

# Associated Baptist Press

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## Changes in faculty hiring prompt ATS visit to Southern

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (ABP) -- Recent changes in faculty hiring practices at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary have drawn the attention of the seminary's primary accrediting agency.

The Association of Theological Schools informed the seminary May 4 that it will send a team to the Louisville campus in September for a "focused site visit." The visit was requested by faculty members.

According to faculty sources close to the process, the faculty concerns stem from the March 20 firing of Diana Garland as dean of the Carver School of Church Social Work and a resulting change in faculty hiring procedures adopted by trustees. While set in the context of Garland's firing, the real issue apparently is the faculty hiring process.

At their April meeting, seminary trustees affirmed President Al Mohler's handling of the Carver School crisis. Mohler says Garland was fired for going public with her dispute with the president over the hiring of a faculty member.

Trustees also gave official approval to changing the faculty hiring process to require faculty candidates not only to affirm the seminary's doctrinal statement but to hold certain positions on current social issues. Faculty members believe this unfairly penalizes teachers who were hired at the seminary under different rules.

For example, a professor who currently does not have tenure but was hired with the expectation of gaining tenure would now have to be re-examined by the administration and trustees based on the new criteria. This would be particularly distressing to most of the seminary's current inerrantist faculty members, who have been hired since 1991. While avowed evangelical conservatives, most are unwilling to flatly say God cannot call a woman to the pastoral role. Affirming a ban on women as pastors is one part of the new faculty hiring standards.

Another Southern Baptist seminary, Southwestern in Fort Worth, Texas, currently is on probation by ATS due to concerns about academic freedom and policy violations in the way trustees fired President Russell Dilday last year.

ATS does not publicly comment on pending investigations of its member schools. However, normal ATS procedure would call for a report of the fall site visit to Southern to be acted on by the full commission at its January 1996 meeting. At that time, the seminary presumably would be notified that it had been cleared of charges, given a notation or placed on probation.

In a statement released May 5, Mohler said the seminary has nothing to fear from the ATS investigation.

"I am confident that any ATS inquiry will result in an affirmation of the seminary's academic integrity," he said. "We will make appropriate response and report to the ATS as such responses are requested by the agency. Southern Seminary meets or exceeds every accreditation standard and will continue to do so."

ATS visited Southern Seminary most recently in 1993 but took no disciplinary action. Periodic questions have been raised as the seminary has undergone a transformation to more conservative leadership.

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-- By Mark Wingfield

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Sarah Zimmerman, a news writer for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, agreed to cover ABP's board meeting for both ABP and Baptist Press.

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## **ABP board discusses vision, strategy, fund-raising**

By Sarah Zimmerman

ATLANTA (ABP) -- Vision, strategy and funding dominated the Associated Baptist Press board of directors meeting May 6 in Atlanta.

"We have a niche, but do we have a mission?" Greg Warner, ABP executive editor, asked the board members. "Is it time to refine our mission statement, see our task through a wider lens and in clearer focus?"

Associated Baptist Press was started five years ago primarily by state Baptist newspaper editors in response to the firing of two editors for the Southern Baptist Convention's Baptist Press news service.

Last year, ABP published 635 stories, which appeared 2,008 times in state Baptist newspapers, according to a usage report. More than half of state papers used at least one ABP story, and 10 used 99 or more, according to the report.

"After five years, we have a start, but do we have a course?" Warner asked. "What means will we use to get where we are headed?"

The 12 board members attending the meeting spent an hour in small groups discussing answers to Warner's questions. Their talks ranged from using electronic media to finding people who could help raise money, but they took no immediate action on the issues.

Earlier in the meeting, board members authorized the strategy committee to develop a vision statement and adopted a three-fold approach to fund-raising. The action involves enlisting professionals to develop a fund-raising strategy, creating a council to implement the strategy and expanding the list of financial supporters.

