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Southern trustees have
differing views of action

By Pat Cole

N-CO (Ky.)

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Southern Baptist Theological Seminary trustees voiced differing perspectives on the function of new employment guidelines adopted for seminary faculty.

At a called meeting Sept. 24 on the Louisville, Ky., school's campus, trustees voted 36 to 14 to add the 1987 Southern Baptist Peace Committee report as a guideline for hiring, promoting and granting tenure to seminary faculty.

Several trustees were interviewed following the board's called meeting and two-day retreat.

Trustee Julian Pentecost, editor of the Religious Herald, newsjournal of Baptist General Association of Virginia, said trustees added "another layer" to the Abstract of Principles, the seminary's confessional statement since 1859. He noted that just three years ago trustees voted to add the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message Statement as a guideline for employment of faculty. The Peace Committee report is becoming "more and more a norm for the decision making process in the denomination," he said.

In the "findings" section of the report, the Peace Committee declared that "most Southern Baptists believe" people who say the Bible is true believe that "Adam and Eve were real persons," "named authors did indeed write the biblical books attributed to them," miracles "did indeed occur as supernatural events in history" and "the historical narratives given by biblical authors were indeed accurate and reliable."

Pentecost, chairman of the trustees' academic personnel committee, said he has "not had time to think through" how the committee might deal with the guidelines. Nevertheless, he called the board's decision a "grievous error of judgment" and predicted its "impact will be great."

"I'm sure the provost and the deans will do their very best to honor the history and heritage of the seminary," he said. However, he anticipates a "difficult meeting" in April when the academic personnel committee considers personnel recommendations from the administration.

Trustee John Michael, a Louisville businessman, disagreed with Pentecost's assessment.

"When we say that we are going to hire people who believe and teach according to our confessional statements there has to be some interpretation of what that means," said Michael. "I see the findings and recommendations (of the Peace Committee report) as giving us that guidance and I think that's where the importance is. I don't see that as an additional layer of requirement. I see it giving guidance to interpret what we already have."

The board's action was an attempt to set guidelines for future employment practices "rather than go back and investigate past issues," Michael said. For current faculty, the guidelines will not be an issue unless they become candidates for tenure or a promotion, he said. A possible exception would be if "someone raised an issue or complaint about someone's teaching," he added. "Then just like you would bring up the Abstract of Principles in the discussion you would probably bring that up (the Peace Committee report) as well, but I don't see that as the intent of it."

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The guidelines will prevent faculty members from interpreting the Abstract of Principle's article on inspiration in a "Heinz 57 Variety" of ways, said trustee David Miller, an associational director of missions from Heber Springs, Ark.

"Historically and traditionally the Abstract would certainly mandate" that persons accept the teachings on biblical interpretation contained in the "findings" section of the Peace Committee report, he said.

Neither seminary administrators nor the chairman of the academic personnel committee during last April's trustee meeting knew whether a particular person recommended for personnel action believed in the historicity of Genesis, Miller said. "The bottom line is this: it was not a matter of concern to them." Therefore, he said, trustees felt compelled to "narrow the parameters somewhat."

"The days are gone when staff members can come on at Southern and say in a general sort of way 'I believe in the Abstract' or sign the Abstract and turn around and interpret the article on inspiration as meaning something other than (biblical) inerrancy," said Miller.

However, trustee Jerry Mahan, pastor of First Baptist Church of Cedartown, Ga., said that if inerrancy is the primary concern, trustees could have chosen a wiser path.

"If we want a statement on inerrancy there are many statements (on inerrancy) drawn up by competent theologians which are superior to the Peace Committee report," he said.

Mahan said he opposes using the Peace Committee report's "total lack of theological understanding or sophistication as a guideline in a theological setting."

"I don't believe that people who voted for the creation of the Peace Committee ever thought or had any idea that it would develop a statement of faith or that it would go beyond the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message Statement," he said. "The emphasis, as I recall, of the Peace Committee report was on the recommendations that it presented and now we are going back and treating its findings as theological absolutes."

Mahan also foresees confusion about how to interpret parts of the "findings" section adopted by the trustees. He said when he asked four trustees what the Peace Committee report means when it says "named authors did indeed write the biblical books attributed to them," he "got four different interpretations."

The "motive" of the trustee action was to "provide some type of security" to current faculty, said trustee Wayne Allen, pastor of Briarwood Baptist Church in Cordova, Tenn. "The purpose of the trustees is not to go back to the 80s or whenever to determine the worthiness of faculty and staff."

