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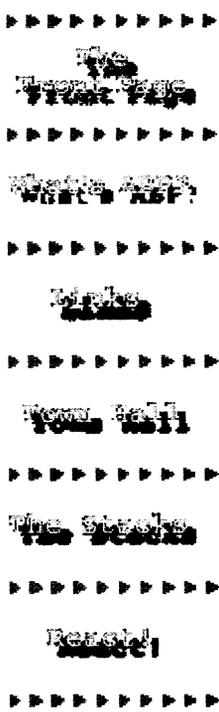
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Texas Baptist committee responds to SBC information campaign

October 10, 2000 - Volume: 00-89

By Bob Allen

DALLAS (ABP) -- In the latest display of conflict between leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention and its largest affiliate, a Texas Baptist committee labeled biased and desperate an attempt by national leaders to influence Texans to vote against budget changes proposed at the state convention's upcoming annual meeting.

SBC leaders launched a new Internet site Oct. 2 dedicated to criticism of action coming before the Baptist General Convention of Texas Oct. 30-31 in Corpus Christi. Proposed changes in the state budget would reduce funding of SBC seminaries by more than 80 percent, defund one national agency outright and reduce to token amounts what Texas Baptists send to the SBC's central oversight body.

The new Web site, www.baptist2baptist.net, includes articles from a new brochure, "The Truth about the SBC and Texas," which is being produced and circulated free of charge.

The articles, written mainly by SBC Executive Committee staff members, dispute a number of assertions attributed to Texas Baptist leaders as rationale for the funding change and refer frequently to the state's "anti-SBC" leadership.

"These SBC critics have made statements like the Southern Baptist Convention is no longer Baptist and that it has adopted practices that are untrue to our Baptist heritage," wrote Executive Committee President Morris Chapman in the brochure's lead article. "Some are suggesting that the theological education and/or missions programs of the SBC are somehow corrupted and, therefore, not worthy recipients of missions gifts from Southern Baptist churches in Texas.

"These assertions are false and the information in this series of articles responds to these accusations."

In response, a BGCT committee formed 20 months ago to combat "slandorous attacks" by critics of the state convention, accused SBC leaders of an "all-out, obviously very expensive" effort to influence votes in a state convention matter.

"That's money that could have been spent reaching the lost rather than serving a political agenda," John Wilkerson, chairman of a 15-member

committee on Baptist integrity, told the Baptist Standard.

"I do not begrudge any Baptist for expressing his or her opinion -- that's the Baptist way," said Wilkerson, a layman from Lubbock. "But this biased and anti-BGCT-leadership pamphlet in no manner represents a balanced analysis or perspective regarding these issues."

"If I used this SBC document alone to base my opinion without seeking out the history and reasoning for the proposed BGCT budgetary changes, I would be left with the impression that the only cause of these unfortunate events is that Texas has 'anti-SBC leaders' who are less than adequate doctrinally and theologically," Wilkerson said. "Nothing could be further from the truth."

Wilkerson charged that the SBC's own acts have prompted the proposed changes.

"It was the unwanted, undeserved and very 'uncooperative' actions of the SBC over many years -- particularly toward Texas and some of its leaders who have been accused, among other things, of not holding to a high view of Scripture -- that have led Texas to this action," he said. "It would be more appropriate to call us 'SBC rejects' than 'anti-SBC.'"

Wilkerson said it is time for Texas Baptists to move beyond bickering that has characterized Southern Baptist life for 20 years. "The BGCT is a free and autonomous convention, and it can determine which missionary and educational efforts its gifts and offerings will support," he said.

Texas Baptists will consider one recommendation that would reduce the amount of funding that goes to the six SBC seminaries from \$5.3 million to no more than \$1 million a year. Funds to national seminaries would be based on the number of Texas students they enroll, meaning only one -- Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth -- would receive significant Texas funding. More than \$4 million would be redirected to three theology schools with ties to the state convention.

A second budget proposal would defund the Ethics and Religious Liberty Committee and earmark \$10,000 for the Executive Committee, freeing up another \$1.1 million for "special Texas needs."

Neither proposal affects funding of the SBC's two mission boards, which together receive about 73 cents of every dollar given to the national unified budget.

