

**BP****BAPTIST PRESS**

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80-20

## 'Articles of Faith' Inform

Parents, Students, Watson Says

By Toby Druin

DALLAS (BP)--W. Marvin Watson said here that his emphasis on making Dallas Baptist College a "distinctively" Christian school and requiring the faculty, staff and trustees to sign a statement of their beliefs and practices is meant to tell parents of prospective students and the students themselves "what they can expect" from the college.

The emphasis, he said, certainly is not to be judgmental of the practices or stance of any other educational institution nor to cast any aspersions on what has been done in the past at Dallas Baptist College.

"What I proposed and was adopted by unanimous vote of the trustees present," he said, "was done because I believe if we are to be Christian we must be willing to say to the world that if you want to consider this as your college home this is what you are going to be taught."

The presidents of the other Texas Baptist colleges and universities interviewed said they have no intention of following Watson's lead in having their faculties and staffs sign a statement of faith.

And though all defended any college's right to do as it pleases, a couple of them indicated they felt that such a requirement would have the effect of making their institutions less "distinctively" Christian and would be a violation of Baptist principles.

Though none requires faculty or staff to sign a statement of beliefs, all of the presidents emphasized they interview faculty members personally before they are employed and their religious beliefs and practices are carefully scrutinized.

In November Watson presented to his trustees "Articles of Faith" based on the statement of Baptist Faith and Message approved by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1963. The Articles of Faith, however, included additions to the portions of the 1963 statement on the Scriptures and man.

In the Scriptures portion, Watson inserted a sentence, "We believe in the Scriptures of both the Old and New Testament as verbally inspired by God and inerrant in the original writing, and that they are of supreme and final authority in faith and life."

In the portion on the nature of man, a sentence was inserted, stating, "By this statement we affirm our belief that man was created by a direct act of God in His image, not from previously existing creatures, and that all of mankind sinned in Adam and Eve, the historical parents of the entire human race."

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Watson explained he resents "the abuse" of the original wording of the Scriptures portion to permit a wide latitude of belief. He added the part about man in response to the growth of teaching on evolution in public schools.

The trustees approved the Articles of Faith and required they be signed by all the 128 faculty and staff of the institution.

The action has had several repercussions.

The student division of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has suspended some \$70,000 in tuition equalization grants and federal tuition grants because of an attorney general's ruling in 1974 that students attending colleges which require their faculties, staffs and trustees to hold certain beliefs are not eligible to receive such grants.

Even before the grants suspension was announced, however, opposition to signing of the Articles of Faith was voiced on the DBC campus. Some faculty members altered portions of it before signing and six have refused to sign at all.

One of the faculty who refused to sign, Larry D. Braidfoot, an instructor in philosophy and religion who has been at the college since 1973, was abruptly reassigned from the classroom to do institutional studies at the start of the spring semester.

Watson denied Braidfoot's stand on the Articles of Faith had anything to do with his reassignment. He said the instructor was the only faculty member with a law degree.

Watson said he has not made a decision yet to terminate Braidfoot or the other faculty and staff persons who refuse to sign the statement or who have altered it.

He said he could not believe there is anything wrong in asking a person to sign a statement of faith and said as far as he was concerned that since the Southern Baptist Convention action in 1963, "there has been nothing new about it."

Neither the Texas convention, nor the executive board, according to the office of the recording secretary, has taken action on the 1963 statement, per se. Last November in Lubbock, however, the convention passed a resolution recognizing Texas Baptists have "embraced the highest views of the Scripture as 'truth without any mixture of error'" and encouraging trustees to insure integrity of Baptist institutions by upholding the "fullest implications of the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message statement."

Even if the convention has not taken action on the statement, Watson said, he felt his action was in keeping with the 1975 Texas Baptist institutional study committee report which stated the objective of Christian education was to make the institutions "distinctively Christian in purpose and accomplishment" with a strong Christian influence "permeating the entire institution."

The president acknowledged the criticism of his action in some quarters but said it apparently has had no effect on contributions. "We raised more money in December and January than the previous 12 months," he said.

And in spite of the grants suspension, which Watson has pledged to make up from other funds, spring enrollment apparently will exceed the 1979 total.

**\$277,000 Received  
For Cambodian Refugees**

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RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--During the last three months of 1979, Southern Baptists sent 1,600 donations totaling more than \$277,000 for Cambodian refugees to the Foreign Mission Board.

Contributions for the refugees began in October, when the largest wave of Cambodians thus far entered Thailand and their plight was headline news across the United States.

Since then Southern Baptist missionaries and three volunteer medical teams have used money designated for refugee relief as they worked to feed and care for refugees in two of the camps. The board appropriated a total of \$610,000 in 1979 for Cambodian refugee relief.

