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October 18, 1989

89-149

SWBTS trustees, Dilday
discuss 'family matters'

By Dan Martin

N-CO

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--The president and trustees of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary discussed "family matters" behind closed doors for nearly five hours Oct. 17.

When they emerged, they issued a three paragraph statement of affirmation and warning, directed at President Russell Dilday and the 36-member board of trust.

Trustee Chairman Ken Lilly, a medical doctor from Fort Smith, Ark., read the statement to the gallery of about 250 people at the Fort Worth, Texas, seminary:

"Our executive session consisted of healthy dialogue in which we all acknowledged our differences and failings.

"We, the trustees and Mr. President hereby affirm one another and pledge our mutual support.

"Because of the sensitivity of the issues involved, we covenant together as trustees and president to cease and desist from making any statements, or writings, or engaging in any activities that could reasonably be interpreted as being intentionally political in nature, all the while seeking to deal with each other and the institution we serve in truth and love."

Lilly's reading of the statement was greeted by polite applause. "That's it," he said, as he moved trustees into regular business.

Dilday, who has headed the 4,800-student seminary for 11 years, interrupted regular business after Lilly had read the statement to say he wanted a time to "let everybody kind of rejoice in what has happened."

"There was a unanimous expression of coming together after a long and orderly and very positive process of discussion," he said.

"The statement came about in a very providential way," he added. "The board gathered around here with me on our knees. We pledged our best; we covenanted -- a very important word -- as trustees and president to abide by the very best part of this statement to the very best of our ability.

"The board has taken a very positive and strong step that will ensure a strong future for this seminary," he added.

Trustees called for the executive session after some -- including former Southern Baptist Convention President James T. Draper Jr. -- said they feared a "circus-like atmosphere" would be generated.

They voted 22-11 to conduct the executive session after Draper, pastor of First Baptist Church of Euless, Texas, said trustees needed to deal with a "family matter" in discussing "some things with the president."

He added he is "not afraid to discuss them in open session, but sometimes we need to get together as a family. I do a lot of things in public, but I don't dress and undress in public."

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After the vote to hold the executive session, Dilday, in his report to trustees, said he would "rather have had the session open to Baptists around this convention, but you (trustees) have voted to do that in a secret and private way. I will work with you in this regard."

He said: "It is not likely we will settle those difference in our perspectives about the convention, the nature of the SBC or the direction it ought to take."

"But those differences do not directly relate to the work of this institution. That work continues to be the priority responsibility (of trustees) to guide, direct and govern this school.

"The work of this institution continues to be strong."

Dilday urged all concerned to "deal with the complaints ... in a way that would not deter" the work of the convention.

"Our task is to be sure that in the midst of this debate and confrontation that the school be protected and that it does not suffer," he said.

In the debate over the executive session, Drew Gunnells, pastor of Spring Hill Baptist Church in Mobile, Ala., opposed closing the doors, noting the discussion "has nothing to do with moral or fiscal matters" but dealt strictly with political issues.

Another trustee, Pat Campbell, pastor of Ridgecrest Baptist Church in St. Charles, Mo., told Baptist Press after the meeting trustees were not critical of Dilday's operation of the seminary but were unhappy with his political activities.

The executive session was protested by about 125 pastors and laymen -- most from the Dallas/Fort Worth area, but some from as far away as Abilene, Texas.

"We are family, too," said Charles Wade, pastor of First Baptist Church of Arlington, Texas, and spokesman for the dissenters. "We feel like we belong in the house, too."

Lilly allowed Wade to address the trustees after noting the remarks should be brief and were allowed "if it will allow you to go on out. We are having an executive session and cannot do our business with you here."

Wade, who asked the board to reconsider its decision to close the meeting and to allow observers to remain, said the dissenters "are afraid" for Dilday, who has been under fire from conservative trustees for what Lilly previously called the "whole problem of political activity by the president."

"We have heard in published reports what may happen here," Wade said. "We cannot leave our president alone to be censured or spoken to in a way that does not respect the great contributions he has made to Southern Baptist life."

