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

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FMB trustees postpone  
decision on Parks' future

By Robert Dilday

RICHMOND, Va. (ABP) -- Whether or not Keith Parks will continue as president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board may depend on the outcome of a "spiritual retreat" planned for FMB trustees and selected staff members March 19-20 at the Dallas-Fort Worth airport.

After delaying a vote of confidence on Parks Feb. 12, trustees agreed to hold the retreat in response to Parks' request that they resolve lingering questions about how long he will continue to serve as president, a topic widely discussed across the Southern Baptist Convention since at least last summer.

"The question I believe missionaries, staff and Southern Baptists deserve to have answered is: 'What will be the tenure of the current president?'" he told trustees on the last day of their Feb. 10-12 meeting.

Parks also warned that Southern Baptists' 12-year theological and political conflict has "brought change and crisis to our world mission program" and that the resulting distrust "is contributing to an erosion of sound management (at the FMB) that is reaching critical proportions."

He said settling the issue of his tenure immediately would "resolve many problems and lay to rest many anxieties." But he added he is willing to wait for an answer until the board's April 8-10 meeting if earlier resolution "does not seem feasible nor wise."

The retreat proposal was approved in place of an affirmation of Parks recommended by Jack Bledsoe of Fordyce, Ark. "We (the board) are in deep water and we've got to decide if we're going to sink or swim..." Bledsoe warned. He urged trustees to "go on record assuring the president of our prayerful, personal and combined support of his leadership through the time of tenure he has outlined...."

Last August Parks, who turns 65 in October, told trustees he felt God wanted him to remain as president through 1995 to maintain stability during

a period of unusual missions opportunities offered by changes in Eastern Europe and the disintegration of the former Soviet Union. He also presented a plan of renewed missions emphases to take advantage of the new opportunities.

But some trustees, disturbed by increased tension between Parks and the board over missions philosophy, have suggested Parks should leave earlier, perhaps by October.

Bill Hall of Danville, Ky., moved to replace Bledsoe's motion with a substitute delaying response to Parks' question until the board's April 6-8 meeting. Trustees accepted a suggestion from Mike Goodwin of Festus, Mo., to modify Hall's substitute motion and hold a retreat prior to the April meeting. Any decision made during the retreat likely would be ratified in April.

"We need a format and a time that will allow us to get together for one reason, one purpose, one single agenda," said Goodwin, referring to Parks' relationship to the board. "The question put before us deserves that opportunity."

Only about eight trustees voted against postponement.

While he indicated he would have preferred settling the tenure question this month, Parks appeared resigned to the schedule adopted by the board.

"I hope we can get a definitive answer by April," he told ABP. "I had hoped that after the affirmation and positive events on Monday they could have felt free to affirm me today. It kind of delays things for a couple of months."

Parks' unexpected challenge Feb. 12 came two days after he and trustees appeared to have defused several months of speculation that the board would speed up his retirement or even fire him.

Trustees have generally affirmed Parks' leadership since he announced in August his intention to stay on until 1995. But few have publicly endorsed his request to remain until 1995. An interim report in December from a subcommittee charged with recommending a response to Parks' August announcement expressed enthusiasm for the missions emphasis but stressed that no one person was indispensable in implementing it. That response renewed questions that trustees might not permit him to remain.

The president's tenure was rendered more precarious when he opposed the defunding last October of the Baptist Theological Seminary at Ruschlikon, Switzerland, and by his presence at a Jan. 7 news conference in which two top staff members announced their early retirements to protest trustee actions.

Frank criticisms by Isam Ballenger, vice president for Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, and Keith Parker, area director for Europe, outraged some trustees, who scheduled an unusual board meeting to discuss the matter with Parks Feb. 10, at the outset of this month's regular board session.

Normally trustees conduct business in committees for two days before convening as a full board. But trustees said they didn't want to wait to ask Parks why he permitted the news conference to be held at the FMB's headquarters and why he did not respond to the retiring staffers' allegations against trustees.

However, Parks and trustees avoided a showdown at the Feb. 10 meeting and at a closed meeting of the chairman's council which preceded it. Instead, the board affirmed a list of seven missions principles long held by the board and stated its willingness to work with the president. Several trustees described the development as a "miracle" and an answer to prayer.

But in committee sessions the next day, other trustees continued to express anger at Parks' handling of the news conference. The board's communications committee formed a panel of trustees and staff to recommend procedures for calling press conferences.