John R. Cheyne, associate consultant for relief ministries, said Southern Baptists who wish to assist in relief ministries are encouraged to make designated gifts through their local churches, above regular tithes and offerings. Churches will channel such gifts to the Foreign Mission Board through state Baptist convention offices.

The number of contributions in January dropped some, but Cheyne said he hopes that Southern Baptists will remember that refugees continue to need assistance.

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**Claud O'Shields Joins  
North Carolina Convention**

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RALEIGH, N.C. (BP)--Claud O'Shields, former eastern representative for the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, has joined the North Carolina Baptist Convention staff as a part-time consultant in radio and TV.

O'Shields will help churches and associations in North Carolina develop radio and TV ministries, promote the convention's video tape program, and coordinate a joint evangelistic campaign media emphasis.

While working for the commission, 1965-79, O'Shields served conventions and churches in all states east of the Mississippi River as a liaison between the denomination and the broadcast industry. He also developed communications and public relations workshops for state conventions in the area.

Prior to that, he was manager of a Wilmington (N.C.) television station, sales manager of an area radio station, and classified advertising manager for the Wilmington newspaper.

A resident of Surf City, N.C., he has served two terms as New Hanover County (Wilmington) Commissioner and one term on the Surf City Board of Commissioners.

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Ferguson Affirms 'Baptist  
Faith and Message'

By Barbara Little

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--Annual convocation ceremonies at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary here were highlighted by the formal signing of the seminary's Articles of Faith by four new faculty members and an address by George Beasley-Murray of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Preceding the address by Beasley-Murray, who predicted that "this decade will see the debate on the Christology intensify even more," seminary president Milton Ferguson formally welcomed new faculty members by noting that "Baptist confessions of faith serve as a 'group testimony,' focusing on those common affirmations which bring us together as Baptists."

Ferguson also declared that the confession--Southern Baptists' 1963 statement of Baptist Faith and Message--was adopted to provide those who join the seminary faculty "a sense of common direction and purpose."

He prefaced his remarks by saying, "Baptists historically are a fiercely independent people whose heritage is rooted in the affirmation that no one stands between God and the individual conscience."

"The sole authority for Baptists is the ultimate Word of God--Jesus Christ revealed through the Scriptures as they are energized by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit."

Ferguson reminded the group that although the "Baptist Faith and Message statement is not to be regarded as a formal creed, it does function as a positive affirmation of those historic Christian beliefs which Southern Baptists continue to affirm."

The message closely paralleled earlier remarks Ferguson made to the faculty and staff. In a fall meeting he spoke concerning the basic challenge and commitment of Midwestern Seminary. "Midwestern is like a church, yet unlike a church; like a university, yet unlike a university," he said.

Declaring that the seminary is a "child of the churches," he noted that "we are supported with the expectation that we will serve the churches. It is our privilege--and responsibility--to bring the church and the educational process together in a spiritual discipline of learning and growth."

"In this way," he said, "we seek to equip God-called men and women for effective ministry in and through the churches."

In relating to the issue of biblical authority, Ferguson said, "There are very real differences in understanding and interpretation among us as Southern Baptists--our people are diverse--and the differences are not merely semantic." Ferguson urged the faculty and staff to understand and appreciate these differences, but to "move beyond them in affirming and communicating our basic beliefs."

He issued a challenge to "preach the gospel with clarity and authority, to celebrate the gospel with new life and vitality, and to live life in conscious devotion and service in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord."

Concluding, Ferguson insisted that there has never been a time of greater opportunity for Southern Baptists and for Southern Baptist seminaries.

He declared, "It is time for us at Midwestern Seminary to reaffirm our commitment to, and participation in, the life and ministry of the churches.

"By doing this," he said, "we will fulfill our calling and live out our commitment to be the people of God in the last quarter of the twentieth century."

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Barbara Little is supervisor of news and information at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo.

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January Tops Record  
For Cooperative Program

Baptist Press  
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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Giving to the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program in January topped the all-time record for giving in one month, according to figures released by the SBC Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee received and disbursed \$6,488,452 in Cooperative Program receipts channeled by SBC churches through state Baptist conventions. That figure topped by 8.1 percent the \$6,002,367 given in January 1979, the previous record month.

The undesignated Cooperative Program receipts, along with another \$6,944,223 in designated contributions, brought total giving in January to \$13,432,675, up 6.67 percent over January 1979.

Total giving for national SBC causes through the first four months of the 1979-80 fiscal year, through Jan. 31, amounted to \$32,204,656, up 12.01 percent over the same period last year.

The total giving includes \$23,089,970 in Cooperative Program receipts, up 12.41 percent, and \$9,114,686 in designated receipts, up 11 percent.

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