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**SBC president names study committee
to review 'Baptist Faith and Message'**

By Bob Allen

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (ABP) -- Southern Baptist Convention president Paige Patterson says he doubts the "Baptist Faith and Message" study committee he has appointed will completely rewrite the confessional statement.

"Most folks feel, 'If it ain't broke, don't fix it,'" Patterson said in a Baptist Press story announcing his naming of a blue-ribbon committee authorized by the convention in June.

Adrian Rogers, pastor of the 26,000-member Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn., and a past SBC president, will chair the 15-member committee announced Aug. 24.

Patterson called the document, which represents consensus views held by Southern Baptists and serves as a guide for hiring at SBC seminaries and agencies, an "undeniably fabulous statement."

Still, the president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., said he agrees the document ought to be reviewed.

"(T)he messenger making the motion believes, and I concur, that every 30 years or so we need to take a look at the statement of faith, not because our faith changes, but because the issues of the day usually dictate some minor revisions to remove ambiguities or address specific issues," Patterson said. Nevertheless, Patterson said the committee would be "free to proceed with whatever recommendations they wish to make."

T.C. Pinckney, who made the motion calling for the review, said a lot has changed since the SBC adopted the "Baptist Faith and Message" in 1963. Speaking for his motion at this year's convention, Pinckney alluded to "momentous" changes during the 1980s, when the nation's largest non-Catholic faith group shifted from moderate to conservative control.

"I believe it is appropriate at this time that the 'Baptist Faith and Message' be reviewed and that it be made consistent with the current stand of the Southern Baptist Convention," said Pinckney, a retired Air Force general and editor of a conservative Baptist newspaper in Virginia.

Pinckney is among 15 people named by Patterson to the study committee. It includes two seminary presidents: Albert Mohler of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and Charles Kelley of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

It also includes another past president of the SBC, Jerry Vines, pastor of First Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Fla., and an agency head, Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission.

Members include two women, one African American, one Chinese American, one Hispanic American, a Baptist Student Union director and a state Woman's Missionary Union and women's ministries director.

The 1963 "Baptist Faith and Message" has been amended once, by addition of an article on the family in 1998.

Baptists traditionally have avoided creeds, because of the belief that the Bible and not manmade statements is the final rule of faith. They have, however, produced several confessions of faith, which typically have been regarded as voluntary, non-binding and fallible, according to the Dictionary of Baptists in America.

Confessions of faith usually are hammered out on the anvil of some doctrinal dispute, and thus rarely satisfy the partisans on either side, according to Baptist historian Leon McBeth.

McBeth said Southern Baptists have spoken frequently on doctrinal issues, but the convention has adopted only two confessions of faith -- in 1925 and 1963. Before those, Baptist churches in the South usually adhered to the Philadelphia Confession of 1742 and later the New Hampshire Confession, which originated in 1833.

The 1925 statement, originally termed the "Memphis Articles" but later referred to as the "Baptist Faith and Message," was prompted by two concerns, McBeth said in his 1987 history, "The Baptist Heritage." One was external, a desire following World War I to reach out to Baptists of like mind in Europe. The other, internal, was attacks by fundamentalist leader J. Frank Norris alleging that Southern Baptist colleges taught evolution and that seminaries tolerated "modernistic" views of Scripture.

The 1963 statement found impetus in controversy over a book by professor Ralph Elliott at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Elliott was dismissed in 1962 after publication of "The Message of Genesis." The SBC that year debated issues related to the book, rejecting an effort to ban it outright but adopting resolutions declaring the entire Bible to be the inspired word of God.

The 1962 convention also authorized a committee composed of presidents of affiliated state conventions at the time and chaired by SBC president Herschel Hobbs to draw up a confessional statement for consideration the following year. As a result, the "Baptist Faith and Message" was adopted at Kansas City in 1963, along with a preamble that explained it is not a binding creed.

The 1963 statement, like its 1925 counterpart, followed the basic framework of the New Hampshire Confession, McBeth said. By combining some articles, the 1963 statement reduced the number of articles from 25 to 17. It modified the earlier "Landmark" view of the church, McBeth said, and clarified the article on Scripture.

In the article on Scripture, the 1963 version clarified that the Bible "is the record of God's revelation of himself to man" and added a final sentence: "The criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ." Both phrases have been seen as giving latitude for Baptists who do not subscribe to a fundamentalist, or "inerrantist," reading of Scripture.

