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Henry will seek
SBC presidency

By Greg Warner

ORLANDO, Fla. (ABP) -- Orlando pastor Jim Henry said March 27 he will be a candidate for president of the Southern Baptist Convention when the annual convention meets in his hometown this summer.

"After much prayer, thought and counsel, I believe it to be God's will that I offer myself as a candidate for the presidency . . .," Henry told the Palm Sunday congregation at First Baptist Church of Orlando.

Henry's likely opponent is Fred Wolfe, pastor of Cottage Hill Baptist Church in Mobile, Ala., who threw his hat into the ring Feb. 8.

Both men are leaders in the conservative movement that since 1979 has controlled the Southern Baptist Convention by controlling the presidential election.

But unlike most previous presidential elections, which have pitted SBC conservatives against moderates, the Henry-Wolfe showdown reveals differences among conservatives over what type of leadership their movement needs in the future.

Wolfe, a highly visible figure in the 15-year political fray, carries the endorsement of at least two previous conservative presidents -- megachurch pastors Adrian Rogers of Memphis, Tenn., and Jerry Vines of Jacksonville, Fla. He also was endorsed by a group of state-level political strategists who want to extend conservative control into the various state

Baptist conventions.

Henry, though he supports the SBC's conservative swing, has shied away from denominational politics. He told the Orlando Sentinel March 27 he wants to "build community and fellowship and love in this (denominational) body."

"I will not have a structured campaign effort but trust the Holy Spirit to speak to the hearts and minds of my brothers and sisters in Christ as they choose their leadership for the near future," he told his congregation March 27. "In that process and in the sovereignty of God I have complete trust."

Henry has said he too has been encouraged to seek the presidency by key Southern Baptist leaders but he has declined to identify them.

Support may come from conservative leaders like Jack Graham, pastor of the 12,000-member Prestonwood Baptist Church in Dallas, who have called for a new style of Southern Baptist leadership.

Graham, who may nominate Henry, said March 22 he plans to gather conservatives together in the next several months to examine "the current status of the denomination and to move forward with a fresh agenda for the future."

Graham and others have been troubled by continued strife in the denomination, particularly the sudden firing of seminary president Russell Dilday March 9 by conservative trustees. Graham said Dilday's dismissal from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary "does not serve the best interest of the cause of Christ" and only fuels the persuasion that fundamental-conservatives are unloving and mean-spirited."

Southern Baptists disturbed by Dilday's firing may use Henry's candidacy as a way to express their displeasure with current SBC leadership, which has described the firing as part of the on-going transition of power in the denomination.

Henry was not available March 28 to discuss his nomination.

Graham, a longtime friend of Henry, said March 28 he has not been asked to nominate the Orlando pastor but will "pray about it" if asked.

Although Henry and Wolfe differ on the future direction of the conservative movement, they have much in common. Both are 56, conservative and have served long pastorates in prominent Baptist churches.

Henry, who has been pastor of his Orlando church for 16 years, is expected to benefit from having the convention meet in his hometown. He is a former trustee of two Southern Baptist agencies, the Sunday School Board and the Foreign Mission Board. He also served on the SBC Peace Committee, which in the late 1980s tried to quell the tempest in the denomination.

Wolfe has been pastor of the Mobile congregation for 23 years. He currently serves as chairman of the powerful SBC Executive Committee, which controls the SBC's annual \$146 million budget, the Cooperative Program.

The Cooperative Program may become a factor in the Henry-Wolfe debate. Now in its third straight year of decline, the Cooperative Program has apparently become a victim in the ongoing SBC controversy.

Critics say conservative churches, traditionally low in Cooperative Program support, have not taken up the slack of moderate churches that reduced or diverted their funding to other causes in recent years.

First Baptist of Orlando, where Henry is pastor, has been a consistent leader in Cooperative Program funding, leading all SBC churches in CP contributions in 1992. The church gave \$843,732 in 1993, or 13 percent of undesignated receipts.

Cottage Hill Church, where Wolfe has been pastor for 23 years, gave \$183,333 to the CP in 1993, church officials said. But the 8,800-member church has been below the national average in Cooperative Program percentage giving.

Wolfe told members of the Executive Committee last September that the

church gives about 5 percent of its receipts to the CP. He pledged to improve that record by half a percent a year until the church reached 10 percent.

Wolfe told the Orlando Sentinel he expects the presidential election to be close but he is not disappointed Henry decided to run.

"If he feels like it's God's will for him to be nominated, I certainly believe that he knows God's will," Wolfe said. "We just want God's will to be done in the convention."

Henry told his congregation he is convinced God wants him to be a candidate, and that's more important than winning. He asked his parishioners not to pray that he wins.

"Being in God's will in this matter ... does not necessarily translate into a victory," he said. "I have complete peace that I will be in God's will, win or lose."

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-- This story includes information from Adelle Banks of the Orlando Sentinel and Toby Druin of the Baptist Standard.

Provost William Tolar named
acting president at Southwestern

FORT WORTH, Texas (ABP) -- Trustees of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary appointed Provost William Tolar as acting president March 29, temporarily filling the void left when trustees fired President Russell Dilday March 9.

Tolar, 65, has been a professor and/or administrator at the Fort Worth, Texas, school since 1965. He served first as professor of biblical backgrounds, was appointed dean of the School of Theology in 1981, and became vice president for academic affairs and provost in 1990.

A native of Jonesboro, La., Tolar has led a group of seminary vice presidents that has directed the school's day-to-day operation since the firing.

Tolar's appointment was announced at a news conference in the Truett Conference Room, the same room where trustees abruptly dismissed Dilday three weeks earlier.

Trustees accused Dilday of mismanagement and insubordination, charges Dilday and his supporters say are false and contrived.

A search committee headed by Fort Worth pastor Miles Seaborn is seeking Dilday's successor.

Tolar holds a bachelor's and master's degree from Baylor University, where he later taught for 10 years, and a doctorate in theology from Southwestern. He is married to the former Floye Kimball. The couple has two grown children.

