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**Christian leaders discuss
responses to Sept. 11**

By Robert Marus

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- Faith has assumed a greater role in public life since Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, but is that necessarily a good thing?

A diverse group of religious leaders recently discussed that question in a panel on some of the best -- and worst -- Christian responses to the terrorism.

The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities, and the Center for Public Justice sponsored the discussion, titled "What Do Christians Have to Say Post 9/11?"

One positive outcome, said Joan Rosenhauer of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, is that, "We can no longer pretend that there is this distinction between religion and politics."

"There's a heightened need for a deeper appreciation of the role that religion plays in international affairs," she said.

Panelist John Schroeder of the Acton Institute said there is less controversy now about politicians and other civic leaders expressing their faith publicly. "Prior to Sept. 11, some of these actions [publicly invoking God's blessings on the U.S., asking for Americans' prayers] by our leaders -- bringing God into it -- might have been viewed as breaches of the First Amendment," he said.

Schroeder also observed that, since the attacks, Christians have come to realize that "Americans have a better understanding of evil than we previously thought."

Other panelists sounded a more cautious note about Christian thought following Sept. 11.

Ken Johnson, director of the social-service arm of the Azusa Christian Community in Boston, noted that evangelical Christians have often been ridiculed in the secular world because they are selective about the kinds of injustice they oppose.

For example, he said the evangelical media has been slow to condemn recent revelations about former Christian Coalition leader Pat Robertson's business ties with an African dictator who has helped Osama bin Laden raise millions of dollars. "We fail to speak up against things that are unjust," Johnson said. "And that brings us into disrepute."

Panelist Nathan Wilson, a Disciples of Christ minister and activist with the Christian social-justice group Call to Renewal, said Sept. 11 "only heightened our concerns about economic justice." As a result of the economic downturn that was made more acute by the Sept. 11 tragedies and their aftermath, more than

850,000 Americans have lost their jobs -- and many of those jobs were low-wage to begin with. "To bail out the airline companies without a plan to help the 140,000 workers laid off by them is unacceptable," Wilson said.

And several panelists noted that, in the post-Sept. 11 revival of faith and patriotism in American life, Christians should never confuse their identity as citizens of God's Kingdom with their identity as citizens of the United States.

Jim Skillen, executive director of the Center for Public Justice, worried that much of the expression of faith since Sept. 11 is a superficial form of civil religion. "I think a lot of what's going to happen -- people praying more -- it could be a very healthy sign," Skillen said. "On the other hand, will it continue after this is all over?"

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Trustee chairman defends removal of theology dean

By Marv Knox

FORT WORTH, Texas (ABP) -- Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's board chairman said the recent reassignment of the school's theology dean is the result of philosophical differences with the president and denied trustees are on a witch hunt to get rid of moderate faculty.

In an interview with the Baptist Standard, chairman Michael Dean disputed an earlier editorial in the paper saying the move signaled that trustees were "turning up the heat" to reshape the Texas seminary as a more conservative school.

"We don't have a hit list," said Dean, pastor of Travis Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth.

Dean's assessment seemed to differ from comments attributed to the previous chairman that some moderate faculty had "gone underground" in order to remain at the seminary and implying they ought to be removed.

Dean said trustees did not call for removal of David Crutchley as dean of the seminary's school of theology but affirmed the decision by seminary President Ken Hemphill. He said Crutchley's reassignment as dean of globalization was because Hemphill believed his skills would be better utilized in the new job.

"It became apparent that there were personal differences between the president and dean," he added. "When there are differences between a boss and an employee, the boss usually wins."

Dean also said the election of Craig Blaising to a newly created position of provost/executive vice president and removing Hemphill from day-to-day administration does not indicate a lack of trustee support for Hemphill.

"The president is an extraordinarily gifted man -- a powerful preacher, a visionary leader. He travels extensively, raising money, preaching and providing leadership to the Southern Baptist Convention," Dean said.

"But the president and the trustees recognized the need for someone on campus with more authority to tend to day-to-day affairs so that the president can give broad-based leadership to the seminary. Dr. Blaising is not taking the president's place; he will be working under the authority of the president."

