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November 5, 1986

86-164

Martin Apologizes To Moore,
Says Roberts Should, Too

By Toby Druin

N-00
Texas

DALLAS (BP)—A Baylor University trustee has apologized for being the source of information used to criticize Winfred Moore and said the man who levied the criticism, Lee Roberts of Atlanta, also owes Moore an apology.

Moore, pastor of First Baptist Church of Amarillo, Texas, and who also is a Baylor trustee, requested the apology from Paul Martin of Houston. Last spring Martin told Roberts that in a January 1985 Baylor board meeting Moore had voted to table a motion by Martin instructing the Baylor administration not to allow Baylor Film Society to show movies on campus containing profanity, sexually explicit scenes and taking God's name in vain.

The motion to table Martin's motion was made by W. Dewey Presley of Dallas and stated the trustees had confidence in the administration and the matter was one the administration could handle. The tabling motion passed. President Herbert H. Reynolds suspended the film society on April 30, 1985.

In a letter exchange last spring, more than a year after the tabling motion, Roberts wrote of the January 1985 trustee action to Paul Powell, pastor of Green Acres Baptist Church in Tyler, Texas, who also is a Baylor trustee and current president of the Texas Baptist convention.

Both Roberts and Powell were involved in the SBC presidential election process last spring, Roberts endorsing Adrian Rogers and Powell endorsing Moore.

Roberts, chairman of the 1986 SBC Committee on Boards, was criticized for a speech in April in Nashville, Tenn., when, while urging Rogers' election, said he didn't know if Moore "believes in truth." Powell was criticized for sending out a letter of endorsement for Moore on his Texas presidential stationery.

Moore's vote, Roberts wrote to Powell, was "to allow the continued showing of pornography, depicting homosexuality, sadism, nudity, explicit sex, and the use of the Lord's name in vain on the campus of Baylor University. Think about that fact, that this mind-set is today but a heartbeat away from the presidency of the SBC."

Roberts' information about Moore's vote on the tabling motion was provided by Paul Martin, he said, saying Martin told him he could quote him.

In a Baylor trustee meeting in July, Moore reiterated Roberts' statement about his January 1985 vote in the meeting of the Baylor trustees and stated Roberts' contention that his vote to continue showing profanity, nudity, taking God's name in vain, etc., was an "untruth," that his vote simply was to table the motion, voicing confidence in the administration to handle it.

Martin told the trustees he had indeed been telephoned by Roberts, whom he did not know and told him of Moore's vote to table. All Roberts asked, Martin said, was if Moore's vote were to table. He did not ask if it were a vote to continue showing pornography. Roberts did not say how he had learned of the January 1985 action, Martin said, nor did he indicate how he intended to use the information.

Martin apologized to Moore, Reynolds, Presley and Powell and said he probably should just have told Roberts he didn't want to talk to him.

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At the request of Moore, Martin subsequently agreed in the trustee meeting in July to sign a statement of apology to Moore if Moore would have one drafted by Moore's attorney, Maston Courtney of Amarillo, and sent to Martin on July 29.

Moore said Martin later told him he would have to revise it somewhat before signing it. Moore said he told Martin to prepare it any way he wished, but when he had not received it by Aug. 27, he called Martin about it.

The Houston attorney, Moore said, told him he could not sign it because he was convinced Moore was going to use it in a lawsuit.

Moore told the Baptist Standard, newsjournal of the Texas Baptist convention, he had never said he is or is not planning a lawsuit.

Martin's refusal to sign a statement prompted Moore on Oct. 7 to send a transcript of the tape recordings of the July Baylor trustee meeting, including Martin's apology, along with the statement of apology prepared for Martin by Courtney, to the Baylor trustees and administration and others, including the Baptist Standard.

Moore said in a telephone interview with the Standard that he had sent the material because "I think our people need to know that some of the things that have been said about people and institutions are not true, and if it goes unchallenged you can keep that kind of thing going. I don't think that's right."

Martin told the Standard he had refused to sign the statement prepared by Courtney "because it does not correctly state the facts."

