



Nashville, Tennessee  
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Baptist Press**

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February 29, 2000

(00-16)

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**Carver School endowment funds  
transferred from seminary to WMU**

By Mark Wingfield and Bob Allen

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (ABP) -- Nearly \$1 million in endowment funds has been transferred from control of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary to Woman's Missionary Union as part of a formal mediation over the disputed assets of the Carver School of Church Social Work.

Though the mediation reportedly took place last summer, officials of Southern Seminary and WMU have refused to speak publicly about the matter since then. Sources familiar with the negotiations said a gag order was included as part of the deal at the request of the seminary.

The transfer of \$928,541 from the Southern Baptist Foundation to the WMU Foundation does appear in WMU's audited financial report for last year, however. That audit, which must be submitted each year to the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee, is a public record. It was available for review during the Executive Committee's Feb. 21-22 meeting in Nashville, Tenn.

The audit states that the funds in question were transferred to the WMU Foundation by the seminary after a previous trust was terminated.

Asked about the matter last summer before her retirement as WMU executive director, Dellanna O'Brien said she could not speak about the endowment dispute. The most she would say is this: "Yes, we have had a mediation and settled to each party's satisfaction."

The matter reportedly was discussed in executive session during the WMU Executive Board meeting in Shocco Springs, Ala., in January. During that meeting, board members approved the distribution of large sums of money from an undisclosed source. The distributions will benefit the Eleanor Terry Chair for Christian Women's Leadership at Samford University and the new graduate program in social work at Baylor University, among others.

Baylor has taken up the mission once held by the Carver School before its termination at Southern Seminary. Baylor not only offers the master-of-social-work degree with an emphasis on church social work, but the program is run by Diana Garland, the previous dean of the Carver School at Southern Seminary.

In 1998, the seminary sold the Carver School name and certain undisclosed assets to Campbellsville University, a liberal-arts school affiliated with the Kentucky Baptist Convention. That transaction capped a tumultuous saga of transition that began in 1993, when Albert Mohler became president of the Louisville, Ky., seminary -- put in place by conservative trustees who wanted the seminary to reflect a much more conservative theology and ideology.

Amid several years of faculty upheaval -- with a turnover rate of more than 60 percent -- a dispute arose between Garland and Mohler over faculty hiring requirements for the Carver School. Mohler insisted that all prospective faculty members must oppose women being ordained as pastors. Garland told students and the press the requirement would place the Carver School's accreditation at risk.

Mohler promptly fired Garland as dean for insubordination.

In the ensuing months, Mohler and the seminary trustees launched a study of whether the seminary should continue operation of the church-social-work school, the only one of its kind in the nation. Ultimately, Mohler declared, and the trustees affirmed, that some tenets of social work are inconsistent with biblical theology.

Nearly four years passed while WMU sought to resolve the fate of the Carver School endowment funds with the seminary. Eventually, both sides agreed to binding mediation, according to multiple sources familiar with the proceedings.

The funds in question originated as part of the WMU Training School, which was founded in Louisville in 1907. At that time, women were not allowed to enroll as students at the seminary. In 1952, the training school was renamed Carver School of Missions and Social Work. Then in 1963, by action of messengers to the SBC annual meeting, the Carver School was merged into Southern Seminary. The two schools already shared adjoining property and had a close working relationship.

In 1984, Southern Seminary made the Carver School of Church Social Work one of four schools operating under the seminary umbrella, putting it on equal status with the schools of theology, Christian education and church music. The Carver School received accreditation for its master-of-social-work degree, making it the first and only accredited degree of its type in the nation.

With the 1963 merger, the seminary became provisional beneficiary of several endowment funds related to the Carver School. These included a general endowment fund, the Margaret M. Norton Fund, the William Owen Carver Fund and nine scholarship funds.

At that time, WMU took action to direct the Southern Baptist Foundation, which held the funds, to make Southern Seminary the recipient of earnings "provided that the seminary uses such income in conformity with the requirements of the trust agreement."

The trust agreement carried this stipulation: "Whenever the Southern Baptist Convention ... shall cease to conduct a school ... for uses and purposes as set forth in said Article 2 of the Articles of Incorporation of the Carver School of Missions and Social Work as quoted above, the trust shall terminate and the corpus shall be returned to the Woman's Missionary Union, auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention, or its legal successor in interest."

In addition to the endowment funds, WMU also gave to Southern Seminary real estate valued at \$799,500 at the time of the 1963 merger. That property, which today houses the seminary's new Boyce Bible College, reportedly was not part of what WMU asked to have returned.