"We are trying to reflect the theological position of the (Southern Baptist) convention as we understand it and we do not plan to bring in that position (to the seminary) by firing, but by attrition and hiring," explained Allen, first vice chairman and a member of the academic personnel committee.

Some trustees on the board's academic personnel committee, he said, have struggled with how to comply with Recommendation Five of the Peace Committee since Southern's trustees agreed to implement the recommendation in 1988.

Recommendation Five asks that SBC institutions "build their professional staffs and faculties from those who hold such dominant convictions and beliefs held by Southern Baptists at large." Allen claimed the "dominant convictions" of Southern Baptists are more precisely defined in the "findings" section of the Peace Committee report than in the "recommendations" section.

Allen said trustees' use of the word "guideline" in their adoption of the Peace Committee report is "very important." He stressed the Abstract of Principles is still "our constitutional requirement and our contractual requirement."

Trustee David Dykes, pastor of First Baptist Church, Gardendale, Ala., said "the intent of the Peace Committee (report) was not to be punitive in any way to any current faculty member." Instead, he said, the Peace Committee was concerned with additions to the faculty. New faculty members should be "academically qualified but theologically conservative," he said.

Dykes said he would have preferred the trustee action not have dealt with the promotion of existing faculty.

Asked how the trustee action will be implemented, Dykes, a member of the academic personnel committee, said the committee "will have to meet and hammer out exactly what it means."

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Threats, distrust led
to Baylor action

By Toby Druin

N-CO (Baylor)

Baptist Press
10/2/90

DALLAS (BP)--The threat of a "fundamentalist" takeover, real or perceived, and the climate of distrust left by 12 years of controversy in the Southern Baptist Convention prompted the action of Baylor University trustees Sept. 21 to remove the institution from direct control by the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

President Herbert H. Reynolds said that "fundamentalists" now in control of the SBC and its institutions "said early on they were going for the jugular in their attempts to gain control of the denomination and the 'jugular' was the boards of trustees of the agencies and institutions."

"They have done everything they said they would do," he told the Baptist Standard, newsjournal of the BGCT, "and when we hear statements from their leaders and others that they are going to take over the state conventions, including the Texas convention and Baylor University, I have no reason to doubt their sincerity and seriousness."

So instead of sitting back and seeing his institution succumb to "fundamentalist" control such as has happened to the Southern Baptist seminaries, Reynolds said, he chose to act while the university still had a "window of opportunity."

The 48-member Baylor board of trustees, Reynolds said, has had from 8-14 members who "might vote in sympathy with the fundamentalist faction or do their bidding" on certain issues. With 16 trustees to be elected in Houston in November, there was the possibility an alternate slate of trustees could be substituted and "fundamentalists" could have a majority.

"And I felt if didn't happen in Houston, it could happen next year," he said. "These folks (the conservatives) have shown determination, persistence and patience. They said when they announced they were going for the jugular in the Southern Baptist Convention it would take 10 years."

"I felt that based on the evidence of a dozen years they were capable of doing it, so I felt we could not afford to run the risk and lose the opportunity for the foreseeable future to save this institution for Texas Baptists," he added.

Reynolds said he instituted a study of the Baylor charter and the legal ramifications of convention ownership and control in 1988 out of a concern for trustee-university-convention relationship and the threats that were being made to take over the university.

"I was thinking of the future of the institution," he said. "I felt as president that I had a responsibility to examine where we were in regard to the stated intentions."

The research went on for a year and the results were then examined for another year by another legal firm "from every angle," Reynolds said.

Results of the study, he said, showed that Baylor is under the "patronage and general direction of the Baptist General Convention of Texas; the convention has the authority to elect trustees and to either grant or withhold funds; and the trustees of the university ... have the authority to amend or change the articles of incorporation of this institution -- the sole authority to do it."

The constitution of the Baptist General Convention of Texas is not binding on the university, Reynolds said the study revealed.

Reynolds said he left the Southern Baptist Convention in New Orleans with the conviction that what he had witnessed there had not been "baptistic" and that it would continue for a long time.

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Coupled with that was the persistent "word" that now that the "fundamentalists" were in firm control of the SBC, they would turn their attention to the state conventions. In Texas, he said, they were expected to try to take over the state convention through the election process as they had in the SBC and through it control persons appointed to the committee on committees, thus gaining control of who was nominated as trustees of Baylor and other institutions.