Wade alluded to an effort in August to fire Lloyd Elder, president of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville. Trustees of the SSB discussed for an hour a motion to fire Elder before allowing it to be withdrawn.

"One of the reasons we are so afraid (for Dilday) is because of what happened" to Elder, Wade told trustees.

The reports, he added, were that efforts would be made to "pressure him, quiet him, silence him, make him change his ways. We want the trustees to understand how much we love him and are grateful for what he has said."

Draper took exception to the remarks, noting Wade "has made assumptions that these people (trustees) don't love the president. He has already determined what we will do ... when we haven't even met yet. This is the kind of circus atmosphere I have spoken of.

"There is no intent to hurt him (Dilday). There is a need to discuss some things with him and this (the dissent) is counterproductive and makes our task much more difficult."

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One man who refused to identify himself walked to the front of the meeting room and told Lilly and trustees, "The Lord would have me stay."

"The Lord doesn't have anything to do with this; we are having a trustee meeting," Lilly responded.

The young man -- along with the other dissenters -- left the meeting room. A sign was posted outside which said, "Closed Session."

Shortly after they were expelled from the meeting, Wade led the dissenters in singing the Doxology and breaking into small prayer groups.

Occasionally, the group broke into other songs, but generally stood in the rotunda of the seminary's student center waiting for the meeting to end.

After Lilly read the statement to the gallery, Draper also addressed the audience: "I want to thank you for allowing us to have this executive session, even if you did not agree with it."

"It was difficult at the time, but on the behalf of the trustees I thank you because we had a freedom we would not have had with you here."

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(Contributing to this story were Toby Druin, associate editor of the Texas Baptist Standard; Lynn Clayton, editor of the Louisiana Baptist Message; and Scott Collins, news director at Southwestern Seminary.)

'Sensitivity' only gag
for president, trustees

By Toby Druin

N-10
(Texas Std.)

Baptist Press
10/18/89

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Both Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary President Russell Dilday and Chairman Ken Lilly insisted following their almost-five-hour, closed-door session that the only gags or muzzles applied to either Dilday or the trustees were ones of "sensitivity" about what and how something is said.

They did reach a "compromise," Dilday said as he and Lilly spoke to reporters in a brief news conference following the trustee meeting Oct. 17.

"I guess compromise could be used as word for it," Dilday said in response to a reporter's question about what they had been able to accomplish.

"I think we all came together," he said. "We all mutually acknowledged our failings and our feelings, our differences, and we agreed we can't solve the differences we have about the Southern Baptist Convention in a session like this."

"But we can come together about our purpose and responsibility for this seminary, and I think that is the way I saw the meeting come out -- that there will be in the future differences in our convention and in our denominational discussion, but we don't want anything to interfere with the work of this school, its calling, its purpose, its ministry."

In an opening statement, Dilday said that many differences were shared in the closed-door session but that the overriding concern was to find a way that all concerned could "pull together in unity and harmony again."

They agreed there would still be differences about the SBC, he said, but there was strong affirmation that their task was Southwestern Seminary and that it move forward.

Their joint statement, he said, "was not just a pious statement" or just a "temporary kind of euphoric thing."

"We believe in grace," he said. "We say we believe in the miracle of God's presence; we say we believe that God can take circumstances that have human dimensions that seemingly won't work and can't be solved, that won't work and with his intervention and providence those things can work out. I think we truly have it here."

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Lilly defended the executive session, saying what was accomplished could not have been done in open session, "without the privacy of being able to talk to each other frankly about it."

"We were able through prayer, much dialogue, to come to the conclusion that we do love each other. We can work together," he said.

At issue in the trustee meeting was Dilday's alleged political activity, especially his appearance on the program of moderate political meetings. He was asked several times in the press conference about his future involvement in such meetings and also, in light of the joint statement, about the involvement of trustees, particularly Euless, Texas, pastor James T. Draper Jr., in denominational political meetings.

"The statement states it very well that we will desist from making those statements that would be interpreted as intentionally political," Dilday said. "And where any of us feels the other trustee or president has not abided by this that we will in good covenant call and contact each other directly ... and come to an understanding."