Chairman Jeff Mobley, a Nashville, Tenn., attorney, said they hope to have fund-raising plan details in place by the fall board meeting, tentatively scheduled Oct. 20-21.

In the budget report, directors were told ABP revenues totaled \$247,017 last year, and this year's budget is \$258,150. More than half of ABP's projected income for 1995 is from "organizations," primarily the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, Warner said. State conventions in Texas, North Carolina and Virginia comprise the second

largest funding source.

Re-elected to three-year-terms on the board of directors were Carl Kell, communication and broadcasting professor at Western Kentucky University; Don McGregor, retired Baptist newspaper editor from Mississippi; Charles Overby, president of the Freedom Forum in Arlington, Va.; Phil Lineberger, pastor of First Baptist Church in Tyler, Texas; and Jimmy Nickell, a retired businessman from Overland Park, Kan.

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## **Southwestern trustees pick dean, cut budget by \$500,000**

By Jim Jones

FORT WORTH, Texas (ABP) -- Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary trustees adopted a cost-cutting budget and took actions aimed at healing differences between conservative trustees and faculty and students.

In a move applauded by the seminary faculty, trustees appointed a long-time seminary professor, Tommy Lea, as new dean of the school of theology, replacing Bruce Corley, who resigned in March.

"The naming of an insider to this position was very important," said seminary President Ken Hemphill. "This sends a real clear message that this administration has absolute confidence in our faculty."

Lea, 56, holds an engineering degree from Mississippi State University and a master's and doctorate from Southwestern. He will replace Corley when he leaves in the fall to accept a faculty position with Baylor University's George W. Truett Theological Seminary.

Corley also welcomed the move.

"I think Tommy's election will be very encouraging to our faculty as a whole," said Corley, known as a staunch backer of Russell Dilday, the former seminary president who was fired by conservative trustees last year. Dilday now is interim dean of Truett Seminary.

Lea said he looks forward to working with Hemphill. Among challenges he said he expects to face as dean are replacing retiring faculty members, representing faculty concerns to administration and trustees and "providing a good harmonious environment that encourages people to make a lifelong commitment to staying here."

Lea added that one way to encourage the faculty is to understand their concerns and deal with them effectively. "We want to define and preserve a good environment of academic freedom," he said.

After the firing of Dilday, the Association of Theological Schools placed the 3,200-student seminary on two-year probation, accusing trustees of not following their own rules in the firing and of creating an atmosphere in which faculty and students feared academic freedom was threatened.

In another move partially aimed at answering the criticism of the accrediting agency, trustees unanimously approved a special ombudsman committee of eight trustees, seven faculty and seven students to deal with concerns about academic freedom and other matters.

Hemphill said both the naming of Lea as theology dean and the appointment of the ombudsman committee will help convince the ATS that the seminary can address the concerns of the accrediting agency.

"We named Dr. Tommy Lea as dean of theology because of his qualifications, but it also sends a message that while some things are changing at Southwestern there is still a sense of stability," he said.

Hemphill said the new \$22,330,244 budget for 1995-96, while \$574,060 less than the current budget, is an effort to use funds responsibly while anticipating greater costs in education and a possible decline in enrollment in the fall.

Hubert Martin, vice president for business affairs, said that despite the lower budget the school is in no debt and is in "sound financial condition."

While trimming costs, the budget includes almost \$700,000 for a 4 percent salary increase for faculty and other staff members, which has been a major priority of trustees in recent years.

Although regular tuition rates of \$80 an hour won't change, students on the main Fort Worth campus will be charged an additional \$135 base fee this year. It is expected to earn an additional \$700,000, Martin said. Despite that, revenue from student tuition is projected to dip because of expected lower enrollment, he said.

Martin said tuition rates will be lower than most seminaries -- a maximum of about \$900, regardless of the number of hours taken -- since the Southern Baptist Convention contributes heavily to the seminary.

