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In this issue:

- Baptist leaders in Texas announce plans for another theological school
- Baylor regents, president headed for likely showdown
- Campolo apologizes to SBC for tone of remarks at CBF
- Homeland security measures deter mission work along Mexican border
- News briefs from Associated Baptist Press

### **Baptist leaders in Texas announce plans for another theological school**

By Ken Camp

ARLINGTON, Texas (ABP) -- Do Baptists need yet another theological school? A group of self-described "traditional Baptists" in Texas say yes.

The group, which includes former leaders of nearby Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, met June 27 in Arlington to talk about launching the Carroll Institute in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. But they insist the move is not a reaction to the recent hiring of Paige Patterson as Southwestern's president and is not a rejection of other theological schools at Baylor and Hardin-Simmons universities.

Instead, the group cited the need for "a more effective and efficient approach to theological education in a radically changing world."

Scotty Gray, retired professor and administrator at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, said a "select group" of about 45 people with expertise in education, church life, administration, legal issues and financial matters gathered for the exploratory meeting. The new school would be named for B.H. Carroll, founder of Southwestern Seminary and religion professor at Baylor University in the early 20th century.

Advocates of the Carroll Institute presented it as a non-traditional approach to theological education, with a center in North Texas and a widespread network of "teaching churches" where "mentor-teachers" would provide instruction.

Gray identified himself as one of four directors for the new entity, but he declined to name the

7/9/03

other three. Russell Dilday, who was fired as president of Southwestern Seminary by fundamentalist trustees in 1994, attended the meeting and has been "supportive" and "committed to the concept" of the institute, Gray said, but Dilday is not one of its directors.

The meeting was not open to the press.

The institute already is an incorporated legal entity and a business plan is being finalized, Gray said. Representatives from the institute have contacted the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, as well as a major accrediting agency, and the institute "has indications of significant financial support," he added.

Creating the institute was a reaction neither to the hiring of Paige Patterson at Southwestern nor to any controversy surrounding the direction of Baylor University, Gray said.

Patterson was one of the architects of the movement that gained control of the Southern Baptist Convention for fundamentalists in the 1980s. Robert Sloan, president of Baylor and former dean of Truett Seminary, has been under attack recently by alumni and others who have challenged "Baylor 2012," the long-range plan for the school.

"The exploration that led to this point preceded any recent events," Gray said. "It's not a reaction to anything at Baylor, Southwestern, Logsdon or anywhere else. It's in response to what we see as the need for a new approach to theological education in a radically changing world."

Logsdon School of Theology at Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, like Baylor's Truett Seminary, is supported by the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

The Carroll Institute will have a center in the Dallas-Fort Worth area to house offices, a library and some classes, Gray said. Staff recruitment for the center is "still being finalized."

The institute will offer most of its instruction through distance learning, using a network of "teaching churches" and Internet-based resources, he explained. Gray did not specify what degrees, if any, the institute would offer.

In addition to teaching classes, professors at the center in North Texas coordinate the work of "academically qualified mentor-teachers" in teaching churches around Texas. The goal, Gray said, is for teaching churches to be identified throughout the nation and the world to create a "network concept."

A minimal amount will be spent on buildings in the Dallas-Fort Worth center so that resources can be funneled into recruiting faculty and providing technology, he explained. Teaching churches will use available space in local church facilities that may otherwise be unused on weekdays.

Gray predicts that the Dallas-Fort Worth center will open in January, and directors hope the first semester of classes will be offered in fall 2004.

"The institute definitely will be Baptist in orientation, but it will not be affiliated with any organization," he said. "It will be self-sustaining, both in its governance and its finances."

Initially, directors of the institute are recruiting individual donors to provide financial backing for

the venture. They hope to secure grants from foundations once the institute achieves accreditation, Gray said.

A press release issued after the Arlington meeting stated: "This group of traditional Baptist educators is developing the approach out of a desire to meet the urgent and growing needs in a non-traditional, non-duplicating, non-political, non-competitive way. Learning is intended to flourish in an innovative, collegial, encouraging environment with freedom of inquiry and will be biblical, scholarly, practical, widely available and affordable to a broad spectrum of Christian leaders."

Charles Wade, executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, said the state convention welcomes the efforts of all "traditional Baptists" who want to help prepare students for service in churches, while affirming the "wonderful work of Truett and Logsdon, whose graduates already are leading some of our finest churches in Texas."

