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**New textbook policy draws
protests at Louisiana College**

By Lacy Thompson and Greg Warner

PINEVILLE, La. (ABP) -- In a move that already has generated considerable outcry, Louisiana College trustees will now require college administrators to approve textbooks for classes at the Baptist school.

Previously the selection of textbooks and other classroom materials was at the sole discretion of faculty members. Trustees said the change will bring accountability to the process. Under the new policy, approved by trustees after a lengthy executive session Dec. 3, all materials used at the school now must be approved by department chairs and the vice president of academic affairs.

One trustee said the new policy brings the school in line with the 2000 "Baptist Faith and Message," the Southern Baptist Convention's new doctrinal statement.

The school's faculty approved a statement Dec. 5 warning the new policy will damage the college's reputation, devalue degree programs and hinder recruitment and fund-raising efforts, according to The Town Talk newspaper of Alexandria.

The new policy is "manifestly impossible," said Thomas Howell, chair of the history department. "There is no conceivable way to review all the materials. There is no other way but to trust our faculty members to use good professional judgment on these kinds of things."

Meanwhile, opponents of the new policy are organizing a candlelight vigil near the Pineville campus for Dec. 10.

The issue of textbook approval surfaced in September when university President Rory Lee removed two books from the college bookstore after complaints from a student. The books - "A Road Less Traveled" by Scott Peck and "A Lesson Before Dying" by Ernest Gaines - had been used for several years in a values class. The complaining student noted the Peck book contains profane words and the Gaines novel includes a love scene.

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A single complaint should not be enough to get a book pulled, one student told the newspaper. "Only one student had a problem with the book out of all the years they've used it," Dale de Perrodil said. "'The Road Less Traveled' is an excellent text."

Lee acknowledged he ordered the removal of the books without following the established procedure, which provides for students to be assigned alternative readings for materials they find objectionable.

The incident prompted a trustee review of the textbook selection process.

Fred Malone, chair of the trustee academic affairs committee, said the old policy provided "literally no academic governance or oversight" in the selection of materials. As established, faculty members do not have to submit textbooks or materials for review by anyone, Malone said.

The changes, which took effect immediately, assign "primary" responsibility to faculty members but require materials to gain additional approval farther up the academic and administrative ladder. Malone said the new policy falls in line with the 2000 "Baptist Faith and Message" because it provides the balance of academic freedom and academic responsibility called for in the doctrinal statement.

The approved policy not only addresses the process for selecting textbooks and materials but also establishes guidelines for those materials. "All teaching materials and assignments must be relevant to the subject matter, appropriate in content and purpose, not inordinately expensive or difficult to obtain and recognized by others in the discipline as appropriate for the subject matter," the policy states.

Making the new policy effective immediately adds pressure to administrators, since textbook selection is underway for the 2004 spring semester.

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Carl F. H. Henry, famed theologian, evangelical journalist, dies at 90

By ABP staff

WATERTOWN, Wis. (ABP) -- Carl F. H. Henry, famed evangelical theologian and first editor of Christianity Today, died Dec. 7 in Watertown, Wis., following a lengthy illness. He was 90 years old.

Henry's contributions to evangelical Christianity were great and far-reaching. In 1977 Time magazine called Henry the leading theologian of American evangelicalism. He is credited with helping shape the defense of evangelicalism as intellectually credible.

A Southern Baptist, Henry was a member of Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington, D.C.

"The death of Dr. Henry, though not unexpected, leaves a huge void in American Christianity," said David Dockery, a theologian and president of Union University in Jackson, Tenn. "No Christian thinker in this country has done more to advance orthodox theology and full-orbed Christian worldview thinking than Carl F. H. Henry."

Albert Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said Henry "stood at the center of virtually every major development in evangelical life, combining tenacity with restlessness." Mohler said Henry "devoted his long and illustrious career as a theologian to building and defending the 'intellectual struts' of evangelical theology."

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Henry was the eldest of eight children born to Karl F. and Joanna Heinrich in New York City. His mother was Roman Catholic by family tradition and his father was Lutheran. His early public education led to his first work as a journalist and reporter. Raised on Long Island, Henry became interested in journalism, and by the age of 19, he edited a weekly newspaper in New York's Nassau County. After his conversion to Christianity, Henry attended Wheaton College, obtaining his bachelor's and master's degrees.

