



BAPTIST PRESS

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78-205

Trustees' Vote Threatens
Wake Forest, Baptist Tie

By Charles Richardson

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. (BP)--Wake Forest University trustees, in unprecedented action, voted to remove the university from control of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

By a vote of 27-6, with two abstentions, the trustees deleted from the Wake Forest charter and bylaws clauses which give the state convention the right to elect or fire trustees; removed the phrase which states that they will operate "as an agency" of the convention; but stopped short of establishing a new procedure to elect trustees which now are elected from North Carolina Baptist churches by the convention.

The action came just 24 days after messengers of the Baptist state convention, meeting in Raleigh, voted 1,276 to 1,048 to continue a study for a new relationship between WFU and the convention. Only a week earlier, the chairman of the study group, Frank Campbell, said the group was "confident we can come up with a solution that will be satisfactory to Wake Forest and the majority of the convention that we can live with a long, long time."

A statement from James W. Mason, chairman of the board of trustees, said, "There is no arrogance in our conclusions, no impatience, but rather a carefully determined judgment that the board's autonomy must be clearly established before the convention and Wake Forest can appraise how they can best help one another. This has been done."

According to an earlier legal opinion, the trustees have "no duty under the law to carry out any expressed directive made to them by the Baptist state convention, or its General Board." The legal opinion said that in conflicts between the trustees and the convention, final authority "legally resides in trustees of the university and not the convention."

"The trustees now have the legal right to select their successors," said Mason, "but it is the clear intent of the board to work closely with the Council on Christian Higher Education of the convention, or other bodies which the convention may choose, in determining how new trustees will be selected and what criteria will be used."

According to a statement the trustees inserted into their charter, they "shall endeavor to work in close harmony with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and to promote its educational ministries."

At the September General Board meeting, Wake Forest President James Ralph Scales asked for "an affiliate" relationship with the convention rather than the current agency role. As an agency, Wake Forest last year received \$815,000 from the convention and is scheduled to receive \$937,000 this year.

Convention president Mark Corts suggested those funds "could and should" be held in escrow "until the matter is finally resolved." He predicted a recommendation to that effect would be made at the General Board meeting Jan. 30-31 in Raleigh.

Mason told a Greensboro newspaper that "We are determined to operate as a Christian university, hopefully with the Baptist state convention. But we won't knuckle under to economic blackmail."

The convention contribution is less than two percent of Wake Forest's \$58 million budget, but is matched in gifts by the Reynolds Foundation which are contingent on the Baptist affiliation.

Witness To Hispanics
Runs 20 Years Behind

By Linda Lawson

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Despite recent progress, Southern Baptists are still about 20 years behind in witnessing to Hispanic Americans, a language missions leader says.

Chuck Padilla, associate in the Sunday School department of the California Baptist Convention, and Ruben Canas, director of language missions and interfaith witness of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, emphasized the urgent need to support churches ministering to Hispanics, the second largest ethnic minority in the United States.

"We're catching up fast. Now we're only about 20 years behind," said Canas, who moved to Tennessee last year from Chicago where he was pastor of a bilingual church. Canas praised cooperative efforts in the denomination to "bridge the gap," and predicted more progress in the next five years.

Both men have participated in a task force of representatives from the Home and Foreign Mission Boards, the Sunday School Board and from state conventions in proposing priority product needs.

Padilla, the first non-missionary ethnic employee on the California Baptist Convention staff, expressed concern that Southern Baptists are not geared up with money, personnel or programs to reach the rapidly growing Hispanic population. He said by 1980 Los Angeles will be more than 50 percent Hispanic.

"Los Angeles is not turning brown every year but every day," Padilla said. "The only way to reach California for Christ is to reach Spanish-speaking persons."

Sponsors of training events for Hispanic pastors and lay persons must provide financial aid for workers to attend, Padilla said. Because most Hispanic churches are small with limited resources and many pastors are bivocational, "they are financially locked out of participation."

Both men cited needs for literature translated from English and for books and periodicals written by Hispanics for Hispanics. Preschool and adult age groups have the greatest need for materials in Spanish because a larger percentage of children and youth tend to be bilingual.

In other areas, Canas emphasized the need to help Hispanics learn English to function in society while, at the same time, recognizing their desire to maintain their culture and language at home and at church.

"We need to work with people in their setting," he said. "Most language groups are indigenously inclined. We need to respect their desire to maintain their culture, family and lifestyle patterns."

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N.C. Board Completes
Form 'Under Protest'

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ASHEBORO, N.C. (BP)--Executive Committee members of the North Carolina Baptist General Board voted to complete a lengthy form from the Equal Opportunity Office on employment practices, but under "protest."

General Secretary Cecil A. Ray asked the committee to authorize business manager Richard Smith to fill out the form but to note the protest as an infringement on the First Amendment.

The action also called for concern to be expressed to the state's Congressional delegation in Washington, including Senators Robert Morgan and Jesse Helms.

The same committee on Nov. 13 voted to delay completing the forms. Smith said that a higher court is now considering a government appeal case in Texas. Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, refused to comply and a lower court upheld its case.

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Smith said after discussing the delaying action with an official of the Southern Baptist Annuity Board, who in turn checked with the board's legal counsel and several other state conventions, he felt it "wise" to complete the form "but at least register a complaint."