## **Fellowship leaders approve church-centered strategic plan**

By Bob Allen

ATLANTA (ABP) -- A proposed strategic plan for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship will seek to cast the Southern Baptist Convention splinter group "as a movement and not just as an organization," according to its chief executive.

"We think this represents a significant and perhaps even revolutionary direction for the future," said Daniel Vestal, coordinator of the Atlanta-based Fellowship. "That is we exist for the benefit of the local church."

Founded by moderates in response to a conservative takeover of the Southern Baptist Convention in the 1980s, the 9-year-old Fellowship initiated its second generation with a strategic-planning process begun last summer.

Approved by the Fellowship's Coordinating Council Feb. 24, the plan awaits adoption by the CBF General Assembly June 29-July 1 in Orlando, Fla.

The plan calls for renaming the Fellowship's Atlanta offices as the "CBF Resource Center" and for the hiring of a new "Resource Center coordinator" to serve as chief operating officer. The new officer would lead and coordinate the work of the CBF's leadership team, freeing Vestal to "cast the Fellowship's vision" in Baptist churches around the nation, he said.

Phase One of the plan clarifies the Fellowship's identity and mission, strategic initiatives and key priorities. A Phase Two next year would examine issues related to the structure and role of the Coordinating Council and the relationship of state and regional CBF groups.

"This provides the foundation for us in dealing with some structural issues in the future," Vestal said.

The plan includes a new mission statement of, "Serving Christians and churches as they discover and fulfill their God-given mission."

"Core values" are Baptist principles, biblically based global missions, a resource model for serving churches, an emphasis on justice and mercy, lifelong learning for ministers, trustworthiness and organizational effectiveness.

The plan contains four "strategic initiatives" -- faith formation, building community, leadership development and global missions and ministry -- and 14 "priority areas."

The 14 priority areas are:

- Evangelism and outreach.
- Spiritual growth.
- Congregational health.
- Baptist identity and relationships.
- Reconciliation and justice.
- Marriage and family ministries.
- Ecumenical and interfaith dialogue.
- Theological education.
- Congregational leadership development.
- Collegiate ministry.
- Partnership missions with local churches.
- Unevangelized peoples.
- Urban poor and other marginalized people.
- Church planting.

"This represents the heart of the strategic plan," Vestal said.

Members of the Coordinating Council enthusiastically endorsed the plan, proposed by staff and officers. "This is CBF," said Michael Smith, a Coordinating Council member and pastor of Second Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn.

The Fellowship staff will draft a budget for next year based on the proposed structure. The Coordinating Council will consider it at a called meeting in March.

"This has been an absolutely exhausting experience, but it has been an energizing experience," Vestal said.

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## **CBF 'young leaders' emerge as coalition**

**By Rob Marus**

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (ABP) -- What one Cooperative Baptist Fellowship leader said "may be the most important meeting for the future of the CBF movement" took place in suburban Atlanta Feb. 21-23. During the first-ever CBF Young Leaders' Retreat, a group of more than 100 moderate Baptists under age 40 gathered to discuss their role in the future of CBF and organized themselves into a permanent coalition for encouraging support of the Atlanta-based organization.

However, participants made it clear from the start that they think CBF needs to better live up to its stated ideals.

A session where participants voiced concerns about CBF emphasized two issues in particular: a lack of diversity among CBF leadership and the fear that CBF might become simply a re-tooled version of the old Southern Baptist Convention.

The Fellowship's moderator-elect, Jim Baucom, pastor of Rivermont Avenue Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Va., admitted that even he had reservations about the missionary-sending organization's future. "I am worried about investing in something that might be unrealistic -- namely, asking moderate Baptists to coalesce around anything of substance," said Baucom, one of the retreat's conveners.

Other retreat participants worried that many of those who have been CBF leaders since the organization's founding are so wounded by events during the SBC's fundamentalist takeover that it has stifled the organization's growth. During a session where participants gathered in small groups to list the reasons they were participating in a retreat limited to young CBF leaders, groups reported back comments such as: "We're tired of hearing grown men whine" and "We don't want our bitter roots to produce bitter fruit."

During a dialogue session between retreat participants and CBF's senior-level coordinators, Baucom made note of the group's general concerns.

"We believe that CBF as an organization, many of the churches related to CBF, and many of the people related to CBF are afraid," he said. "We're afraid that the commitment level is low in CBF all over, as a group. We're afraid that we could make the same mistakes the SBC has made if we aren't careful. We're afraid that we're reactionary. We're afraid that we've just put a new face on an old system. And we're afraid of the lack of diversity that is displayed in many areas of the organization."

