebody else, particularly if they are people we are comfortable with," Thomas said.

Jimmy Allen, chairman of the global-missions committee of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, said his group will meet by conference telephone and take up the issue of the Thomases. He said he is confident they will become the Fellowship's first missionary couple.

He added that in addition to the Thomases, the Fellowship plans to stand by "other missionaries who we are told are planning to leave."

"I'm confident we'll have a place for the Thomases," added John Hewett, an Asheville, N.C., pastor and moderator the Fellowship.

Meanwhile, Nic Gheorghita, general secretary of the Romanian Baptist Union, said Thomas' resignation would be "terrible" for Romanian Baptists, who already are somewhat divided over FMB actions in Europe.

"I don't know what to say...because we have done our best for him," said Gheorghita, who is traveling in the United States. "This is not the best. Maybe they want to create a crisis over the issue."

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-- By Greg Warner and Ed Briggs

Prime-time TV understates influence  
of religion in America, study shows

By Mark Wingfield

TUPELO, Miss. (ABP) -- If prime-time television represented reality, America's churches would be nearly empty and the most substantial prayer people uttered would be "Thank God" after a close escape from disaster.

Those are the findings of a new study on television and religion commissioned by the American Family Association of Tupelo, Miss. The conservative watchdog group hired three educators with advanced degrees -- one communications professor and two psychiatry professors -- to conduct extensive research of how religion is portrayed on prime-time network dramas and comedies.

The research was done by Thomas Skill of the University of Dayton, John Lyons of Northwestern University and David Larson of Duke University Medical Center.

The trio analyzed 100 episodes of fictional shows appearing on the ABC, CBS, NBC and Fox networks for a period of one month in late 1990. Results of their work were released in late December.

From those 68 hours of programming, they found only 5.4 percent of all characters had an identifiable religious affiliation. In reality, 89 percent of all Americans claim a religious affiliation, according to the latest Gallup polls.

And while at least 40 percent of Americans report they have attended a church service in the past week, the TV characters in the study almost never were shown attending church or talking about going to church.

"The extremely small number of significantly religious or spiritual behaviors on network television suggest that the religious or spiritual dimensions of people's lives are mostly invisible," the report concludes.

"Overall, characters rarely acknowledge or reflect a belief in God or Jesus, and on the occasions when they do make such references, those comments tend to be ambiguous."

Although network television rarely degrades religion, it abuses Americans' religious involvement by neglect, the report says: "Overall, the message being presented about religion by network television is that it is not very important because it is rarely a factor in the lives of the characters presented on TV or in the society in which they are portrayed."

Of the 81 characters clearly identified as Christians during the test period, 36 percent were found in just three episodes: 17 Catholics in two episodes of "Father Dowling Mysteries" and nine Protestants in one episode of "Amen."

"Father Dowling Mysteries" also provided the largest example of religious symbolism on prime-time TV, the study found. The series is about a Catholic priest and nun who double as amateur detectives.

Images of churches, cathedrals, temples and synagogues, along with crosses, crucifixes, nuns and priests, were the most common religious symbolism identified in the study.

Although in reality twice as many Americans identify themselves as Protestants than as Catholics, Catholic images such as priests, nuns and crucifixes dominate religious symbolism on TV, the study found.

The researchers concluded Catholicism has "high profile" on TV because its members "serve as convenient stereotypes for images of religion."

Also, while in reality women are more likely to be active in church affairs than men, the reverse is portrayed in prime time. The study found 68 percent of all religious behaviors portrayed on TV were done by men. In reality, Gallup polls have shown, 44 percent of American women report having attended worship in the past week, while only 36 percent of men claim the same.

Other findings of the study include:

-- Some type of personal prayer is shown on prime-time TV once every 90 minutes on average. However, the most common event researchers classified as prayer was utterance of "Thank God" after a character narrowly escaped disaster.

-- Public prayer is virtually never portrayed on prime-time television. Even the common American practice of giving thanks before family meals was found fewer than eight times among the 100 episodes studied.