History lessons, he said, have taught him not to act on "terms of what someone might do, but what he is capable of doing."

"These people have demonstrated they are capable of producing crucial votes and then seizing control," he said. "Based on the evidence of a dozen years, why run the risk and lose the opportunity to protect the university for the foreseeable future?" he said. The decision to amend the charter and to put distance between the university and "any takeover group" followed.

"We are doing the best we know how to perpetuate the work of this institution and keep it for Texas Baptists," Reynolds insisted, noting a provision of the charter specifies that if the university ever is dissolved the property goes to the BGCT.

"I don't relish having to work in ways that are agonizing," he said. "You don't do something of this magnitude without spending endless hours in prayer. I was born a Texas Baptist, and my heritage and personal history, family and friends are Texas Baptists.

"I have just prayed to God we are doing that which is right and will be good and we as Texas Baptists will be able to maintain our distinctives and not give them up to folks who would make us a different group of people."

Under provisions of the Texas Nonprofit Corporation Act, no notice is required of intent to change the charter, Reynolds said.

No notice was given to anyone outside the board of trustees, because "the fundamentalist forces would have obtained a restraining order or some other injunctive relief and the window of opportunity would be gone for the foreseeable future."

He does not anticipate that the convention will withhold funds from the university, he said. The university has more than 6,000 Baptist students, hundreds of whom are receiving ministry scholarships from the state convention; and its graduates are active in thousands of churches and other work, and the charter still provides for 48 trustees to be named to work with the university, he noted.

"We will provide them (the 48 trustees) with reports, apprise them of our work and ask for suggestions," he said. "They will elect six of their people to serve on the board of regents."

The amended university charter specifies only that the regents be Baptists, but Reynolds said they must be Southern Baptists.

"We are a Texas Baptist institution. We have not sought to distance ourselves from the convention and Texas Baptist people," he said, "only from this takeover group."

Baylor has been engaged in an attempt to increase its endowment, which now is about \$190 million, and the action of the trustees could affect fund-raising, although Reynolds said he expects it to "balance out."

"I think people will feel more confident now," he said. "Some have told us they do not want to provide gifts with the threat of control of this (takeover) group."

Baylor has not been "stolen" from Texas Baptists by the trustees, Reynolds insisted. "It has been saved."

"Some have said this is the act of robber barons or modern-day piracy," he said. "Well, I want to say that over the last dozen years we have been real good students, good learners. The fundamentalists have been good teachers through these years. They have taught us to be proactive instead of reactive."

Reactions vary to news
of Baylor trustees; decision

By Toby Druin

N. CO
(Baylor)

DALLAS (BP)--Surprise, shock, disgust, pleasure and "I told you so" were some of the range of emotions and opinions registered at the decision of Baylor University trustees to change the university charter to end "governance" of the school by the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

And opinions were disparate, too, about how much of a "threat" existed for a takeover of the university by the conservative faction that has gained pre-eminence in the Southern Baptist Convention the last 12 years.

Baylor trustees voted 30 to 7 with one abstention Sept. 21 to change its charter to provide for a board of regents of 24 persons who would have sole governance of the university. The school would continue to relate to Texas Baptists through 48 trustees elected for the university by the convention, but the trustees would have limited responsibilities, electing six of the 24 regents from among the 48 trustees.

The action on the charter was accomplished without notifying the Texas Baptist executive board, which is required by the convention constitution. Baylor officials said the university trustees have sole responsibility to change the charter, regardless of stipulations in the convention constitution.

According to trustees interviewed by the Baptist Standard, newsjournal of the BGCT, rules of procedure were suspended after the trustee meeting was convened in Waco, Sept. 21, and a motion for the charter change to provide for the board of regents was made by W. Dewey Presley, trustee from Dallas. Presley could not be reached for comment.

Several seconds of the motion were offered. Bill Grubbs, trustee from Dallas, offered a substitute motion to reaffirm the university/convention relationship, but it was ruled out of order. He offered it as an amendment later, but it was defeated.

Baylor officials would not reveal who voted for or against the change or which trustees attended the meeting. Mike Bishop, vice president for communications, told the Baptist Standard an "executive decision" had been made to not divulge the names.