A popular speaker, Tolar was pastor of three Texas churches and has served numerous interim pastorates.

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-- By Greg Warner

Texas moderates weigh options
for protesting Dilday firing

By Greg Warner

DALLAS (ABP) -- Moderate Texas Baptists outraged by the firing of seminary president Russell Dilday met with leaders of the state Baptist convention March 26 to discuss ways to voice their displeasure.

But the consensus, according to participants, was to work through established denominational channels and not pursue radical measures.

Since the March 9 firing of Dilday by trustees of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, some Texas Baptists had talked about starting another seminary, withholding contributions from the Fort Worth school or even leading the state convention to secede from the national Southern Baptist Convention, which since 1979 has followed a decidedly conservative course.

But the estimated 50 moderate leaders who attended the March 26 meeting in Dallas eschewed those options for a more traditional approach, said Houston pastor Daniel Vestal.

"The overall consensus was to make our influence felt through official channels," said Vestal, a member of the executive committee of Texas Baptists Committed, a moderate organization that called the meeting.

Those channels include a study committee that is already weighing the involvement of Texas Baptists in the national budget of the Southern Baptist Convention, the Cooperative Program.

Some Texas Baptists are calling for the state convention to reduce the portion of church contributions that is passed on to the Cooperative Program in protest of the conservative domination of national SBC agencies like Southwestern.

That portion -- now 35 percent -- likely will drop, said Phil Lineberger, a former state convention president and pastor of First Baptist Church of Tyler.

Such a change may come from the Cooperative Giving Study Committee or from the floor of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, which meets this fall, Lineberger said.

Baptist Committed invited leaders of the Baptist General Convention of Texas to the March 26 meeting to discuss the ramifications of the Dilday firing. Participants included Jerold McBride of San Angelo, state convention president; Leroy Fenton of Waxahachie, chairman of the BGCT executive board; and Cecil Ray of Georgetown, chairman of the Cooperative Giving Study Committee. McBride could not be reached for comment.

Also participating were representatives of Truett Seminary, which was established by Baylor University in response to fears SBC fundamental-conservatives would eventually control Southwestern. Present were Baylor President Herb Reynolds, Truett Dean Robert Sloan and Associate Dean Brad Creed.

While some Texas Baptists are suggesting the state convention start its own seminary, there was little enthusiasm for that at the March 26 meeting, according to participants.

"The consensus is Truett inherits the mantle of Southwestern," said Vestal, pastor of Tallowood Baptist Church in Houston. "We are very grateful that the Truett Seminary is in place, and we hope it will give leadership to Texas Baptists in theological education. ... There is a tremendous vacuum now."

Truett, located near the Baylor campus 90 miles south of Southwestern, will open its doors this fall. While Baylor traditionally sends more students to Southwestern than any other college, Truett is expected to draw many students otherwise bound for Southwestern.

Truett officials report no major influx of Southwestern students since the firing, but the new seminary reportedly is prepared to expand its student

limit if necessary.

Southwestern trustees who fired Dilday said no other changes are planned at the Fort Worth seminary, the largest of six operated by the SBC. But Vestal and others are convinced the damage is done and transformation of the school is inevitable.

"As the Southern Baptist Convention goes, so goes Southwestern, because it is an agency of the Southern Baptist Convention," Vestal said.

Vestal said the effect of Dilday's firing on Texas Baptists has been "traumatic" and "sobering."

"What was done to Southwestern Seminary was not done to Southern Baptists but was done primarily to Texas Baptists," added Lineberger. "Texas Baptists, in their psyche and heart, still feel ownership of Southwestern Seminary," which was founded at Baylor and once owned by the state convention.

The largest state convention affiliated with the SBC, with an annual budget of \$63 million, the Baptist General Convention of Texas holds significant sway in the national body. Despite the gains made by conservatives nationally, moderates in Texas remain in firm control of their state convention.

The state convention's size, coupled with the legendary independent mindset of Texans, could lead the state's Baptists to chart a course distinct from the national convention, Lineberger suggested.

"Texas Baptists do not need the Southern Baptist Convention to make an impact," Lineberger said, "but the Southern Baptist Convention cannot make a strong and lasting impact without Texas Baptists."

That's not a threat, he added, just reality -- and testimony to the fact Baptists are not run by a top-down hierarchy.

The result, he said, may be a Texas Baptist budget that allows churches to pick and choose what causes to support and how to channel their money, all the while maintaining their status as "cooperative" churches.

Talk of secession from the SBC is far-fetched, however, the Texas pastors said.

Individual churches may decide to reduce or eliminate their involvement in the SBC because "they are tired of the political control of the Southern Baptist Convention by fundamentalists," said Vestal. But, he said, "Baptists Committed is not trying to get people to leave the Southern Baptist Convention. That's not what we are about."

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Cost of Dilday firing
\$15 million, group says

By Bob Allen

FORT WORTH, Texas (ABP) -- The firing of President Russell Dilday has cost Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary at least \$15 million in gifts and pledges, according to a memorandum sent to a group of the Fort Worth, Texas, school's leading benefactors March 24.

The memo, to members of the Southwestern Council from the group's current and past chairman, reported that 20 to 25 members of the 114-member council have resigned in wake of Dilday's March 9 firing by seminary trustees.

"More resignations are coming daily," said council chairman John McNaughton and past chairman Jerry Yowell, both of Fort Worth. Other members "have expressed their intention to do so." For the most part, those who have

resigned from the council have canceled gifts and pledges as well, they said.

"It is definite that at least \$15 million in gifts and pledges have been canceled in total at the seminary and it is expected that the total will continue to rise as individuals, institutions and foundations cancel their gifts and pledges," they said.

The Southwestern Council advises the administration on promotion and planning and helps raise money for capital needs, endowment and student aid.

Since 1990, members of the group have given and pledged nearly \$4.2 million to the seminary, along with leading in other multi-million-dollar fund-raising efforts.