He said trustees continue to place high confidence in Hemphill's leadership.

"I can say support for the president is as strong now as ever, probably stronger," he said. "He has led us through a tough time. The president has had to steer the seminary through difficult waters. The trustees recognize the president has had to make tough decisions because these are best for the school. Not that we

were displeased before, but we are even more pleased . in light of the job he has done in the swirling political climate in Texas."

Dean said Blaising's hiring and Crutchley's dismissal were unrelated.

"The decision to reassign David Crutchley was made before we knew Craig Blaising was coming," Dean said.

"There developed what I call a philosophical disconnect between the president and dean," Dean said. "My observation is David has served as a wonderful pastor to the faculty. They agree that is his strength."

Crutchley particularly helped faculty deal with the loss of a number of longtime faculty to retirement and death, he said.

"David has been supportive of the faculty. But as a dean, his responsibility flows in two directions -- from administration to faculty and from faculty to administration. Maybe he has not exhibited as much diligence in reflecting administration/trustee goals to the faculty.

"I don't mean to say he was ineffective. He did a wonderful job of getting the faculty through the process of signing the (2000) 'Baptist Faith and Message,' which was painful. He helped shepherd that process along, and he brought in some fine faculty members."

Dean also denied the new configuration is a trustee instrument to remove so-called "moderates" from the faculty.

His predecessor as trustee chairman, Miles Seaborn, seemed to say as much in an interview published by the Southern Baptist Texan, the magazine of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention.

Of the creation of the provost position and Blaising's election, Seaborn said, "We've been working toward this ever since the firing of Dr. (Russell) Dilday," the president removed by trustees in 1994.

"There have been folks that got deeply entrenched here at the seminary that are moderates," Seaborn said. "Some of them have gotten so uncomfortable that they've left and are irritated, but others have kind of hunkered down and gone underground."

Seaborn said Blaising would have to deal with such situations, "because they've got to be dealt with."

Dean, however, predicted Blaising would come to the seminary "with a positive, proactive mission."

"He will give leadership to the faculty in very broad terms," Dean said. "We did not say to Craig Blaising, 'We want you to clean house.'"

"We've never taken a vote, but as trustees, we're not looking to fire anyone who is willing to teach and abide by the statement of faith [the 2000 'Baptist Faith and Message'] that has been given to us by Southern Baptists."

Dean acknowledged that the seminary has changed during the last two decades under conservative leadership and said he could not say for sure if legendary professors from past like Jack MacGorman, Curtis Vaughan and T.B. Maston would be elected to the Southwestern faculty today.

"If they would be willing to sign the 'Baptist Faith and Message' as an indication of their willingness to abide by the statement of faith adopted by Southern Baptists, they could teach and would be accepted by Southwestern," Dean said.

Fast Company editor says it's time for a deep breath

By Greg Warner

SAN DIEGO, Calif. (ABP) -- Are you bummed out that the economy is heading south? Numbed by bioterrorism warnings and news of a deepening war?

Take Alan Webber's advice: Hit the pause button. Take a deep breath.

It's time to "regroup, rethink, recalibrate," says Webber, editor of Fast Company magazine.

That may sound like strange advice from this poster child for fast-thinking, fast-acting entrepreneurs. But Webber says the dot-com crash and war on terrorism are changing the mood of the business world, which is now ready for some self-examination.

Many workers and companies were worn out by the roaring '90s, when they were told constant change is the new way of life. "They are up to here with change, speed and reflexive response," Webber says.

The mood now is shifting from reflexive to reflective. After a decade spent learning the "new rules" of business and chasing the latest innovations and strategies, Webber says "this is a good time to hit the pause button and see if they are working or not. In fact, it would be a good idea for the nation as a whole to hit the pause button."

Webber, who describes himself as a "practicing but not observant Jew," cites an Old Testament story to describe our times. It's the story of Joseph in Egypt, storing up provisions during seven bountiful years, so that when seven years of famine arrived, he was ready for his brothers to visit. Guess which part of the story we're in now?