Lilly said that Dilday and the trustees "will go ahead and go wherever they feel led of the Lord to go. I guess the message they bring is what is going to be important.

"We discussed it at length. We are interested in portraying much less rhetoric and disunity than has been done in the past. We will try to do our best to desist and intentionally avoid political issues."

Dilday said he would still feel free to speak his convictions and quoted a pre-session statement by Draper to the press "that people of conviction must not allow pressure to keep us from saying and doing what we believe we should do."

"The board did that today," Dilday said. "They expressed themselves in spite of a lot of pressure and concern."

"I think Dr. Dilday will certainly say anything in conscience that he needs to say," said Lilly. "There is no gagging or changes in his way of doing business. He will be, because of his commitment to us, sensitive about what he says and how he says it."

Dilday acknowledged he did have some concern about his future as president of the seminary as he went into the trustee meeting. There had been enough talk and enough people had very strong feelings to justify concern, he said.

But he added he didn't think anyone was disappointed that there was no "harsh muzzling or dismissal of anybody."

"Everyone is a winner as a result of this, and we are learning from it," he said.

He expressed gratitude for the outpouring of support in more than 200 students, faculty, area pastors and others who attended the trustee meeting and prayed and sang during the closed-door session.

He said he did not interpret it as just support for him but for him, the seminary and the trustees and what they are about at Southwestern, "letting everybody know that this school is important."

Several trustees commented on the meeting after the close of the session.

Stephen G. Hyde, pastor of First Baptist Church, Silver Spring, Md., praised Dilday. "He listened," Hyde said. "Even when he got the opportunity to speak, he spoke forthrightly and very graciously. He exhibited the kind of qualities that show excellence of leadership."

He said he was sorry "the people and press didn't have the chance to see us being very open with each other."

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Pat Campbell, pastor of Ridgecrest Baptist Church, St. Charles, Mo., said: "We urged him (Dilday) to be discerning, to use direction. There has to be either balance or to hold back. I think the message that kept coming through was that he has been seen as the spokesman for the moderate-conservative position, which causes the seminary to be focused in that dimension. I think he received that well."

Draper said he saw the session and its accomplishments as a "breakthrough."

"Russell was very understanding and appreciated our concerns," he said. "He profited from it. We heard some of his concerns. I had never heard him tell some of the things that he shared. I thought it was very positive."

"I didn't know what would come out of the meeting. I had come prepared to take whatever action was needed. But I think the Lord turned it around. It was unanimous."

The former SBC president said he felt the events would be "a healing thing" for the SBC, "a first step to giving birth to this baby we have been growing for 10 years."

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Call for new missionaries
rises 11 percent for 1990

By Marty Croll

N-FMB

Baptist Press
10/18/89

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Southern Baptist missionaries are asking the convention's Foreign Mission Board to fill 370 new missionary jobs in 1990, an increase of about 11 percent over personnel requests for 1989.

The 3,800-plus missionaries also are asking for 285 workers who are not career missionaries, a 30 percent jump over last year. That increase shows a growing emphasis on broadening the pool of Southern Baptists participating in overseas mission work.

The rise in missionary requests represents a sign of hope to the denomination's foreign mission enterprise, board strategists said. Two years ago missionaries asked for new co-workers to fill 426 jobs, but missionary requests dropped by nearly one-fourth last year after a funding shortfall forced the Foreign Mission Board to shave 12 percent off its operating budget.

Area directors of mission work worldwide presented the 1990 requests during an annual review of personnel needs at board offices in Richmond, Va., Oct. 16. Also at the session, board enlistment workers told area directors how they plan to reverse a four-year downward trend in new missionary appointments.

Top needs for 1990 include missionaries to start churches among Muslims in the Middle East, train pastors and lay leaders through theological education in Angola and start churches in Hong Kong.

Priorities also include workers to teach English as a second language in Poland, minister to pastors in an Eastern European nation, coordinate a program for the handicapped in Mexico City and work in a hospital and public health services in Yemen.