-- Religious values are rarely alluded to as a factor in how a character behaves or responds to situations. Only six instances were found when a character said anything to reflect standards of Christian living, traditions or practices. Only 11 instances were found where God's influence on events was cited.

-- If God makes out poorly on prime time, the devil does even worse. "There is not a preoccupation with the devil or evil forces on prime-time television," the researchers concluded. "Characters infrequently reference the devil, and when they do, they clearly do not favor evil."

-- When religion is portrayed on television, it receives positive treatment 75 percent of the time. The researchers cited ABC as most likely to frame religion and spirituality positively and Fox as least likely to frame religion positively.

-- Weddings and funerals are the most commonly depicted religious activities on prime-time TV.

Supreme Court to review  
abortion restrictions

By Larry Chesser

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- The U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to decide the constitutionality of a restrictive Pennsylvania abortion law, giving the court an opportunity to clarify whether it still considers abortion a fundamental right.

The high court announced Jan. 21 that it will review a decision by the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upholding most parts of the Pennsylvania law toughened in 1989 but striking its requirement that spouses be notified before an abortion is performed.

The announcement came one day before the 19th anniversary of the Supreme Court's landmark decision in *Roe v. Wade* that recognized a woman's fundamental right to privacy in abortion decisions. Several Supreme Court decisions in recent years have eroded *Roe's* holding that abortion is a fundamental right that can be limited only when the restrictions are justified by a compelling governmental interest.

Both supporters and opponents of abortion rights believe the replacement of liberal Supreme Court justices William Brennan and Thurgood Marshall by Bush appointees David Souter and Clarence Thomas increase the likelihood the court will further cut back or even eliminate the protections provided by *Roe v. Wade*.

In the Pennsylvania case, the Supreme Court agreed to decide whether the appeals court properly upheld the constitutionality of the following provisions:

-- A requirement that physicians or their agents inform women considering abortion about the nature and risks of and alternatives to abortion and provide other informed-consent information;

-- A requirement for a 24-hour waiting period after the informed-consent information is provided before an abortion is performed;

-- A requirement that women under 18 receive the consent of a parent or judge before receiving an abortion;

-- A requirement that abortion providers file confidential reports containing the identity of the referring physician, the physician's basis for determining the gestational age of the fetus and the basis for medical decisions concerning abortion;

-- A narrowly drawn definition of "medical emergency" that provides exemptions to the law's requirements when a risk of death or substantial and irreversible impairment of major bodily function is present.

The high court will also decide whether the appeals court properly struck down the Pennsylvania requirement that, in most cases, a married woman must notify her husband before obtaining an abortion.

In deciding the Pennsylvania case, the 3rd Circuit stated that the Supreme Court departed from *Roe v. Wade's* strict protections 1989 and 1990 cases in which five justices held that Missouri and Minnesota officials need show only a reasonable, not compelling, basis for abortion regulations.

The appeals court said the narrowest concurring opinion in those cases was the "undue burden" test espoused by Supreme Court Associate Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. That test requires government to show only a reasonable basis for restricting abortion unless the restrictions unduly burden a woman's right to choose abortion.

The appeals court held that most of the Pennsylvania regulations do not unduly burden a woman's right to choose an abortion.

However, the appeals court held that the requirement that husbands be notified severely burdens the right to choose abortion and must be based on a compelling interest. It concluded that promoting spousal participation in

the abortion decision is a legitimate state interest but "not the kind of compelling state interest that can justify the very substantial burdens imposed...on the wife's right to choose an abortion."

The court is expected to hear arguments in the case in April, and a decision then would be expected before the court concludes its term this summer. Whatever the court's decision, its release is expected to intensify the impact of the emotionally charged abortion issue in 1992 political campaigns.

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Dispute over BJC fund  
has Baptist donors worried

By Greg Warner

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (ABP) -- A dispute over who owns a \$400,000 account on deposit with the Southern Baptist Foundation poses a threat to the work of Baptist foundations around the country, according to some state foundation officials.