Biblical inerrancy served as the rallying cry for conservatives who took over the SBC by winning a series of presidential elections beginning with Adrian Rogers in 1979. Moderates, who hold a high view of

Scripture but reject inerrancy, largely withdrew from the fray in 1990. Many shifted their energies instead to building the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, which formed in 1991.

A more pressing theological issue for SBC conservatives today may be Calvinism, a view that elevates God's sovereignty and de-emphasizes humans' free will. Many Southern Baptists embrace a "modified" Calvinism that accepts some but not all of its tenets. A number of influential conservatives, however, are contending the founders of the Southern Baptist Convention held views that were more in line with a stricter, "five-point" Calvinism.

While leaders of both groups say publicly there is room for both views in the SBC, there are signs that some convention leaders would like to keep the Calvinist resurgence in check. Of the 15 people named to the "Baptist Faith and Message" study committee, only one, Albert Mohler, is a high-profile neo-Calvinist.

The rest of the committee is: Steve Gaines, pastor of First Baptist Church in Gardendale, Ala.; Heather King, WMU/Women's Ministries director for the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana; Simon Tsoi, pastor of First Chinese Baptist Church in Phoenix; Susie Hawkins, a member of Prestonwood Baptist Church in Dallas and wife of SBC Annuity Board President O. S. Hawkins; Roger Spradlin, pastor of Valley Baptist Church in Bakersfield, Calif.; Rudy Hernandez, an evangelist and member of Primera Iglesia Bautista in Grand Prairie, Texas; Fred Luter, African-American pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans; Max Barnett, Baptist Student Union director at the University of Oklahoma; and Nelson Price, pastor of Roswell Street Baptist Church in Marietta, Ga.

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Judge stops voucher program, saying money advances religion

By Kenny Byrd

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- A federal judge temporarily stopped Cleveland's four-year-old voucher program the day before public schools opened, ruling that the program has a primary effect of advancing religion.

In an injunction issued Aug. 24, U.S. District Judge Solomon Oliver said opponents of the voucher program had a "very substantial chance" of winning their argument that the U.S. Constitution forbids such aid to religious schools.

The injunction halts the program until a decision can be made on the merits of the case. It left parents of as many as 4,000 students scrambling to determine where their children will attend school.

Oliver said he issued the injunction because violation of the First Amendment "constitutes irreparable injury."

"It is always in the public interest to prevent the violation of a party's constitutional rights," he ruled.

Oliver noted that schools participating in the Cleveland program, which provides 3,801 students up to \$2,500 each to attend private or parochial schools, "are overwhelmingly sectarian."

The voucher program "has the primary effect of advancing religion," the judge ruled. "Failing to grant the injunction under such circumstances would not only be contrary to law but could cause an even greater harm to the children by setting them up for greater disruption at a later time."

A principal of one participating school said the injunction would make it "tough" for her school to survive. But Carol Sperry, principal of Westside Baptist Christian School, said she is still optimistic that a way will be found for the 46 voucher students to attend her school of 166.

The 24-year-old school is supported by several Baptist churches and housed at Madison Avenue Baptist Church in Cleveland. The church is associated with the General Association of Regular Baptists.

Sperry said she is saddened but not surprised by the injunction. One voucher parent plans on taking an extra job to make the tuition payment of almost \$2,000, Sperry said. "It will be difficult. But we walk by faith not by sight. I know the Lord has purpose in all of this," Sperry said.

Sperry, whose school uses a Bible-class curriculum designed by Bob Jones University and requires students to attend weekly chapel services, sees no church-state conflict with the voucher program. The separation of church and state was intended by the founders only to bar a state church, she said. "Everybody should have a right to choose where they attend school."

Oliver's injunction rekindled debate over the constitutionality of vouchers.

Barry Lynn, executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State said, "This decision brings the school voucher train to a screeching halt."

"This is the second federal court to rule against vouchers in the past three months," he said. "Voucher supporters need to realize the law is not on their side. Taxpayers cannot be required to support houses of worship or their schools."

The federal lawsuit, filed by AU, People For the American Way and a coalition of civil-liberties and educational groups, marked the first federal test of a voucher program that includes religious schools. An earlier federal-court decision ruled that Maine, which offers vouchers only to non-religious schools, could not be forced to extend the program to religious schools as well.