Members of the council were sent a questionnaire about events surrounding Dilday's firing. Trustees, at the end of a tumultuous meeting March 7-9, voted 26-7 in executive session to fire Dilday, president of the Fort Worth-based seminary since 1978, after Dilday refused to accept immediate retirement.

Out of the first 60 responses, 59 Southwestern Council members responded that they support Dilday and "abhor" the firing and the methods used to carry it out, the memo said.

"It is felt overwhelmingly that the action by the trustees has already caused irreparable damage to the seminary and will certainly cause more and greater division within factions of the SBC," the chairmen said.

Council members were particularly offended that trustees voted to fire Dilday after recently giving him a vote of confidence and that locks to Dilday's office and his computer password were changed at his dismissal.

"It is inconceivable to believe that (such) actions ... expressed the love of Christ," McNaughton and Yowell said.

The chairman of the seminary's board of trustees, Dallas attorney Ralph Pulley, described the council as "an encourager and support group" for the seminary, "although some (members) appear to support a person instead of the institution."

Pulley acknowledged "there is obviously some unrest there," but said he hopes "as the matter settles down our Southwestern Council will continue their effort for the seminary and continue their direction in support of the institution."

Pulley said he cannot gauge what impact the loss of \$15 million in pledges will have on the seminary. "We certainly would regret the loss of any support regardless of what size it is."

However, he said, the decision to dismiss Dilday was not made "on a basis of whether we're going to lose dollars or not lose dollars. It's a whole lot deeper than that."

Pulley also said he does not intend to call a special meeting to reconsider the Dilday firing, though some trustees have asked for it.

"The decision has been made," said Pulley. "It was made by almost 80 percent of those present and voting. You can't go back."

At least two trustees have called for trustees to convene an emergency meeting to consider reinstating Dilday.

One trustee, Wayne Allen, pastor of First Baptist Church, Carrollton, Texas, has written a letter to fellow board members calling for an emergency session and proposing that Dilday be reinstated.

Another, Bob Anderson, pastor of Parkview Baptist Church in Baton Rouge, said he plans to "strongly encourage" the board's chairman to call a meeting to reconsider the firing. He advocated a compromise reinstating Dilday for two years. Dilday, 63, has said he wanted to stay on until age 67 or 68.

Instead of looking back, Pulley said, trustees are "moving forward" with a search committee chaired by Fort Worth pastor Miles Seaborn and a process for appointing an interim president.

Neither process is on a timetable "at this point," Pulley said.

Pulley said trustees "certainly are sensitive to the feelings" of vocal critics of the board's decision, which include both moderates and conservatives. However, he predicted "as time goes on and this thing unfolds" it will become apparent that "this action the board took was under the direction of the Lord."

In another development, 91 students, faculty and staff at the Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond signed an open letter of support for the Southwestern community. The letter conveyed "sadness at the firing of your president, Dr. Russell Dilday," and offered "our support and prayers to each person affected at your school."

"We know this must be a very confusing and painful time for each of you. Many here at our school have known the pain of demonic political acts done in the guise of Christian holiness," the letter said.

The seminary, located in Richmond, Va., was established five years ago to provide moderate Southern Baptists an alternative to the six SBC seminaries falling increasingly under the influence of fundamental-conservative boards of trustees.

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NOTE: The following story was inadvertently omitted from the March 22 issue.

Students protest Dilday firing;
area pastors seek clarification

By Bob Allen

FORT WORTH, Texas (ABP) -- Students at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary staged a show of support for fired seminary President Russell Dilday and Fort Worth area pastors gathered to listen as trustees explained the reasons for the ouster in meetings March 21.

Students meeting at Gambrell Street Baptist Church, across the street from the seminary's Fort Worth, Texas, campus, adopted a resolution calling the firing "un-Christian" and asking trustees to reverse it.

The resolution charged the board with violating due process and forsaking honesty and truth in their handling of Dilday's firing.

It "implore(d) the board of trustees to be accountable both to the students whose best interest they have pledged to protect and to the members of churches which have entrusted them with this institution."

The resolution called upon members of the board "to repent of their un-Christian behaviors, to ask forgiveness of those they have wronged and to restore the vitality and academic integrity of the institution by reversing their actions."

Signatures are being collected to attach to the resolution, which will then be sent to individual trustees and to Baptist state papers, said Robby Jones, a fourth-year theology student appointed to moderate discussion of the resolution and to preside at a press conference March 22.

Southwestern does not have an officially-sanctioned student government organization. So, an ad hoc "group of concerned students" drafted the statement and scheduled an impromptu meeting for its consideration, he said. He emphasized the group does not speak for the student body.

Jones said about 500 students attended the meeting. Reportedly, about a

dozen of those attending voted against the statement.

The group convened the meeting because "we hadn't had a chance to have our concerns voiced as students," Jones said. "There needed to be a place we could come together and have a unified voice."

Jones said "we really don't have a goal" for the number of signatures the group hopes to collect. "My personal opinion as a student here is a majority of students would agree with it," he said.

Earlier March 21, about 60 ministers of Baptist churches in Tarrant County met with three trustees from their association at Travis Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth.

The two-hour, closed-door meeting was convened by David George, pastor of Lake Arlington Baptist Church, for clarification of the reasons Dilday was fired.

The meeting was not sponsored by the association, George said. "I asked if trustees from Tarrant County would meet with any of the pastors who would choose to meet."

The trustees -- Miles Seaborn, a Fort Worth pastor; Ollin Collins, a pastor from Watauga; and Lee Weaver, a petroleum engineer and trustee vice chairman -- read a prepared press release and fielded questions about the action, George said.

The press release accused Dilday of "mismanagement," "insubordination" and embarrassing and damaging the seminary by refusing to retire under generous terms proposed by trustees.

According to one pastor who attended the meeting, "probably 15" people from the audience rose to speak in dialogue with the trustees and "there might have been two who gave a pat on the back" to the trustees.

Most, he said, advised the trustees their statement would do more harm than good.

George initiated the meeting not in any official capacity, but as "just a pastor in the community," he said.