The newsjournal was told, however, that William D. Agee of Tyler, Reida R. Stewart of El Paso, Grubbs, Jack Fields of Humble, Donald H. Wills of Dallas, Hal B. Boone of Friendswood and Fred Roach of Richardson were the seven who opposed passage of the change, and Earl B. Patrick had abstained.

Grubbs, still emotional three days after the trustee meeting, said he had expressed his disdain to President Herbert H. Reynolds and to Presley about how they had "engineered this thing."

His concern, he said, was not so much the lack of notice to the convention and trustees, but "the horror of what they were doing. We have a process of involving two million Texas Baptists in decision-making, and while it may be susceptible to politics, it is better than putting it in the hands of 24 persons."

"Something has to be done, and something will," he said, although he added he is not part of any organized effort to try to reverse the decision.

As to the threat of "fundamentalists" attempting to take control of the university, Grubbs said he has wanted to see "conservatives who won't be beholden to the clique that has picked all of the trustees" in recent years elected and wants the school to have a strong, conservative School of Christianity, but to sacrifice nothing academically.

Grubbs said he expects no immediate changes in the university, however, and expects it to retain close ties to Baptists.

Roach said he voted against the motion because he considered it the "most significant thing in Baylor's 145-year history and thought it ought to be something to be considered for more than an hour at a board meeting."

He had a responsibility to help Baylor, but, "I also had a trust relationship back to the group that elected me, the Baptist General Convention of Texas," he added.

The action was a complete surprise since the motion had not been included on printed agendas mailed to the trustees before the meeting, Roach said.

Roach is chairman of the Baylor University Medical Center trustees, a 15-member group chosen from the larger Baylor University trustee body to oversee the medical center. He appointed a committee last week to study the relationship of the Sept. 21 action to the medical center. Members of the committee are Grubbs, Presley, Wills, Oswin Chrisman and George Anson of Dallas. Roach and medical center President Boone Powell Jr. will serve as ex officio members.

Trustee Ron Durham, pastor of Columbus Avenue Baptist Church in Waco, said he voted for the charter change "with the intention of removing Baylor from the political arena in which it had found itself in the last number of years to enable Baylor to pursue its mission of higher education in Christian environment. There was no intention of removing Baylor from Texas Baptist ties, and I am still committed to Baylor being a Baptist university working closely with the Baptist General Convention of Texas."

John A. Wood, trustee and pastor of First Baptist Church in Waco, who voted for the change, said how the changes were effected might be questioned, but the context of the past 12 years in the SBC and the threat the same situation is about to prevail in the BGCT "made it compulsory."

"When somebody warns you, tells you and then threatens you that they are going to rob your house, you would be a fool not to lock the door," he said.

Nevertheless, he added, "Every trustee is committed to Baptist work in Texas and absolutely no trustee is on the side that has any thought of Baylor drifting or moving away from the solid participation in every Baptist program."

Ralph Smith, pastor of Hyde Park Baptist Church in Austin, and a Baylor trustee, did not attend the meeting, but decried the action. "I was absolutely surprised and shocked," he said. "My first reaction was I can't imagine the arrogance of 24 people thinking they can operate Baylor University better than two million Texas Baptists can."

Smith noted that the convention had established a policy in the 1970s for an institution to free itself, if it chose to do so.

The threat of a takeover is "ill-founded fear," he said. "Everybody knows that for the last two or three decades, almost without exception, the Baylor president has named his trustees by going through the committee on committees, which have cooperated. The present trustees were almost all hand-picked and are good trustees."

"Many of us have tried to keep the controversy out of the Texas convention and would do everything we could to keep the Texas convention as it has been," he said.

Gracie Hilton, trustee from Arlington, affirmed the trustee action and said Baylor would remain close to its Baptist roots.

Hilton said the action had to be taken in light of the "threat of a takeover by fundamentalists."

She was the editor of a publication of the Baylor Alumni Association, "Baylor Needs You," mailed in early to mid-September which devoted six pages to warning Baylor alumni of the takeover threat at the state convention in Houston, Nov. 13-14, and urging them to attend and oppose it.

She said in the publication that John Bisagno, pastor of First Baptist Church of Houston, "has vowed to marshal all his forces to bring about a Fundamentalist victory in Houston."

Bisagno denied he has been a part of any meetings planning for the Houston convention or any strategy planning any such "takeover." In a statement to the Baptist Standard, he said, "Not only is the (Baylor alumni) publication's statement totally untrue but state moderate leaders ... will verify that, to the contrary, I have been in conversation with them over the past month in an effort to depoliticize this fall's Texas convention and bring about a harmonious meeting in Houston."

