



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

December 21, 1999

(99-105)

IN THIS ISSUE:

- BTSR dean tapped as seminary president**
- New Mexico minister urges churches to be ready to respond to youth violence**
- Pastor of large SBC church announces retirement plans**
- Carson-Newman board elects president, offers to let state Baptists elect trustees**

**BTSR dean tapped
as seminary president**

RICHMOND, Va. (ABP) -- The faculty dean at Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond (Va.) has been tapped as president of American Baptist-related Colgate Rochester Divinity School/Crozer Theological Seminary.

Trustees of the school in Rochester, N.Y., named Thomas Halbrooks as president-elect at a called meeting Dec. 17. Halbrooks, 59, will assume the presidency July 1 when the current president, James Evans, steps down after 10 years.

A search-committee document described Halbrooks as a leader who has "demonstrated a commitment to excellence in scholarship and church leadership throughout his career."

Halbrooks was one of three original faculty members at the Virginia seminary that opened in 1991 and its only dean. He previously taught church history 13 years at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

BTSR President Thomas Graves said Halbrooks was instrumental in establishing the seminary, building its faculty and curriculum and obtaining accreditation in record time.

"BTSR is proud that the dean of this school, the youngest accredited Baptist seminary in America, has been selected as president of the oldest Baptist divinity school in the nation," Graves said.

Colgate Rochester Divinity School is the result of a 1928 merger of two former Baptist seminaries: Colgate (founded in 1819) and Rochester (founded in 1850.) Crozer Theological Seminary, which was founded in 1861 and counts among its graduates Martin Luther King Jr., joined the merger in 1970.

The divinity school enrolls about 200 students. It is one of 10 seminaries related to American Baptist Churches USA through the denomination's Educational Ministries arm.

BTSR is an independent, moderate school that is supported by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. It has grown from three faculty members and 32 students in the fall of 1991 to 14 faculty members, 11 staff and 285 students.

Halbrooks is a 1962 graduate of Samford University. He earned a master of divinity from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1965 and a Ph.D. from Emory University in 1971.

His wife, Jean Tackett, is a registered nurse. They are parents of an adult son.

Halbrooks said his goals for Colgate Rochester/Crozer include "being a congregationally focused" institution and producing graduates that combine "piety and social justice."

-30-

New Mexico minister urges churches to be ready to respond to youth violence

By John Loudat

DEMING, N.M. (ABP) -- Churches everywhere should be prepared to respond to violence against children in their communities, says a minister who knows first-hand.

On Nov. 19, Deming, N.M., joined the ranks of unlikely spots to be shaken by violence when 13-year-old Araceli Tena died after allegedly being shot in the back of the head in the lobby of Deming Middle School by a fellow student.

In an interview two weeks later, Jim Prince, who has been minister of music and youth at Deming's First Baptist Church 21 years, offered this advice to fellow Baptists: "Be ready."

Prince suggested that churches "be visible" in their communities, so people know they can turn to them for guidance when tragedy strikes.

Because of their visibility in the 11,000-resident community, three Baptist ministers were called to the crime scene shortly after the shooting in Deming and were able to provide counseling for students and their families.

Along with Prince, Steve Mosely, pastor of Bethel Baptist Church, and Bethel's youth minister, Paul Eckeberger, were at the school ministering within minutes of the shooting.

Counselors were available to students Friday afternoon and evening, Saturday morning and all day Monday. The counseling was coordinated by local and state organizations.

Counseling was not the only service provided by churches in the wake of the shooting.

Bethel Baptist held a prayer service that same Friday evening.

First Baptist had already scheduled a testimony service for that Sunday evening. In light of the shooting, however, several students during the service shared their feelings and spoke of their desire to become more involved in witnessing to friends. Prince said the "depth" of his young people impressed him profoundly.

On Monday, approximately 200 people from all of the churches of the community gathered to form a prayer circle around the school, said Mosely's wife, Julie. And the community-wide Thanksgiving service turned into a prayer meeting both for the families of the victim and alleged assailant, she said.

"It was real neat to see the churches pull together and pray for the kids," Julie Mosely said.

Prince said that he has been reminded of the importance of encouraging parents in the church and community to take seriously their responsibility as parents.

"We appreciate a lot the prayer support that people have given us," Prince added, noting the many calls he received from his fellow Baptists in the days following the shooting.

-30-

Pastor of large SBC church announces retirement plans

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (ABP) -- The longtime pastor of one of the nation's largest Southern Baptist churches announced his retirement Dec. 19.

Homer Lindsay Jr., pastor of First Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Fla., for nearly 31 years, will preach his last sermon March 26, according to church spokesmen.

The church will reportedly seek a younger co-pastor to work alongside former Southern Baptist Convention president Jerry Vines, who has shared duties with Lindsay in that role 17 years.

Lindsay, 72, succeeded his father, Homer Lindsay Sr., as pastor in 1969. The downtown church had about 2,600 members at the time. Today it has a membership of 26,000, ranking it third in size among more than 40,000 churches affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.

The church is probably best known in Southern Baptist life for its winter pastors' conference, which attracts a crowd of several thousand each year. Candidacies of several conservatives who were later elected SBC president during the 1980s were announced at that gathering.

The surprise announcement reportedly stunned church members. Lindsay, who has a history of heart problems, had previously said he planned to try to remain in the pulpit until he is 80. Even Vines said while he and Lindsay had discussed and prayed about retirement, he didn't expect the announcement when it came, the Florida Times-Union reported.

Lindsay did not say specifically what led him to his decision other than it has come "to the time and place for me to announce my retirement."

-30-

-- By ABP staff

Carson-Newman board elects president, offers to let state Baptists elect trustees

JEFFERSON CITY, Tenn. (ABP) -- Baptist educator James Netherton has been elected 21st president of Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tenn.

Trustees of the Baptist-affiliated school also endorsed a compromise aimed at improving strained relations with the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

Netherton has been provost at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala, three years. He previously was a professor and administrator at Baylor University in Waco, Texas.

Netherton will succeed 22-year Carson-Newman President Cordell Maddox. Maddox will retire when Netherton assumes office Feb. 1. The December election ends a 10-month presidential search, according to a report in the Tennessee newspaper Baptist and Reflector.

Carson-Newman trustees also passed a resolution to allow the Tennessee Baptist Convention to elect the school's trustees next year. Last year, trustees changed the college's charter to allow them to elect their own successors. The state convention -- which previously named college trustees -- responded by placing funds earmarked for Carson-Newman in escrow.

The new trustee resolution does not mention the escrowed funds. Releasing the money would be up to

the Tennessee convention's executive board, observed Calvin Metcalf, chairman of a trustee denominational-relations committee.

-30-

-- By ABP staff

END