In the board's strategy committee, the president reportedly asked for

clarification of his status. After candid discussion, the committee adopted no specific reply, simply asking the subcommittee examining Parks' August statement to continue its work for an indefinite period.

The additional delay may have sparked Parks' decision to put the question in a more public setting the next morning. The missions leader told ABP he had asked for an answer last August, discussed it with trustees in October and raised the question once more in committee this week.

"I just felt everybody seems to be in such uncertainty that in all fairness it needed to be said," said Parks, who told trustees he did not complete the statement until late the night.

In his statement, Parks assured trustees that by seeking clarification, "I am not asking for a vote of confidence nor affirmation nor agreement nor blanket approval to whatever I do or say. I am simply asking if I have the option of exerting positive leadership and trying to fulfill the vision I believe God gave me until 1995.

"If not, then I urge the board to move as quickly as possible to change leadership. If so, then I pledge myself to work as harmoniously as possible with trustees in applying those seven (missions strategy) principles you affirmed unanimously...."

Parks told trustees that some of their recent actions -- apparently including the defunding of Ruschlikon seminary last year because of alleged liberal teaching -- had led him to "regrettably, sadly" acknowledge that the SBC conflict "has brought change and crisis to our world mission program."

"For the 12 years I have been in this role we have prayed and struggled to keep our agenda on the kind of missions entrusted to us by Southern Baptists," he said. "But a drastic shift is apparently now taking shape."

The shift is based partly on "serious misperceptions," he said. "Some trustees have alleged that there are missionaries and staff who are 'neo-orthodox' and do not believe the Bible.... In my 46 years of preaching, no one has ever accused me of not believing the Bible. The missionaries, staff and our international Baptist partners believe, live and preach God's Word, as much as any of their critics."

Changes have also occurred in the "indigenous principle," which he called "central" to the board's missions philosophy.

"That (principle) means we seek to remove our American, Southern Baptist culture, present the simple gospel and watch the Holy Spirit develop churches and conventions that are 'at home' in their country.... Our relationship with other Baptist bodies can never be an attempt to just extend our own American churches or convention nor an effort to dictate belief and practice.

"It appears to me that a shift has occurred when this board is expecting theological conformity from those who receive Southern Baptist money," he continued. "I am as concerned about correct biblical belief as anyone is, but to use money to produce it is not the biblical nor Baptist way."

Parks also cited a "basic lack of trust in me and many of the staff and missionaries."

"Some trustees have indicated this lack of trust in me has roots in my resistance to identifying with one faction of the controversy.... I am convinced that taking sides would have done great harm to mission support. Nor could I conscientiously support only one side because I believe we need both sides."

He also noted that "this is not, as has been charged, a controversy between one group that believes the Bible and one that does not. That is an absolute falsehood."

The mistrust "in the administrative staff is contributing to an erosion of sound management" and has resulted in "violations of several elements in the trustee manual," he added. In defiance of board guidelines, trustees are bypassing the president to deal directly with staff and missionaries, he

charged.

"This administrative staff cannot function properly under these circumstances," he said.

Parks reminded trustees of new ministry opportunities overseas and the "brief window" of three to five years in which the board can take maximum advantage of them.

"We need strong, certain leadership to get us through this period," he said. "We can establish some spiritual outposts while the opportunities exist. Then, these spiritual communities could function and expand while we diverted time and energy necessary to change leadership."

However, he said "maintaining present leadership in an uncertain role would be worse" than selecting a new president in the midst of unusual overseas opportunities. He then urged the board to resolve the questions surrounding his tenure.

Trustees who opposed the call for a retreat also wanted to resolve the issue immediately and appeared to favor retaining Parks through 1995.

"We've got to make a decision now," said Franklin Hall of Yorktown, Va., during discussion of a delayed response. "Either he (Parks) is God's man for this hour or he's not.... The board is in limbo, the staff is in limbo. I don't see how he operates.... Keith Parks is God's man in my mind and I'm ready to settle it."

But John Simms of Salem, Va., who expressed sympathy for Bledsoe's motion, noted, "It has become obvious that if we speak today we will speak before all minds are decided."

Missions causes could be harmed if a vote to affirm Parks simply papered over continuing trustee anger, Simms said, while a sharply divided vote could diminish missions support.

Other trustees asked -- and trustee chairman Bill Hancock of Louisville, Ky., agreed -- that the March retreat be closed to all but board members. Bill Sutton of McAllen, Texas, urged the meeting to be held outside Richmond to avoid coverage by the city's newspaper reporters. Trustees frequently criticize reports of their meetings carried by Richmond's two newspapers.