The Cleveland program was previously struck down by the Ohio Supreme Court on a technicality in the state's constitution, not on the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment.

Supporters of the Cleveland program immediately appealed Oliver's injunction to the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

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Contrary to public statements, evangelical marriages often equal

By Mark Wingfield

PRINCETON, N.J. (ABP) -- Conservative-evangelical couples such as Southern Baptists have more egalitarian marriages than their public rhetoric about male leadership might indicate, according to a new study.

Likewise, conservative-evangelical parents, while more likely than others to spank their children, are warmer and more loving than other parents, a related study finds.

The research by Bradford Wilcox and John Bartkowski is part of an ongoing study of family relations among evangelicals. Parts of this research recently have been published in the American Sociological Review and a journal called The Responsive Community.

Wilcox recently completed a fellowship at the Brookings Institution and is a doctoral student in sociology at Princeton. Bartkowski teaches sociology at Mississippi State University.

Evangelicals denounce "cultural elites" on the left and embrace pro-family rhetoric from the right, such as the Southern Baptist Convention's 1998 family statement declaring that wives should "graciously submit" to their husbands.

In what the authors call the "evangelical family paradox," however, researchers found that actual practice often confounds both trends.

"Evangelical family practice doesn't match evangelical family rhetoric," they report in The Responsive Community's summer issue. "When it comes to the practice of family life, evangelical men and women act in ways that parallel or are in fact more communitarian than other Americans."

Wilcox and Bartkowski say evangelical Christian couples are no different than other American couples in how they deal with family finances, child rearing, work decisions and division of household labor. They cite only two exceptions: evangelical couples are more likely to say the husband takes the lead in "spiritual matters," and evangelical couples are more likely than other American couples to report high levels of marital satisfaction.

They note that even the mainstream language used by conservative evangelicals has changed in recent years to talk about husbands as "servant leaders" rather than emphasizing their "headship."

That innovation "allows evangelical men and women to retain their allegiance to the symbolic authority of men even as they adopt behaviors more in keeping with the norms of their non-evangelical friends, neighbors and coworkers," the researchers explain. "Moreover, it allows evangelicals to express -- symbolically if not practically -- their moral superiority over these very same non-evangelical friends, neighbors and coworkers."

To illustrate the "paradox" of evangelical family life, Wilcox and Bartkowski focus on what they find to be a more loving, warm and involved parenting style among evangelical mothers and fathers.

"When it comes to parenting, evangelicals -- especially evangelical men -- are in many ways more communitarian than other Americans," they report. "The single exception to this pattern is that evangelical parents spank their toddlers and preschoolers more often than other parents."

Despite their fondness for corporal punishment, evangelicals display more warmth and affection to their children, they add. "We find that evangelical mothers praise and hug their children more often than do other mothers. More surprisingly, we also find that evangelical fathers are more likely to practice this kind of expressive parenting.

"In fact, we find that evangelical fathers are more involved with their children than other fathers. They have dinner with their children and volunteer for youth activities like soccer and Scouts more than other fathers."

Wilcox analyzed these parenting factors in depth by isolating data from the National Survey of Families and Households, a huge database gathered in 1987 and 1988 that covers a broad range of topics.

Among his findings:

-- "Theological conservatism is associated with a greater propensity to praise and hug one's preschool children very often." In fact, the more conservative a person is classified theologically, the greater the likelihood he or she hugs and praises children, he found.

-- The same increase in hugging and praising was found in evangelical parents of school-aged children.

-- This increase in hugging and praising children is not due solely to more evangelical mothers staying home with their children nor to more frequent church attendance reported by evangelical families, although those factors may have some influence on school-aged children.

-- It's not membership in a conservative evangelical church that makes a difference but identifying with the core religious ideology of such churches.

-- Greater warmth in parenting by evangelicals has been fueled by evangelicals' embrace of church-based psychological and therapeutic ideals, such as those advanced by James Dobson and Focus on the Family.

In conclusion, Wilcox notes that "a distinctive neo-traditional parenting style has emerged among the most culturally committed conservative Protestants."

"This style is traditional in that it maintains the classical Protestant emphasis on the sinfulness of human nature and the attendant need for strict framing rules to address child misbehavior," he explains. "However, it may be viewed as innovative in that it harnesses theological and psychological values to framing rules that dictate a warm, expressive style of parenting for most parent-child interaction."