Texas' moderate leaders say the changes are needed because fundamentalist Southern Baptist programs no longer represent traditional Baptist views and that the money is needed for work in Texas.

SBC leaders counter that the Texas proposals pose an imminent threat to the

tactics used by conservatives to gain control of the denomination during the 1980s. He also suggested that rank-and-file Southern Baptists are largely unaware of the convention's wealth and that denominational officials for years have downplayed the amounts for fear that Baptists would not give sacrificially to programs that already appear flush with funds.

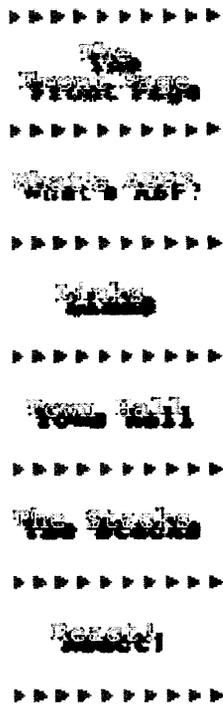
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International seminary trains African leaders October 10, 2000 - Volume: 00-89

By Trennis Henderson

ARUSHA, Tanzania (ABP) -- When Southern Baptists began sending missionaries to Tanzania more than 40 years ago, one of their first priorities was to establish a seminary to train African Christian leaders. That dream became reality in 1963 when a small seminary in Arusha opened its doors and admitted its first 15 students.

Since that time, International Baptist Theological Seminary of Eastern Africa has grown to include more than 100 resident students as well as another 100 students taking classes at the school's four branch facilities located throughout the nation.

Emphasizing that "Baptists here are known as people of the Bible," seminary president Harrison Olang said, "Our vision is to reach people at all levels to read and understand the word of God and to divide it and teach it correctly."

Olang, a 1973 graduate of the seminary, returned to his alma mater as president nearly 20 years later. As a student and now as the chief administrator, he has seen the school experience both struggles and success as it seeks to fulfill its mission.

Acknowledging that "we are still trying to define who we are," Olang said the school's "vision has stayed the same but probably has widened quite a bit."

Initially offering classes in Swahili, by 1972 the school had developed a certificate of theology program taught in English. The curriculum expanded to include a four-year diploma in theology and in 1987 a bachelor's degree was added. Plans are underway to begin a master's program next year.

Olang said the seminary's academic growth has been spurred by an increased level of education throughout Eastern Africa. He added, however, that many African people with little or no formal education still "depend on other people to tell them what to believe."

People who fill those leadership roles, especially those in Christian circles, "should be properly trained at all levels," he emphasized. And that's where International Baptist Theological Seminary is seeking to make a difference.

"I happen to be a believer in education and more so in theological education," Olang said. "Our goal is to make theological education available to people throughout Eastern Africa," an eight-nation region that stretches from Tanzania to Sudan.

Seminary treasurer Barbara Brown, a Southern Baptist missionary, said the seminary "is the key to effective growth throughout Eastern Africa."

"We draw students from several African countries and they form the Baptist leadership of those countries," she said. "Without trained pastors, you might as well forget it."

Calling seminary-trained leaders "the backbone of our conventions," Olang said. "It's amazing that almost three-fourths of participants in our convention meetings are seminary graduates. These are the people who influence our society." As an example, he said 50 percent of the Baptist pastors in neighboring Kenya are graduates of the Arusha seminary.

George Olipu, a seminary student from Mbeya, Tanzania, said the school "helps the pastors be equipped spiritually and physically."

Citing the seminary's work program that allows students to earn money to offset their educational expenses, Olipu said such campus jobs as gardening and raising cattle give students practical skills that "teach them how to survive when they go back home, because life is difficult."

The seminary's academic programs have "equipped me with the real theological education I needed," he said. "I will not forget the financial support, the ethical teachings and spiritual support that my family and I received here. ... I will work hard to make sure the church is benefiting."

Even with the school's widespread influence, there are ongoing hardships.

"Of course, there is the financial challenge," Olang said. He noted that the Southern Baptist International Mission Board, the school's primary financial supporter since its founding, has been reducing its financial gifts since 1994. The funding shift is designed to encourage overseas institutions to move toward self-support while freeing up resources for church planting and other IMB priorities.