"As details are forthcoming, we will be glad to look for ways that we can be helpful to the Carroll Institute. Most of our Baptist institutions in Texas started in a similar manner, as a few folks felt God putting a need on their hearts from which they could not turn away. We will pray for their success," Wade said.

But Wade and other BGCT leaders reiterated their support for the theological ministries already supported by the state convention.

Royce Rose, director of theological education for the BGCT, cited the graduate and undergraduate theological training provided through at least nine institutions in more than 20 locations around Texas. "These quality programs are busy providing education to almost 5,000 future ministers and deserve the full and continuing support of Texas Baptists seeking to cooperate together through the BGCT," he added.

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### **Baylor regents, president headed for likely showdown**

By Hannah Lodwick

WACO, Texas (ABP) -- The controversy that has engulfed the Baylor University may come to a head June 16-18 when President Robert Sloan faces critics from among the school's regents and alumni.

The regents have been investigating Sloan's charges against Jaclanel McFarland, a regent from Houston, whom Sloan has asked to resign. And Sloan and the regents will address critics among the alumni who disagree with the school's ambitious and expensive "Baylor 2012" long-range plan.

Meanwhile, the school remains in the national headlines as police investigate the disappearance of a Baylor basketball player whom they fear was murdered.

The Baylor Alumni Association, which is independent from the university, sent a letter July 3 to

770 Baylor leaders inviting them to a forum about the direction of the university. The group originally planned to rent the Waco convention center to rally opposition to Baylor 2012 and other Sloan initiatives. But the event was turned into a dialogue between invitees and Sloan, regent chair Drayton McLane and other regents.

The forum, which will follow the regents meeting, "promises to be an event of substance and candid conversation," said alumni president Fred Norton. Invitations were sent to past and current members of the board of regents, past and current members of the Baylor Alumni Association board of directors, and the President's Executive Council.

The forum was announced three days after Sloan sent a letter to alumni and friends of Baylor to answer concerns about Baylor 2012, a ten-year vision designed to propel the school into the top tier of universities in the nation.

"This letter ... is a first for me," Sloan wrote. "I feel we are in exceptional times at the university -- times of unparalleled success and unmistakable challenge. As I travel the country, I constantly hear from alumni and friends who support the vision and are excited about its progress. Yet I know that change of this scope has prompted some anxiety, as well. This letter aims at openly discussing some of these concerns."

The letter addresses the recent \$246 million bond issue to pay for the Baylor 2012 expansion, the increased attention to recruiting Christian faculty, a commitment to require more research by professors, and the formation of a university-funded alumni services division. Sloan said changes of that magnitude don't come without challenges.

Sloan also defended a recent increase in tuition, noting Baylor still has the lowest tuition of any major private university in Texas.

"Our belief that Christian faithfulness and academic excellence are not mutually exclusive compels us to compete in the world in which we send our students," Sloan wrote. "Nostalgia for the past will not equip students in the present for the realities of the future. We believe Baylor 2012 will."

While some regents have misgivings about Baylor 2012, controversy within the board recently has focused on Sloan's request for McFarland to resign. The request followed a botched drug sting operation on campus. Sloan and some regents believe McFarland, a Houston attorney, told her son, a former student, that Baylor's police department had placed an undercover officer on campus. Her son allegedly tipped off members of the Tau Kappa Epsilon, derailing the yearlong drug investigation, according to Sloan.

McFarland refused to resign and said the accusation was untrue and an attempt to silence her criticism of Sloan. The regents have been conducting their own investigation of the charges and are expected to report during the July 16-18 meeting.

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**Campolo apologizes to SBC  
for tone of remarks at CBF**

7/9/03

By Robert Marus

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- Tony Campolo has sent the Southern Baptist Convention's news service a letter apologizing for the "intemperate manner" in which he made recent remarks criticizing SBC leaders. However, he reiterated his strong disagreement with them over their views on women in church leadership and their handling of homosexuality in civic life.

"I do believe that organizations and social structures that deny women the right to exercise spiritual gifts and actualize their spiritual potentialities are sinful, evil and even instruments of the devil," Campolo said in a letter dated July 3 and addressed to Baptist Press. "I do not, however, believe that the individual people who make up those organizations and who participate in those social structures necessarily have either impure motivations or insincere convictions. While I am convinced that the policies of many institutions are injurious to women, I am equally convinced that the people who form and support those policies mean well."

