



Nashville, Tennessee
**Associated
Baptist Press**

Editor: **Bob Allen**
Executive editor: **Greg Warner**

Phone: **800.340.6626**
Fax: **904.262.7745**
E-mail: **bob@abpnews.com**

October 22, 1999

(99-87)

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Wayne Oates, pioneer of pastoral care, dies**
- Midwestern trustees OK severance, begin search for seminary president**
- House defeats voucher amendment to education-spending measure**
- Religious freedom panel urges action against China, Sudan**

**Wayne Oates, pioneer
of pastoral care, dies**

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (ABP) -- Wayne Oates, a pioneer in the field of pastoral care and counseling, died Oct. 21 in Louisville, Ky.

Oates, 82, taught 1948-74 at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and then at the University of Louisville School of Medicine. He wrote nearly 60 books in a 50-year career as an author and professor.

He was one of the first scholars to advocate using principles of psychiatry and psychology in ministry, opening the door for what became an established field known as pastoral care. He remained one of the foremost experts in the field until his death.

Oates "made a significant impact on generations of Southern Baptist ministers who have made pastoral care part of their ongoing ministry," former student Andy Lester said in an interview last year.

Southern Baptist seminarians for five decades learned pastoral care and counseling from Oates or those who studied at his feet.

"There are very few pastoral-care specialists who are Baptists who couldn't track their roots back to Oates," said Lester, who teaches pastoral theology and pastoral counseling at Brite Divinity School at Texas Christian University.

But Oates' influence also reached beyond Baptists. His writings have influenced thousands of ministers in church and institutional settings such as chaplains in military, hospital and business settings.

"He put together the practice of pastoral ministry ... with the wisdom and resources of psychiatry and psychology in a masterful way," said Roy Woodruff, executive director of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors.

Woodruff described Oates as "bilingual" in the disciplines of theology and psychiatry and said he was able to "move back and forth with amazing agility."

Oates grew up in poverty in Greenville, S.C. His mother worked in a cotton mill. Oates' father abandoned the family when he was born.

None in his family had schooling beyond the sixth grade, and Oates saw education as his way out of poverty. After finishing the eighth grade, he went to Washington to work as a page in the U.S. Congress. After graduating from high school, he worked two years in the mills before earning a degree from Wake Forest University.

He enrolled at Southern Seminary, where he met Gaines Dobbins, a popular professor. Through that relationship, Oates developed an interest in what he called "sick religion." One of his books, "When Religion Gets Sick," is still widely used and is now available on CD-ROM.

Integrating theology and psychiatry was viewed in the 1940s not only as novel but also controversial. Some people opposed his appointment to the Southern Seminary faculty in 1948. His books often were criticized.

He never published his doctoral dissertation, fearing he would be labeled a Freudian. But his thesis in fact challenged Freud and argued against uncritical acceptance of his arguments.

Oates called his first book "The Christian Pastor." First published in 1951, it is in its fifth printing.

Asked if he was a follower of Freud or some other famous teacher, Oates said he would always reply: "No. I'm a Christian pastor."

"He always kept pastoral care grounded in theology and the Bible," Lester said. "There are many who would thank Oates for holding the field's feet to the fire of biblical and theological roots and relevance."

-30-

-- By Bob Allen and Mark Wingfield

Midwestern trustees OK severance, begin search for seminary president

By Bill Webb

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (ABP) -- Trustees at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary approved a severance package for a president they dismissed in September and elected a seven-member committee to seek his successor in their regular fall meeting, Oct. 18-19 in Kansas City, Mo.

Board chairman Carl Weiser will head the search committee by virtue of his office. Other members were elected out of a group of 22 trustees who agreed to be considered.

The rest of the committee includes: Reagan Bradford, a layman in Edmond, Okla.; Loretta Bringer, a laywoman in Maywood, Mo.; Conrad "Buster" Brown, a pastor in Mt. Pleasant, S.C.; William Hatfield, a pastor in Dierks, Ark.; John Marshall, a pastor in Springfield, Mo.; and Dennis Wood, a pastor in Tempe, Ariz.