A correct statement, he said, would have included the transcript of what he said at the Baylor trustee meeting as to why he made his motion to direct the administration. He made the motion, he said, because he had seen no evidence the administration was moving to stop the movies.

Martin said he told Moore he would publicly apologize to him "because I really didn't want him hurt in this thing. I think Winfred Moore is a really fine, wonderful Christian who loves the Lord certainly every bit as much as you or I do."

"Obviously, when he voted to table that motion he wasn't considering he was going to allow them to continue to show pornography at Baylor as I thought they were."

Moore, Martin said, "probably thought the administration was really going to stop them. It's just unfortunate because he was in this national (Southern Baptist) campaign, the word got out that he was one of the ones who voted to table my motion and it was misconstrued."

Martin criticized Powell for further distributing Roberts' remarks about Moore in his letter of endorsement last spring.

Martin said he briefly had talked with Roberts since the July Baylor board meeting and told him of Moore's displeasure.

He said he told Roberts "he ought to write Winfred Moore an apology because I thought he was out of order to have accused Winfred that way."

Roberts told the Standard that he had received the letter and transcript from Moore and had written a "very private, privileged letter" in reply.

The next step, he said, will depend on Moore's responding in an "honorable" way. The issue is how Moore voted and why rather than who said what to whom, he said.

He said he would not argue the matter in the press and did not send copies of his letter to Baylor trustees or the press "as Dr. Moore did."

He would not say for the record why he had not contacted Moore instead of Martin, at the outset as to how Moore voted in the January 1985 meeting.

Annuity Trustees Give
Retirees Raise For 1987

N-Ann. Bob.

DALLAS (BP)--Southern Board Annuity Board trustees, have voted to increase monthly checks to 13,000 retired Southern Baptist annuitants and credit earnings to Plan A accounts of members not yet retired.

Annuitants who retired before Jan. 1, 1980, who participated in Plan A will receive a 16.66 percent increase in their monthly checks on Jan. 1. While they will receive a 13th check this year, the permanent increase will replace the annual bonus. Persons who retired after Jan. 1, 1980, will be granted a 6.66 percent increase.

Members in Plan A who have not retired also will receive an increase at retirement reflecting the fund's income growth beyond that required for the original defined benefit.

Darold H. Morgan, president of the Annuity Board, said an estimated \$2 million per year will be credited to 13,000 members. The increases are possible because of high earnings of the retirement fund.

"We are here to serve Southern Baptists. So when we are successful, we pass our success on to our plan members," Morgan said.

He noted some annuitants' government assistance was reduced the month they got their 13th check because their income exceeded allotments. The increases allow members to enjoy more retirement income all year and permit annuitants in government assistance programs to collect their full benefits. The board's third quarter income was up \$3.2 million, bringing the net total income for 1986 to \$36.8 million.

Total assets increased 18.8 percent last year to \$1.8 billion. Assets in the Insurance Fund increased 21 percent to \$101.6 million.

In other business, trustees promoted Mac Perkins, assistant director in insurance services, to director of that department.

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High Court Affirms Decision
On State Funding, Abortion

By Kathy Palen

N-BJC

Baptist Press
11/5/86

WASHINGTON (BP)--The U.S. Supreme Court has affirmed a lower court decision that the Arizona legislature may not withhold state funding from an agency simply because that agency provides abortion services, counseling or referrals.

By a 5-3 vote to affirm, the nation's highest tribunal elevated the lower court opinion, giving it precedential effect throughout the United States rather than only in the circuit in which it was decided. Three members of the court--Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist and Justices Byron R. White and Antonin Scalia--indicated they voted to schedule oral arguments in the case. Justice Sandra Day O'Connor did not take part in the action.

In 1980, the Arizona legislature appended a footnote to its appropriations act stipulating that no state money could be spent on "abortions, abortion procedures, counseling for abortion procedures or abortion referrals." The footnote also mandated no state money could be given to "agencies or entities" that offered any of those services.

Two Arizona branches of Planned Parenthood sought state funds to provide family planning services. Those state funds would have constituted a 10 percent matching grant to accompany a 90 percent grant already provided by the federal government.