Enrollment could drop from about 3,200 this year to fewer than 3,000 in the fall, Martin said. Even with the drop, the seminary would remain the largest in the nation.

Another reason for the revenue drop, Martin said, was a decision not to spend some \$400,00 in endowment funds set aside in 1992 as an annual budget supplement for five years. The 1992 spending plan called for \$800,000 from endowment funds to be used as operating expenses in 1995-96. The amount was pared to \$400,000 to phase out what was viewed as a non-sustainable source of income, Martin said.

Among major cuts in the seminary's new budget is a \$300,000 reduction in spending for the office of institutional advancement, which handles fund-raising and public relations, Martin said.

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-- Jan Johnsonius contributed to this story.

## **Foster testifies before Senate committee**

By Pam Parry

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- Members of a Senate committee examining President Clinton's surgeon general nominee cited a "toxic atmosphere" surrounding the nomination in which the candidate had been reduced to a "cardboard caricature," a "pawn our abortion debate" and "a pariah."

Members of the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee questioned Dr. Henry Foster for two days about his qualifications for the nation's top medical post, May 2-3.

Questions focused on his abortion record, his knowledge of a controversial experiment conducted on African American men, his program designed to curb teen-age pregnancy and the sterilization of mentally retarded women -- at one time an accepted medical practice.

Foster, 61, a Baptist, said he came before the committee to set the record straight on his 38-year career as a physician, educator and researcher.

"First of all, I am a doctor who delivers babies," said Foster, who is a member of the First Baptist Church of Capitol Hill in Nashville, Tenn. "My life's work has been devoted to bringing healthy lives into this world and trying to assure that every child born is a wanted child whose needs can be met by its parents."

Foster said he has dedicated his career to "taking all appropriate medical steps to meet the health needs of my patients," including legal abortions.

Much of the opposition to Foster's confirmation is his admission that he has performed abortions.

"In America, a woman has a right to choose. And I support the president's position that abortions should be safe, legal and rare," Foster said.

Foster abhors abortion, he told the committee, but in rare instances he has performed them.

"I abhor war, but I am not a conscientious objector," he said.

Foster, one of 10 members of the Ethics Committee of the Nashville Academy of Medicine, said his

credibility was never questioned prior to his nomination as surgeon general. The credibility question arose when White House officials said that Foster had performed only one abortion. The administration later said he had performed about 12 abortions and then changed the number to 39 after Foster checked hospital records.

Foster explained the discrepancy to the committee, saying he was asked during a casual conversation whether he had performed abortions, and he said he remembered one in particular because it involved a woman with AIDS.

A few days later, Foster said he responded from "memory" when he said he had performed about a dozen abortions.

"That was a mistake," Foster said. "But it was an honest mistake. In my desire to provide instant answers to the barrage of questions coming at me, I spoke without having all the facts at my disposal."

After reviewing the records, Foster said he is listed as the physician of record on 39 abortion cases at Meharry Medical College. Residents whom Foster was teaching performed about three-fourths of those procedures, he said.

Foster said "there was never any intent to deceive" on the number of abortions he had been involved with. "I had no reason to do so."

One of the most heated exchanges during the hearing occurred between Foster and Sen. Dan Coats, R-Ind., who asked the doctor about his actions involving an infamous syphilis experiment that denied African-American men treatment. Foster had been accused of knowing about the experiment before it became public in 1972 and of doing nothing.

Foster denied the charge emphatically and repeatedly. In fact, he said he took steps to help find those men treatment after he learned of the experiment. "I cannot believe this happened a quarter of a century after Nuremberg," he said.

Responding to questions, Foster said he had performed a small number of therapeutic sterilizations on severely mentally retarded women in the 1960s and 1970s. By the late 1970s, medical practice, legal standards and Foster's views had shifted on the issue, he said.

The women's parents brought them to Foster for treatment, he added, saying that eliminating the menses in some cases had significant benefit to the patient.