The SBC Christian Life Commission has laid claim to the capital-needs fund, which was given to the Baptist Joint Committee by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1964. The CLC has asked the SBC Executive Committee, which approved the original capital-needs allocation, to give the CLC control of the fund.

The Southern Baptist Foundation, which has held the money since 1964, has agreed to let the Executive Committee settle the dispute, and a study committee of the Executive Committee is scheduled to meet Jan. 24 to do just that. The study group's recommendation will be voted by the full Executive Committee in February.

But that has directors of some state-level foundations concerned. A decision to transfer the money from the Baptist Joint Committee to the CLC could undermine the work of Baptist foundations, they warn.

"The main commodity our Baptist foundations have to offer is trust," wrote Harry Trulove, president of the Arkansas Baptist Foundation, in a Dec. 23 letter to an Executive Committee official. "Therefore, even if a technicality might conceivably allow a change in the use of funds, and if this change is perceived to have been made as a result of the political process, the results may very well be a substantial loss to Baptist causes."

Through the work of Southern Baptists' 30 state foundations, individual Baptists provide millions of dollars to state and national Baptist agencies through wills and trusts. But the BJC-CLC dispute has some of those donors and potential donors suspicious that their gifts could be reassigned by SBC officials, foundation officials report.

The disputed fund was authorized by the SBC in 1964 so that the Baptist Joint Committee, a religious-liberty agency, could purchase its own building in Washington. Instead the BJC has continued to rent office space, using interest on the fund to pay rent.

The Christian Life Commission, which last year succeeded the BJC as Southern Baptists' representative on religious-liberty issues, says it is now the logical recipient of the funds -- and all the interest earned since 1964.

But the Baptist Joint Committee says the money was intended for its use and has been under its control for 27 years. Last September the BJC asked for the money to purchase a building, but the Foundation froze the funds until the Executive Committee acts on the dispute.

"Whatever the legal possibilities, technical arguments or political dynamics impinging on this issue," wrote Trulove, "it is this foundation's firm conviction that it would be a mistake to redirect any Southern Baptist

Foundation monies from the purpose for which they were given."

Trulove's letter was addressed to C. Ray Fuller, who chairs the Executive Committee subcommittee through which the study group will report. Fuller, a pastor in Joliet, Ill., was cautious in his response.

"I've not heard from enough of the foundations to know whether or not he (Trulove) speaks for them," Fuller said.

Fuller suggested there could be "some expression of concern both ways" - that some foundation directors could consider a decision either in favor of the CLC or the BJC to be "an act of integrity."

Fuller said he welcomed Trulove's input but said he could not predict how it might affect the Executive Committee decision.

Although the 30 foundation directors have taken no official stand on the matter, several told ABP they share Trulove's concern.

"Harry has raised a legitimate issue," said William Crotts, president of the Arizona Baptist Foundation and immediate past president of the Association of Baptist Foundation Executives. "I think its important in our business to live by our agreements."

Robert Mobley, executive director of the Virginia Baptist Foundation, agreed. "I share Harry's concern about the ability to transfer funds from one cause to another after the commitment has been made," said Mobley, current president of the foundation executives.

According to Crotts and Mobley, an increasing number of people are asking Baptist foundations for assurances that their gifts cannot be diverted for unintended purposes.

By law, directors say, most such gifts cannot be redirected to other causes. But that hasn't kept concerned callers from raising questions.

"For the first time in over 20 years," Trulove wrote, "I am having to assure current and potential donors that neither my board nor any other Baptist body can legally change the use of designated funds deposited with the foundation."

The issue is trust, the directors say, and the effect could be loss of money for Baptist work. Donors who feel the foundations could become pawns in the denominational controversy may decide to give their money to other causes.

Mobley said whether or not the state foundations get more involved in the dispute depends on what the Executive Committee does in February. He said the topic undoubtedly will be discussed when foundation directors meet in March.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: The preceding article will be updated after the Jan. 24 study group meeting. The story should be available Monday, Jan. 27.