In his statement, Parks acknowledged trustee concerns that he had not affirmed their leadership as they have affirmed his in the past. "I do not offer praise as much as I should," he said. "I so abhor hypocrisy that I never want even to appear to be insincere or manipulative."

But, he told them, "I appreciate the time and energy you give to this task and the sacrifice you make to participate.... I recognize with regret that you as trustees have been caricatured with prejudicial images by some on occasion. That is not right."

Following Parks' comments, however, trustee Terry Harper of Colonial Heights, Va., asked Parks if he was affirming only the trustees' hard work and not the trustees themselves. He added: "I have not heard you say you have a willingness to be led by trustees."

Parks replied his statement was intended to mean "I affirm you in your roles as trustees." He also observed that trustees are the elected leaders of the board and that if "I plan to work in this position, I must find a way to work harmoniously with you."

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Ruschlikon repercussions  
claim trustee attention

By Robert Dilday

RICHMOND, Va. (ABP) -- Cleaning up some of the loose ends remaining from their defunding of the Baptist Theological Seminary at Ruschlikon,

Switzerland, claimed Foreign Mission Board trustees' attention this week.

During their Feb. 10-12 meeting, trustees allocated \$365,000 they had eliminated from Ruschlikon's 1992 budget to eight other seminaries in Europe and asked staff to handle what they said were policy violations in Ruschlikon's recent fund-raising efforts.

The also finalized plans for a trustee committee to meet with European Baptists to discuss future partnerships and began the search process for a vice president to oversee work in Europe.

Last October, the board deleted funds for Ruschlikon, European Baptists' only international seminary, to protest alleged liberal theology some trustees said was taught at the Swiss school.

They redirected the funds to support theological education in Eastern Europe and the newly-independent nations of the former Soviet Union.

This week trustees approved a staff recommendation to spend the money on seminaries in Bulgaria, the Baltic republics, Romania, Russia and Ukraine.

The largest single amount -- \$100,000 -- will go to a Bible school set to open in Sofia, Bulgaria, next month. Existing seminaries in Moscow; in Kiev and Odessa in Ukraine; and in Estonia each will receive \$50,000 and Latvia's seminary will get another \$45,000.

Two seminaries in Romania -- one in Bucharest established by the nation's Baptist union in 1920s and another in Oradea founded two years ago by city's Second Baptist Church -- each will receive \$10,000.

Last year, the board sent \$50,000 to the Oradea church to provide facilities for its new school.

Property for the eight seminaries already has been obtained. FMB funds will assist with construction costs; classroom equipment; curriculum development; translation or writing of textbooks and subsequent publication; and library grants, as well as general operating budget needs.

Reflecting the importance they attach to the action, trustees instructed staff to distribute a news release describing the reallocation of funds.

Some trustees have expressed anger and disappointment that their defunding of Ruschlikon last year received more public scrutiny than their decision to send the money to other seminaries in nations recently freed from communist control.

Trustees muted their reaction to recent aggressive fund-raising efforts in the United States by Ruschlikon seminary and instead asked staff to communicate their concerns of policy violation to seminary president John David Hopper.

FMB policy prohibits missionaries from soliciting funds directly from churches for their ministries. Last year, Ruschlikon seminary launched a wide-ranging fund-raising campaign and Hopper, a board-appointed missionary, spoke in a number of Southern Baptist churches in support of the school.

Trustees said his activity violated long-standing rules, although Hopper maintained he spoke only in churches who issued an invitation to him. Prior to the February board meeting, at least one trustee called for Hopper to be fired.

But in a closed-door meeting of the Europe committee, trustees agreed to let president Keith Parks and interim vice president for Europe Winston Crawley express their concerns to Hopper, said committee chairman Steve Hardy.

Hardy, of Burlington, N.C., said Hopper would not be fired, but would be asked to abide by board policy. Later, board chairman William Hancock of Louisville, Ky., said Parks and Crawley would report the results of their discussion with Hopper to trustees in April.

Hancock also selected a group of trustees to meet with representatives of the European Baptist Federation, who last month requested discussions on their future relationship with the board.

The group, which is expected to travel to Europe in March, includes

Hardy, Pat Bullock of Corpus Christi, Texas; Joel Gregory of Dallas; John Jackson of Fairfield, Calif.; Hoyt Savage of Las Vegas, Nev.; and John Simms of Salem, Va.

Hancock, who will rotate off the board in June, said he does not plan to go on the trip, although trustees later encouraged him to reconsider. Parks and Crawley will join the group.