Henry completed doctoral studies at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary (1942) and later at Boston University (1949). He was ordained in the Northern Baptist Convention in 1941 and from 1940 until 1947 taught theology and philosophy of religion at Northern Seminary. In 1947, he became the first professor of theology at the new Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif.

Henry took a prolonged sabbatical from his teaching duties in 1955 to become the first editor of *Christianity Today*, a publication conceived by Billy Graham and Nelson Bell as an evangelical alternative to the *Christian Century*. Under Henry's guidance, *Christianity Today* became the leading journalistic mouthpiece for neo-evangelicalism and lent the movement intellectual respectability.

He resigned from *Christianity Today* in 1968 in a dispute over the magazine's direction. After a year of studies at Cambridge University, Henry became professor of theology at Eastern Baptist Seminary (1969-74).

From the beginning of his academic career, Henry aspired to lead Protestant fundamentalism to a greater intellectual and social engagement with American culture. He is considered one of the most significant leaders -- along with Graham and Fuller Seminary founder Harold Ockenga -- of the "new evangelicalism" of the post-World War II era.

Henry was president of the Evangelical Theological Society (1967-70) and the American Theological Society (1979-80). Henry's many books, the most famous of which is the six-volume "God, Revelation and Authority," consistently reiterate the themes of biblical theism, objective revelation in propositional form, the authority and inerrancy of the Scriptures and the rational, apologetic defense of Christianity.

Dockery of Union University said Henry's books and articles -- more than 50 in the past 40 years -- "called for serious engagement with our culture and the issues of our day. ... With his homegoing is the passing of a generation of intellectual and scholarly leadership that has shaped the thinking of Baptists and evangelicals for more than half of a century."

Outside the evangelical world, few theologians paid attention to Henry until the last 20 years, said Roger Olson, professor of theology at Baylor's Truett Theological Seminary, who wrote a chapter about Henry in a book on 20th-century theologians.

"My perception is that Carl Henry turned more conservative in the last 25 years than he was in the 1950s," Olson told Associated Baptist Press. "I'm not saying there was a major paradigm shift or anything," Olson added, but Henry became more adamant about evangelical beliefs, "and the Southern Baptist theologians latched onto that."

"He was very cranky toward anyone who did not believe in inerrancy," said Olson, co-author of *The Story of Christian Theology*. "He didn't think you could be a consistent evangelical and not believe in inerrancy."

But Henry's own definition of inerrancy was "fairly nuanced," Olson added, and "might not make it past the gatekeepers" of conservative theology today. Still, Olson said, Henry embraced the term and "was outspoken enough that his opinion was useful to them."

Henry is survived by his wife, Helga, a daughter, two sisters and five grandchildren. His only son, Paul, was a congressman from Michigan who died in 1993 from a brain tumor.

A private burial was scheduled for Dec. 10 in Watertown, Wis.

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CBF, religious advocacy groups object to Baptist Press story

By Robert Marus

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- A Dec. 5 Baptist Press story on a new clergy political group has earned a strong rebuke from the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and others.

The story concerned the Clergy Leadership Network, an organization formed in November by a group of moderate and progressive clergy. Its founders include several prominent moderate Baptists. (see ABP, Nov. 21, 2003)

The Baptist Press story mentioned several non-Baptist board members of the new group that have connections to organizations that support gay rights or abortion rights.

The story included extensive quotations from Missouri Baptist layman Roger Moran. In the late 1990s, Moran used such "exposes" on the alleged connections of moderate Baptist leaders to fuel a successful movement to bring the Missouri Baptist Convention under fundamentalist control.

"The recent formation of the Clergy Leadership Network is just one more example of religious liberals working frantically to put a religious face on the agenda of the political far left," Moran said, according to Baptist Press. "The heavy involvement of prominent Cooperative Baptist Fellowship personalities in liberal groups like the CLN ... should raise serious concerns among Bible-believing Southern Baptists about the nature of the battles that have now come to the various SBC state conventions."

Moran is a member of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, the agency that funds and administers Baptist Press. Moran did not respond to a request for comment by press time Dec. 9.

A spokesperson for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship blasted Moran's charges and the story's implications about CBF, dismissing them as a "guilt by association" tactic intended to harm the work of the Fellowship.

In a Dec. 9 phone interview, Ben McDade, CBF's director of communications, told ABP the group's membership includes both Republicans and Democrats, and that simply because some CBF supporters or leaders serve on a board alongside those who support abortion rights or gay rights does not imply anything about CBF's social agenda.