"Tarrant Baptist Association has a deep fellowship among the pastors," George said. "Two of these men (trustees) are pastors of Tarrant Association. We didn't want there to be a lack of communication and a rift in our association as a result of the actions and responses to actions of the trustees."

"We didn't change anybody's minds," George said. "That wasn't what we were there for. Basically we did what we set out to accomplish. We gave a forum for our pastors to ask questions and hear the heart and the motive for these trustees who were pastors in our association."

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WMU board votes to accept
\$100,000 gift from Fellowship

By Bob Allen

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (ABP) -- Woman's Missionary Union will not take the advice that it turn down a \$100,000 gift from the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

According to a March 24 press release, the WMU's 36-member executive board voted unanimously to reaffirm a January 1993 decision to accept contributions for WMU and related missions needs, including the one-time gift approved by the Fellowship's coordinating council in February.

At a meeting a few days after the Fellowship's action, Southern Baptist

Foreign Mission Board President Jerry Rankin advised WMU Executive Director Dellanna O'Brien that declining the contribution would "send a clear and unequivocal signal" that the 106-year-old auxiliary stands behind the work of the Home and Foreign Mission boards of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The Fellowship is a loose-knit moderate organization which offers Southern Baptists an alternative missions program to those of the SBC's foreign and home boards, arguing those agencies are corrupted by takeover by the convention's right wing. However, some Fellowship funds are designated by the churches or individuals who give them to go to SBC agencies. In the past three years, the Fellowship has forwarded about \$8.7 million to SBC causes.

Until the February gift, however, none of that money had gone to WMU, which receives no funds from the SBC through the Cooperative Program unified budget.

"It is significant to us that the money which has been given to WMU has come from Southern Baptists," said Carolyn Miller, president of the 1.2-million-member woman's organization that in its history has led Southern Baptists to raise more than \$2 billion to support Southern Baptist missions.

The WMU accepts annual gifts of appreciation from the Home and Foreign Mission boards, Miller pointed out. "Anytime we receive a gift in appreciation for our contribution in missions it is especially meaningful."

The fact that WMU is taking money from the Fellowship does not mean it is taking sides in the long-running conflict between moderates and conservatives in the SBC, said O'Brien. "Missions has been and always will be WMU's only purpose for existence," she said.

The \$100,000 gift will be used for projects like hunger projects planned by WMU through 1995, establishing a job corps offering training and help in finding jobs for Christian women and implementing women's work in developing countries, the press release said.

Those kinds of programs are part of a future vision of WMU laid out in a radical revamping of the organization's program statement last year. To make those types of expansion possible, the WMU executive board stated its willingness to accept contributions to its work. While such gifts had been accepted in the past, they were with little fanfare or acknowledgement that WMU could put the money to good use. WMU raises most of its support through literature sales.

The executive board authorized its finance committee to receive undesignated gifts. Since several members have come onto the board since the January 1993 decision, however, the finance committee decided to include the full board in the decision of what to do with the Fellowship funds.

"Given the significance and amount of the gift, we felt that new board members should have an explanation of the January 1993 board action," said Janet Hoffman, Louisiana board member and finance committee chair, "and that all board members should have the opportunity to discuss the matter."

Small group discussions were held by telephone conference calls prior to a vote by mail ballot.

During the decision making process, rumors were rampant that WMU was being pressured to refuse the gift under threat that Foreign Mission Board trustees would retaliate by forbidding WMU to promote its Lottie Moon Offering for foreign missions.

Rankin dismissed such speculation, saying the Foreign Mission Board would consider WMU a "partner," regardless if they should accept the money or not.

In a statement issued March 25, Rankin reiterated that support. "We continue to be grateful for all the WMU does as a partner in missions education and promotion of prayer and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering," he said.

However, the statement continued, "At a time when we are seeing record missionary appointments and unprecedented response overseas, we regret that WMU is being put in a position of divided loyalty, rather than continuing their historical position of exclusive support of the Home and Foreign Mission boards and a unified convention missions program."

O'Brien, in a statement released through WMU's communications office, denied that WMU has a "divided loyalty."

"How can you call "disloyal" an organization that:

- promotes only the offerings of the Home and Foreign Mission boards;
- devotes ongoing missions education materials exclusively to the Home and Foreign Mission boards;
- encourages its members to be faithful in prayer for missionaries of the Home and Foreign Mission boards;
- and trains up its children and youth to be missions leaders of tomorrow?" she asked.

The Fellowship's gift was offered "without any consideration given to potential political ramifications for WMU," said David Wilkinson, communications coordinator for the Atlanta-based Fellowship. "That may have been perceived by many people as being naive, but it was a gift offered in good faith and a positive and constructive spirit."

The gift was "simply what we thought was an appropriate gesture on the part of CBF global missions toward a partner in missions education and missions support," said Wilkinson.

"We regret the time and energy that WMU has had to invest in defending itself, but that seems to be the order of the day in Southern Baptist life," he said.

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Clinton discusses his faith
on national TV news program

By Larry Chesser

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- President Bill Clinton, a Southern Baptist, believes in Jesus Christ, but not in using the office of the presidency to force his beliefs on others, he told ABC News recently.

Clinton told ABC News religion correspondent Peggy Wehmeyer, in interviews aired March 22 and 23, he's comfortable using language referring to Christ as his Savior.

"As a Christian, that's how I know God," Clinton said. "I mean, I know God through Jesus. That's what the Christians do."

What he is not comfortable with, Clinton said, is using his office to say, "You must do that, you must believe that, you must be governed by these laws, because that's what the Bible told me to do to you."

Clinton, a member of Immanuel Baptist Church in Little Rock, Ark., said he has had an aversion since youth to people who seemed to be publicly pious.

"I've never wanted to be seen as a Pharisee," he said.

Nonetheless, personal faith is important to him, he said.

"I do not believe I could do my job as president, much less continue to try to grow as a person, in the absence of my faith in God and my attempt to learn more about what it should be and to grow," he told ABC. "And it provides a solace and support in the face of all these problems that I sometimes am not smart enough to solve."