Lee Berg, pastor of West Oaks Baptist Church in Houston, and Charles Wade, pastor of First Baptist Church of Arlington, both of whom have been associated with the moderate cause in the SBC, confirmed to the Baptist Standard they had talked with Bisagno.

Wade said they had talked about the possibility of working out nominations for first and second vice president, but that the level of trust had been so low it couldn't be worked out. Nevertheless, he is interested in continuing the dialogue, he said.

Berg said the meeting with Bisagno was Sept. 10 after the Baylor alumni publication had already gone to press and was in reaction to the stories coming out of New Orleans following the SBC that "We (conservatives) are coming to John's (Bisagno's) town and it would be a different story this year."

Berg said the meeting with Bisagno was to discuss Cooperative Program funding and to try to negotiate vice presidential nominations.

Joel Gregory, pastor of Travis Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth, and who addressed the convention's relationship with Baylor during his final address to the convention in 1989, said he was astonished at the Baylor trustees' action, and considered it unprecedented in the history of the convention.

"For 145 years Baptists have given their children and their sacrificial contributions to Baylor University and it is what it is because of the Baptist General Convention of Texas," he said.

Gregory said he thinks reversal of the action should be sought and legal action taken only as a last resort.

"The best thing would be for them under enormous public pressure to reverse themselves and do the honorable thing, have an open meeting with no hidden agenda and let Texas Baptists decide this."

The "pretext of a fundamentalist takeover is absurd," Gregory said. "No meetings are being held and no plans made."

He "categorically" denied being a part of a reported meeting in New Orleans, along with Bisagno, where a takeover of the Texas convention allegedly was discussed.

"That is an absolute absurdity," he said. "I was not a part of any such discussion and attended no meeting to plan anything. Quite the contrary, John (Bisagno) and I have been working behind the scenes for some remediation."

"But whatever their pretext, it doesn't justify this action," Gregory said. "Baylor is now not accountable to anybody."

Paige Patterson, president of Criswell College, and one of the architects of the conservative movement in the SBC, said he was "deeply disappointed, but under no circumstances surprised" at the Baylor action.

"I hope now that however much some might disagree with what we have done, they will at least see that what we warned about is in fact now happening, that we would eventually lose out institutions if we didn't move to save them."

Patterson denied there have been plans made for a takeover of the Texas convention.

"I do think it has been felt all along that what has happened in the SBC would inevitably shake down to the states," he said, "but even then I don't believe it could be called a 'takeover.'"

He has never been "nearly so worked up over Baylor," anyway, he said. "I haven't been sure Baylor could be salvaged. My principal concern has been the seminaries because those are the places we train pastors."

Alliance directors ponder
relationship with SBC

By Bob Allen

N-BPC

WASHINGTON (BP)--Steering a course they believe leads to an eventual split of the 14.9-million-member Southern Baptist Convention, directors of the Southern Baptist Alliance are recommending action to distance the organization from the conservative-dominated SBC and open doors for ministry relationships outside the nation's largest non-Catholic denomination.

The Alliance was begun four years ago as a haven for moderates unhappy with changes imposed in their denomination by a new generation of more conservative leaders but committed to remaining in the Southern Baptist Convention. The group's board of directors, meeting Sept. 27-28 in Washington, envisioned a post-Southern Baptist Alliance.

The directors voted unanimously to strike from the purpose statement in the SBA constitution a reference to "the continuance of our ministry and mission within the Southern Baptist Convention" and replace the phrase with, "to the expression of our ministry and mission through cooperative relationships with other Baptist bodies and the larger Christian community."

Embodying the change in focus, the directors voted to "affirm procedure and progress toward cooperative ventures in ministry and mission" with the 1.5-million-member American Baptist Churches, U.S.A. They also affirmed intentions to invite similar dialogue with other Baptist groups and voted to set up a task force to invite leaders of the predominantly-black Progressive National Baptist Convention to discuss possible joint ventures with the SBA.

Both the constitutional change and affirmation of relationships outside the SBC will come as recommendations to SBA delegates when they hold their next annual convocation, scheduled March 14-16, 1991, at Grace Baptist Church in Richmond, Va. The directors also pledged to recommend in March a new name for the organization, which would remove reference to Southern Baptists.

