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TENNESSEE--Meetings.

WASHINGTON--Court accepts major case on religious freedom.

VIRGINIA--FMB taps missionary for volunteer office; photo.

NORTH CAROLINA--SEBTS trustees approve plans for additional student housing.

TENNESSEE--David S. Dockery inaugurated as Union University's 15th president.

CALENDAR

MISSOURI--Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary trustee meeting, Oct. 21-22, Kansas City.

TEXAS--Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary trustee meeting, Oct. 21-23, Fort Worth.

TENNESSEE--Brotherhood Commission trustee meeting, Memphis, Oct. 25-26.

Court accepts major case
on religious freedom

By Tom Strode & Ken Camp

Baptist Press
10/18/96

WASHINGTON (BP)--The U.S. Supreme Court has accepted a case which apparently will determine the extent of religious liberty protection from government intrusion.

On Oct. 15, the high court announced it would review a case involving the proposed expansion of a Roman Catholic church building in Boerne, Texas, and the Catholic diocese's use of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act to battle the city's refusal to grant a permit for such work.

Signed into law by President Clinton in November 1993, RFRA requires a government body to demonstrate a policy serves a "compelling interest" and is the "least restrictive means" in fulfilling the government's interest before restricting the free exercise of religion. The bill gained overwhelming bipartisan support in both houses of Congress.

RFRA was proposed and adopted in response to a 1990 Supreme Court opinion, Employment Division v. Smith, in which the justices ruled government no longer has to demonstrate a "compelling interest" before restricting religion. After the Smith decision and prior to RFRA's enactment, it was easier for the government to limit religious expression.

The question of RFRA's constitutionality arrives at the high court in the form of a zoning dispute in a small Texas hill country town. Three years ago, St. Peter Catholic Church in Boerne applied for a building permit to enlarge its overcrowded sanctuary. City officials denied the request, citing a historic preservation ordinance and the church building's distinctive architecture. Church officials said the city's action violated RFRA.

A federal judge ruled in the city's favor, but the Fifth District Court of Appeals upheld the law.

Both sides in the zoning dispute asked the justices to rule in the case. RFRA has yet to lose at the appeals court level, but its constitutionality has been attacked across the country in not only zoning disputes but prison and housing disputes. It appears the court's ruling will be landmark one.

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"I don't think there is any doubt that RFRA is constitutional," said Will Dodson, legal counsel and director of government relations for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission. "RFRA does not change the Constitution. What it changes is a Supreme Court doctrine on how religious liberty should be treated when the interests of the state are involved. The Supreme Court fashioned a doctrine which religious liberty organizations with varied opinions about the proper relationship between church and state all agreed is too restrictive toward religion and not restrictive enough against the state."

Organizations such as the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, American Jewish Congress and Christian Legal Society led the broad-based coalition of more than 60 groups which promoted RFRA in Congress and continues to defend it today. The Christian Life Commission is a part of the coalition.

"Only if RFRA is allowed to stand can we feel some sense of security from those who could otherwise zone us out of existence, regulate us out of existence or tax us out of existence," said Western Ware, associate director of the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission.

In its brief, the city charges RFRA "violates three structural features of the Constitution . . . federalism, separation of powers and the Establishment Clause."

The Southern Baptist CLC's Dodson said, "The real battle in this case is going to be over whether or not the Supreme Court will allow Congress to reshape a doctrine which the justices have written. The Supreme Court should allow Congress to reshape any doctrine it wishes as long as that doctrine conforms to the Constitution. RFRA does conform to the Constitution, but I think the Supreme Court is going to be very reluctant to relinquish any power, even though Congress has the perfect right to do so."

"This case is significant for how it affects religious liberty law. It has the potential to be just as important as to how it affects the relationship between Congress and the Supreme Court."

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FMB taps missionary
for volunteer office

By Norman Miller

Baptist Press
10/18/96

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--David Campbell, a Southern Baptist missionary for 14 years, became associate director of Brazil and the Caribbean for the Foreign Mission Board's Volunteers in Missions department effective Sept. 30.