With the school facing a \$30,000 budget deficit this year, Olang said, "To expect a seminary in the Third World to raise 50 percent of its support is a challenge. That puts us into a financial crunch."

Economic limitations also affect the students studying at the seminary. Stepping into the library's textbook room, Brown explained, "The men can't afford to buy texts and we can't afford to buy everyone texts." As a result, the school provides copies of class textbooks each session that students can study at the library.

Olang and the school's other faculty and staff members refuse to let such challenges derail the seminary's primary focus.

"We are involved in people's lives," he affirmed. "There is nothing so rewarding as seeing students the first day and then seeing them the last day. Seeing them in the churches in ministry is what is exciting to me."

As the seminary prepares African Christian leaders for ministry in the 21st century, Olang said, "We hope and pray the Lord will see us through it. I believe if we do our part and remain faithful to him, he will do it. This is God's ministry."

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Two Baptist-affiliated schools receive Lilly Endowment grants October 10, 2000 - Volume: 00-89

By ABP staff

INDIANAPOLIS (ABP) -- Two Baptist-affiliated universities are among 20 U.S. schools to receive grants of \$1 million or more from the Lilly Endowment to begin or enhance programs that encourage young people to consider the ministry as a career or to consider faith commitments in whatever careers they choose.

Baylor University in Waco, Texas, received a \$2 million grant to establish a program called "Baylor Horizons: An Exploration of Vocation for a Life of Service." The program will implement a comprehensive set of 13 projects, ranging from new-student orientation to internships in area churches.

"Baylor was founded to be of service to church and state. Therefore, we at Baylor are grateful to the Lilly Endowment for the opportunity to be involved in their new initiative," said Michael Beaty, director of Baylor's Institute for Faith and Learning and principal investigator for the grant. "Our participation in this initiative gives all of us at Baylor the opportunity to take part in activities that reaffirm, deepen and expand Baylor's historic efforts to help our students see all of their lives as a vocation, a calling."

Baylor is affiliated with the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Another grant school, Mercer University in Macon, Ga., is aligned with the Georgia Baptist Convention. Mercer received a nearly \$2 million grant to establish "Mercer University Commons," a project that will create a new organizational structure at the center of the university. The commons will strengthen the school's connections to its Baptist heritage, identify and support a new generation of religiously committed leaders, provide opportunities to explore the ministry and help students understand their future work in light of faith commitments.

Nationwide, the Lilly Endowment awarded 20 grants totaling nearly \$40 million. The endowment's board of directors also approved a \$50 million commitment for a second round of grants in this competitive initiative for church-related schools.

"The caliber of proposals we received in this initiative was absolutely outstanding," said Craig Dykstra, vice president for religion at the Indianapolis-based foundation. "It is clear to us that these schools have thought deeply and productively about this issue of encouraging young people to consider questions of faith and commitment when they choose their careers."

Another school on the list, Furman University in Greenville, S.C., is historically Baptist but is now independent from the South Carolina Baptist Convention. Furman received a \$2 million grant to establish a "Center for Theological Exploration of Vocation" to serve students, faculty and interested laity and clergy in the region. The center will sponsor programs, including a summer theology institute for pre-college youth, seminars, courses and student-led service projects.

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BJC board approves \$1million budget, adds Texas, Alliance as members

October 10, 2000 - Volume: 00-89

By Kenny Byrd

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- The 64-year-old Baptist Joint Committee approved its first million-dollar budget in history at an annual board meeting Oct. 2-3.

The Washington-based religious-liberty agency also added two organizations to its list of members. Both the Washington-based Alliance of Baptists and the Baptist General Convention of Texas have been supporting bodies to the BJC but this year formally became member bodies and named representative to the BJC.

Joining the BJC board as a result are Stan Hastey, Alliance of Baptists executive director; Charles Wade, BGCT executive director; Phil Strickland, director of Texas Baptists' Christian Life Commission; and Albert Reyes, president of the Hispanic Baptist Theological School in San Antonio.

The additions bring to 12 the number of member bodies in the diverse coalition of Baptist groups in the United States.