Dunn calls 'parochiaid' plans  
assault on First Amendment

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- Several anticipated amendments to major education bills now before the U.S. Senate represent frontal assaults on the First Amendment's religion guarantees, a Baptist church-and-state specialist told Senate staff members during a Jan. 17 briefing.

The Senate is expected to take up the education package Jan. 21 or 22.

James Dunn, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, urged rejection of expected amendments to President Bush's education

package that reportedly would channel tax dollars into private and religious schools.

Dunn said after the briefing he expects close votes on the 'parochiaid' proposals.

The amendments are expected to be offered as the Senate considers the Neighborhood Schools Improvement Act (S. 2), a measure that would authorize \$850 million in annual grants to states to finance comprehensive education improvement.

As approved by the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee, the bill does not contain the parental "choice" provisions proposed by the Bush administration in its America 2000 educational reform package. The administration wants to spend \$200 million to encourage local school districts to allow parents to select the schools -- including parochial schools -- their children attend.

The Senate bill contains a school "choice" provision, but it applies only to public schools. Anticipated floor amendments in the Senate include measures to establish a "choice" demonstration project for private schools, to authorize the establishment of 535 public and private New American Schools (a key element in the administration plan) and to allow states to use federal education dollars for private and parochial schools as long as such use does not violate state laws or constitutions.

Dunn told Senate staffers he did not see how civil libertarians or genuine Democrats could support "spending tax dollars outside the realm of accountability" by channeling tax dollars to private and religious schools.

In addition, he said, "No conservative, no real Republican can be for this expensive inflationary entitlement program that absolutely guarantees a package of regulations and guidelines."

Dunn reminded Senate staffers of the "furor" of telephone calls generated in 1987 by fundamentalist religious leaders fearful that additional layers of government regulations would accompany the Civil Rights Restoration Act.

"My soul, the very people that were so exercised and so frantic about regulations in that instance are now in many instances supporting these schemes that would inevitably and absolutely bring along the same kind of regulations," Dunn said.

The briefing was sponsored by the Labor and Human Resources Committee and the National Coalition for Public Education, a coalition of more than 40 educational, civic, civil rights and religious organizations.

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-- By Larry Chesser

Dockery picked for Southern dean;  
signals shift in seminary focus

By Marv Knox

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (ABP) -- David Dockery will become dean of the school of theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary if an administration proposal is approved.

Dockery, 39, has been general editor of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's Broadman Press since 1990. Before that, he was assistant professor of New Testament interpretation at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., for two years.

Seminary President Roy Honeycutt and Provost Larry McSwain confirmed Dockery is their choice for dean. McSwain held the post until last year, when

he succeeded Willis Bennett as provost.

Honeycutt and McSwain worked with faculty and trustees to select Dockery from a field of 27 candidates, whose names were submitted last summer and early fall. They reduced that number to seven by October, when Honeycutt told trustees Dockery was his top pick.

"David was my first choice," Honeycutt said last week.

"First, he served with us. I knew from his experience as a professor of New Testament he would have faculty support and strong trustee support. I would not presume upon our faculty, but I felt he would work well within our community.

"Second, he will bring to the executive staff a role representing the conservative position in the Southern Baptist Convention, consistent with our covenant and the Glorieta Statement," Honeycutt said.

The covenant is a 1990 document which charts a more conservative direction for the seminary. The Glorieta Statement was drafted in 1986 by the presidents of all six SBC seminaries in response to the conservative shift within the convention.

Dockery's selection marks a "move toward a particular posture in the SBC," Honeycutt noted. "We announced in June that the person would be a conservative evangelical scholar. It's a desire to keep faith with the covenant and maintain the posture that I've had since 1986 to reach out to all Southern Baptists as an SBC entity."

In that context, Honeycutt said: "I don't want to diminish him as a person. He comes with his own integrity."