Gwen Newman, a laywoman from Winder, Ga., is an alternate.

The committee's job is to nominate a successor to President Mark Coppenger, who was fired Sept. 14 after a majority of trustees concluded that his anger had undermined his ability to lead the seminary.

"The profile of a new president has not been put together," said Weiser, pastor of Hyland Heights Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Va. "I can tell you that we will be looking for a bridge builder, someone who can build relationships in the Midwest."

Weiser said it is essential that the next president "have a sense of calling to the Midwest" and "be a man of conviction, calling and character."

After emerging from one of three executive sessions, trustees approved, without dissent, a severance package of \$40,000. It is to be made in regular payments through Jan. 15. It includes moving costs and other expenses.

Trustees voted to let Coppenger keep the president's laptop computer and to provide insurance coverage through March, unless Coppenger becomes eligible for other coverage earlier. Coppenger will be asked to sign a letter of agreement accepting terms of the package.

In his first report to the board since being named interim president Sept. 14, Michael Whitehead told trustees the faculty had pulled together in the wake of the firing.

He also addressed enrollment. "In spite of the increased head count, our full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment is down," he said. He explained that one student taking 24 credit hours a year is the equivalent of one student enrolled full-time.

The student head count rose this fall to 659, compared to 594 a year ago, Whitehead said. But FTEs are critical because they are the measure by which the seminary receives funding through the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program unified budget.

While enrollment in seminary extension programs is up, Whitehead said, both the head count and FTEs are down at the seminary's main campus in Kansas City, Mo.

The interim president also told trustees the seminary had erroneously reported 380 FTEs for 1998 and had since corrected that number to 326. He blamed human and computer errors and specifically the inclusion of transferred credits in the total.

"If every FTE counts for \$6,000, you can see we're talking about real money," he said. Whitehead said when presidents of the other five SBC seminaries -- which share a pool of funds for theological education that is divided up according to a complex seminary-funding formula -- learned of the mistake last month, they said: "We all make mistakes. We're not going to count that against you."

The board took two actions aimed at encouraging students to take more credit hours -- the average class load now is about 10 hours per semester. Trustees increased from six to 12 the number of electives students can take without restrictions. They also placed a cap on tuition for students at the main campus at \$700 per semester and \$300 for January, June and July terms.

The president said the seminary needs to work to combat "distorted, unbalanced and exaggerated" information about the school.

Critics have accused some professors of being committed "to a man whose initials are J.C.," Whitehead said, making an apparent reference to John Calvin. "As long as I'm here, the board's here and the professors are here, the only man at Midwestern Seminary that we're going to worship with the initials J.C. is Jesus Christ."

In other action, the board:

- Delayed a vote on a communications policy aimed at discouraging trustees from talking about sensitive matters discussed in executive sessions. A plan offered by Weiser drew an hour of discussion before he offered to restudy the issue for later consideration.

- Granted permanent status to the Ethnic School of Ministry, which provides a significant ministry to Laotians in America.

- Learned from capital-resources director Bill Foil that trustees had exceeded their goal of pledges for Midwestern's "First Step Toward Tomorrow Campaign" with \$204,970, bringing total pledges by trustees and seminary employees to \$319,258.

-30-

House defeats voucher amendment to education-spending measure

By Kenny Byrd

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- The U.S. House of Representatives rejected a proposal Oct. 21 to establish a five-year pilot program to allow students in "failing" public schools to attend private schools at public expense.

The House voted 257 to 166 against an amendment sponsored by House Majority Leader Dick Arney, R-Texas. Arney had sought to add the measure to a bill that authorizes funds for Title I education services.

Arney's plan would have allowed governors to declare "academic emergencies" in public schools, qualifying parents of first-through-fifth grade students for up to a \$3,500 voucher for tuition at a public, private or parochial school.

The \$100 million initiative would also have been open to students who have been victims of criminal violence. It would have affected an estimated 27,000 students.

Arney said that if a school is failing, many parents have the money and the ability to "pick up that child and move them someplace else."