In trading his foreign missionary responsibilities in Mexico to take on a new role in the board's home office, Campbell's ministry comes full circle from the time he first went overseas -- as a volunteer.

He succeeds Boyd O'Neal, who retired Oct. 17. He will recruit volunteers to meet needs identified by missionaries on the field.

A 1981 volunteer project in Brazil scratched an itch for missions he and his wife, Karen, felt for 12 years. "The Lord used that trip to answer our prayers about becoming foreign missionaries," said Campbell.

Appointed missionaries to Brazil in 1982, the Campbells transferred to Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, in 1994 to direct a river ministry along the Rio Grande.

"While in Brazil and Mexico, David and Karen knew the heartbeat of volunteers and the need for them on the foreign field. As a former missionary and volunteer, he is uniquely qualified to serve with us. We're glad to have him," said Jim Furgerson, director of the Volunteers in Missions department.

"Southern Baptists have the dual challenge of the Great Commission and an expanding world population," said Campbell. "I want to help our foreign missionaries meet these challenges through the strategic use of volunteers."

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Before graduating from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, Campbell was a high school math teacher, a profession he left for seminary training and pastoral ministry. The Campbells have two grown children.

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(BP) photo (mug shot) mailed 10/18/96 to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press and posted on SBCNet News Room. Outline also available on SBCNet News Room.

**SEBTS trustees approve plans
for additional student housing**

By Lee Weeks

**Baptist Press
10/18/96**

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary's board of trustees voted to proceed with negotiations to acquire 144 additional housing units by fall 1997 in an effort to keep pace with the school's record-setting growth.

Paige Patterson, president of Southeastern, said the additional housing, for married couples with and without children, is expected to be provided through a combination of properties purchased and leased.

"It does appear that we have been able to secure 144 new units," Patterson said Oct. 15. "We should be in them by fall (1997)."

The seminary's housing shortage, Patterson said, should be resolved for the present with the additional units. Currently the seminary's male and female dorm rooms for single students are at double-occupancy and on-campus married housing is filled to capacity with a long waiting list of students desiring campus housing.

Student enrollment figures for the fall 1996 semester have eclipsed the school's previous record set in 1982 of 1,282 students.

Officials student enrollment figures are expected to be released simultaneously next week by the Southern Baptist Convention's six seminaries.

Southeastern's fall enrollment, approximately 1,350 students, marks the third consecutive year the school has registered double-digit percentage growth. For fall 1995, Southeastern recorded an enrollment of 1,098 students.

Patterson refuses to take credit for the seminary's skyrocketing growth. "I don't know how to account for it in any way other than just the smile of God," he said.

Outlining the seminary's looming needs, Patterson said more faculty will be necessary to accommodate the continued rise in student enrollment. An additional professor of ethics, two systematic theology professors and a professor of philosophy and preaching are pressing needs, he said.

In other business, trustees approved raises for faculty and administration salaries, a new master's degree program and elected four new faculty members.

Responding to findings from a study of the competitiveness of faculty and administration salaries ordered by the trustees last year, board members voted to increase faculty salaries by 12 percent over the next four years.

"I'm very pleased about that because it enables us to come closer to competitive (salary) standards," said Patterson.

Trustees also approved a three percent raise effective this year for seminary staff.

A master's degree program in Intercultural Studies will be offered by Southeastern beginning in the spring of 1997. The trustees approved the new master of arts degree program during the board meetings held Oct. 14-15 on the Wake Forest, N.C. campus.

In addition to the basic core curriculum courses, Patterson said, the degree program will require an emphasis in missions and linguistics.

"It's designed to prepare people to walk into almost any kind of cultural situation that they would go into and to spot the particular cultural signs that would enable them to work effectively in that culture," Patterson said.

While on campus, trustees participated in a dedication service of a newly renovated apartment building for married couples without children.