Twelve of the global strategists' 25 top requests call for missionary church starters. Four ask for nonresidential missionaries, a new category of workers assigned to help evangelize unreached people groups from outside their homelands, which often are closed to missionaries.

The greatest increase in requests for new missionaries comes in the area of general evangelism. Last year missionaries requested 179 preacher missionaries to help start churches. This year they are asking for 210. In the evangelism and church development category, which includes church starters, missionaries increased their requests by 15 percent, from 240 last year to 276 for 1990.

For 1990, missionaries are requesting 14 educators, 36 health-care professionals, 14 media workers, 13 people with business skills and 11 community development specialists.

Enlistment staff members at the Foreign Mission Board said they will have to increase their pool of applicants to find these people. The number of missionary appointments has fallen each year since hitting a peak in 1985.

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So far this year, the board has appointed missionaries to fill only 35 percent of missionary personnel requests from last year. Of the top 25 mission assignment requests highlighted by overseas strategists last year, five have been filled by new missionaries and one by transferring a missionary. From 118 requests offered last year as priorities by area mission directors, 32 have been filled by new missionaries.

The intensity of the personal call to each new missionary has not diminished, according to Tim Brendle, associate vice president for mission personnel. Enlistment staff will step up efforts to find people called by God to fill priority needs, he said. Of every 50 prospects with whom they make contact, seven actually begin the soul-searching path to missionary appointment, Brendle said. Of the seven, one is appointed.

Last year Brendle told area directors not to panic about the reversal in a general upward trend in missionary appointments. This year he said enlistment staff members have worked as hard or harder than ever.

"In a word, we are not gearing down. We shall not passively accept a downward trend nor assume that this trend will continue," he said. "We must increase the size of the pool."

Joe Bruce, area director for Middle America and Canada, said the world needs missionaries who are unfettered by titles and rank, who lead by example, not from behind a desk.

He recounted how once, on the way to a Baptist retreat in Honduras, missionary Ralph Wilson of Texas carried a pastor with club feet up the side of a mud-slick mountain. "There are a lot of folks like that out there. I think they demonstrate some of the qualities of the kind of people we'd like you to send us," Bruce said. "They are people who are on a spiritual pilgrimage themselves, and they want other people to walk along with them."

"Ralph could have talked a whole lot about what it means to be a good neighbor to those pastors at the retreat. But when they saw him walking up the mountain, giving this other guy a piggyback ride, he didn't have to say a whole lot."

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Pressler turns down
government ethics job

By Marv Knox

N-CO

Baptist Press
10/18/89

WASHINGTON (BP)--Paul Pressler, a Houston judge and vice chairman of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee, has turned down President Bush's nomination to direct the U.S. Office of Government Ethics.

But Pressler has accepted a part-time administration appointment, which is to be announced later this fall.

Pressler met in the Oval Office with President Bush, Vice President Dan Quayle and White House Chief of Staff John Sununu Oct. 11. At that time, Pressler declined to accept the top federal ethics post but indicated he would be willing to serve in another capacity, he said.

In a statement released by the White House press secretary's office to Baptist Press Oct. 18, President Bush said:

"Judge Paul Pressler is a man whom I have known and admired for many years. His integrity, outstanding qualifications and exhibition of the highest ethical standards prompted me to again urge him today (referring to the Oct. 11 meeting) to accept the nomination as director of the Office of Government Ethics.

"Unfortunately, Judge Pressler informs me that due to professional, religious and family obligations, he is unable to accept a full-time government position at this time. He, therefore withdrew his candidacy for director of the Office of Government Ethics. I am disappointed by that decision.

"However, Judge Pressler assured me that he would be willing to accept another position that would not conflict with his personal obligations. We will explore the available options. I am grateful to Judge Pressler for his enthusiastic support and agreement to serve our country."

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Contacted in Houston Oct. 18, Pressler told Baptist Press: "The president and I have reached an agreement, and an announcement will be forthcoming within the next month.

