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Editor: Greg Warner
Associate Editor: Bob Allen
Phone: (904) 262-6626
Fax: (904) 262-7745

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Nominee to SBC committee challenged over ties to CBF

By Mark Wingfield

ERLANGER, Ky. (ABP) -- The nomination of a Kentucky layman to serve on the Southern Baptist Convention's committee on order of business has been challenged because the nominee's church allows members to contribute to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

At issue is whether the nominee's church violates a guideline adopted by this year's SBC committee on nominations. That guideline states that "a nominee should neither personally support financially nor belong to a church which supports the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship through its budget."

Each year, the SBC's committee on nominations adopts its own guidelines regarding who is eligible for nomination to serve on the denomination's trustee boards and standing committees, according to Morris Chapman, president of the SBC Executive Committee. These guidelines supplement the few basic requirements mandated by SBC bylaws.

The nominee in question is Arnold Caddell, a Northern Kentucky banker who has been active in his local association and state convention.

Caddell is a member of Erlanger Baptist Church, one of nearly 100 Kentucky Baptist churches that allow members to contribute through the church to the Fellowship. The Fellowship is a group of Southern Baptist moderates who fund their own mission efforts in protest of conservative control of the SBC.

Erlanger pastor Bill Crosby said his church is a loyal and cooperating Southern Baptist congregation. The chairman of the SBC committee on nominations wrongly questioned that loyalty and Caddell's qualification to serve, he said.

Crosby said he was called June 5 by Lloyd Freeman, an Odessa, Texas, layman who is chairman of the SBC committee on nominations. Freeman told Crosby someone had challenged Caddell's nomination because of his church membership.

After making extensive inquiries into the church's budgeting process and views on SBC politics, Freeman said Erlanger Baptist Church appears to meet "the letter of the law but not the spirit," Crosby said.

Freeman also contacted Caddell, but Caddell declined to make any public statement about the issue or the content of Freeman's call at this time.

When contacted June 5, Freeman refused to discuss Caddell's nomination, saying he believed any statement must be issued through Baptist Press, the SBC's news service. The next day, however, after talking with Executive Committee President Chapman, Freeman called back and offered to talk about Caddell's nomination.

Freeman said he now believes Erlanger Baptist Church "technically meets the requirements, in spite of the fact that they are sending money to the CBF."

Any challenge to Caddell's nomination will be presented to a seven-member subcommittee of the committee on nominations June 14, Freeman said. Whether the nomination is kept or withdrawn will be up to the subcommittee, he said, but added, "I don't anticipate a problem."

Caddell was nominated for the SBC post by the committee on nominations, which includes two Kentuckians: Herb Booth of Florence and Don Short of Benton. Booth and Short recommended Caddell to the full committee during a March 21-22 meeting.

Caddell's nomination subsequently was approved and reported in Baptist Press in late April along with the nominations of more than 300 other people to serve on SBC trustee boards and standing committees.

Since then, Freeman said he received calls opposing Caddell's nomination. Freeman would not identify who had raised the concern or how many people had called him on the matter.

Booth, one of the two Kentuckians on the committee, said he stands behind Caddell's nomination and does not believe it violates any requirement.

The only grounds for withdrawing Caddell's nomination at this point would be for reasons such as death, moving out of state, voluntary withdrawal or moral failure, Booth said.

Since none of those conditions apply to Caddell, any question about the viability of his nomination is "rhetorical," Booth said.

If Caddell's nomination is successfully challenged, it should cause all Kentucky Baptists to question who will be eligible to serve in SBC posts in the future, Crosby, Caddell's pastor, warned.

While Erlanger Baptist Church allows individuals to designate the missions portion of their offerings to the Fellowship, it still gives primarily through the Cooperative Program.

Crosby said the church last year gave \$71,000, or 10 percent of undesignated offerings, to the Cooperative Program. With the addition of special offerings, the church gave \$151,000 to SBC causes last year, he said.

"How much is a church required to give to be considered to be cooperating?" Crosby asked. "Does everybody who serves on a committee or as a trustee, do their churches give \$150,000 a year to the work of the SBC? If it's about support, I think we support."

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German scholar picked to lead Prague seminary

PRAGUE, Czech Republic (ABP) -- German scholar Stefan Stiegler has been nominated as president of the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Prague, Czech Republic.

If elected, Stiegler, 42, would replace former president John David Hopper, a missionary from Texas who led the seminary eight years before retiring in May.

Stiegler, professor of Old Testament and Hebrew at the Baptist Theological Seminary in Hamburg, Germany, was nominated jointly by the Prague seminary's faculty and a trustee search committee.

The full trustee board has affirmed the unanimous recommendation. Individual unions in the European Baptist Federation have until June 20 to respond to the nomination. Pending a positive response, Stiegler will be elected by the EBF council in September.

A native of East Germany, Stiegler has taught at German Baptists' united seminary since 1991. He is a graduate of East German Baptist Theological Seminary in Buckow and earned two degrees, including a doctorate, from the Martin-Luther University in Halle-Wittenberg, Germany.

The seminary recently dedicated a new campus in Prague, where it moved from its original location in Ruschlikon, Switzerland.

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-- By ABP staff

Gardner-Webb prof named to head school of divinity

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. (ABP) -- Gardner-Webb religion professor Wayne Stacy has been named dean of the university's school of divinity.

He replaces former dean Robert Lamb, who retired recently.

Stacy, 46, taught five years at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., and was senior pastor at First Baptist Church in Raleigh, N.C., before joining the Gardner-Webb faculty in 1995.

He is a graduate of Palm Beach Atlantic College who earned both a master's and a doctor's degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

University President Chris White said Stacy will be a "teaching dean" who will also carry the title of professor of New Testament and preaching.

Gardner-Webb, a Baptist school in Boiling Springs, N.C., opened its divinity school in 1992. Current enrollment of the divinity school is 113, said a seminary spokesperson.

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-- By ABP staff

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