"Anyone who has an authentic interpretation of historic Baptist principles knows that no one Baptist speaks for all Baptists," McDade said. "To try to smear a movement of God in base political terms we think is un-Christian."

McDade said Baptist Press did not contact CBF for comment prior to releasing the story.

Art Toalston, editor of Baptist Press and co-author of the Dec. 5 article, did not respond to a request for comment from Associated Baptist Press. Tammi Ledbetter, the other co-author, could not be reached.

One of the Baptist founders of the Clergy Leadership Network also rebuked Moran and Baptist Press. Reached by telephone Dec. 8, Wake Forest Divinity School professor James Dunn said the story is an example of Moran and other SBC leaders "straining at a gnat to establish a non-existent camel of relationships to their concepts of evil."

In the past, Baptist Press has issued similar stories attempting to demonstrate links between moderate Baptist leaders

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and individuals and organizations that are supportive of gay rights or abortion rights.

According to Brenda Peterson, executive director of the Clergy Leadership Network, the group has no plans to take positions on abortion and homosexuality, leaving those to its individual members to decide.

However, CLN president Albert Pennybacker did tell ABP, "Certainly, discriminatory and anti-human-rights positions with regard to anybody is a position that we repudiate." But Pennybacker, a former executive with the National Council of Churches, said at the organization's kick-off press conference that CLN would refuse to "get drawn into" debates over such divisive issues as abortion and homosexuality.

The Baptist Press story made extensive references to connections between moderate Baptist leaders and the Washington-based Interfaith Alliance. The story said the Alliance has "taken various pro-homosexual stances," such as a board statement allegedly endorsing the recent Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court's decision to legalize same-sex marriage in that state.

But Interfaith Alliance spokesperson John Peterson said that was a mischaracterization of his group's position on gay marriage. "The board affirmed the civil rights of people to pursue a civil union. We did not affirm any religious aspect of these relationships -- that's not our job," Peterson told ABP, adding that the statement "was arrived at following thoughtful, deep discussion amongst our board members."

John Peterson, who is married to Brenda Peterson, CLN's executive director, also noted that his group is "not affiliated with the Clergy Leadership Network." Interfaith Alliance President Welton Gaddy issued a statement Nov. 21 criticizing the CLN's formation.

Peterson and Pennybacker said Baptist Press reporters did not contact them for comment prior to the Dec. 5 story's appearance.

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Paul Powell to continue as dean of Truett Seminary

By ABP staff

WACO, Texas (ABP) -- Paul Powell will continue to serve as dean of Truett Theological Seminary past his three-year commitment.

Powell said he intended to retire in the spring, but Baylor University President Robert Sloan asked him to stay. "I have agreed to do so because of the importance of Truett to Baylor's mission and to traditional Baptists everywhere," Powell said in a statement Dec. 5.

Sloan praised Powell's "great passion and commitment," adding, "He has been particularly effective at strengthening the seminary's relationship with Texas Baptist churches, resulting in significant increases in enrollment and expanded financial support for Truett."

"In the last few months," Powell said, "we've had the greatest financial response of my three-year tenure, and I fully expect that to continue. I want to be a part of something that is great and good, and that's the way I feel about Truett and its future."

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Under Powell's leadership, which began in February 2001, the seminary's enrollment has grown from 247 to 380 students, new degrees and new faculty have been added, and 200 endowed scholarships have been established.

Prior to joining the seminary, Powell served as a member of the Baylor Board of Regents. He retired in 1998 as president of the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Powell also served as pastor of Texas Baptist churches in Belfalls, Troy, Taylor, San Marcos and Tyler, where he served 17 years as pastor of Green Acres Baptist Church.

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Albanian textbook ministry shows value of CBF offering, missionaries say

By Melanie Kieve

SKOPJE, Macedonia (ABP) -- "A jeni ju Baba Dimri?" Translation: "Are you Santa Claus?"

That's what Serxhane, an 11-year-old Albanian orphan, asked Rick Shaw -- who serves with his wife, Martha, as Cooperative Baptist Fellowship global missions field personnel in Skopje, Macedonia -- a few weeks after receiving textbooks from Martha and Fellowship volunteers.

But according to Rick Shaw, it wasn't the gift as much as God's love demonstrated through giving that created the mistaken identity. "I told the young Albanian that, like Baba Dimri, we love people -- especially the children of the world," he said.