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Bostwick Hall, built in 1924 is the seminary's oldest dorm. The 25,000 square-foot former men's dorm, which had been closed since 1988, has been refurbished into a 25-unit apartment complex. Seminary couples moved into the historic three-story building in June.

During the dedication service, Southeastern honored Billy Souther, a member of the seminary's board of visitors and pastor of Southside Baptist Church in Roanoke, Va., as its "Volunteer of the Year."

For the past year, Souther spent his day off from the church every Thursday to help renovate Bostwick Hall.

In other business, trustees elected four new faculty as well as new trustee officers.

Elected to the faculty were:

-- Kenneth S. Coley, Ed.D, University of Maryland at College Park; formerly principal of Montrose Christian School in Rockville, Maryland as assistant professor of Christian education;

-- Daniel B. Forshee, Ph.D., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary ; formerly pastor of Mt. Gilead Baptist Church, Keller, Texas, as assistant professor of evangelism and church growth;

-- L. Keith Harper, Ph.D., University of Kentucky; formerly professor of history at Mississippi College, as assistant professor of church history; and

-- Andreas J. Kostenberger, Ph.D., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School; formerly assistant professor of New Testament and professor for theological German, Trinity International University, as associate professor of New Testament and Greek.

Elected to serve as officers on the board of trustees were: Dale Thompson, president, Fort Smith, Ark.; Cecil Ray Taylor, vice president, Satsuma, Ala.; Charlie W. Waller, secretary, Bumpass, Va.; and Kent Humphreys, treasurer, Oklahoma City, Ok.

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David S. Dockery inaugurated as
Union University's 15th president

Baptist Press
10/18/96

JACKSON, Tenn. (BP)--David S. Dockery was inaugurated as Union University's 15th president Oct. 17 during ceremonies in the University's G.M. Savage Memorial Chapel.

"It is with great humility, a deep gratitude to God, and a confident trust in God's guiding providence that I stand here today to accept the responsibility to lead Union University into the next century," Dockery told students, faculty, and delegates from 64 universities and organizations. "It is with thanksgiving for all of you and an overwhelming sense of God's enabling grace that we look forward to investing our lives with the Union University family in the years to come."

Tennessee Governor Don Sundquist and Jackson Mayor Charles Farmer provided resolutions proclaiming Oct. 17, as "Union University Day" in the State of Tennessee and the City of Jackson. Other delegates included Morris Chapman, president of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, and James Porch, executive director and treasurer of the Tennessee Baptist Convention. Both Chapman and Porch reflected on Union's strong Baptist ties and charged Dockery to build on Union's Baptist heritage during his tenure as president.

"Union University is respected far beyond the State of Tennessee, and I congratulate the trustees and administration in this high hour of the institution's history," Chapman said. "It is not Dr. Dockery's election by men that makes him a leader, however -- only God can make a man a leader."

"David Dockery is a man of integrity and honesty; he's full of wisdom and has a fine spirit. May all those who receive a diploma from his hands know that they've received a torch to carry God's light into the world."

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"As the new president of Union University, I charge you to be with God as you lead this institution," Porch said. "To lead alone is to neglect responsibility -- to lead with God is to fulfill his admonition and hear him say Well done my good and faithful follower."

In his inaugural address, titled "Vision and Values: Toward a Great Commandment University," Dockery outlined the challenges of a new century and described his vision for Union's continued impact on a changing world.

Prior to coming to Union Dockery was vice president for academic administration and dean of the school of theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. Also, he was general editor of Broadman Press at the Baptist Sunday School Board and has taught at Moscow Theological Institute, Samford (Birmingham, Ala.) University's Beeson Divinity School, the University of Dallas' Anglican School of Theology, and Criswell College, Dallas.

The inauguration ceremony highlighted a week of community-wide festivities, including an outdoor concert featuring contemporary Christian band Newsong and a prayer breakfast for area business leaders.

Union University, located in Jackson, Tenn., is a four-year, liberal arts university affiliated with the Tennessee Baptist Convention. Founded in 1823, the 2,000-student institution is the oldest university related to Southern Baptists.

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