The president told ABC he wasn't in the White House long before

realizing that "unless I could mature spiritually, unless I could sort of reach beyond myself, I would not be able to do right by the American people."

In the most competitive of professions, Clinton said he tries not to pray for personal advantage.

"I just try to pray to do my job better," he said. His prayers, he said, seek help "to do a better job tomorrow at being president, at being a father, at being a husband, at being a person.

"It's a very humbling job, this job," he said.

Clinton said the God he believes in is a God of second chances.

"The important thing to me about ... my life and my faith is that every day I get to get up and try again."

ABC's two-part report also highlighted the rift between Clinton and some American evangelicals, including many fellow Southern Baptists, who criticize the president's views on issues such as abortion and homosexuality.

One of the president's critics is Ed Young, president of the 15.4-million member Southern Baptist Convention.

"The agenda that he is pursuing is totally, in my view at least, contradictory to the faith that he has professed," Young told ABC.

That was not the first time Young questioned Clinton's religious views. At the Texas Baptist Evangelism Conference in January, Young held up Clinton as an example of someone who separates his religious belief from his life.

Clinton discussed the abortion and homosexual issues.

"I think there are too many abortions in America," he told ABC. "I think there should be much more adoption in America. But I do not believe that it is self-evident from the Bible that all abortions are murder."

The issue of homosexuality, he said, "did not make it into the Ten Commandments, but 'thou shalt not bear false witness' did. And so I would say if you don't want to vote for me, that's fine.

"But it's not right to go around saying that everybody's Christianity or religious faith or character should be evaluated totally in terms of these two issues."

Besides the critics, the president also has his supporters, including Immanuel pastor Rex Horne, who told ABC, "I believe that he sees the need in his life and his family and in the country to recognize the spiritual value of faith."

And American Baptist Churches professor Tony Campolo, who told ABC he met with Clinton "because I wanted him to know that there were evangelicals who loved him and wanted to reach out to him and hold him up before the Lord in prayer and care for him as a person."

ABC's Peter Jennings said Clinton thinks he has been misrepresented by many evangelical critics.

"Only God knows the truth of a person's heart and the full facts of a person's life, not only what they have done but what they have not done," Clinton told ABC.

The president described himself as "an honest, struggling believer trying to grow every day, trying to learn more every day, praying for guidance every day and never pretending to be anything other than (what) I am -- a person who has sinned, as a child of God, who has sought forgiveness, searched for redemption and is struggling to grow and struggling to find the guidance of God in this job."

First family drops in on Dallas-area church

By Orville Scott

DALLAS (ABP) -- While in Dallas for his brother's wedding, President Bill Clinton and his wife and daughter visited First Baptist Church of Richardson, Texas, March 26 to hear a message by his former pastor, Brian Harbour.

Harbour moved to Texas from Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock, Ark., where he was pastor to Clinton, then-Arkansas governor, for four-and-a-half years.

Both Clinton and daughter Chelsea were active in Immanuel's choir program, Harbour said, and Hillary Rodham Clinton "often came over to worship with us when she was not leading Bible study at the Methodist church."

The first family arrived at the Richardson church for the 9:30 a.m. worship service, shaking hands with many church members before entering the sanctuary to a spontaneous, standing ovation.

In his sermon, Harbour said, "The cross is the answer to the problems of mankind."

The problems of alienation, emptiness and despair can be overcome by remembering Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, providing the world peace and hope through God, Harbour said.

In the closing prayer, deacon Mack Hampton requested wisdom and safe travel for the president.

Following the service, the Clintons and Harbours chatted for several minutes beside the president's limousine.

Harbour said the families "talked mostly about personal matters, such as how our kids are progressing."

"The Clintons said they were impressed with our choir and how warmly they sang," he added.

On Saturday, a member of the church's youth department, 15-year-old Stephen Nash, had called the Dallas hotel where the Clintons stayed and left a message with a member of the president's staff inviting the family to church.

"I reminded them that Dr. Harbour was the Clinton's former pastor and told them I'd be glad to take Chelsea to Sunday school and show her around," Nash said.

Nash's brother, John Andrew, 12, wrote a note and handed it to the president. It said, "I appreciate your coming to my church and hope some day you'll come again."

Clinton thanked him warmly.

"It was an exciting day," said Harbour.

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Boomers seek spirituality, but churches offer religion

By Mark Wingfield

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (ABP) -- Imagine a society in which millions of people crave hamburgers but Wendy's, McDonald's and Burger King all are on the brink of closing their doors.

This paradox is a parable for what is happening today with the baby boomer population and organized religion, according to several speakers at a

March 24-25 conference in Louisville, Ky. The conference, sponsored by the Louisville Institute of Louisville Presbyterian Seminary, focused on baby boomers and the changing shape of American religion.

Millions of people are expressing a spiritual hunger today while churches struggle to keep their doors open, said Reginald Bibby, professor of sociology at the University of Lethbridge, Canada, and a former student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

"The churches are going broke at a time when the people are going hungry," he said.

This supply and demand anomaly has occurred because too many churches focus on religion instead of spirituality, Bibby explained. "Baby boomers and their children aren't in the market for churches; they're in the market for spirituality."

Bibby, along with several other speakers, said it is time for churches to determine what kind of business they're in.

Successful churches, the speakers said, will be in the business of faith-sharing, not church-building. And they will be in the business of helping individuals do things spiritually meaningful to them, not expecting them to do things only meaningful to the organization.

"There's a real future for religious groups if they can address spirituality," Bibby said. "But if not, then good luck."

The fact that baby boomers are spiritual if not religious is a central theme of "A Generation of Seekers: The Spiritual Journeys of the Baby Boom Generation," by Wade Clark Roof, professor of religion and society at the University of California at Santa Barbara, one of two books which served as the focus of the seminar.

"There is an important distinction between religious and spiritual," Roof told the group. "So many people I talked to made a great deal of it."

The fact that baby boomers are staying away from churches in droves does not mean they aren't interested in spiritual things, Roof said. "There is a widespread spiritual hunger today."