The Europe committee also initiated plans to find a successor to Isam Ballenger, who retired as vice president for Europe, the Middle East and North Africa in protest of the defunding of Ruschlikon and other trustee actions.

Hardy said trustees would receive copies of the position's job description and encouraged them to recommend potential nominees by March 15.

The job description suggests a candidate should hold a master of divinity degree; have at least 20 years of administrative and ministerial experience, including at least 15 years as a missionary; and have "knowledge of at least one language other than English."

But Hardy told trustees "we consider these things as more or less ideal. If God has put a man on your heart to recommend and doesn't fit every letter of the guidelines, send his name anyway."

He later told ABP that trustees or staff could modify requirements in the job description if they felt a candidate had comparable experience in other areas.

Hardy said a vice president will be elected before a search is undertaken for a new area director for Europe. Keith Parker, who served in the position until last month, also took early retirement to protest trustee actions.

In other business, trustees:

-- Appointed 17 new missionaries, bringing the total missions force overseas to 3,926 workers living in 122 countries and providing a Christian witness in about a dozen more.

-- Elected William Goff as area director for Spanish South America. Goff, a missionary in Venezuela since 1971, will coordinate the work of missionaries in nine countries. He succeeds Bryan Brasington, who retired late last year.

-- Appropriated \$3,855,000 to finance "Green Alert" activities in the new nations of the former Soviet Union. "Green Alert" procedures allow the board to speed up normal processes to seize missions opportunities amid social upheavals. Communism's collapse in the former Soviet Union triggered the alert last September.

The \$3.85 million, the first allocation of an estimated \$12 million expected to be spent on "Green Alert" activities, includes \$1 million for Bibles and other evangelistic tools.

-- Learned that a trustee subcommittee has selected William Estep, church history professor at Southwestern Seminary, to write a history of the FMB in time for the board's 150th anniversary in 1995.

Johnni Johnson Scofield, retired communications vice president for the board, will serve as the FMB's editor of the book, to be published by Broadman Press in October 1994.

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Hewett says missionaries  
responding to CBF offer

ASHEVILLE, N.C. (ABP) -- "Scores" of dissatisfied Southern Baptist missionaries around the world have contacted the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship asking if they can "switch over" to Fellowship sponsorship and

support, according to moderator John Hewett.

"I get letters and phone calls every day from missionaries sick to death of what the Foreign Mission Board trustees are doing," said Hewett, pastor of First Baptist Church of Asheville, N.C. "Their morale is at rock bottom."

The Fellowship's coordinating council voted Jan. 11 to offer employment to missionaries in Europe after the FMB's top two administrators for the region left in protest of recent trustee actions.

The Foreign Mission Board has 3,926 missionaries working in 122 countries. One missionary couple in Romania already has resigned over FMB policy in Europe. A spokeswoman for the FMB said no others are known to be leaving because of the Fellowship's offer, but she said "there are rumors" of others.

Those who have contacted the Fellowship "are not 'liberals' who deny the Scriptures," Hewett said. "They are God-called Christian ministers, servants who have dedicated their very lives to incarnational evangelism and missions a long way from home."

"I expect increasing numbers of missionaries currently on furlough to remain in the States instead of returning to the field, assuming the FMB trustees would even allow them to," Hewett said.

Hewett and some members of the Fellowship's missions committee, the global missions ministry group, met in Richmond recently with the two departing administrators -- Isam Ballenger, FMB vice president for Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, and Keith Parker, area director for Europe. The pair announced Jan. 7 they could no longer work with FMB trustees and would take early retirement.

Hewett said the Fellowship group sought advice from the two men on how to minister in Europe. "We discussed the possibility that they might wish to be employed by the Fellowship," Hewett added, "but we weren't there to talk employment. We were there to discuss strategy.

"The Fellowship believes these two men know more about Baptist missions in Europe than anyone else on the planet," Hewett said, "and we're not willing to pass them aside. We want to profit from their experience."

Hewett acknowledged the Fellowship may hire Southern Baptists' No. 1 missionary -- embattled FMB President Keith Parks -- if he becomes available. Parks and his trustees will meet privately in March to determine if he has a future with the agency.

"If we're going to offer to employ missionaries who no longer can work with the Foreign Mission Board, it certainly stands to reason that we would make the same kind of offer to missionary executives," Hewett explained. "If Dr. Parks wants to continue to shape a Baptist mission force in the world, he can certainly do that with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship."

Details of such an arrangement would have to worked out, he noted.