Baptist Press issued a June 27 story quoting Southern Baptist leaders at length reacting to parts of a sermon Campolo delivered June 26 in Charlotte, N.C. It was the keynote message at the annual meeting of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, a group made up mostly of individuals and churches that disagree with the SBC's 24-year-old shift toward fundamentalism.

"It's one thing to be wrong, but that [opposition to women ministers] isn't wrong, that's sinful. The Bible says, 'neglect not the gift that is in you,' and when women are gifted with the gift of preaching, anybody who frustrates that gift is an instrument of the devil," Campolo said in his CBF speech.

Morris Chapman, president of the SBC Executive Committee, said Campolo's remarks were "unwarranted and unnecessary," according to the Baptist Press story. "Tony Campolo is known for bombast and overstatement, but I think this may be a new low for him. His remarks are unbecoming of one wishing to be recognized as a Christian spokesman."

Chapman said evangelical observers have "observed with sadness" Campolo's alleged "drift from biblical authority."

In the letter, Campolo also attempted to clarify his position on homosexuality. While Campolo supports equal rights for gays and lesbians in public life, he said he still opposes homosexual acts on theological grounds. "[W]hile I believe that Christians should stand against those who would denigrate homosexuals or deny their legal rights, my understanding of the first chapter of Romans does not allow me to support same-gender eroticism, as some of my critics have suggested," Campolo said. "On June 26, as always, I was simply calling on the church of Jesus Christ to show love and understanding to our homosexual brothers and sisters."

Campolo noted in the sermon that he and his wife differ theologically on the acceptability of homosexuality and that he is a "conservative" on the issue. However, he said, "Both of us are committed to justice for gays and lesbians regardless of what we may in fact say theologically.... When in fact we live in a society that makes life hell for gays and lesbians, this community has got to stand up and say, 'We're on your side as you struggle for dignity,' and, 'Yes, we will defy anybody who says otherwise, even if we have to go to Disneyland to prove it.'"

Chapman said SBC positions calling on homosexuals to "repent" and opposing gay-rights

measures are correct because the Bible calls homosexual sex acts an "abomination." "That is an extremely serious statement, and cute quips cannot substitute for serious thought in dealing with it," he said.

However, Chapman added, Southern Baptists "also deeply believe that we are responsible to treat all others with kindness, and that hatred of anyone is forbidden."

Campolo also used the letter as an opportunity to clarify his views on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, saying that, "as a biblical, evangelical Christian, I believe that Jesus may return at any moment, that making all of Palestine into an Israeli state with Jerusalem as its capital is not a prerequisite for the Second Coming, and that those who oppose President Bush's roadmap to peace because it includes the establishment of a Palestinian state are needlessly hindering the resolution of the crisis in the Middle East."

Campolo prefaced his letter by saying that responses to the Baptist Press article about his speech have made him "increasingly fearful that my message to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's general assembly is being misunderstood by people who were not with us there on June 26."

"In particular," he said, "I fear that reports of my message do not make plain the important distinction between structural sin and personal sin."

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### **Homeland security measures deter mission work along Mexican border**

By Kambry Bickings

DALLAS (ABP) -- Tightened border controls are affecting not only would-be terrorists, but Christian mission workers also face new obstacles when they cross the border to minister in Mexico.

Heightened security watches in border towns and villages have forced many to abandon their ministries to the people of Mexico. As a result, many Mexicans are suffering, workers say.

"All of the small Mexican towns along the border region, such as Santa Elena and Maderas del Carmen, are suffering from the security control," said Dexton Shores, director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas River Ministry. "Due to the mountainous roads and over 100 miles between ports of entry in the Big Bend region, many groups are discouraged to go."

The Boy Scout troop from Houston's Broadway Baptist Church recently traveled to Big Bend State Park, planning to distribute school supplies to a local church across the border in the village of Santa Elena. Instead, park rangers turned them away.

Travelers are allowed into Mexico freely, but the only place to return to the U.S. legally is a main port of entry. Most ports are located only in large Mexican cities, such as Juarez, Nuevo Laredo, Monterrey and Matamoros.

Mission groups now have to enter at Ojinaga, Mexico, the sister city to Presidio, Texas, and travel almost 100 miles to reach the closest village. "The travel time, combined with the bad roads, is affecting the number of groups willing to make the trip," Shores said.