The question, he said, is, "Can Christianity as we practice it in the late 20th century ... engage these deep spiritual concerns?"

The Protestant church lives with "a great deal of nostalgia for 19th century religious forms," Roof said. But that is not the only valid expression of spiritual matters, he added.

Religion is not in decline; it's just taking on new forms, added Dean Hoge, professor of sociology at the Catholic University of America. Hoge is one of three authors of the other book upon which the conference was based, "Vanishing Boundaries: The Religion of Mainline Protestant Baby Boomers."

Although boomers are characteristically individualistic, they do seek community, the speakers said. However, the meaning of community is being redefined.

"Communities of the future will be formed in many ways," Roof predicted. "But they may not look like church as we know it today."

This kind of change is nothing new, he added. "American religion always has been fashioned by entrepreneurs who see new ways of doing church."

One aspect of the current change is that "denominations are becoming irrelevant, except for entering and exiting ministry," said Herb Miller, executive director of the National Evangelistic Association and Net Results Resource Center.

Part of that phenomenon is that boomers are less interested in the finer points of doctrine, speakers said.

This is seen in West Coast groups such as the Calvary Chapel and Vineyard Fellowship movements, said Donald Miller, professor of religion at the University of Southern California. In these fast-growing clusters of

churches, "the pastor and people are uninterested in doctrine, but not uninterested in studying the Bible," he explained.

In addition to sociologists and researchers, the conference included panels of theologians and local church leaders. Funded by the Lilly Endowment, it drew a diverse crowd of Presbyterians, Baptists, Episcopalians, Methodists, Roman Catholics, Jews and others.

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Boomer bits offered
by conference panelists

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (ABP) -- What's a church leader to do amid all the data, opinions and guaranteed success formulas for reaching baby boomers?

Here's a sampling of data, do's and don'ts from panelists at a March 24-25 conference on baby boomers and the changing shape of American religion held at Louisville Presbyterian Seminary:

-- Baby boomers seek to experience things themselves and not just read or hear about them. Further, spiritual issues that touch on life as they experience it are more important than doctrine or denominational heritage."

-- Yuppies are a thing of the past. Even though boomers are characterized by individualism, they generally seek to become engaged in issues larger than themselves, especially on the local level.

-- The No. 1 stress on evangelical women today is a lack of time -- not money -- due to dual-career families and overextended schedules. However, research shows women who work outside the home donate no fewer volunteer hours to churches than homemakers.

-- Crisis still is a prime factor leading people to seek interaction with the church. Churches seeking new ministry should ask how they can meet the needs of people in their communities.

-- Families on the go with jobs, school and extra-curricular activities often desire more time together, not less. Yet families report they feel like church programs segregate family members rather than promote togetherness.

-- Research on baby boomers largely has ignored minority populations. So what is generally prescribed may not apply in every case.

-- Baby boomers have fond memories of their own childhood exposure to church programs such as Sunday school and often want their children to experience the same.

-- Baby boomers seek spiritual education for their children, but not indoctrination.

-- When surveyed on what has caused their own spiritual growth, baby boomers routinely rank music higher than preaching and devotional books higher than the Bible.

-- In theory, boomers express a high level of tolerance for people of all beliefs and lifestyles but demonstrate a much narrower personal comfort zone in practice.

-- Boomers are looking not only for "teaching places" but "caring spaces."

-- The best way to attract people to the gospel is one of the oldest: transformed people tend to attract other people.

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-- By Mark Wingfield

Senate breaks filibuster
to pass 'Goals 2000' bill

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- The U.S. Senate overcame a filibuster over school prayer to approve a major education bill before lawmakers left for a two-week recess.

The Goals 2000: Educate America Act (S. 1150, H.R. 1804) would establish national education standards and provide grants for educational reform.

Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., led a filibuster after a House-Senate conference committee watered down language regarding school prayer in an amendment to the bill.

Helms offered an amendment originally approved by the Senate that would have denied federal funds to school districts that forbid constitutionally-protected prayer in public schools.

The U.S. House of Representatives earlier had approved a similar bill without any school prayer amendments.

The conference committee replaced Helms' amendment with a milder proposal by Rep. Pat Williams, D-Mont, that would bar Goals 2000 funds from being used to prevent voluntary student prayer but not cut off federal funds.

The Senate broke the filibuster March 26, ending an attempt to put the Helms' amendment back into the bill.

The dispute over prayer legislation is "more about politics and C-SPAN than prayer," said Brent Walker, general counsel of the Baptist Joint Committee. "Students' right to pray is already constitutionally protected. So there was no need for any prayer amendment."

However, Walker said the Washington-based BJC is "much happier with the Williams' provision," adding it "will make less mischief" than the Helms amendment, which would have induced school officials to permit unconstitutional, state-sponsored prayer rather than risk losing federal money.

The measure was approved 63-22.

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-- By Pam Parry

House approves
lobby-reform act

By Pam Parry

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- Major lobby reform legislation passed by the U.S. House of Representatives March 24 could affect the prophetic and pastoral ministries of local churches and religious organizations, but a Baptist church-state specialist working closely with lawmakers hopes that won't be the case.

Religious organizations have sought an exemption to the Lobby Disclosure Act (H.R. 823, S. 349) for churches, said Brent Walker, general counsel of the Washington-based Baptist Joint Committee. BJC directors approved a resolution calling for such an exemption in the bill last October.

The bill, approved overwhelmingly in both chambers, would increase disclosure requirements for lobbyists and tighten loopholes on activities designed to influence government. A major provision of the bill would require every lobbyist to register and file reports with an office of lobbying registration and public disclosure.

The House approved the bill by a vote of 315-110. If ratified, it would represent the most sweeping lobby reform in nearly 50 years.

In the form in which it was originally introduced, language in the bill defined a lobbyist too broadly and presented a risk that churches might have to report activities simply because they speak on public issues, Walker said.

Walker, and his predecessor Oliver Thomas, worked with Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., and Rep. John Bryant, D-Texas, the two chief sponsors, to draft new language that would resolve that issue.