Hewett said recent actions of the FMB clearly demonstrate the trustees have a "global agenda," despite their claims to the contrary. "The fact they can't even get a vote to confirm Keith Parks indicates they do have an agenda that is different from the agenda traditionally followed by Southern Baptists."

Hewett repeated his challenge for disgruntled Southern Baptists to send their missions money to the Fellowship. "The Fellowship offers Baptists an alternative way to do missions, free from intimidation and an attempt to control."

So far this year, more Southern Baptists apparently are doing that. In January, the Fellowship received \$732,000 in contributions, about twice the monthly average for 1991. Hewett said the year-to-date total as of Feb. 10 was about \$1 million.

The Fellowship brought in 4.5 million in 1991, but about three-fourths of that was channelled to traditional Baptist agencies and not the Fellowship's own efforts. Fellowship leaders concede the group will need to

generate a massive increase in funding in order to make good on its promise to pick up dissatisfied FMB missionaries in Europe.

Hewett will lead about 50 people on a fact-finding tour Feb. 16-21 to mission points in Europe, particularly the Baptist Theological Seminary at Ruschlikon, Switzerland, which was defunded by FMB trustees in a controversial decision last October.

The trip is intended to spur financial support for Ruschlikon and other ministries of the European Baptist Federation and to encourage mission teams from American churches to do repairs and renovation at European mission sites.

Hewett said he will deliver a check for more than \$250,000 to Ruschlikon president John David Hopper during the visit. The money was sent through the Fellowship by churches and individuals to compensate for the \$365,000 in lost FMB support. Hewett said the Fellowship's financial support of the school will continue.

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-- By Greg Warner

Survey shows U.S. religion  
losing impact, not relevance

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- Although most Americans may think religion is losing its influence, a majority still believes religion has answers for today's problems, according to a recent survey.

The findings released by the Princeton Religion Research Center shows that more than half (57 percent) of the 1,012 adults surveyed believe that religion's impact on society is decreasing. About one in every three Americans responded that religious influence on American life is increasing, while 9 percent were undecided.

Just five years ago, nearly half (49 percent) of respondents thought religious influence on society was increasing.

However, the perception of less societal impact does not preclude Americans from trusting religion to help them tackle contemporary issues.

Fifty-nine percent noted religion can answer all or most of today's problems, while 22 percent said religion is outdated and 19 percent held no opinion.

Religion is viewed as most relevant by blacks (79 percent), Southerners (73 percent) and women (65 percent). Protestants (67 percent) showed more confidence than Catholics (55 percent) in this matter.

In another survey, the Princeton center noted that many white, born-again Christians in Louisiana supported David Duke, the former Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, in his unsuccessful bid for governor. Duke, who claims to be a born-again Christian, garnered six out of every 10 white Protestants (62 percent) and five Catholics in 10 (52 percent), who said they voted for Duke in a statewide exit poll.

Sixty-nine percent of white, Christian fundamentalists supported Duke, while 57 percent of white weekly churchgoers voted for him.

In contrast, only 3 percent of black Protestants and 9 percent of black Catholics voted for Duke.

The Princeton center attributed the Duke vote to his attraction to poorly educated and economically distressed persons who also are politically and religiously conservative. While this description fits a bulk of Louisiana's black voters, they voted against Duke because of the racial issue, the Princeton center noted.

Another survey indicates most Americans believe a personal relationship with Jesus is the only way to salvation. A national, random survey asked 1,005 adults if they agreed that "the only assurance of eternal life is personal faith in Jesus Christ."

Fifty-nine percent said they agree completely with that statement, with 17 percent agreeing somewhat and 21 percent disagreeing. Three percent were undecided.

Blacks (77 percent) were more likely than whites (58 percent) to express personal faith in Christ as the only way to eternal life. Women (65 percent) also were more likely than men (52 percent) to agree completely with this assertion, while Protestants (69 percent) were more inclined toward this position than Catholics (54 percent).

Eighty-five percent of Baptists, compared with 67 percent of Lutherans and 61 percent of Methodists, said they completely agree that Jesus is the only way to salvation.

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-- By Pam Parry

Administration, lawmakers propose  
tax incentives for charitable gifts

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- Some members of Congress and the Bush administration want to make it more attractive for Americans to donate gifts of appreciated property to charitable institutions.

They have proposed to do that by striking a 1986 tax provision that subjected donors of appreciated property to the alternative minimum tax. Appreciated property includes real estate, stocks and tangible items such as art and collectibles whose value rose after being acquired.