The proposals flow from a consultation of "concerned Baptists" held Aug. 23-25 in Atlanta. Though not shared by every stripe of moderate attending the Atlanta meeting, SBA leaders are moving toward a consensus that a fellowship forged at the Atlanta gathering is the first step in an exodus from the SBC by disenchanting moderates.

"The question Daniel Vestal (the defeated candidate for SBC president in 1990 who called the Atlanta meeting) will have to face most frequently is 'Are you becoming a new denomination?'" predicted Stan Hastey, SBA executive director. "Despite all the disclaimers, there is no escaping the fact that what happened in Atlanta may be a precursor to a constitutional convention."

"It appears to me," he said, "the kind of schism we have avoided so long is now inevitable."

"I personally am not going to invest my life in starting another white, regional body in the south," he added. "If Baptists wish to talk about getting together instead of splitting farther -- if that is what God is about in our time -- we must be a part of it."

His office has been "deluged with telephone calls" since the Atlanta consultation, Hastey said. Some Alliance members "invest great hope in the fellowship as a new movement (and that) in time the Alliance should flow into the larger stream." Others, however, caution that principles in the Alliance's seven-point covenant not be bargained away in discussions with fellow moderates who might not share SBA stances such as support for women's ordination, Hastey said.

In other action at the Washington meeting, the directors adopted a resolution reaffirming the Alliance's commitment to the equality of women and men in society and in the church. The resolution came as a recommendation of the board's standing committee on women in the church.

Directors debated semantics at length before adopting their statement affirming dialogue with American Baptist Churches representatives. The discussions have been underway since February 1987 and have yielded particular progress in the areas of curriculum development and support for international ministries.

Among recommendations for next March's convocation is a \$60,000 challenge offering above and beyond a 1991 global missions offering basic goal of \$55,000, to place a Southern Baptist couple on a mission field outside the United States through the appointment process of the American Baptist Churches.

Hastey alleged that prospective missionaries face greater scrutiny of their theological positions in the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board appointment process now than in earlier years. As a result, he said, some qualified candidates are being rejected and many other are deterred from seeking appointment for fear of being found unacceptable.

The proposed changes in the SBA's purpose statement and name are both an attempt to distance the organization from the conservative-controlled SBC and to flesh out its commitment to ecumenism stated in the covenant portion of the SBA constitution and bylaws.

The margin of conservatives' victories made the 1990 SBC in New Orleans, "a watershed convention which changed the whole perspective of the SBC for the membership of the SBA," he said.

"On the positive side, this frees us to support fully new ventures -- cooperative ventures -- that have nothing to do with the SBC."

In other action, SBA directors heard a report that a candidate for president of the Alliance-sponsored Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond had been presented to and elected by trustees, but subsequently decided not to accept the position.

"This is a terrible setback to us, being very human and subject to disappointment," said Anne Thomas Neil of Wake Forest, N.C., a member of the presidential search committee. "I still believe in this vision and I believe it will come to pass. Surely if it is under God, this seminary is to be. There is someone out there we may not have even looked at."

They also adopted a resolution expressing "support for all faculty, staff and students in Southern Baptist seminaries who are seeking to pursue the truth of God with integrity during these difficult days for Southern Baptists."

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Cowtown taking stock of
Southwestern students

By Chip Alford

N-CO
(SWBTS)

Baptist Press
10/2/90

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Many visitors to Fort Worth's historic Stockyards are finding that more than just the West begins there.

Thanks to two students from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, many visitors to Fort Worth are finding that new life can begin in the Stockyards.

Jack Corcoran and Johnny Bynum, associate of divinity students, began New Foundation Ministries earlier this year with the goal of reaching out to the lost and needy in the Stockyards.

"We both strongly feel the need to take the gospel to the streets," said Bynum, who visits the Stockyards every weekend with Corcoran and other students. "But witnessing is so much more than sharing the Roman Road. These people need to see lifestyle evangelism."

With its rodeo and Western stops, hotels and honkey-tonks, the Stockyards is one of Fort Worth's most popular tourist areas, drawing crowds in the hundreds and sometimes thousands each weekend. But Corcoran said the area is also a haven for alcoholics, streetpeople and bar-hopping young adults.

"During the months we've been going there we've had the opportunity to share the gospel with drunks, prostitutes, businessmen, and tourists, and we've prayed with winos, cowboys, and teenage girls," he said. "We don't force ourselves on anybody; we just hand out our gospel tracts and talk with those who are willing to listen."