Most of that language was added to the House version and a committee report accompanying the Senate bill. Essentially, the two chambers say that lawmakers do not intend for the bill to apply to religious organizations and churches.

"We got about 90 percent of what we wanted," Walker said. "The House bill contains most of the language we suggested to make clear that religious organizations should not have to ask Caesar permission to exercise our prophetic ministry.

"Now we need to hold the line and try to clean up loose ends in the conference committee."

No meeting time has been set for the conference committee.

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Proposed bill adds protection for Native American religions

By Pam Parry

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- The first Americans are second-class citizens when it comes to religious freedom, according to witnesses urging passage of a bill in the U.S. Senate that would provide federal protection for Native American religious sites and practices.

Seven witnesses, including two Clinton administration officials, called on the Senate to adopt the Native American Free Exercise of Religion Act (S. 1021) in a hearing March 23 before the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs.

"Sacred sites are still being desecrated, and Native Americans are often disturbed during their worship by government employees, tourists and curiosity seekers," testified Ada Deer, assistant secretary for Indian Affairs in the Interior Department. "Government actions of all kinds so often seem to ignore, override and take precedence over Native American religious practices and sacred religious sites."

The administration supports protection of sacred sites, the religious use of peyote and equal protection for Native American prisoners, Deer said.

James Hena, chairman of the All Indian Pueblo Council, said the fundamental need to protect Native American's remaining sacred sites cannot be overemphasized.

"When those areas are destroyed or disturbed or desecrated ... we feel a special kind of spiritual pain," Hena said. "Some of the Pueblos have in prior testimony compared this pain to a severe pain as similar to the kind of loss a mother might experience from the death of her small child."

Hena said that the U.S. government has, in some cases, mandated more protection for endangered species of animal and plant life than it has for Native Americans.

"Are we not, as this continent's first human inhabitants, entitled to comparable protection?" he asked.

Len Foster, director of Navajo Nation Corrections Project, told the

panel that Native American prisoners are victims of discrimination. State and federal prisons provide chaplains and religious services for inmates of Judeo-Christian and Muslim faiths, but not for Native Americans, he said.

That denial, he said, "is tantamount to a denial of an opportunity for recovery and healing."

Representing the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Patrick Lefthand said the First Amendment's guarantee of religious freedom has never been fully extended to Native Americans. Lefthand pointed to the Nov. 16 signing of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act that restored a high level of protection for religious practice.

"A tremendous amount of support by both Indian Country and non-Indian organizations has been generated in support of religious freedom legislation," Lefthand said.

"It is now time for Congress to complete the agenda for religious freedom restoration and end this 500-year pattern of discrimination towards Indian religious practices by enacting legislation to assure that the first Americans, like all Americans, have the right to worship freely."

While all seven witnesses testified on behalf of the bill, some urged re-wording of sections to avoid church-state entanglements.

"Protecting Native American religious sites and practices raises decidedly complex issues of constitutionality under the United States Constitution and of manageability for government agencies," Deer said.

Gerald Torres, counsel to the U.S. attorney general, also offered constitutional concerns.

He specifically warned the committee that religious tribes should not be given unilateral authority to stop government action.

"We believe that ... such unilateral authority should be replaced with a process that allows the land management agencies some discretion," Torres said.

"Similarly, NAFERA could in theory entangle the federal government in core religious issues if the federal government were placed in the position of determining who a 'Native American traditional leader' is.

"Such a determination would necessarily implicate the federal government in sensitive aspects of Native American religion," Torres said.

Despite those concerns, he said the administration "believes that NAFERA is a welcome and long overdue measure."

The Baptist Joint Committee, a Washington, D.C., religious liberty coalition, adopted a resolution in support of the legislation at the group's annual meeting last October.

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Bagby to join faculty
at Richmond seminary

RICHMOND, Va. (ABP) -- Texas pastor Daniel Bagby will join the faculty of the Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond this fall as professor of pastoral care.

Bagby was elected by the seminary's board of trustees, who met March 14-15 in Richmond, Va.

Bagby, 52, has been pastor of Seventh and James Baptist Church in Waco, Texas, since 1979. He has taught in the areas of pastoral care and counseling at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Purdue University and Baylor University.

Citing academic credentials and years of local church ministry, seminary president Tom Graves said Bagby's appointment "clearly represents the focus of this seminary -- providing ministers who are prepared to serve the church."

Trustees were told that two other faculty openings have been announced. A position in preaching is expected to be filled in the fall of 1995. A Christian education position at the seminary will be funded on a declining scale for three years, beginning in January 1995, by the Christian Education Committee of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

The trustees approved a \$1.4 million budget for fiscal 1994-95, an 8 percent increase over the current year. The seminary's largest institutional donor is the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, which will provide a projected \$328,000 or 22.4 percent of the school's budget. Baptist state conventions in Virginia, North Carolina and Washington, D.C., also support the Richmond seminary.

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-- By Bob Allen

Dunn tells Richmond seminary students about 'being Baptist'

By Ashley Householder and Pam Parry

RICHMOND, Va. (ABP) -- Cowardice has carried the day in Southern Baptist life as "craven wimps" have given way to "semi-Baptists" touting creeds of morality and secular politics, according to James Dunn.

Dunn, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee, told students at Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond that their institution's commitment to be "distinctly Baptist" is a "tall order."

Addressing the topic, "Being Baptist," Dunn said, "We suffer from semi-Baptists today who would make creeds for us of what they believe and think we should (believe)." In contrast, the only creed for authentic Baptists, he said, is, "Ain't nobody going to tell me what to believe."

Dunn used a lowercase "b" in reference to Baptists, drawing on an idea from retired pastor Howard Moody, as a reminder that they are individuals free from the confines of a regional or national Baptist church that would dictate faith or worship.

The absence of a creed, however, does not mean that Baptists have no confession of faith. "We say with the early church: 'Jesus Christ is Lord,'" he said.

"In fact," he added, "our skittishness about creeds makes more important our confessions and more personal and more focused on faith."

