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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE
SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #75
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-235**BUREAUS**

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 898-7522

DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 333 N. Washington, Dallas, Texas. 75246-1798, Telephone (214) 828-5100

NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37203, Telephone (615) 251-2300

RICHMOND (Foreign) Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va., 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151

**SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
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91-66

Four professors
leave Southern

By Pat Cole

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Four professors at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary have announced plans to leave Southern to assume teaching duties at other schools.

Professors who will be vacating positions at the Louisville, Ky., seminary are:

-- R. Alan Culpepper, James Buchanan Harrison professor of New Testament interpretation, who will teach at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. Culpepper will be a visiting professor during the 1991-92 academic year and will become a full member of the Baylor faculty the following year. He has been a member of Southern's faculty since 1974.

-- Andrew D. Lester, professor of psychology of religion, who will join the faculty of Brite Divinity School at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas. He joined Southern's faculty in 1977.

-- Harry Lee (Hal) Poe, assistant professor of evangelism since 1988, who has been named associate professor of evangelism and associate dean for academic affairs at Bethel Theological Seminary, a Baptist General Conference supported school in St. Paul, Minn.

-- Karen Smith, assistant professor of church history since 1987, who will join the faculty of South Wales Baptist College and the University of Wales, both in Cardiff.

Lester and Smith said their decisions to resign were based primarily on the ongoing controversy in the Southern Baptist Convention and its subsequent impact on the seminary. Both expressed concern the seminary would become too rigidly conservative.

Culpepper, who is associate dean of Southern's School of Theology, said concern over the conservative direction of the seminary played a part in his decision to leave. In addition, he said his position at Baylor will allow him an opportunity to move away from administrative duties and concentrate more on teaching, research and writing. An attractive salary and benefit package was another factor in his decision, he added, noting Southern professors have been granted minimal salary increases in recent years.

Culpepper was granted a two-year leave of absence by Southern.

Poe said his decision to resign was based on a strong sense of call to Bethel and the ministry opportunities available there. His loyalty to the SBC and the seminary made his decision to leave in the midst of controversy difficult, he said.

Theology Dean Larry McSwain said he regrets the seminary is losing the four professors whom he described as persons of "exceptional quality" who have made "superb contributions." Nevertheless, McSwain predicted the seminary will not experience an upheaval in its academic program.

"The number of people who are leaving is not unusual given the typical cycle" of professors coming and going, he said. He also pointed out the seminary has been adding faculty members with "outstanding" qualifications.

"We anticipate maintaining the same degree of excellence," said McSwain.

SEBTS faculty vote
to affirm articles

By Herb Hollinger

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary faculty has voted to affirm the school's articles of faith, prompting seminary President Lewis A. Drummond to classify it as a "first positive move"

In a related matter, a joint meeting of incoming and outgoing officers of Southeastern's student council deadlocked on a motion to support the faculty statement.

The faculty adopted, without dissent, a "Statement of Continuing Commitment and Cooperation" which affirms practices and positions the faculty has made through the years, according to Fred Grissom, president of the school's chapter of the American Association of University Professors.

"This is seen as a first positive move on the part of the faculty in addressing some of the important issues of the seminary in its relationship to the Southern Baptist Convention and the seminary constituencies," said Drummond in response to the statement signed April 17.

Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty L. Russ Bush agreed but said other important steps still need to be taken.

"I want to affirm the faculty for its initiative. Confidence is a fragile commodity ... I hope we will be able to point to this faculty action as the early rays of a new day at Southeastern," said Bush.

The faculty's statement was a response to the concerns Drummond expressed to the seminary's trustees in March about the theological integrity of the seminary.

The student motion was proposed by David Mansberger, outgoing council president, but the vote was 12-12 which killed the motion.

"The intent of the proposal was to give the faculty affirmation that we love them and care about them. We felt their personal integrity had been attacked, even though their theology was the thing in question, because I don't think you can separate your theology and your person," said Mansberger.

David Smith, incoming president, voted against the motion.

"It's my belief the faculty's intentions were good. I want the opportunity to affirm the faculty in our own time and in our own ways. I think one-on-one has much more effect than just a blanket, overall statement."

"I voted against the motion because I felt it would be seen as a politically motivated statement," said Hale Henderson, vice president of the outgoing council. "I could not support the faculty statement because I believe there is question of theological integrity among some members of the faculty."

The faculty statement contained seven points: an affirmation of "our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ...;" scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by the inspiration of God; "our loyalty to the churches of which we are members...;" "our historic relationship to the Southern Baptist Convention;" the statement of purpose of Southeastern seminary; the Articles of Faith of the seminary; and the "criteria of accreditation of the Association of Theological Schools and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools."

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Two physicians help SBC
Atlanta first aid center

Baptist Press
4/30/91

ATLANTA (BP)--Two physicians from the Georgia Baptist Medical Center will operate the first aid center when Southern Baptists convene in June for their annual meeting.

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Their advice for convention attenders: do some pre-trip planning.