The two also try to meet the physical needs of those they can, especially alcoholics who want to sober up. "We are learning how to network, to get the people who need help in touch with those that can help them," Bynum said.

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To minister more effectively in the area, the students plan to establish a church in the heart of the Stockyards. They already have found a suitable building and a sponsoring church, but lack the necessary funds to begin the ministry. An occupancy fee of \$800 is required, along with monthly rent of \$400, so the two men are in the process of securing financial support.

"But we're looking for more than money. We need people to help with the ministry," Bynum explained. "The potential for evangelism in the area is practically untapped. We know there are more people who would like to get involved, but feel they don't know how."

To help bridge the gap, the students plan to offer training courses in street evangelism at the church in addition to worship services, Bible studies, music concerts and other special events.

Bynum knows first-hand the importance of street evangelism. A heavy drinker from age 14 to his early 30s, he accepted Christ and turned his life around after receiving a gospel tract. He is a printer by trade, so he began printing and distributing tracts shortly after his conversion. His passion for evangelism hasn't waned.

"New Foundation Ministries is just the beginning," Corcoran explained. "We will strive to teach people how to lay a new foundation with Jesus Christ."

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Southwestern Seminary

David Keith on chorus with
Southwestern's oratorio singers

By Pam Alewine

F-60
(SWBTS)

Baptist Press
10/2/90

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Lying on the shoulder of a Houston freeway last December, Caruthersville, Mo., native David Keith wondered if his dreams had crashed along with the car he had been in.

Keith, who was a passenger in the car when it was hit by an out-of-control truck, was unable to move his arms. For a music professor who teaches conducting, paralysis can be as bad as death.

But after weeks in a Houston hospital, surgery and nearly three months of recuperation, David Keith is back in full motion.

Keith, a 1971 graduate of William Jewell College, attributes his recuperation to God and his second life-long love -- athletics.

From beating former Olympic gold-medal winner Bruce Jenner in the shotput while at William Jewell, to riding his bicycle 100 miles, the associate professor of church music at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, has combined sports and music to balance his life.

It was as a college athlete on scholarship at William Jewell that Keith had to decide between sports and music, and being gifted in both fields made it difficult.

"While I was at William Jewell, I really felt like God wanted me to do music full-time," Keith said. So as a sophomore football player and track and field standout, Keith put sports second to music.

Keith has taught at Southwestern for 11 years and will take on leadership of the 200-voice oratorio chorus this fall, after the retirement of Robert Burton.

As with sports, Keith started early in music.

In his hometown of Caruthersville, "there was little to do except sports, church and family," he said. Keith lived next to the First Baptist Church.

He joined the church choir as a young boy, realizing that "it was the easiest way not to get into trouble during church." As a sophomore in high school, Keith became the church organist.

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In sports, Keith won the Missouri state shotput title and was an all-state football player. He was offered a scholarship to the University of Tennessee, but chose William Jewell because he could play sports and be in music. But to excel and to fulfill what God wanted for him, Keith knew he had to devote all his time to music.

"Music was always the most important thing," he said. Since early childhood Keith could play the piano by ear, and supplemented his talent by taking piano and trumpet lessons.

"I feel like my real gift is teaching," Keith said. In his years of teaching at Southwestern and during his four years as director of choral activities at Howard Payne University, he found that "in a school you can also be a minister of music," by teaching students to be the best musicians and ministers.

"I'm beginning to try to become my own best critic," Keith said, which is what he tries to teach his choirs too.

Keith's talent for sports has helped him throughout his ministry and taught him things about his life, he said. Keith works out everyday -- running, swimming or bike riding. Even when he takes choirs on tour he jogs before a performance, seeing it as an opportunity for refreshment.

"I find that there's a great correlation between sports and music. Both require a great amount of discipline," he said. Keith said some people told him he wouldn't make it as a musician because it required too much discipline. But he saw the need for discipline in his career, in sports and in his Christian life and strives to teach that to his students.

"There are enough mediocre people around without Christians contributing to it," he said. "I'm going to demand that you rise above the level of your ability. I want the best of a student's ability."

At Southwestern, Keith said his greatest joy is working with students who have a purpose. Whether that purpose is to be a minister of music or a pastor, he strives to show them what music can mean to a congregation in worship.

"What we learn through music is very often theology. When you're involved in congregational singing, you're involved in putting something into your life," he said.

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