In particular, Baucom noted the lack of diversity evident among the coordinators seated in front of the group. He pointed out that of the nine senior-level coordinators on the national CBF staff all were middle-aged white males with the lone exception of Global Missions Co-Coordinator Barbara Baldrige. "This group is not reflective of what we say CBF is supposed to be," Baucom contended.

CBF Coordinator Daniel Vestal, while not justifying the lack of diversity, was quick to point out that "when you look past male-female diversity, there is more diversity [among the coordinators] than you think. If you don't believe me, you should see our staff meetings!"

However, Vestal admitted that CBF is far behind where it wants to be in embracing diversity "as far as ethnic backgrounds."

Speaking to concerns over a lack of commitment among CBF-supportive churches, Coordinator for Church Resources Terry Hamrick said that commitment can come if CBF leaders can change the way the public perceives the group. "There is a difference between CBF as a movement and CBF as an organization," he explained. "Your generation is much more interested in connecting to a movement than an organization."

Participants did point out that one area where they are very proud of CBF's commitment to younger leaders is on its Global Missions team. Noting the high numbers of missionaries under 40, Global Missions Co-Coordinator Gary Baldrige concurred with the group and noted his particular appreciation for the under-40 generation's activism. "What excites me about the younger missionaries that come along is that they want us to have a more holistic mission, they are more interested in social-justice issues and that they are more interested in ministering to marginalized people groups."

Participants came to a consensus on five initiatives their group wants to implement in the life of CBF with the national leadership's help. They are:

- To push CBF as an organization to be more inclusive on all levels -- including doing more than paying lip-service to women in ministry and ethnic diversity;
- To encourage greater involvement of the laity at all levels of CBF leadership and in all age groups;
- To ask the Coordinating Council and state CBF organizations to improve the under-40 representation on the council to at least 25 percent within the next few years;
- To hire a national staff member at the Coordinator level who is under 40, and who preferably would work specifically with emerging generations in CBF; and,
- To create an ongoing CBF Young Leaders' Network for purposes of encouragement, fellowship, and coalition-building among under-40 CBF supporters.

Participants resolved to meet again next year as well as at the CBF General Assembly June 29-July 1 in Orlando, Fla. In addition, many CBF state and regional groups met to organize similar young leaders' meetings in their areas.

Participants elected a steering committee to oversee development of the ongoing CBF Young Leaders' Network and to plan future meetings of the group. The seven-member committee will expand its ranks to 10 members before their next meeting.

Steering committee members for this year's retreat included Baucom; David Burroughs, president of PASSPORT, Inc., in Louisville, Ky.; Matt Cook, director of admissions for George W. Truett Theological Seminary at Baylor University in Waco, Texas; Scott Erwin, pastor of Raritan Valley Baptist Church in Edison, N.J.; and Stacey Simpson, pastor of Fellowship Baptist Church in Edison, Ga.

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## **Baptist schools win accreditation ratings**

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. (ABP) -- A Baptist-affiliated divinity school in North Carolina has won accreditation by the Association of Theological Schools, while a Texas Baptist seminary has been granted candidate status, an important step toward full accreditation.

In January the ATS accredited Gardner-Webb University's M. Christopher White School of Divinity. The accreditation completes a six-year process and lasts for five years, the longest period possible for a school receiving initial accreditation.

Divinity School Dean Wayne Stacy called it an important distinction for the school, founded in 1992, which enrolls 150 students in four disciplines.

"ATS accreditation provides a heightened credibility within the academic community and creates a 'culture of evaluation' in which the School of Divinity is now much more self-conscious about the way it does things," Stacy said.

Now it is no longer possible to do 'business as usual' in the School of Divinity; every course, every program, every event in the School of Divinity is evaluated and assessed as to its overall effectiveness and for the degree to which it helps the School to achieve its mission."

The ATS also upgraded Baylor University's George W. Truett Theological Seminary from "associate" to "candidate" status. As a candidate school, the seminary will enter a two-year self-study process leading to a vote for full accreditation in 2002.

"The granting of candidacy status with ATS for Truett Seminary is another important step in the seminary's growth and progress," said Dean Bradley Creed.

"We at Truett Seminary are honored by the vote of the commission and pleased with the approval of our program that this important step confers."

The seminary is already accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools through its relationship to Baylor.

With 237 member institutions, the Pittsburgh, Pa.,-based ATS has been accrediting graduate theological schools in North America since 1938.

Accreditation is a seal of approval for schools that maintain academic excellence. It is important for students for transferring credits, gaining admission into graduate schools and qualifying for jobs.