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Hardin-Simmons University announces leadership transition

ABILENE, Texas (ABP) -- Hardin-Simmons University President Lanny Hall has announced he will step down from the post May 31, 2001. But trustees of the Baptist-affiliated school in Abilene, Texas, have already named his successor.

Craig Turner, 52, the university's executive vice president and chief academic officer, will become its 14th president after Hall steps down, trustees announced Aug. 22.

Hall, who has been president since 1991, "desires to change roles" but "not to retire," according to an announcement to faculty and administrative officers. He will continue to work for the university in fund raising and teaching.

Hall, who turns 50 Sept. 3, will become chancellor, succeeding Jesse Fletcher, who will become president emeritus in 2001. Hall plans to teach six hours in political science or leadership in the fall of 2001.

Trustees approved the presidential-succession plan at a called meeting Aug. 19.

Hall said in a statement he "strongly recommended" Turner as his successor "in an effort to ensure a seamless and orderly transition."

"It is a high honor to lead this great institution, but I feel the time will be right for me to step down in 2001," Hall said. "I will have completed 31 years in government and education, 15 years in Baptist higher education and 12 1/2 years as a university president."

Turner came to Hardin-Simmons in 1992 as vice president for academic affairs. He assumed his current position in 1996, in which he oversees university functions including enrollment services, information management, planning and academic affairs.

Turner previously taught English and was head of that department at Mississippi College. During a 28-year career, he also has taught at Texas A&M, Baylor, Tulane and Sam Houston State universities.

He has a Ph.D. from Tulane and a B.A. and M.A. from Baylor.

Tina Hunter, chairwoman of the board of trustees, called the plan of succession a "logical and prudent plan" that "will maintain stable and effective leadership."

The board decided not to follow a "traditional road to find a president" by forming a search committee, Hunter said. "Why should we? We have the best man for the position right here on campus. You know him well."

Hall described his successor as "a scholar, a talented academic leader and a gifted administrator."

Turner will continue as executive vice president and chief academic officer during the current year. Beginning next June, he will assume the additional role of chief operating officer before moving into the presidency a year later.

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-- By ABP staff

Baptist-affiliated schools announce staff changes

(ABP) -- Baptist-affiliated schools in Texas and North Carolina have announced the following staff changes in recent weeks:

-- Todd Lyle Lake, campus minister at Wingate College since 1997, has been named dean of the chapel at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. He succeeds Milton Cunningham, who retired in May after 10 years as university chaplain and director of denominational ministries. Lake officially joins Baylor's staff Nov. 1.

A California native, Lake is a 1982 graduate of Harvard University. He earned a master's degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1988 and a doctorate in church history from Andover-Newton Theological School at Boston College.

-- Glenn Jonas Jr. became chairman of Campbell University's department of religion and philosophy July 1. Previously a professor in the religion department, Jonas has taught at the Baptist-affiliated school in Buies Creek, N.C., since 1994.

He is a graduate of Mars Hill College with a master's from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and a doctorate from Baylor University.

-- Gardner-Webb University's M. Christopher White School of Divinity announced formation of a center for congregational enrichment. The center will provide educational experiences for clergy and laity who are not enrolled in traditional degree programs at the divinity school in Boiling Springs, N.C.

Charles Horton, who recently retired as pastor of College Park Baptist Church in Orlando, Fla., is directing the center's work. He joined the divinity school's administrative staff Aug. 16 as special assistant to the dean and associate professor of pastoral ministries.

A pastor for 40 years, Horton holds the M.Div. degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and the Th.M. and D.Min. from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

-- Gardner-Webb also recently hired a new director for its Global Missions Resource Center. Donald Berry, a specialist in world religions, missiology and New Testament theology, took over the post July 1. He succeeds Sonny Sweatman, who accepted a job with the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Berry previously taught at the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Prague, Czech Republic, and at Palm Beach Atlantic College and Stetson University in Florida.

-- Wake Forest University Divinity School, which opens this fall in Winston-Salem, N.C., named Jill Crainshaw of Richmond, Va., as director of supervised ministries. All students are required to work in field placement under the guidance of a local minister during their second year. Crainshaw will design and administer that program.