"The new position will allow me to stay on the bench, maintain my residence in Houston and to stay on the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention. If I had taken the other (Office of Government Ethics) position, I realized from the very beginning, I would have had to resign the position on the Executive Committee. I have an obligation to serve out the term to which I have been elected by Southern Baptists."

Family considerations also prompted his decision, Pressler added: "My wife's father is quite ill, and my parents have expressed a strong desire that I not leave Houston. They have wanted me to take greater responsibility in family business matters. Our son only recently has had additional grand mal seizures. He is pretty well stabilized now, but my wife and I are worried about the destabilization of his situation which could result from a move. All those are prominent factors."

News of Pressler's possible nomination to the top government ethics post first circulated in July. That was followed by rumors and counter-rumors concerning whether his nomination had been dropped by the Bush administration because of his controversial role as an architect of conservatives' rise to power in the Southern Baptist Convention.

But Pressler told Baptist Press Sept. 29, "The status (of the nomination) is that I have not been offered the job, and I have not decided to accept it if it is offered."

During a mid-October interview with Baptist Press, Pressler said that while the full-time ethics job would have required Senate confirmation and the new part-time post will not, both positions require FBI clearance, and that has been granted.

"I feel very excited about the new position, but it will not be announced for another month or so," he said.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Baptist Press

Moore announces retirement
from First Baptist, Amarillo

By Orville Scott

N-Texas

Baptist Press
10/18/89

DALLAS (BP)--W. Winfred Moore, former vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention and two-time nominee for SBC president, announced he will retire at the end of this year as pastor of First Baptist Church of Amarillo, Texas, where he has been for 30 years.

In announcing his retirement, Oct. 15, Moore, 69, told members of the church that his health is good and his "zeal and strength better than when I came."

Moore said he and his wife, Elizabeth, will live somewhere in Texas but not in Amarillo.

"This is the toughest part, he said, "but the new pastor does not need the shadow of the former pastor across his path all the time."

Although he is retiring from the pastorate, Moore said, he will continue to be active in Baptist General Convention of Texas and Southern Baptist Convention matters.

He resigned recently as chairman of Baptists Committed to the SBC, a group that describes itself as "mainstream centrists," but he remains on the group's executive committee.

"I intend to remain active in the effort to return our convention to the place where we accept our diversity and give support to our institutions and agencies," Moore said.

A former first vice president of the 14.8-million-member SBC, Moore was a nominee twice for the SBC presidency. In 1986, he lost to Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn., by a vote of 21,201 to 17,898. The previous year, he was defeated by Charles Stanley, pastor of First Baptist Church of Atlanta, by a vote of 24,452 to 19,795.

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Moore was president of the 2.4-million-member Baptist General Convention of Texas from 1983 to 1985.

While Moore has been pastor, First Baptist Church of Amarillo led Texas Baptists many times in the SBC Cooperative Program unified budget giving. Its members also have been leaders in partnership missions and other direct missions involvement.

During his 30 years as pastor, the church has increased in membership from 6,600 to more than 11,000.

Moore was educated at Lambeth College and Union University in Jackson, Tenn., and George Peabody College in Nashville. He also holds the doctor of divinity degree from Wayland Baptist University in Plainview, Texas, and the doctor of laws degree from Baylor University in Waco, Texas.

Before coming to First Baptist Church of Amarillo, he was pastor of churches in Mississippi, Texas and Alabama.

Moore has been on the 193-member Texas Baptist executive board and boards of several Baptist institutions. He was Amarillo's "Man of the Year" in 1978.

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Church-state issue still
hot in child-care debate

By Kathy Palen

N- BJC

Baptist Press
10/18/89

WASHINGTON (BP)--The role churches should play under proposed child-care legislation remains a contested issue in Congress.

Recent floor debate in the House of Representatives revealed continuing questions about how to send federal funds to religiously affiliated child-care centers without violating the Constitution.

The House recently passed a comprehensive child-care measure that includes plans designed by two separate committees. The Ways and Means proposal is silent on the church-state issue, but the Education and Labor plan forbids the use of federal funds for "sectarian activity, including sectarian worship and instruction."