In other business, the BJC board approved a 2001 budget of \$1,027,950 and re-elected current officers. June McEwen, a retired educator from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, continues as BJC chairwoman. Boyce Brannock, a lawyer from Staunton, Va., is first-vice chairman. Chuck Weber, a professor at Wheaton College in Illinois, is second-vice chairman. Walter Parrish III, representative-at-large for the Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board of the American Baptist Churches, is secretary.

McEwen described the agency's longstanding commitment to the separation of church and state as "urgent in the face of our country's move toward mixing government-supported religious expression with politics and civic affairs."

"We try to remind our Baptist sisters and brothers of our historic Baptist distinctive -- soul freedom," she said.

"We've got our work cut out for us," added BJC Executive Director Brent Walker in his first report to the full board since his election last year, citing a recent survey on religion in public life. The survey showed that 16 percent of Americans could name freedom of religion as a right protected in the First Amendment, 82 percent agree with majority-supported prayer at graduation and 65 percent mildly or strongly endorse prayer over the public-address

system at football games.

He said more people agree with the BJC's stance for the free exercise of faith than its position against government establishment of religion.

Still, Walker said, "I've found that most people want to learn, are open to reasoned explanation and can be convinced that our understanding of religious liberty and the First Amendment is correct."

Walker said the agency also faces financial challenges. He told the board the BJC needs to reach a \$1.5 million budget to achieve "fiscal viability."

Todd Heifner, hired recently to head the agency's development office, noted: "Many of our detractors operate on budgets five, 10 or 20 times that of the BJC. ... It is critical that we raise more dollars to support our work."

Derek Davis, director of the J.M. Dawson Institute of Church-State Studies at Baylor University, said the BJC is the nation's leading religious-advocacy group on church-state issues. Davis, who is temporarily serving as special counsel to the BJC, said he recently interviewed other groups in Washington and heard repeatedly that they did not focus on church-state issues, because they counted on the BJC. The BJC "is really carrying the ball" on church-state issues in the nation's capital, Davis said.

The Religious Liberty Council -- the individual membership arm of the BJC -- also met in conjunction with the BJC meeting.

RLC Co-chair Bill Wilson, pastor of First Baptist Church in Waynesboro, Va., told BJC directors the RLC needs to set a long-term membership goal of 50,000 in order to contend more effectively for religious freedom.

The BJC also heard greetings from former U.S. Sen. Dan Coats, R-Ind., and U.S. Rep. Jim Davis, D-Fla., representing the presidential campaigns of Texas Gov. George W. Bush and Vice President Al Gore, respectively.

The BJC concluded its meeting with a luncheon honoring Larry Chesser's 15 years of service, Chesser, BJC communications director, is editor of the agency's newsletter Report from the Capital.

President Bill Clinton and his daughter, Chelsea, were among the crowd for a worship service at Washington's Calvary Baptist Church held Oct. 1 in conjunction with the BJC meeting. Clinton's former Arkansas pastor, Brian Harbour, preached a sermon espousing a strict separation of church and state.

According to news reports, Harbour, who now is a pastor in Texas, criticized an "all-out-attack" by the Southern Baptist Convention on historic Baptist principles, including church-state separation. "I am convinced our greatest threat in America today is not government devoid of religion but a

government controlled by religion," he said.

Later that night at Calvary, BJC members heard from Bill Leonard, dean of the Wake Forest Divinity School, and Melissa Rogers, BJC general counsel. They joined Dwight Moody, dean of chapel at Georgetown College in Georgetown, Ky., for a taping of his weekly show, "The Meeting House: Conversations on Religion in American Life." They discussed challenges to religious liberty in an era of religious pluralism.

Leonard distinguished between religious "liberty" and "toleration." Religious liberty, he said, means "states cannot judge, in matters of religion, either the heretic or the atheist." Toleration, meanwhile, has meant "certain groups could be allowed to practice their faith but with secular or religious sanctions against them."

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-- Jeff Huett contributed to this story.