Other questions focused on his "I Have A Future Program." Foster created the program in 1987 to help Nashville inner city youths abstain from sexual activity and drug use by giving them hope for the future, he said.

Responding to questions about the program's effectiveness, Foster pointed to a commendation by President George Bush. In 1991, Bush honored the program as Point 404 of the "Thousand Points of Light."

Bush wrote in a March 15, 1991, letter to the program staff and volunteers telling them "your efforts provide a shining example."

The committee has not yet voted on the nomination, but observers predict he may receive a favorable recommendation from the group. But whether that recommendation will make it to the full chamber is in question.

Both Majority Leader Bob Dole of Kansas and Sen. Phil Gramm, R-Texas, have said they may try to block the nomination. Dole has said he might not bring the matter before the body for a vote. Gramm said if the a vote is called for, he will filibuster, a common delaying technique designed to block a vote.

Sen. Christopher Dodd, D-Conn., urged both men, who are GOP candidates for the 1996 presidential nomination, not to block the vote -- an action he described as "childish" and "wrong."

"Let people vote. If you want to vote against it (the nomination), then vote against it. But don't block it."

## Religious leaders urge confirmation of Foster

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- Some members of the religious community have been influenced by "sound bites rather than sound information" regarding surgeon-general nominee Henry Foster, Foster's pastor said in a press conference May 2.

"It is important to know that Hank Foster is a man of competence, but he is also a man of conviction and Christian commitment," said Sherman Tribble, pastor of First Baptist Church of Capitol Hill in Nashville, Tenn.

Tribble said Foster has been an active, supportive member of the church since 1973.

Tribble traveled to Capitol Hill to support Foster during his May 2-3 hearing before the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee.

Some religious leaders have chosen to "castigate rather than support" Foster's nomination, Tribble said, because they have not examined his record or abided by a "sense of fairness."

Responding to a reporter's question, Tribble said he was "disappointed" when Southern Baptist leaders Jim Henry and Richard Land opposed Foster. Henry, SBC president, and Land, executive director of the SBC Christian Life Commission, announced their opposition to Foster at a Feb. 22 press conference because of his position on abortion.

Foster, an obstetrician/gynecologist, says he was the physician of record for 39 abortions during a career spanning nearly four decades. About three-fourths of those abortions were performed by residents whom Foster was instructing. During that time, he also delivered more than 10,000 babies.

"I am not aware of any real contact they have had with Dr. Foster," Tribble said of Henry and Land.

"Their position is based around the issue of abortion," Tribble said, adding Foster's complete record, "if you look at the total of 39 (abortions) vs. 10,000 (births)," indicates he is not an abortionist.

Some of the abortions Foster performed involved rape victims and AIDS patients, said Tribble and other nearby Foster supporters.

Tribble moderated a May 3 press conference with religious leaders who support Foster. The group represented various faith perspectives from Foster's Nashville home and Washington.

Tribble said he has been asked over the past three months to characterize Foster: "He is a person of Christian faith and commitment," the pastor said.

"As he told me one day in his own words as we were talking about the ordeal of this fiery trial, he said to me, 'Reverend you don't have to worry about me because I have been praying for a long time.' "

"Henry Foster is a man of deep religious conviction who utilizes that commitment to God by serving the least, the lost and the last. Dr. Foster has a special talent for developing our nation's youth as demonstrated in that award-winning program, 'I Have A Future.'

"He teaches the least that they can be the greatest; he teaches the last that they can become first; and he teaches the lost that they can become found."

Oswald Schrag, professor emeritus of religion and philosophy at Fisk University in Nashville, lauded Foster's training, knowledge, experience and "humanness" as ample qualifications for the nation's top doctor.

"Dr. Foster has made a life-long commitment to strengthening a nation by strengthening individuals, families, communities and cities," he said.

Susan Andrews, pastor of the Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church in Bethesda, Md., counted among Foster's "impressive" qualifications his advocacy for the poor.