Proponents of the House measure rejected charges that it would exclude churches from participation. They added the measure's restrictions on federally funded child-care services provided by churches and synagogues are the same as those that already exist under the Head Start program.

"Churches could provide child-care services and receive federal assistance as long as they refrained from religious teaching in the program and did not discriminate in enrollment and hiring decisions," said Rep. Constance A. Morella, R-Md. "Many Head Start programs operate in churches; there is no reason why child-care services could not also be provided in or by churches."

But House opponents argued the restrictions would preclude church-related centers from participating.

Allowing churches to provide child-care services in their basements is not sufficient, said Rep. Thomas J. Tauke, R-Iowa. The problems arise, he said, over whether such centers will be able to display religious symbols, control personnel and lead children in praying or telling Bible stories.

"The reality is that the churches who provide child care will not accept those restrictions and, therefore, the money will not flow to them," Tauke said.

At one point, the debate on the church-state issue became so heated that House Majority Leader Richard A. Gephardt, D-Mo., came to the floor to assure members that the body's Democratic leadership had no intention of supporting a bill that would exclude religious child-care centers.

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In an earlier letter to House members, Gephardt said the Democratic leadership believes House child-care conferees "should, and will, move toward the Senate position on this issue" when the measure goes to conference for reconciliation with the Senate's child-care proposal.

The Senate version would allow parents to use federally funded child-care certificates at sectarian child-care centers as long as such use does not violate the Constitution. But, according to that bill, providers receiving direct grants would be prohibited from engaging in religious instruction, worship or other sectarian activities.

"The leadership on the Democratic side is committed to a conference report on this issue that deals with this question in a way that would be appropriate for the religious institutions that are now delivering child care," Gephardt said. "We do not want to be in a position, we do not want to be in a world where you could not have our children in church basements, could not have our children in religious institutions, receiving child care."

Once a compromise is worked out by House and Senate conferees, it must be approved by both bodies before being sent to President Bush for his signature.

Outside observers -- including Oliver S. Thomas, Baptist Joint Committee general counsel -- say predicting exactly how the final child-care compromise will look is difficult Thomas added, however, the BJC will continue to monitor carefully the measure's church-state ramifications.

"If government wants to provide tax breaks to parents with preschool-age children, that's fine," he said. "If government wishes to use public schools or assist private businesses in the task, that also is acceptable.

"But when government begins to fund or regulate the child-care ministries of local churches, that's where we draw the line. Such an unhealthy entanglement between church and state inevitably compromises the free exercise of religion and shortchanges individual taxpayers.

"As long as Baptists oppose aid to parochial schools, the Baptist Joint Committee will oppose aid to parochial preschools."

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Virginia report
seeks more voice

By Ed Briggs

N-10

Baptist Press
10/18/89

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--A long awaited report of a special Virginia committee dealing with the theological/political controversy in the Southern Baptist Convention will ask messengers to next month's state association meeting to change its bylaws and demand more of a say in denominational appointments.

The report also suggests that the state is proceeding with plans to change the way that local churches can keep some denominational agencies from getting the churches' money.

The proposed changes will be in a report to the meeting of the Baptist General Association of Virginia in Salem Nov. 13-15.

Many Virginia Baptists are angered by the conservative groups political control of certain agencies.

And the report of the Special Committee on the Denominational Crisis is the latest step in a dispute involving the conservatives who have taken control of the 14.8-million-member denomination's policy-making system.

The committee, appointed in January, recommends that the bylaws of the Baptist General Association of Virginia be changed so that two people to the Southern Baptist Convention's Committee on Committees would be nominated annually.

The Committee on Committees -- always hand-picked by the convention's president -- is the pivotal group in a process that selects trustees of the convention's boards, agencies and seminaries.

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Control of the denomination's policy-making system has been the goal of conservatives since they began a takeover of the denomination a decade ago. The party has controlled the process through the annual elections of the president.

Before the Virginia report was drafted, the committee held a series of "listening" sessions across the state in which many of the people who spoke advised the committee not to be timid in its report.