The Tax Reform Act of 1986 subjected the appreciated portion of charitable gifts to the alternative minimum tax, a change that precipitated a decline in large gifts to universities, hospitals, museums and other charitable organizations.

But in 1991, after Congress temporarily exempted donations of tangible gifts such as artwork from the alternative minimum tax, gifts in this category skyrocketed.

In a Feb. 10 hearing, representatives of educational, arts and other charitable organizations asked the House Ways and Means Committee to make the exemption permanent and expand it to include all gifts of appreciated property.

Legislation to provide a permanent exclusion for all types of appreciated property has been sponsored by a bipartisan group of senators and representatives. Additionally, President George Bush's 1993 budget proposal -- one version of which was approved Feb. 12 by the Ways and Means Committee -- also would exempt donations of appreciated property from the minimum tax.

The decline in large gifts due to the 1986 tax law change cuts across all types on charitable organizations, including Baptist institutions.

Houston businessman John Baugh, a member of the Baylor University board of regents, said the Texas Baptist institution is among many experiencing a decline in gifts because of the 1986 tax law. Baugh said he is aware of millions of dollars in gifts Baylor would receive if donors were able to make the contributions without being subject to the alternative minimum tax.

Baugh's description of Baylor's experience is typical of universities throughout the country, as testimony on behalf the American Council on Education before the House tax-writing panel showed.

Baugh said the tax on appreciated property gifts produces minimal

amounts of revenue. Potential donors, he said, can simply keep assets rather than donating them when the donation subjects them to the alternative minimum tax.

"I believe the government would come out the winner, as well as educational institutions and other beneficiaries of charitable gifts."

Baugh said the release of the gifts to institutions such as Baylor would lead to construction projects that would benefit the nation's economy. Such job creation, he said, could offset the minimal losses to the treasury.

"When you bottle up significant money, you lose the ripple effect its unleashing would have throughout the economy."

Congressional taxwriters are just beginning the process of drafting a tax bill they hope to have on the president's desk by the March 20 deadline Bush set in his State of the Union address.

It is too early to say for certain whether the final tax package will exempt gifts of appreciated property from the alternative minimum tax. It is also unclear whether Congress will follow the administration's request to offset any revenue loss by imposing reporting requirements on charitable organizations, including churches.

The administration proposal estimated that by having charitable groups report to the Internal Revenue Service annual contributions from donors over \$500, the treasury could gain about \$100 million annually, more than enough to offset the estimated loss from the appreciated gifts exemption.

While religious groups favor exempting appreciated gains from the minimum tax, the proposal to impose a reporting requirement on churches has drawn criticism.

"The appreciated property issue and the reporting requirement for churches are unrelated," said Brent Walker, associate general counsel for the Baptist Joint Committee. "The administration married them for political purposes. It's simply unfair to require churches to pay such an exorbitant price for tax reform that benefits mainly other non-profits, like colleges, museums and art galleries."

Walker noted that churches already are exempted from the annual reports required of other charitable organizations.

"The appreciated property bill is a good one and should be passed, but not at the expense of churches and their members," he said.

In an effort to resolve the reporting issue, representatives of religious groups met recently with administration officials.

"We had a constructive meeting with officials of the Treasury Department and IRS," said BJC General Counsel Oliver Thomas. "I am hopeful that the administration will alter its proposal, but at this point we have no assurances."

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-- By Larry Chesser

State Baptist newspapers  
could face rate increase

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- State Baptist newspapers could face a double-digit rate increase in 1993 if Congress approves President George Bush's budget proposal.

However, a spokesman for the Alliance of Nonprofit Mailers said, if history is an indicator, Congress would not enact that proposal.

The budget proposes \$122 million -- \$360 million less than the U.S. Postal Service requested -- for the non-profit mail subsidy, known as revenue

foregone. Revenue foregone reimburses the Postal Service for the non-profit mailers' share of overhead expenses. Non-profit rates reflect only the cost of handling that class of mail.

If the budget proposal is approved, second-class non-profit mailers could see a 17 percent rate hike and third-class non-profit rates could spiral 31 percent, estimated Dan Doherty, executive director of the Alliance of Nonprofit Mailers. Most state Baptist newspapers are second-class non-profit mailers.

In addition to the reduced funding, the budget also proposes ending or restricting preferred rate status for second-class non-profit mail with more than 10 percent advertising and for third-class non-profit mail with advertising, advocacy material or educational data for organizations that are not schools.

Doherty does not think Congress will enact the budget proposal, but if it is approved, some non-profit mailers would lose eligibility entirely and others would have difficulty surviving, he said.