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-- By ABP staff

## **Some SBC Executive Committee members voice concern over Annuity Board actions**

By David Winfrey

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (ABP) --A plan to expand the role of the Southern Baptist Convention's Annuity Board has raised objections among some state Baptist foundations.

The SBC Executive Committee voted to allow the Annuity Board to work in cooperation with the Southern Baptist Foundation and state Baptist foundations to meet investment needs of Baptist institutions in the states and Southern Baptist entities.

The change is needed, according to an Annuity Board official speaking in a meeting open to reporters for background only, because a lot of assets in Southern Baptist life are not currently being managed by Southern Baptist institutions.

The Executive Committee action followed several months of negotiations between leaders of the Executive Committee, the Annuity Board and other groups.

While a number of state Baptist foundations have welcomed the plan, some have registered strong objections, according to the Annuity Board official.

Prior to the vote by the full Executive Committee approving the plan, Steven Boyd, pastor of Simpsonville (Ky.) Baptist Church, said the Annuity Board did not adequately consult state foundations in developing the plan and admonished that SBC entities not "hand down protocol to state conventions."

Committee member Ted Kersh, pastor of Village Baptist Church in Oklahoma City, also expressed concerns, but the matter passed overwhelmingly in a voice vote.

Members of the Executive Committee who raised concerns said they objected to both the expansion and the way it was presented in a committee before the vote.

The issue dates back to the early 1990s, according to Barry Allen, president of the Kentucky Baptist Foundation. Previously, the Annuity Board tried to offer such services directly to churches, Baptist colleges and other entities and was told by the Executive Committee to stop after objections by the state foundations, Allen said.

This time the proposal, which will be considered by messengers to the SBC annual meeting, June 13-15 in Orlando, Fla., would authorize the Annuity Board to enter cooperative agreements with state foundations or conventions in order to offer services to entities in that state.

While presented as a win-win arrangement for both the Annuity Board and Baptist foundations, some state foundation groups oppose the change. In cases where the Annuity Board and a state foundation are unable to cooperate, the Annuity Board reserves the right to ask the Executive Committee to adjudicate.

Jim Hales, a retired banker, Kentucky foundation board member and member of the SBC Executive Committee, said he fears the action could pose a duplication of services and confuse constituents.

Allen said he's not convinced that participation from the Annuity Board will result in any new dollars invested in the state where he serves. "I don't claim to know where all the money is in Kentucky, but I don't think there is, at least in our state, lots of bucks out there that we don't have an opportunity to get now without the help of the Annuity Board."

One Southern Baptist official, however, said in the subcommittee session open for background that his institution would be eager to invest funds with the Annuity Board.

Allen said he would object to the draft of a cooperative agreement he reviewed before a conference call between several state foundation leaders and Annuity Board President O.S. Hawkins. While Allen said he would be willing to see if a suitable agreement could be reached, he noted that others on the call said they never would sign an agreement with the Annuity Board.

Hales said that in a presentation to the Executive Committee's Cooperative Program subcommittee, Hawkins painted foundation leaders with a broad brush as uncooperative.

"He used a lot of illustrations to discredit state foundations," Hales said, adding that he was especially offended on Allen's behalf.

After discussion in the Executive Board meeting, Hawkins approached Boyd with some pointed words. Hawkins objected to Boyd's claims, especially his assessment that some Annuity Board officials approached the issue with a "kick-butt" attitude.

"I probably wish I hadn't used that," Boyd said later in an interview.

Hawkins returned to Boyd shortly afterward to shake hands and state that he had no hard feelings.

Allen, Hales and Boyd said they're hopeful the issue can be resolved for the benefit of all agencies involved.

"I think most of us would be in agreement that this possibly could be something very advantageous, and maybe there could be a win-win," Boyd said. "But the process left something to be desired."

## **Texas conservatives take no action in private meeting, spokesman says**

By Mark Wingfield

PLANO, Texas (ABP) -- Despite extensive media coverage beforehand, no formal action resulted from a meeting of about two dozen Texas Baptist pastors Feb. 28 in suburban Dallas to discuss their future relationship with the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Secular media outlets across North Texas speculated that the gathering at Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano would draw up to 300 pastors or that it was a meeting for Prestonwood members to vote to leave the BGCT. Neither report was true.

In reality, fewer than 30 pastors attended the by-invitation-only meeting convened by Prestonwood Pastor Jack Graham; Claude Thomas, pastor of First Baptist Church of Euless and chairman of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee; and Ed Young, former SBC president and pastor of Second Baptist Church of Houston.