She is a former visiting professor of preaching and worship at Union Theological Seminary and the Presbyterian School of Christian Education in Richmond, Va. She served six years as pastor of Neriah Baptist Church in Buena Vista, Va.

She is a graduate of Wake Forest, Union Seminary and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

-- Wake Forest also named Rebecca Glen Hartzog as associate chaplain and Baptist campus minister. A graduate of Samford University and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, she has been the Baptist campus minister at Shorter and Berry colleges in Rome, Ga., since 1993.

Gideons International sets goal of distributing 1 billionth Bible

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (ABP) -- Gideons International is celebrating its 100th anniversary with a goal of giving away a total of 1 billion Bibles by 2002.

Gideons International President Lloyd Stone announced the goal at a conference held July 20-23 at the group's headquarters in Nashville, Tenn., according to Ecumenical News International.

Founded in 1899, Gideons International is the oldest Christian business and professional men's association in the United States. In 100 years, the group says it has distributed 850 million copies of the Bible to hotels, prisons, military installations, hospitals, schools and airplanes. The Gideons are currently distributing Bibles in 172 countries, at a rate of 45 million a year, according to the group's Web site.

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-- By ABP staff

Substance, not style, central to worship planning, experts say

By Carl White

JACKSON, Miss. (ABP) -- Churches can avoid the so-called "worship wars" by focusing on planning and preparation instead of style, two Alabama ministers believe.

"Any style of worship that is appropriate to that congregation and planned well can produce growth," said Milburn Price, dean of Samford University's school of music and part-time music minister at Vestavia Hills Baptist Church in Birmingham, Ala.

Price and the church's pastor, Gary Furr, called on pastors, ministers of music and other leaders at a recent conference to be less preoccupied with style of worship and pay more attention to content. Central to their approach is planning.

Furr told the crowd in Jackson, Miss., that six critical issues in worship planning apply to any style of worship:

-- Every worship service needs at least one point. "There are 52 Sundays in a year," he said. "You don't have to try and say everything in one week."

-- Begin with the end in mind. What are you asking the congregation to do? What do you hope will transpire during the worship service? he asked.

-- Think about transitions -- how one element in the service leads to the next. It should be apparent to every worshipper that the entire service fits together and makes sense as a whole, he said.

-- Use opportunities beyond the printed bulletin to prepare the congregation for worship. Furr said a church can educate people about the meaning and elements of worship on Wednesday evening. Or, "Let the children's sermon be about one element of worship, like reading Scripture. You'll also be teaching adults. Tell the children why you read Scripture, and then have someone read Scripture," he said.

-- Plan with the congregation in mind. "Fred Craddock says the congregation is part of the sermon," Furr said. Ministers should ask questions like: Who are they? How will they participate? How will this service represent them? What impact will it have?

-- Think about giving space and places for response. In addition to the traditional altar call at the end of a service, silence can be a response, or joining the pastor at the altar for prayer.

Price said the heart of worship is a dialogue between the congregation and God, and music is often the language of that dialogue.

"In recent years I have come to view music style as some form of an analogy of a cultural language," Price said. "In a country where you don't know the language, you feel disoriented, even if you have a translator. The same is true with a music style you don't relate to. But to a style you do relate to, you feel natural -- it communicates."

Problems arise, Price said, when one group tries to spiritualize its style preference and make it normative for everyone else. "It's a sin to spiritualize your style," he said.

"The first consideration in planning worship is not what style but what text," Price said. "After deciding on the text, then you discuss the various styles."

Furr suggested the struggle over worship style taking place in many churches is evidence they are uneasy with their role in a changing society.

"We are losing hold on the culture, and we are scared," he said. "The attitude today is you don't have to have church to have spirituality, and we are having trouble with this."

Furr and Price said people are really seeking not a particular style of worship but authenticity in worship. "People are crying for something real, something meaningful," Furr said.

Furr said a church should frame its consideration of worship style around six questions:

- What are the irreducible, essential aspects of worship?
- What are the diversions and confused motives that might keep us from true worship?
- What is the role of music in worship?
- What are we attempting to do in worship, and who decides?
- Who are we as a congregation?
- What is the "fruit?"

"While worship seems so lofty in its ideals, we forget that it is human beings who are doing worship in a specific time and place," Furr said.

Furr said churches should be theological rather than pragmatic in their approach to worship. "We need Christian spirituality," he said.

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