"But some people don't have those resources," Arney added. "Can we reach out a heart and a hand of compassion to children that are today stuck in schools that are disasters or who have had in their own personal life a horribly frightening, scary, tragic disaster?"

Opposing the amendment on the House floor was Rep. William Clay, D-Mo. "To take one child out of an unsafe environment and leave the rest of the children in that unsafe environment does not make much sense," he said.

Clay said the House education committee "deliberated at length" on private-school vouchers and then voted overwhelmingly to reject the concept.

"Federal funding of private-school vouchers raises serious constitutional issues that could jeopardize the independence of religious schools and disrupt the administration of Title I programs," Clay said.

In a letter to House lawmakers, religious, educational and civil-liberties groups in the National Coalition for Public Education opposed both the Arney amendment and another proposed voucher amendment. The groups said that some private schools are already expressing concern about such proposals "because they fear the anticipated increase in accountability for the public funds private and religious schools would receive."

Brent Walker, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee, said the fact that so many Republicans repudiated their leadership "speaks volumes about the lack of wisdom behind vouchers." More than 50 Republicans crossed party lines to vote against the measure.

"One of the worst things government can do to religion is to try to give it a helping hand," Walker said. "I can't, for the life of me, figure out how those who don't trust government to regulate commerce are willing to open the door to regulation of religion that inevitably follows government dollars."

Carole Shields, president of People For the American Way, said, "We should be putting this money into improving the public schools, where 90 percent of our kids are educated, rather than diverting funds to help the very few attend private schools."

Among other groups signing the education coalition's letter were the American Jewish Congress, American Jewish Committee, Americans United for Separation of Church and State, National Education Association and National PTA.

Some conservative religious groups are more supportive of vouchers. The Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission joined a legal brief in support of a Wisconsin voucher program, arguing that religious schools should not be excluded from voucher programs that include private non-religious schools. Other groups supportive of such programs include the Christian Legal Society, Family Research Council, Christian Coalition and the National Association of Evangelicals.

Religious freedom panel urges action against China, Sudan

By Larry Chesser

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom has urged President Clinton and other White House officials to take action against religious persecution in China and Sudan.

The commission made its appeal in an Oct. 19 meeting with Clinton, National Security Adviser Samuel Berger and White House Chief of Staff John Podesta.

Rabbi David Saperstein, chairman of the commission, said the panel decided to focus initially on three countries -- China, Sudan and Russia. Their report, however, does not call for specific sanctions against Russia at this time.

China and Sudan were among countries recently listed by the U.S. State Department as "countries of particular concern" because of severe violations of religious liberty. Others listed were Iran, Iraq, and Myanmar (Burma). Also listed were Taliban and Afghanistan, two governments not recognized by the United States, and Serbia, which is not a country.

The listing was mandated by the International Religious Freedom Act, which also established the commission. The law also requires the president to take action against listed countries within 90 days or notify Congress if no penalty is to be imposed.

The commission urged the president to apply his 1997 executive order imposing economic sanctions on Sudan that bar China Petroleum Corp. and other companies from using U.S. stock exchanges to finance Sudan's new oil pipeline. The commission said that pipeline would insulate Sudan from the impact of economic sanctions and "perpetuate the 16-year-old civil war which has already claimed the lives of 2 million Sudanese."

The commission also urged Clinton to meet with experts on Sudan to design future actions aimed at ending religious persecution there and to send Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to a Nov. 9 congressionally sponsored summit on the Sudan. The panel also asked Clinton to "speak out more forcefully and frequently" against religious freedom violations in Sudan.

Concerning China, the commission urged Clinton to "raise religious freedom issues as often and as prominently as possible in meetings with Chinese officials." It said China's listing as a country of particular concern "must carry consequences if the International Religious Freedom Act is to be taken seriously."

On Russia, the commission said it would work with the administration to develop new policies to address "the regressive trend toward violations of religious freedom." The commission said the link between religious persecution and "extreme nationalism" in Russia should be weighed as a significant factor in shaping U.S. policy.

-30-

END