The report acknowledges that "many Virginia Baptists are beginning to realize that the Southern Baptist Convention will never be the same again, and that now is the time to search for new ways of working with our fellow Baptists."

Besides seeking the bylaw change, the committee urges the state association's resolutions that will speak out on the conservatives treatment of some agency heads.

Particular resolutions are expected to deal with the recent muzzling of Lloyd Elder, head of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, and possibly with Russell Dilday, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

"It is distressing that, with increasing frequency, respected and effective leaders in the SBC agencies and institutions have been subjected to systematic abuse so that their personal ministries are crippled and the institutions they serve are weakened," the report says.

The report also says that unless given a new direction by the state association, the crisis committee will develop a new plan of financial giving in place of the 64-year-old Cooperative Program unified budget.

Under the Cooperative Program all congregations, regardless of their theological slant, contribute to a financial pool to support domestic and foreign missions, seminaries, religious education and outreach programs.

As suggested in the report, a "new wineskin" for handling money -- to be called "Cooperative Missions Giving" -- would offer a potpourri of ways congregations can contribute. The committee plans a series of public forums on the proposals for 1990.

The committee suggests four ways that churches can continue their support and remain members of the Virginia association. They are:

- Inclusive support: Undesignated gifts distributed according to the annual association budget.
- Custom support: Gifts distributed according to a percentage established by the giving church.
- Selective support: Gifts to both state associations and Southern Baptist Convention causes as designated by the local church.
- Exclusive support: Gifts designated to a specific state association or denominational cause.

The report also encourages continued financial support by the state association of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs -- a nine-denomination religious liberty organization whose continued SBC support is in question.

During the "listening sessions" many of the speakers also urged the crisis committee to give some suggestions to congregations on what they can do.

In response, the committee is suggesting that each congregation form a denominational affairs committee to study the crisis; use state association-supplied booklets to study the Virginia Baptist history of religious freedom; stand up for the right of "dissent within the embrace of fellowship"; participate "as fully as possible" in all denominational meetings; keep stewardship standards high; and continue support of missions through the state association.

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(Ed Briggs is religion writer for the Richmond Times Dispatch.)

CORRECTION: Please change the 17th paragraph of the 10/13/89 Baptist Press story titled "Florida Baptist efforts fail to gain tighter abortion laws" to read:

The substitute was withdrawn when lawmakers learned it too would require a two-thirds vote. Senators then voted on Langley's motion, which fell five votes short of the needed two-thirds, 22-18. The motion to form an investigation committee then was reintroduced and approved without opposition.

Thanks,
BP

Baylor cancels classroom viewing
of 'Last Temptation of Christ'

By Ken Camp

N-Texts

Baptist Press
10/18/89

DALLAS (BP)--Baylor University President Herbert H. Reynolds announced Oct. 17 that he had cancelled a scheduled classroom presentation of the controversial "The Last Temptation of Christ."

The movie was to have been viewed by an upper-level history of motion picture film class later in the fall semester.

"Baylor University's commitment to the cause of Christ must transcend any concerns by those who place paramount importance on unlimited inquiry in the academic setting," Reynolds said.

Prior to Reynold's announcement, rumors that the film was scheduled to be shown at the Texas Baptist university in Waco already were circulating and raising the ire of some religious broadcasters and others who had protested the film's release last year.

The movie by filmmaker Martin Scorsese, based on a 1948 novel by Nikos Kazantzakis, was released by Universal Studios and Ceneplex Odeon Films. The fictionalized account of the life of Christ was criticized last year by evangelical leaders, including Larry Braidfoot, general counsel for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

Braidfoot and Southern Baptist Convention President Jerry Vines of Jacksonville, Fla., were among the signers of a statement last October protesting the film and urging a boycott of the home video of Universal's "E.T. -- The Extra-Terrestrial."

Evangelicals who protested "The Last Temptation of Christ" objected to its portrayal of Jesus as an indecisive human being wracked by doubts and moral failures. They also pointed to nudity, explicit sex, violence and a demeaning portrayal of women in the film.