"I believe that he embodies the values of justice, mercy, compassion and love, which are central to the Judeo-Christian tradition," she said, "values which are also foundational to the soul of this nation."

She continued: "In the past few weeks we have seen with tragic results what fear and prejudice and

narrow vision can bring forth in this nation. The objections to Dr. Foster's nomination are based on opinions and judgments which obscure the moral, intellectual and practical skills of this man.

"It appears that Dr. Foster is being used by some as a symbol of an issue that has little to do with finding a person of integrity and wisdom to be our next surgeon general."

Rabbi Lynne Landsberg, associate director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, told reporters that the Union of American Hebrew Congregations has endorsed Foster -- only the second time in 25 years the group has endorsed a nominee.

"Our ethical and moral tradition is over 5,000 years old; 5,000 years of decency, integrity, truth, compassion and social justice," she said. "These are our traditional values, and we are appalled and offended by the lies, half-truths, misstatements and mud slinging far right religious groups and conservative senators have engaged in to combat the Foster nomination.

"As a religious leader, I ask those religious figures who have been denouncing Dr. Foster, and their allies in the Senate, 'Are your actions truly religious or are they hypocritical? Is it religious integrity or political deceit that compels you to reduce Dr. Foster's life work ... to one inflammatory label: abortionist?'"

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-- By Pam Parry

## National debate asks: 'Who is Henry Foster?'

By Pam Parry

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- Henry Foster has been called many things by many people since being nominated by President Clinton to become the next U.S. surgeon general. An abortionist. A dedicated physician. A liar. A man of Christian character. Depending on one's perspective, Foster is either Dr. Jekyll or Mr. Hyde.

There seems to be no neutral zone in this political battlefield, with one possible exception. Questions have arisen about medical procedures, such as abortion or sterilization and his candor on those issues, but no one has attempted to challenge him as a public servant.

That service, Foster says, began as an offshoot of values learned from his parents and paternal grandmother, Hattie, who was born just 16 years after slavery ended in this country.

"As far back as I can remember, we had a copy of the American Constitution in our home," Foster said. "My father often told my sister and me that our freedom and justice were locked inside the Constitution. And then he would tap his temple and say, 'The key to unlocking it is an educated mind.'"

His parents had an "unshakable faith in the American Dream," Foster said, adding his father lived to see the nation's armed forces and public schools integrated and his son accepted as the only African-American student in his entering class at the University of Arkansas School of Medicine.

During two days of intense testimony before the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee May 2-3, Foster wept as he spoke of "the dignity and power" of his grandmother and parents whose values sustained him throughout a 38-year career as a physician, educator and researcher.

Foster was born in 1933 in Pine Bluff, Ark. He was accepted to medical school at age 20, earning his degree in 1958. From 1959 to 1961, he was a medical officer in the U.S. Air Force, stationed in Washington state.

He began his medical practice in Tuskegee, Ala., where for many African-American women he was the

only doctor for miles. The main hospital served only whites.

"Most of his patients were poor, black women who had never seen a doctor in their lives before being treated by Dr. Foster," said Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass. "Most of them lived without electricity, a telephone, and in some cases, running water."

"Many were forced to deliver their babies at home with midwives. Access to prenatal care was non-existent. Dr. Foster provided this critical service, often in life or death situations and under the most difficult circumstances," Kennedy continued.

During this time, Foster realized how the lack of adequate health care contributed to infant mortality, so he applied for a grant to expand these services at the Tuskegee Institute. Primarily because of this groundbreaking work, he was elected to the Institute of Medicine.

He delivered babies in Alabama until 1973 when he went to Nashville as chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Meharry Medical College. In Nashville, he began a crusade to combat sexual activity and drug use by inner-city youths.

Many youths from the program traveled to Capitol Hill to demonstrate support for Foster, saying he has been maligned by many people debating his nomination.

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