Serxhane was one of approximately 500 children who received textbooks, along with backpacks and school supplies. The textbook project was part of the Shaws' ongoing ministry among orphan and indigent children in Skopje and surrounding villages.

The children who received textbooks are either orphaned or have only one parent who is employed. Most are ethnic Albanians who face discrimination and lack educational and employment opportunities in Macedonia.

"Many of the children are very bright and ... dream of a better life," Martha Shaw said, but they face obstacles to learning, such as having to provide their own books. "You can imagine what a challenge this is when no one in the home is working," she added.

When Highland Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky., learned of the textbook shortage, they quickly responded. They spread the word to other stateside Fellowship churches, while the Shaws contacted churches in the Balkan region. In all, more than \$40,000 was raised.

In August, three Highland members -- Phil Collier, Terri Connolly and Angela Dennison -- along with Mary Thompson of Calvary Baptist Church in Lexington, Ky. -- traveled to Skopje, where they distributed textbooks and visited in schools and orphans' homes. They were joined by several local Albanian and Macedonian church members and Kristen Connolly, Terri's daughter and a Student.Go missions intern serving in the region.

The Kentucky volunteers "left full of love for Albanian people and with ideas of ways they could continue to support our ministry here, as well as begin a ministry to the Albanians who live in their own community," Martha Shaw said.

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Since the volunteers' return, Highland Baptist has discovered that many Albanians live in Louisville. The church hosted a Thanksgiving meal for local Albanians as part of an emerging, cultural exchange-oriented ministry, said Phil Collier.

"Our church has been energized by this project," Collier said. "We have become more missions-oriented, with a large percentage of our members becoming involved in missions work and justice issues." Collier noted that Highland has also enjoyed the connections created by the project with new Albanian friends and sister churches like Lexington's Calvary Baptist.

Calvary Baptist collected money for the textbook project and donated school supplies for distribution. The church's deacons also held a dessert auction during a deacon fellowship to help send Mary Thompson on the textbook distribution trip.

"It meant the world to me to have the opportunity to go and help the Shaws," Thompson said. "I felt God's hand throughout the experience."

The Fellowship's 2003-04 Offering for Global Missions, with the theme "Everyone... Everywhere, Being the Presence of Christ," encourages this kind of personal missions involvement, along with prayer and financial support.

The offering's importance to ministries among Albanians cannot be underestimated, Martha Shaw said. "The Offering for Global Missions provides funding for us to be here, to establish ministries among orphans and widows, and to communicate with CBF constituency churches and other churches the Albanian story," she said. "The offering is the financial foundation of our presence in the Balkans among Albanians. Without it, we could not be here."

In addition to the textbook project, the Shaws have developed other holistic, transformational ministries alongside Albanians, including English instruction; clothing, food, medicine, firewood and heater distribution; medical care arrangement and financing; church planting and discipling; human rights advocacy; sewage system installation in villages; and prison ministries.

"Our goal is to guide Albanians to see the gospel as powerful, real and relevant to their lives and culture," Martha Shaw said.

- Photo available from Associated Baptist Press

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T Thomas elected to lead CBF of Oklahoma

By ABP staff

NORMAN, Okla. (ABP) -- Veteran missionary Charles "T" Thomas was hired by the Cooperating Baptist Fellowship of Oklahoma as coordinator Dec. 6.

Thomas, currently associate coordinator for missions for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Florida, will assume his new position Jan. 1. Both state organizations are affiliated with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, a nationwide network of moderate Baptists.

"There's a great deal of excitement here in Oklahoma" about Thomas' election, said Lavonn Brown, interim coordinator.

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Thomas, a native of Atlanta, replaces Rick McClatchy as chief executive of the CBF of Oklahoma. McClatchy recently left to become coordinator for the CBF of Texas. The Oklahoma organization has three employees.

In 1992, Thomas and his wife, Kathie, were among the first four global missionaries appointed by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Previously they were missionaries assigned for the Southern Baptist Convention, serving first in France and later in Romania. The Thomases resigned from the SBC Foreign Mission Board in protest of what they termed a "hostile takeover" that resulted in the resignations of two top FMB administrators for Europe.

- This story updates one issued Dec. 1.

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CORRECTION:

Please make the following correction in the Dec. 3 ABP story: "CBF church-planting partnerships produce 54 new congregations." The fifth graph should read:

The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, a national organization of moderate Baptists, counts approximately 1,800 churches that fund its missions and ministries.