He noted the 1993 budget proposal is "hardly a new scenario" because Bush proposed a similar cut to revenue foregone last year. Congress took steps to prevent a rate increase for most non-profit mail in 1992.

While Doherty is somewhat confident, he said that non-profit mailers must take the proposal seriously because the economy is in bad shape and legislators are having to tighten the federal government's belt. Non-profit mailers have many sympathetic supporters on Capitol Hill, but legislators have multiple concerns and interests, he added.

Bush challenged Congress to approve his budget by March 20 during his third State of the Union address.

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-- By Pam Parry

Southern trustees end dispute  
with two professors but not third

By Marv Knox

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (ABP) -- Trustees of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary reportedly closed the door on several years of controversy for two professors, but they apparently left it ajar for a third.

Meeting in Louisville last week, the trustees' academic personnel committee issued warnings but "brought to a conclusion several years of continuing concern related to certain writings" of Glenn Hinson, church history professor, and Molly Marshall, associate theology professor, according to a joint statement by President Roy Honeycutt and trustee chairman Wayne Allen, a pastor from Cordova, Tenn.

Undetermined, however, is the fate of Paul Simmons, professor of ethics.

The trio of teachers have been criticized by trustees who have claimed their work is outside the mainstream of Baptist thought.

Trustees did not disclose the nature of their complaints. However, in the past Hinson has been criticized for his views on the deity of Christ, Marshall for her views on salvation, and Hinson for his views on abortion.

The charges against Hinson and Marshall have been led by John Michael, a businessman from Louisville; the claims against Simmons have been leveled by David Miller, an associational director of missions from Heber Springs, Ark.

The academic personnel committee deliberated for 11 hours Feb. 3. It reported to the trustee executive committee the following day. It delivered part of its report behind closed doors "because of the highly sensitive

nature of these personnel concerns," according to the statement from Honeycutt and Allen.

"The academic personnel committee reported that it had instructed President Honeycutt to 'warn the professors that if in the future one should teach the positions which someone interpreted them to have expressed, he or she might be in violation of the Abstract of Principles (the seminary's governing document) and thus be in jeopardy of dismissal," the statement said.

"We are encouraged by the trustees' careful resolution of this important and sensitive matter," it added. "We are grateful that the action taken satisfies the concerns raised without constituting a punitive action against the two faculty members.

"Having brought closure to these lingering concerns, we are eager to move forward under the promise of the covenant of renewal between the trustees and the faculty and administration, adopted overwhelmingly last April by both trustees and faculty."

Both Marshall and Hinson said the responsibility for maintaining the "closure" lies with trustees.

"I am hopeful that the action of the trustees will give me the freedom to pursue my vocation as an equipper of ministers," Marshall noted. "And I am counting on our trustees to make sure the issues of concern are closed."

"I'm not going to be hounded for things I wrote way back there," said Hinson, who is on sabbatical leave in Oxford, England. "I don't have to worry about that being brought up.

"On the other hand, what is it that you do when you teach? Someone asks you a question and honestly you have to answer in response to that. Some student reports that to John Michael, and he's on your back again. To me, it does not take away the threat even of things of the past."

Hinson interpreted the warning as saying, "'If you say something that gets these people upset again, then your job is in jeopardy.'

"A great part of the absolutist approach is trying to intimidate -- having things hang over people. This is what the fundamentalists used, just like the communists used. It makes everybody afraid to speak or write. It basically is intimidation."

Michael, the trustee who had issued criticism of the professors, said the cases are closed.

"I am very supportive of the action, and I am glad and in agreement that this will bring closure to concerns of the past," he noted. "I am very much looking forward to proceeding on with the mission of the seminary without the need for continued discussion on these issues."

Asked about the nature of the warning and its implications for future disciplinary action, Michael cited the restrictions of the closed session under which trustees met and said he was not at liberty to elaborate.

Other trustees also said they felt honor-bound by the rules of the closed session and declined to interpret the warning. They also would not discuss the case of Simmons, the third professor who had been openly criticized but whose name was not mentioned in the joint statement.

Honeycutt and Allen both were traveling following the meeting and were unavailable for comment.

The status of Simmons was harder to determine.

Simmons said he was told that Honeycutt's report to the personnel committee, which stated "there were no grounds for dismissing me, was not accepted."

"The committee said: 'We don't accept that at this stage. We're going to receive that as information and try and get further counsel on it,'" explained Simmons.

Seminary Provost Larry McSwain said of Simmons: "There is no change in his status at this time. The trustees have taken no action relative to Paul

Simmons at this time."