Webber shared his take on American culture, the workplace, and leadership in a recent gathering of 1,400 Christian leaders in San Diego, sponsored by Leadership Training Network. "For a short, fat Jewish guy, I feel incredibly welcome here," he told them.

A native of St. Louis, Webber started Fast Company after six years as managing editor of the Harvard Business Review. Since its launch in 1993, Fast Company has grown to 700,000 subscribers. Webber is credited for the magazine's unique character and style, a decidedly hip and probing magazine in the often stodgy world of business.

One key to Fast Company's meteoric success is its holistic, even spiritual, understanding of work.

"Fast Company asks not only what's new, but what matters?" he told FaithWorks magazine.

"The central tenet of our magazine is that work is about creating meaning. We recognized a fundamental shift taking place in the workplace. Making money isn't enough. People -- particularly baby busters -- want work to mean something."

Although the rise of Fast Company paralleled the Internet boom, Webber says he never questioned the magazine's survivability after the dot-com collapse.

"Our DNA was never about dot-coms. It is about individual, personal expression."

The changes in the workplace are deeper than any one business sector, he says. It is "a revolution that is demographic, psychographic and global."

Much of the conversation since the dot.com crash and the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks has focused on a world changed. And Webber concedes business as usual will certainly be different.

But some things won't change, he contends. The fundamental forces underlying the new economy and the new workplace will survive war and recession.

"There are four forces reorganizing everybody's life," he says, and they are revolutionizing the workplace as well.

-- Technology. "Life is different," Webber says, "and the life of organizations is different," because of the explosion of technology.

-- Generational shift. Earlier generations said work is not personal, Webber says. "The younger generations are saying, 'We've got the basics covered. We can put food on the table. We want to put meaning on the table.'"

-- Globalization. "Money, technology and values travel globally," he says. The dichotomy between domestic and international is gone.

-- Gender. At one time, every business magazine had the same dominant image on its cover, Webber says -- "A white male looking to the right and looking heroic."

Fast Company's version of a business magazine is unmistakably different. The cover is often a quirky illustration or caricature. Photos of CEOs may look like the adjacent Nautica ad. Sure, there are the stories on the "The Next Big Idea," hot companies to watch, and the guy with the job title of "director of ethical hacking."

But there are also stories on your job as a calling and the destructive power of success.

The Fast Company message, Webber says, was built around four values:

-- Work is personal. "Work and personal life are intertwined," he says. "The men and women who lost their lives [in the World Trade Center attacks] did so at work, precisely because they were at work. And the men and women who went in to rescue them who lost their lives were doing a job that was absolutely their calling."

-- The individual is the unit of analysis. "The organization with the best people wins," Webber asserts. "You have to believe in the people you're working with, to believe they've got good judgment, that they share your values, that they're willing to commit themselves, that the more they participate the more they contribute, and you've got to be willing to learn from them."

-- This is the best time to work and find meaning in what you do.

-- There is no division between who you are and what you do. Rather than "compartmentalizing" work as something you do to make a living, work should "express who you are," Webber says. "Nobody should do anything they don't want to do. Life is too short."

"Not all days are good days," he quickly adds. You have to take the average. There are some things about every job that aren't chock full of meaning. "Everybody has to do the dishes," he muses. But overall, work is intended to be life-giving, not life-draining.

Fast Company doesn't just preach meaningful work and human value. Readers are invited to participate in local forums, where they get to know each other, share work experiences and hash out workplace issues. The forums are more than smart marketing gimmicks to create reader loyalty. They build community. And that's another key to the magazine's success.

Most business magazines, Webber says, are about "transactions" -- two people making a deal across a table. "What we said at Fast Company is let's reframe the interaction. We tried to move the chair to the other side of the table. If we talk to each other, maybe we can figure it out. That's a fundamentally different position."

"That's the reason there is a sense of community with our readers. . Fast Company defines success as impact -- how many great conversations can we get started."

Likewise, work and business should be about creating community, not just about creating "winners and losers," Webber says.

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