"We have no statement, no proposal or pronouncement," Graham said at the conclusion of the three-and-a-half hour meeting. Rather, he described the meeting as a time of prayer and discussion about the options available to Texas Baptist churches that want to fully support the SBC and believe the BGCT is distancing itself from the national convention.

The small group of pastors included Stan Coffey, pastor of San Jacinto Baptist Church in Amarillo and president of the new Southern Baptists of Texas Convention formed in opposition to the BGCT. No representative of the BGCT was invited to attend, even though James Semple, director of the BGCT's State Missions Commission, called the church the morning of the meeting and volunteered to come hear the concerns of the pastors.

"We talked about what we believe matters most -- world evangelization and missions in Texas," Graham said after the meeting. "The common thread was support of the Southern Baptist Convention. As Southern Baptists living and ministering in Texas, how do we go about reaching our state?"

Asked if the group thought the BGCT was an ineffective means of reaching Texas with the gospel, Graham responded that he believes there are "some philosophical differences about how we do church and missions."

But the primary concern, he reiterated, is that the BGCT is not supportive enough of the SBC and its current conservative leadership, put in place after a 20-year battle for control of the denomination.

The SBC and its agencies and institutions are experiencing "success, success, success" in missions and evangelism, and the BGCT does not promote and highlight these successes, he said.

Graham is scheduled to nominate Georgia pastor James Merritt for the SBC's presidency during the annual meeting in Orlando, Fla., in June. Graham also has been rumored as a future presidential candidate himself.

Graham expressed displeasure with an earlier statement by BGCT President Clyde Glazener that the BGCT "won't be controlled by the SBC."

"I ask, what convention in all the world is controlled by the SBC?" Graham responded. "There's no other state convention saying this."

The pastors represented at the meeting -- most of whom were unidentified and unavailable for comment -- also shared concerns about the BGCT becoming a refuge for churches from outside Texas, Graham said.

"The BGCT wants to be a shadow denomination," he charged.

That issue also was cited by Thomas, who said he does not favor inviting "disenfranchised churches from other states" into the BGCT.

The Texas convention is "moving more toward becoming a national entity on its own," he asserted.

BGCT Executive Director Charles Wade said since neither he nor any other BGCT leader was invited to the Prestonwood meeting, he could not comment on the issues raised there.

"We are open to discuss any matter of concern with any church affiliated with the Baptist General Convention of Texas and to address those concerns as openly and honestly as possible," Wade said. "I am sure that before any church would decide to move away from the BGCT, they would want to have representatives from the convention visit with them and their churches."

Wad said he hopes no churches will leave the BGCT but that all will remain an active part of the convention's mission to proclaim the gospel across the state.

"When a church leaves, it turns its back on the ministries which we mutually support -- child-care homes, facilities for the elderly, hospitals, universities and academies, as well as efforts to reach and better the lives of thousands of Texans," he said. "The job is so big it requires the best efforts of us all."

Young admitted he and his church have not been involved much in the BGCT or its statewide ministries. Last year, Second Baptist Church gave no money to the Cooperative Program through the BGCT, according to the BGCT's published annual report. The mega-church did give \$7,400 in designated funds.

Young came to the Prestonwood meeting, though, because he is interested in knowing more about reaching Texas with the gospel, he said.

However, Young would not commit himself to the new Southern Baptists of Texas Convention any more than he committed to supporting the BGCT. "I'm just going to do my work and designate straight to the SBC," he said.

But he did complain that he and other conservative pastors feel "disenfranchised from the General Baptist Convention of Texas."

"I hope the tent will broaden a bit," he said, recasting a famous line uttered in the 1980s by fellow Houston pastor John Bisagno, who at the time said conservatives would "broaden the tent" to allow more participation by moderates.

Graham said Prestonwood has not made any final decisions about its state convention affiliations. A study committee is working on the matter and should report to the church's deacons this spring, he said.

Though Prestonwood has the largest membership of any Baptist church in Texas, it traditionally has not been one of the convention's largest financial supporters. Last year, for example, the 15,000-member church with a \$23 million budget gave a total of \$12,575 through the BGCT. Of that amount, the BGCT received \$6,050 for Texas ministries and the SBC Cooperative Program received \$4,858.

First Baptist Church of Euless, meanwhile, recently completed a study of its state convention relationships and voted to dually align with the BGCT and the new Southern Baptists of Texas Convention. Thomas said he couldn't remember how the church's missions giving would be divided between the two state conventions.

Last year, First Baptist Church of Euless gave a total of \$396,445 through the BGCT. Of that amount, \$84,649 went to BGCT ministries, \$200,083 went to the SBC and the remainder went to designated offerings.

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