Since the September 11 terrorist attacks, the tightening of the border had placed a tremendous hardship upon the poor and underprivileged of Mexico in these small villages. Simple tasks like getting to a local grocery store or buying over-the-counter and prescription medications are sometimes impossible in small communities.

The decrease in border crossings has also affected local entrepreneurs. Several locally owned restaurants have been forced to close their doors, due to the decrease in the daily tourism.

The crackdown along the Mexican border came following a report by a TV station shortly after the September attacks. The TV crew filmed people crossing the border regularly. That "press [ed] the panic button," said Shores, and suggested American borders are too open and not secure.

The new U.S. Department of Homeland Security, while working to "deter attacks on the U.S. [and] reduce vulnerability to terrorism," also promises to "upgrade infrastructure so that it keeps up with commerce." But small Mexican villages are not large enough to benefit from these plans, mission workers say.

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## **News briefs from Associated Baptist Press**

By ABP staff

### **Baylor aide named White House fellow**

WACO, Texas -- White House officials have selected Baylor University's Jerome Loughridge, chief of staff to President Robert Sloan, as a White House Fellow for the 2003-2004 term.

More than 1,000 candidates competed for the appointment, which required a record of early and outstanding career achievements, leadership potential and proven commitment to public service.

Loughridge received his master's degree in public policy from Harvard in 1998 and became Sloan's chief of staff in 2001.

The paid position, effective Sept. 1, offers 12 fellows the opportunity to learn about United States policy and gain experience working in the highest levels of federal government. (ABP)

### **Bush supports teacher distribution of religious flyers**

WASHINGTON -- The Bush administration has weighed in on a controversial case involving public-school teachers giving students evangelistic materials published by a Christian group.

The Department of Justice filed a friend-of-the-court brief June 11 in favor of the Child Evangelism Fellowship in their suit against the Montgomery County, Md., school district.

The suburban Washington district has a policy of allowing recreational and community groups to send flyers or information about meetings home in elementary-school students' backpacks. The information is placed there by teachers.

Montgomery county officials have limited the materials teachers send home to "notices about health, nonprofit organizations, community sports and recreation activities," according to the Washington Post.

In its brief, administration lawyers argue that "CEF offers students educational, cultural and recreational opportunities that are similar to activities offered by other community organizations that submit fliers for inclusion in the [students'] take-home folders" and should not be disallowed from the program simply because it is a religious group.

But, attorneys for the school district said, "Requiring teachers to force students to accept and distribute CEF's materials would result in the unconstitutional coercion of the students to proselytize on CEF's behalf." (ABP)

Groups urge different strategies on 'under God' case

WASHINGTON -- Two different national advocacy groups are urging the Supreme Court to take very different approaches to the "under God" case it has been asked to hear.

Americans United for Separation of Church and State has filed a friend-of-the-court brief asking the high court not to hear an appeal of a lower-court ruling that said teacher-led recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance including the words "under God" in public schools is a violation of the Constitution's ban on government endorsement of religion. "Children are bound to perceive the phrase as affirming a belief in the existence of God and national subordination to God and as expressing commitment to a nation defined by religious devotion," the brief argues.

Meanwhile, the Knights of Columbus have also filed a friend-of-the-court brief urging the justices to overturn the lower-court decision. "At least since the Declaration of Independence was written, our national ethos has held that we have inalienable rights that the state cannot take away, because the source of those inalienable rights is an authority higher than the state," the brief said. The Knights are a Catholic fraternal organization. "The Pledge, like the Declaration, is a statement of political philosophy, not theology."

The decision by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals was handed down in 2002. The Supreme Court will likely decide this fall whether to hear the case. (ABP)

Family Research Council head resigns

WASHINGTON -- The head of one of the nation's most influential Religious Right organizations has resigned, citing "professional and personal reasons."

Ken Connor, president of the Family Research Council for the past three years, announced his resignation, effective July 14. "This was not an easy decision but one that, for both professional and personal reasons, I believed I needed to make," Connor said in an FRC news

release. "After the summer, I look forward to returning to the courtroom and practicing law."

James Dobson, a member of the organization's board and former Focus on the Family head, praised Connor's leadership. "Ken Connor has been a fighter for the family and an exemplary leader for Family Research Council," said Dobson, a popular radio host. "During his time at FRC, Ken consistently put principle before politics, and that's a rare thing to find in Washington, D.C." (ABP)

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