McSwain also said the rules of the closed session prohibited him from commenting on details of the trustees' discussion. He did, however, elaborate on the warning received by Marshall and Hinson.

"The first thing it means is that the trustees made no judgment about the teachings of the faculty members involved," he said. "They were communicating a judgment of what would be inappropriate, and the specifics of that are clear to the individual faculty members and cannot be discussed publicly."

Seminary professors discussed the trustees' action during a faculty meeting last week. One professor, who asked to remain anonymous, noted: "Satisfying the concerns of one trustee has been at the expense of two faculty members who received a warning for charges the president, the provost and the dean found indefensible. ... It's like tossing him a bone -- and a pound of flesh is attached."

Gerald Keown, an Old Testament professor and president of the Faculty Association, said professors have mixed feelings about the outcome.

"It's a tough call in some ways," he said. "We are disturbed on the one hand that the trustees continue to address issues we thought should have been closed long ago. At the same time, we are pleased to hear that this should bring closure.

"We think the protest that the charges were unfounded should have been taken more seriously," Keown said. "We felt there were no grounds for concerns and don't like the warning that was done. On the other hand, we understand the political climate under which we work, and we are pleased to think this would have put an end to those concerns."

About the future, Keown added: "We are trying to find ways that are constructive to work with trustees that will lead to a positive outcome. This is very difficult, because we have such diverse constituencies.

"This is a very difficult, very delicate situation."

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Michael Clingenpeel elected  
editor of Religious Herald

RICHMOND, Va. (ABP) -- Virginia Baptist pastor Michael Clingenpeel has been elected editor of the Religious Herald, newsjournal of the Baptist General Association of Virginia.

Trustees of the Herald unanimously elected Clingenpeel Feb. 10 at a called meeting of the board in Richmond. He is expected to assume the position around May 1.

Clingenpeel, 41, succeeds Julian Pentecost, who will retire at the end of April after 22 years as editor of the 164-year-old Virginia Baptist newsjournal.

Since 1983, Clingenpeel has been pastor of Franklin Baptist Church in southeastern Virginia. Prior to that time he served as pastor of Packard Road Baptist Church in Ann Arbor, Mich., 1979-83, and Bear Creek Baptist Church in Scipio, Ind., 1975-79.

Clingenpeel is currently first vice chairman of the Religious Herald board of trustees and has served as a trustee since 1986.

Clingenpeel holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Richmond and master's and doctor's degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. He has done additional study in sociology at the University of Kentucky, Lexington.

Although born in Ocala, Fla., he has lived in Virginia most of his life. His wife, the former Vivian Stephenson, is a lawyer and the daughter of

former Virginia Baptist executive director Richard Stephenson of Falls Church, Va.

Clingenpeel has been active in Virginia Baptist life, serving as the BGAV's first vice president in 1988. While in Michigan he was a trustee of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

The Clingenpeels have one 8-year-old son, Timothy James.

"Never has the ministry of the Religious Herald been so vital....," Clingenpeel told trustees following his election.

"To champion the lofty principles of freedom and cooperative missions we must do everything within our power to maintain the freedom of the Religious Herald's editorial posture."

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### First 3 Baptist women ordained in Cuba

MARIANO, Cuba (ABP) -- Cuban Baptists ordained their first three women pastors Jan. 11.

The ordination of Ena Garcia, Clara Rodes and Xiomara Diaz Gutierrez took place at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Marianao, a suburb of Havana. All three women graduated from the Baptist seminary in Havana in the late 1960s and have served many years in pastoral roles.

Apparently only a few Cuban women ever have been ordained -- perhaps only one Presbyterian and two or three Methodist women previously, said Jualynne Dodson, a sociologist who has taught at Princeton and Yale and made nine trips to Cuba.

Dodson was part of a 13-person visiting group of women pastors and religious leaders from the United States and Canada. The group, representing affiliations with four Baptist conventions, came on a week-long Women's Friendship Tour to Cuba sponsored by the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America.

About 250 people squeezed into the church for the ordination service, which was noted during a Cuban television news program the next day. The broadcast marks a new trend in Cuba after three decades of virtually ignoring religious people and their practices.

One of the North Americans, Prathia Hall Wynn, a pastor in Philadelphia and an executive of the Progressive National Baptist Convention, delivered the ordination sermon.

The tour group took more than \$2,000 worth of supplies -- mostly simple medicines and hygiene products -- as a gift to Cuban Baptist churches.

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