"He is a highly competent teacher and scholar," McSwain added. "He served on this faculty and did so with distinction. Evaluations of his teaching by students were superb. For his age, he has a remarkable publishing record for a scholar. His work as editor at Broadman Press has only enhanced that."

Dockery has the ability to secure new faculty members who are scholarly enough to earn the respect of the faculty and conservative enough to earn the trust of trustees, McSwain said.

Dockery initially turned down the seminary administrators' offer but changed his mind.

"I think the opportunities are there for us to move forward to continue the great tradition and heritage of Southern Seminary and to be a seminary for all Southern Baptists," Dockery said. "The prospects are bright, and we can remain faithful to the covenant agreement and bring in the finest Baptist/evangelical scholars we can find."

"I believe those people are out there. The faculty is concerned to find people of high academic standing who would share their commitments to academic freedom. The trustees want people who are committed to the basic tenets of evangelicalism, including a strong commitment to biblical authority."

In his role at Broadman Press, Dockery is general editor of the New American Commentary, a 40-volume Bible commentary which began publication last year. The possibility of continuing his duties as commentary editor "remains in discussion," he said.

Prior to joining the Southern Seminary faculty in 1988, Dockery was professor of theology and New Testament at Criswell College in Dallas and associate pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas from 1984 to 1988. He was pastor of Metropolitan Baptist Church in Brooklyn, N.Y., from 1982 to 1984.

Dockery earned the doctor of philosophy degree from the University of Texas at Arlington and also graduated from Texas Christian University, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Grace Theological Seminary and the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Dockery and his wife, Lanese, have three sons: Jonathan Samuel, Benjamin Paul and Timothy David.

Dockery is on course to be appointed dean and elected professor of New Testament. Both processes involve the administration's interaction with faculty and trustees. He could be approved by trustees during their meeting April 27-29.

However, he could begin serving as dean-elect "as soon after Feb. 1 as his schedule allows," McSwain said, and officially begin all his duties Aug. 1.

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Baylor regents wait until March  
to set seminary's opening date

WACO, Texas (ABP) -- Baylor University's regents agreed to delay at least until March a decision about opening its George W. Truett Theological Seminary in the fall of 1994 -- a delay applauded by officials at nearby Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

On Jan. 16, the Truett Seminary trustees unanimously recommended the 1994 opening to the Baylor regents. On the following day, the university's governing board authorized a 10-member joint study committee of Baylor regents and Truett trustees to respond to the recommendation.

The first opportunity for the joint committee to make its recommendation to Baylor's governing board is at the regents' next regular meeting March 20.

Russell Dilday, president of Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, said he "welcomed any delay" in the establishment of the Truett Seminary, citing the seminary's desire to cooperate rather than compete with Baylor.

Dilday and a delegation of Southwestern faculty members had delivered a request Jan. 6 from the faculty to Baylor President Herbert Reynolds that the new Truett Seminary's opening be delayed.

"We have valued our cooperative relationship with Baylor and other colleges and universities here in Texas and would not be enthusiastic about any development that would threaten a tense or competitive relationship between our schools," Dilday said.

Dilday said Baylor's desire for a school that is "scholarly, evangelical and with a world vision" describes Southwestern too. "It would not seem necessary to have two institutions with that same missions statement or purpose here together," he added.

Baylor had reserved the name George W. Truett Theological Seminary in 1990, and incorporated the institution and elected trustees in 1991. University regents initiated proceedings to establish the school explaining the seminary would begin operations if it were determined that Southern Baptist seminaries were being led away from their historic mission by extremists.

That rationale -- including observations that Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary has been "devastated," the futures of Golden Gate and Midwestern seminaries are in question and great changes are being made at Southern Seminary -- was cited in a two-hour dialogue session between the regents and seminary trustees on Jan. 16.

Instruction is still sound at Southwestern Seminary, it was noted, but fundamentalist pressures have affected faculty selection and the future of the seminary was questioned after current administrative leadership is gone. "True learning" exists only in an "atmosphere of freedom...a precious gift," it was observed.