When state funds were denied Planned Parenthood, the non-profit corporations, joined by medical director Jack Bashaw, filed action in the federal district court for Arizona.

The district court found the state law to be unconstitutional on First Amendment and vagueness grounds and enjoined state officials from refusing to pay state funds to Planned Parenthood.

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Upon appeal by the state, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the district court decision on the vagueness issue and held the state could promote "choice" for childbirth by withholding information about abortion. The appeals court, however, remanded the case to the lower court with instructions to determine whether "withdrawing all state funds from Planned Parenthood was the only way to ensure that Planned Parenthood would not use state funds to support its abortion-related activities."

The district court again held the entire state law unconstitutional. The appeals court affirmed that decision, citing the state's ability to monitor and prevent misuse of its funds rather than to withdrawal all funds.

In their appeal to the Supreme Court, attorneys for the state of Arizona argued such monitoring would place an "onerous and impossible burden on the state."

They also contended the state law did not interfere with Planned Parenthood but simply provided that no state funds should go to the agency because it engages in abortion and abortion-related activities. "Planned Parenthood has no constitutional or statutory right to state funds, nor is the state obligated to contract with them," they wrote.

Attorneys for Planned Parenthood asked the high court to affirm the circuit court's decision, arguing the "Arizona statute imposes a classic penalty." They contended the law would force Planned Parenthood both to give up its freedom of speech that enables it to discuss abortion with clients and to forfeit federal funds that require it to make all medically necessary referrals, including abortion referrals. (86-369, Babbitt v. Planned Parenthood)

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High Court Rejects New
Nativity Scene Dispute

By Stan Haste

N-BJC

Baptist Press
11/5/86

WASHINGTON (BP)—The U.S. Supreme Court has decided not to reopen its internal debate over the constitutionality of cities' erection of Christmas nativity scenes.

In an order filed Nov. 3, the court—apparently without dissent—rejected an appeal by the city of Birmingham, Mich., that it consider overturning two lower court decisions banning a 25-year practice of placing the figures of the Christ Child, Mary, Joseph and shepherds and lambs on the front lawn of city hall during the Christmas season.

City attorneys argued in papers asking for the review that the lower panels' findings ran contrary to the high court's 1984 ruling in Lynch v. Donnelly, a 5-4 decision upholding Pawtucket, R.I.'s longstanding practice of erecting a nativity scene on private property. In the Pawtucket dispute, the court noted, a key factor was the presence of other, secular seasonal figures set up with the creche. In Birmingham, the creche stood alone except for a Christmas tree and lights.

Two years ago, a federal district court banned the Michigan city's continuation of the practice, ruling it had no secular purpose, had the primary effect of advancing one religion and excessively entangled church and state.

When the city appealed, the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the lower panel on the questions of purpose and entanglement but agreed the Birmingham practice had the primary effect of advancing Christianity in violation of the establishment clause of the First Amendment. (86-389, City of Birmingham v. ACLU)

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Missouri Baptists
Share 'Old Times'

By Bob Terry

N-CO Missouri

RAYTOWN, Mo. (BP)—"It was just like it used to be." That was a frequently voiced comment as 2,500 Missouri Baptists gathered at First Baptist Church of Raytown for the 152nd annual meeting of the Missouri Baptist Convention, Oct. 27-29.

Music and preaching highlighted the three-day convention. The major references to denominational conflict came from three members of the Southern Baptist Convention Peace Committee who spoke at the convention.

Ed Young, pastor of Second Baptist Church of Houston, told the Pastors' Conference audience: "We are seeing a coming together on God's terms. We've begun to put down our guns and go fishing again."

Winfred Moore, pastor of First Baptist Church of Amarillo, Texas, expressed appreciation for the movement by the six SBC seminary presidents as outlined through their recent "Glorieta Statement" on denominational reconciliation. He said he hopes Baptists of the differing theological persuasion would now reciprocate with movement toward the center of Southern Baptist life.