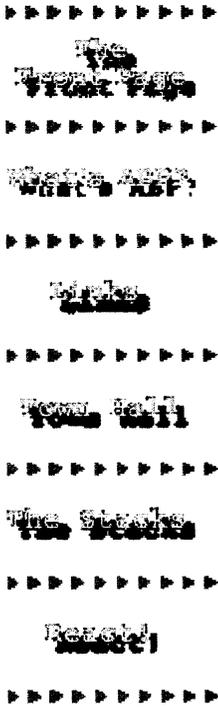
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Ethics journal names Joe Trull new editor October 10, 2000 - Volume: 00-89

By ABP staff

WIMBERLEY, Texas (ABP) -- Longtime seminary professor Joe Trull has been named editor of Christian Ethics Today, a 5-year-old journal formerly associated with the Texas-based Center for Christian Ethics.

Retired Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission executive Foy Valentine started the publication in 1995 as part of the ethics center, which was chartered as a freestanding agency in 1990. The center was transferred to Baylor University in June and a permanent director was hired.

In disbanding, the previous Center for Christian Ethics board voted to continue the publication, however, and set up a new board to oversee its work.

Trull, a former pastor who taught 15 years at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, said he will publish the journal six times a year from his home in Wimberley, Texas. He said the journal is sent free of charge to more than 2,500 subscribers.

He said the magazine's purpose would remain "to inform, inspire and unify a lively company of individuals and organizations interested in working for personal morality and public righteousness."

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State blames auditor in Foundation fraud**October 10, 2000 - Volume: 00-89**

By Bob Allen

PHOENIX (ABP) -- Arizona officials allege that the Baptist Foundation of Arizona's auditor aided and abetted fraud by giving the organization a clean bill of health despite warnings to the contrary.

Accounting firm Arthur Andersen has requested a hearing to challenge charges by the Arizona Corporation Commission's Securities Division that it either knowingly or negligently helped Foundation officers mislead trustees and investors about financial losses.

Last year securities officials alleged that officials of the Baptist Foundation conducted a "ponzi scheme" by making bogus transactions between various corporations to hide the fact that investments were losing money.

The Foundation eventually collapsed and filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection last November.

In the new allegations, however, state investigators say auditors continued to rely on material provided by Foundation officers even after former employees warned them of irregularities and a Phoenix newspaper ran a series of investigative articles accusing the agency of shady dealings.

Losses to investors of perhaps more than \$350,000 "could not have occurred without Arthur Andersen knowingly or recklessly ignoring the repeated warnings or 'red flags' uncovered during its audits," according to a Securities Division notice issued the last week in September.

Arthur Andersen officially requested a hearing Oct. 3 to answer charges.

"We have been a trusted and respected member of the Arizona business community for more than 40 years and always have been guided by what we believe is objective and professional," Andersen official David Scullin told the Arizona Republic.

A 35-page complaint posted on the Arizona Corporation Commission Web site helps vindicate Foundation board members, who were often portrayed as incompetent in the scandal, said Berry Norwood, former chairman of the board.

Norwood, pastor of First Baptist Church in Scottsdale, Ariz., sent a letter and excerpts of the report to Baptist state papers and denominational leaders. He said the information "should help people understand why our truly

competent board -- two-thirds of which were always current or former CEOs, financial advisers, business owners, etc. -- was unaware of problems."

"Our board knew BFA's balance sheet and audits thoroughly but had no way of knowing hidden transactions and improper relationships that the state discovered," he said.

According to the latest state investigation, auditors should have suspected reports from senior management that showed appreciation in real-estate investments when the Phoenix property market was in decline. Auditors should have sought third-party verification but relied on management, claims the state charges.

Audits were "seriously flawed" between 1991 and 1994, the state says, but beginning in 1995 the facts indicate "that Arthur Andersen not only aided and abetted the securities fraud being perpetuated on investors but in fact may have directly or indirectly participated in that fraud."

Current and former employees warned auditors beginning in 1996 that they believed financial statements were being deliberately manipulated and misstated. Auditors also should have recognized an additional audit risk when key accounting personnel left their jobs, the state alleges.

Even after an April 1998 series of articles in the New Times investigative newspaper called "The Money Changers," which contained allegations of fraud and insider dealings, the auditor continued to give an unqualified opinion of financial statements "in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards."

The state's complaint seeks fines and restitution for Arthur Andersen.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: The Arizona Corporation Commission complaint against Arthur Andersen is posted at www.ccsd.cc.state.az.us/hot_topics/bfa.asp

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