A resolution from the faculty of Southwestern Seminary asking that Baylor delay opening the seminary was read to the trustees and regents and

will be presented to the Baylor faculty on Jan. 20.

"The academic freedom we have traditionally enjoyed at Southwestern Seminary remains intact," the resolution stated.

The Southwestern faculty, staff, administration, and student body "still represent mainstream Southern Baptist life in dedication to global missions, evangelism, and religious liberty," according to the statement.

Truett trustees made their recommendation the Waco seminary be opened in 1994 in response to what was described as "a window of opportunity" to share the gospel with the world, a need for more preachers, and the need for a "stackpole" around which to build a new consensus in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Among reasons cited for opening the seminary in 1994 were:

-- Robert Sloan's message to the Baptist General Convention of Texas in November calling for a return to the basics of sharing the gospel of a crucified and risen Christ with the world. Sloan is George W. Truett Professor of Evangelism at the university and has been mentioned as a likely candidate for dean of the seminary.

-- Sloan's emphasis that Southern Baptists must build a new consensus or die and that Baylor is the "flagship" university among Southern Baptists should be the "stackpole" around which to build such a consensus.

-- The unprecedented opportunity with the "walls down" around the world and the need for more preachers to preach the gospel.

-- The atmosphere of freedom to publish, to learn and to make open inquiry in a university setting.

-- A "constituency shift" in Southern Baptist life, where some feel disenfranchised. The new seminary would give those persons a place to send their gifts and their students.

The 1994 opening would give time to hire faculty and staff, establish procedures and begin soliciting endowment. It was emphasized that the seminary would not be a "deficit" operation and would not siphon off funds from the operation of the university.

The Truett trustees recommended that an enrollment cap be established at 1,000 students. Several scenarios of initial enrollment goals and costs to be charged during the initial years were outlined. Most prominent in the discussion was an initial cost of some \$2,600 annually. That would be about \$2,000 more than the current cost at a Cooperative Program-subsidized seminary but would be much less than charges at many other seminaries, it was noted.

The seminary would offer master of divinity and master of theology degrees. Students who want to pursue doctorate degrees would do so in the university's department of religion, which offers a doctor of philosophy degree.

The seminary would be housed initially in current university buildings and would require a projected faculty of 15 members.

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-- By Toby Druin, Scott Collins and Ken Camp

Second Baptist of Houston  
buys satellite location

HOUSTON (ABP) -- Second Baptist Church of Houston voted Jan. 15 to spend \$3.3 million for a 180-acre site for a second location for the burgeoning 18,000-member congregation.

The "Second Step" location is about 15 miles west of the church's current 42-acre site, where in 1984 the church moved into new and remodeled facilities, costing \$34 million.

Pastor Edwin Young told the Houston Chronicle that no plans have been made for when the new facility will be built or how it will be financed. "All we have now are dirt and dreams," he said.

The property has been owned by 22 church members who purchased it after Young cited it as a location for a satellite congregation. About 5,000 members of Second Church live in the area, which is expected to be home for a fourth of Houston's population by the turn of the century.

The plan followed more than two years of study and a report by seven church think tanks.

About 75 percent of the 2,500 members who attended the Wednesday night discussion approved the project. Sale of 11 acres near the current location, valued at \$2-4 million, was approved at the same meeting.

Some members complained of the hurried nature of the decision. One told the Houston Chronicle the deacons were not notified of the plan until early in the week and that there was no advance announcement to church members that the vote would be taken.

Young said the church's debt on the current location is about \$17.9 million. The alternative to moving -- remodeling and expanding it -- would cost an estimated \$50 million.

Young has been pastor at Second Church since 1978. Under his leadership it has become one of the fastest-growing congregations in the Southern Baptist Convention and the world. He currently conducts three Sunday services, and educational facilities and parking lots are overcrowded.

The pastor said he will preach at both sites.

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-- By Cecile Holmes White of the Houston Chronicle and Toby Druin of the Baptist Standard of Texas.

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