SBC Peace Committee Chairman Charles Fuller, pastor of First Baptist Church of Roanoke, Va., recalled an experience during the spring floods which devastated his area of the country. Fuller said he was trying to salvage belongings from his flooded basement when his wife told him a Tennessee reporter was calling to talk about the Southern Baptist controversy.

"I told my wife to tell the reporter that during the middle of a catastrophe is no time for a controversy," Fuller shared. Our world is in the middle of a catastrophe with men and women dying and going to hell. Time is running out. This is no time for a controversy."

Fuller commended the seminary presidents and expressed appreciation for what he termed "positive leadership" out of the lingering denominational fight.

Aside from passing references, the annual meeting was a time of tribute and celebration for Missouri Baptists.

Retiring Executive Director Rheubin South was honored during the opening session. Among the featured speakers were SBC Executive Committee President Harold C. Bennett and Dan Stringer, president of the Association of Southern Baptist Executive Directors.

South, who is hospitalized in St. Louis with leukemia, was represented by his wife, Verna. Missouri Baptists presented her the keys to a 1987 Buick Park Avenue in appreciation for their services, a \$5,000 cash gift for South and a \$2,500 gift for her. In addition, South was named executive director emeritus and furnished secretarial services for a year.

In other actions, the messengers elected John Hughes, pastor of First Baptist Church of Independence, president; approved a \$15 million budget for 1987; and adopted a resolution supporting the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

Hughes, pastor of the Independence church since 1971, was elected on the first ballot in a three-candidate race. He received more than 62 percent of the votes cast. He is a former chairman of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission trustees and currently is national alumni president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

The \$15 million budget is divided into two tiers—a \$14.3 million operating goal and a \$700,000 challenge goal. In each level, 35.187 percent is designated for Southern Baptist Convention causes through the Cooperative Program. That percentage is up more than four-tenths of 1 percent over the 1986 percentage going to SBC causes. It represents the first step in a four year program to increase Missouri's contributions to SBC causes by 1 percent over current levels.

In its resolution report, the messengers praised the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs for "diligent" and "faithful representation of the cherished principles of separation of church and state."

The messengers voted to "declare our appreciation for and support of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and express this convention's desire that the Southern Baptist Convention retain the present cooperative relationship as a member of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs."

In a resolution titled "Harmony and Unity," messengers declared, "our strength lies in cooperation based on the Lordship of Christ and the authority of Scripture." The resolution also commended the SBC Peace Committee "for its healing work in behalf of Southern Baptists."

The next meeting of the Missouri Baptist Convention is scheduled for First Baptist Church of Springfield, Oct. 26-28, 1987.

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Former Ouachita Trustee
Earl Verser Murdered

N- Ark.

Baptist Press
11/5/86

EUDORA, Ark. (BP)—Earl Verser, former chairman of trustees for Ouachita Baptist University, was found dead at his Eudora, Ark., home Oct. 31, an apparent murder victim.

Preliminary indications were that Verser died of several blows to the head suffered during a burglary of his home, Eudora Police Chief Lawrence Webster said. The body was transported to Little Rock, Ark., for an autopsy.

A suspect, Glen Allen, 21, of Eudora was in custody without bond in the Lake Village County Jail on charges of capital murder and theft of property, according to the Chicot County sheriff's office.

Allen was arrested Oct. 31 in Fort Worth, Texas, after becoming involved in a barroom fight, Webster said. Fort Worth police discovered the vehicle he was driving was registered in Verser's name, and subsequent investigations connected him to the Arkansas crimes.

In addition to the automobile, nine guns stolen from the Verser home were recovered.

Verser, 62, had been a trustee of Ouachita Baptist University for two six-year terms, 1972-77, 1980-85. He was chairman of the trustees from 1982 to 1985. Prior to his death, he was chairman of a university development council fundraising campaign to expand and update the school's library.

Verser, a deacon at First Baptist Church of Eudora, also had been a volunteer lay preacher and singer in Arkansas' partnership mission with two Baptist conventions in northern Brazil.

He was preceded in death in 1984 by his wife, Mollie Trimble Verser. Survivors include five children.

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