The absence of a creed also does not imply Baptist beliefs lack a coherent content, he said. "Baptist principles are identifiable. Like it or not, one can know if he or she has been 'baptistified'."

The indicators of being "baptistified" are the emphasis of soul freedom, priesthood of all believers, personal interpretation of the Bible, acceptance of Jesus Christ personally and freely -- or not really -- and democratic and autonomous bodies of believers, he said.

"If there is no pope, presbyter, president or pastor to rule over you, if no mortal has the power to suppress, curtail, rule out or reign over the will of the congregation, you have probably been baptistified," Dunn said.

"Being baptist also means respect, affirmation and honest honoring of differences," Dunn said.

"The non-creedalism we know allows for growth, appeals to people of all

ages, at all educational levels, in every economic condition and with every emotional predisposition."

So Baptists with a little "b," he said, fight not for mere toleration, but for freedom, even for those who differ with them.

"Religious freedom and its essential corollary, the separation of church and state, are still part of the Baptist non-creedal bundle of beliefs," he said.

Neither should the absence of a creed diminish the intensity of Baptist commitment, Dunn added. Fearing confrontation, many people walked away from conflict in the Southern Baptist Convention "unsure of themselves, their faith and their Lord," he said.

However, "there is a place for a little holy hostility," Dunn said. "As Thomas Jefferson said, 'I have sworn on the altar of God eternal hostility to every form of tyranny over the mind of man.'"

"There is a lot of little 'b' Baptist in all of us."

Transition of leadership in the 15.4-million-member SBC has affected both Dunn's agency and the Virginia seminary.

For more than 50 years, the SBC was a member of the Baptist Joint Committee, a religious-liberty watchdog coalition in Washington, D.C. During the 1980s, however, the SBC's increasingly conservative leaders criticized the BJC for its stands against school-prayer legislation and taxpayer funding of Christian schools and its unwillingness to address abortion. In 1991, the convention severed ties with the BJC and transferred its religious-liberty assignment to the Christian Life Commission, the SBC's moral-concerns agency.

Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond is a five-year-old school started by moderates to provide alternative theological education to the six SBC seminaries increasingly influenced by trustees representing the convention's right wing.

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Pastor finds mobile-home park
fertile ground for church planting

By Tom Price

BRISTOL, Ind. (ABP) -- Shortly after Sherrie Jackson moved into the Bristol Mobile Village six months ago, she stopped attending her longtime church in Osceola, Ind., which she didn't feel was meeting her spiritual needs.

"I went for years and I felt ignored," said Jackson, who was looking for a new church home four months ago when she met Bob Phillips, who was organizing a volleyball game at their mobile-home park.

Phillips, pastor of a Bible fellowship offered by Southern Baptists in Indiana, invited Jackson to a home Bible study. Earlier this month, Jackson was baptized. Now she teaches pre-school Sunday school classes at the Lighthouse Baptist Church, the mission recently organized by Phillips.

"Many people in mobile-home parks just have not found churches where they are accepted and feel comfortable," said Phillips, who moved to Bristol Mobile Village about 10 months ago in order to plant a church to serve Bristol's two largest mobile-home parks.

Many residents of mobile-home parks do not attend church anywhere, Phillips said. "It's a great mission field."

The two dozen or more people who attend weekly Bible studies and children's clubs at Bristol Mobile Village and the Timberbrook Mobile Home Park are providing the nucleus for the new mission congregation.

Phillips, a 1992 graduate of Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Memphis, Tenn., had planned to start a church in another part of town. But when he and his wife, Pam, found it difficult to buy affordable housing, they settled with their three children in Bristol Mobile Village. Unwittingly, that enabled Phillips to join a spiritual effort in which Southern Baptists lead the nation -- starting new churches among mobile-home and apartment communities.

One-fourth of Americans live in multi-family housing -- 50 million in apartment units and 16 million in manufactured-housing communities, according to Neal Stevens, a national consultant on multi-family housing for the Southern Baptist Convention.

While a pastor in 1985 in Arkansas, Stevens started a church in a manufactured-housing community. Things progressed so well that he was given responsibility for such efforts statewide in 1988. The Southern Baptist Convention's Home Mission Board asked him to move to Indiana in 1990 to direct multi-family housing efforts among the state's 1.5 million residents of apartments and mobile-home communities.

"Only about 4 to 6 percent of these residents will drive outside their community to go to any church on a Sunday morning," said Stevens, who moved to Elkhart in December 1992 to direct mission efforts for the five-county North Central Indiana Baptist Association. "We have discovered that by going into these communities and starting a ministry working with the managers, developers or owners, we will reach approximately 24 to 26 percent of that community ... telling them about Jesus and helping them, in many cases, have a better understanding and knowledge of a better way of life."

But in nine years of work in these housing communities, Stevens has found only isolated instances of other churches actively reaping a harvest of willing churchgoers.

"We are having more people wanting us to come in and do these ministries than we can provide help to do them. That's my big problem -- getting local churches involved," said Stevens, a member of Wynd-Gate Baptist Church. "I would say we are leading the pack in this area."

"I just started out going door-to-door in the part which I live, introducing myself to people," said Phillips, who met families at Timberbrook through the children's club. "The main thing is not expecting them to come to the church, but meeting them where they live."

Residents of multi-family housing often face barriers to church participation that don't confront others.

"Many of the people feel like they would not fit in at the local church (populated by) prominent people, affluent people," Stevens said. "The greatest barrier we are finding is people who live in these communities feel kind of looked-down-upon by people who live outside these communities."

Indiana's manufactured-housing communities tend to be more updated and affluent than other communities Stevens has seen, with the exception of Florida. Yet many have common needs.

"The greatest needs that we're finding are ministry to single parents and ministering to the needs of children and youth," Stevens said.

"I believe seeds have been planted that will bring fruit to this church," said Phillips, who also has made contacts through his work delivering newspapers and pizzas. "If we keep our eyes open, we can meet them at their point of need and reach them with the good news of Jesus."