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Southern Baptists respond
to California earthquake

By Marv Knox

N-CO

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NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptists sent workers and money to California less than 24 hours after the Bay Area suffered its second-worst earthquake of the century Oct. 17.

The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board authorized \$10,000 in disaster relief funds and \$50,000 in domestic hunger relief funds to be sent to the California Southern Baptist Convention to aid quake victims.

Eleven volunteers from the Texas Baptist Men organization were headed west with their mobil kitchen and command post, planning to provide hot meals for homeless people and disaster-relief workers.

Members of the Baptist Men organization in Oklahoma were on "alert standby" and were to decide whether to go to California by late afternoon Oct. 18. Their colleagues in Louisiana also were considering making the trip.

Information regarding the extent of injury to Southern Baptists and damage to their churches was difficult to receive, due to weakened and overloaded communication lines.

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But reports from Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, north across the Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco, were good. "All is OK; the seminary is not damaged," said Eddy Oliver, director of public relations at the seminary.

Oliver and Glenn Saul, a professor at the school, both noted electrical power in the area was out for about five hours. Information about seminary students, who live throughout the area and commute to the Marin County campus, was scarce, they said.

A survey of Southern Baptist churches and ministries in the area was sketchy at best, said Mark Wyatt, public relations director for the California convention.

Ralph Gardner, director of missions for Santa Clara Valley Baptist Association, and Bob Rocks, director of missions for Central Coast Baptist Association, could not be contacted, Wyatt reported.

Those associations are located south of San Francisco in the area hardest hit by the quake. Santa Clara Valley Association encompasses San Jose, Cupertino and Palo Alto. It has 52 churches and 17 church-type missions. Central Coast Association encompasses Santa Cruz, Salinas and Hollister and has 28 churches and six church-type missions.

Karl Ortis, director of missions for San Francisco Peninsula Baptist Association was trying to assess damage to the 37 churches and 14 missions in that city the morning after the crisis, Wyatt reported. However, that task also was difficult due to communication problems.

Nineteenth Avenue Baptist Church's sanctuary was damaged, but no one was in the building when the tremors struck, Ortis discovered. The association's offices, located about a block from Golden Gate Park, sustained some damage, but no workers were harmed.

Ortis said he feared some members of San Francisco Baptist churches were on the damaged freeways at the time of the disaster as they headed to the second session of the association's annual meeting that evening in Foster City. About 25-30 people arrived for the event, but they spent a brief time in prayer and cancelled the meeting to return to their homes and churches.

Ortis has asked pastors to open their churches to be used as shelters for people who cannot re-enter their homes and apartments and for commuters stranded by traffic delays.

In Oakland, East Bay Southern Baptist Association's missions director, Larry Fisher, was attempting to visit churches in the city to assess the damage, but damaged streets and freeways were impeding his progress, Wyatt learned. The association has 68 churches and 22 missions.

The associational office, located a few miles from the collapsed 880 freeway, sustained some damage when part of the roof of the two-story building fell in, but the problems were not believed to be severe.

Phyllis Avery, a secretary in the office, was working at the time of the quake, preparing for the association's annual meeting. She described the shock: "It was really bad. The desks and computers started moving. The books and computers started falling off the desks, but the desks moved back and caught them. It was almost like we were in slow motion. It is a disaster area here."

Fisher said Oakland churches may need help with counseling residents traumatized by the earthquake, which had taken at least 271 lives. "We don't know how many were killed," he said. "I don't know what our needs are, but we may need some counseling help for our people here."

The Home Mission Board owns three properties in the area. Only San Francisco First Slavic Baptist Church was damaged significantly, but the extent of damage was not immediately known.

The California convention is keeping contact with the four associations in the area, seeking to allocate resources for aiding churches and earthquake victims, Wyatt reported.

"We're also seeking to support and encourage churches in ministry to their communities," he said.

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Also contributing to this story were Polly House of the BP central office and Mark Wingfield and Jim Newton of the BP Atlanta bureau.

NOTE TO EDITORS: The Baptist group reported to be meeting at the Amfac Hotel was not Southern Baptist.