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Texas Baptists Extend
Landes as Chief Executive

DALLAS(BP)--James H. Landes, executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, has accepted a request of the state convention's executive board that he remain in office through 1982.

The board voted 111 to 3 to urge Landes to stay until age 70 following a motion by James Flamming, pastor of First Baptist Church, Abilene, Texas, who cited the need for continued leadership in Bold Mission Thrust, the Southern Baptist goal to reach every person on earth with the Christian gospel by the year 2000.

Two years ago, the board voted unanimously to ask Landes to continue in the top administrative post two years past his 65th birthday. Landes, now 66, was elected on Jan. 1, 1974. He had planned to retire Dec. 31, 1979, before the extension.

Speaking in favor of the second extension, Texas Baptist President Milton Cunningham of Houston, said, "It would be extremely tragic for all of us if we should fail to realize that we are on the verge of the greatest possibilities in history and make a change at this time."

Landes, who delayed his decision for a week after the request, said he was "greatly moved" and urged Texas Baptists to "move enthusiastically together to claim our state and our world for Christ during the years of Bold Mission Thrust."

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Board OKs \$63,000 In Relief
For Refugees In Thailand

By Anita Bowden

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RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Indochinese refugees in Thailand will benefit from more than \$63,000 in hunger and relief funds appropriated by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board during its December meeting.

Funds earmarked for refugees in Thailand will provide basic necessities, such as clothing and temporary shelter, tools and seeds for agriculture projects and supplemental food.

"Recent news articles have highlighted the plight of these refugees, but their problems have been there ever since Vietnam fell to the communists," said William R. Wakefield, the board's secretary for Southeast Asia.

The \$63,000, included in more than \$164,000 appropriated for relief and hunger needs around the world, is part of the board's continuing relief efforts for Indochinese refugees. This amount brings the 1978 figure to \$78,500. In 1977, the board appropriated \$81,000 for needs of the refugees.

For a while, Thailand refused entry for "boat people," those refugees who escape by sea, but more are being accepted into the Thai refugee camps since western governments have promised to resettle larger numbers of refugees, Wakefield said. Conditions are not good and space is limited, he explained. One camp in Thailand, built to hold 300 refugees, now houses 2,000.

And with as many as 500,000 Indochinese refugees seeking freedom in the next year, according to "U.S. News and World Report" estimates, even U.S. plans to double the refugee intake to 47,500 a year seem insignificant. "Newsweek" also reported that some officials estimate as many as two million people may try to leave Vietnam.

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An increasingly large proportion of recent refugees includes Chinese people who have been forced to leave because of racial persecution and a tightening of regulations on small businesses, in which many of them were engaged prior to Vietnam's takeover.

Wakefield said he anticipates a "long range, fairly intensive ministry to the refugees with an emphasis on resettlement."

The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, too, has an eye on resettlement of these refugees, recently hiring Gene V. Tunnell, a former foreign missionary to Vietnam and Honduras, as consultant on refugees. Tunnell said the Home Mission Board wants to involve more individuals and churches in resettlement. To date, only about two percent of Southern Baptist churches in the States have sponsored a refugee or family.

The Asian refugee problem will not disappear in a few months or even a few years, Tunnell and Wakefield agree, noting that more money and personnel will be needed to minister to them.

Wakefield said all of the volunteers and special project workers sent by the Foreign Mission Board to work with refugees in Thailand have extended their time of service and one has returned after a few months in the States. "I think this points up the obvious needs there," said Wakefield, who added, "I see the need for increasing sums of money, especially for relief of physical needs."

In addition to money for relief work with refugees, the board reported a need for money to replenish the nearly depleted general relief fund.

Other relief appropriations made in December will go to help rebuild churches and homes damaged in recent storms in Korea and Honduras, Sri Lanka and Brazil. Funds also were designated for war relief in Lebanon and hunger relief in India, Bangladesh and Tanzania.

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Jones Named Associate
Editor of 'Christian Index'

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ATLANTA (BP)--Michael E. Jones, 29, has become associate editor of "The Christian Index," state newspaper for the Georgia Baptist Convention.

He succeeds W. D. (Dub) Joiner, who has become editor of "The Metter (Ga.) Advertiser."

Before joining "The Christian Index," edited by Jack U. Harwell, Jones spent six years as a cartographer with the mapping and graphics section of the Georgia Department of Transportation, where he also edited an employee publication.

A graduate of Georgia State University with a degree in advertising art and journalism. Jones worked as an obit/classified advertising clerk with the "Atlanta Journal" and "Constitution" while attending school.

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Singer's Wife Gives
For Refugees' Shoes

DENVER (BP)--When David Miller, director of Brentwood Baptist Center, went on Denver television to ask for shoes for Indochinese refugees, he had no idea what response to expect.

The next day, Miller's secretary received a call from a woman who identified herself as the secretary of Annie Denver. The woman told the Brentwood secretary that Mrs. Denver had seen the broadcast and wanted to give a donation toward purchase of shoes for refugees.

Annie Denver, it turns out, is the wife of the world-famous singer John Denver of Aspen, Colo. She sent a check for \$500.

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