David Baxter and David Anders will co-direct the center as they did when the annual meeting was held in Atlanta in 1986. Both are board certified specialists in internal medicine and both are associate program directors for the residency training program at GBMC.

"When we worked with the SBC (in 1986) we saw many of the same problems over and over," said Baxter. "Just a little bit of pre-trip planning would have made for a much more pleasant visit for quite a number of people we treated that week," said Anders.

Their advice:

-- If you have a known physical condition, make certain you bring an adequate supply of your prescription medications.

-- Check with your local physician before leaving home to see if you should take any medical information with you to Atlanta.

-- Anticipate the significant amount of walking required for a convention. Make sure your shoes are comfortable enough for walking the distances from hotel to convention center to restaurant.

-- By its nature, the convention is a very busy time. Don't forget to take care of the basics of good health care: adequate rest and proper food.

-- When planning for the convention don't forget to pack a small medicine kit with things you're most like to need: aspirin, Band-Aids, antacids and decongestants are a few.

-- Atlanta can be very hot and humid, even in early June. Plan to be able to dress accordingly.

-- Finally, don't forget to wear your seatbelt if driving to and from the convention.

Convention officials also reminded Southern Baptists that Delta Air Lines has special convention rates to and from Atlanta. The fares are five percent discount off any published fare (with some exceptions), and a 45 percent discount off the unrestricted coach fare (seven days advance reservations and ticketing required).

To take advantage of the discounts call World Class Travel, Inc., at 1-800-237-0434, 8:30-5:30, Monday through Friday, Central Time Zone. Refer to File Number D0569.

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Poll shows most Americans
don't know extent of abortion

By Tom Strode

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WASHINGTON (BP)--About 90 percent of Americans do not understand the extent to which abortion is legal in the United States, according to the results of a Gallup poll recently announced.

The survey, commissioned by Americans United for Life, found only 11 percent of those interviewed knew abortion is permitted for any reason at any stage of pregnancy.

The survey also revealed Americans by a vast majority oppose abortion for reasons other than the life and health of the mother, rape, incest and fetal deformity, even during the first three months of pregnancy.

The results of the Abortion and Moral Beliefs Survey were announced by AUL, which is recognized as the legal arm of the pro-life movement, Feb. 28 in Washington. It was described by AUL as "the most comprehensive and ambitious study of American public opinion on abortion ever released to the general public."

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"After 18 years, Americans are still ignorant of the full extent of the abortion policy decreed in Roe v. Wade, yet they oppose central tenets and claims of that policy," said Laurie Ramsey, AUL's vice president for public affairs. "The vast majority of Americans are opposed to 95 percent of the 1.6 million abortions done each year."

"In many cases, it appears that people who consider themselves 'pro-choice' simply don't know what they're supporting," said Victor Rosenblum, law professor at Northwestern University and vice chairman of AUL.

Ramsey said the survey's results show Americans, "when properly informed and wisely led, will reject Roe and protect the unborn and empower mothers to make the choice of childbirth."

In the Roe v. Wade decision of 1973, the Supreme Court legalized abortion on demand throughout pregnancy.

Two Southern Baptist agency officials who deal with the abortion issue said the survey findings were not surprising to them.

"These results confirm my experience with Americans in that they reveal Americans to be far more innately pro-life than they are commonly supposed to be," said Richard D. Land, executive director of the Christian Life Commission. "I'm particularly encouraged that my perception that most Americans don't really understand the extent of abortion on demand's legality is accurate. Also, they are far more supportive of restrictive legislation than they are commonly held to be."

"My experience of Southern Baptists is that they are emphatically more pro-life than the general population. It is safe to assume that their responses would be far more pro-life than even these encouraging responses are for the population as a whole."

Sylvia Boothe, coordinator of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's alternatives to abortion ministries, said the results were in line with her "actual experience with people, inside and outside the church." Southern Baptists would be even more pro-life if they realized the extent of abortion, she said. Boothe said she believes a lower percentage of Southern Baptists than Americans as a whole understand current abortion policy.

"I think we in Southern Baptist life have been convinced that our place is in the church and not to deal with life issues outside of the church, ... we believe that and I think in many cases have chosen to remain ignorant on certain policies, and I think abortion is one of them," she said.

At least 66 percent of respondents in the survey found the following reasons for an abortion unacceptable during the first trimester:

- Tests reveal the baby is not the sex the couple wants (91 percent opposed);
- Use of abortion as a repeated means of birth control (88 percent opposed);
- Unplanned pregnancy that would interrupt a woman's career (77 percent opposed);
- Woman has been abandoned by father of baby (68 percent opposed);
- Another baby would create heavy financial burden (66 percent opposed);
- Pregnant teenager would have to drop out of school (66 percent opposed).

Approval for abortion in such cases shrinks in about half after the first trimester, the survey shows.

Vast majorities of Americans "mostly favor" the following legislative prohibitions or regulations on abortions:

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- 86 percent support requiring women to receive information on the unborn child's development and alternatives to abortion before undergoing one;
- 84 percent approve of health and safety standards for private abortion clinics;
- 73 percent favor a ban on abortion after the third month of pregnancy unless it is necessary to save the mother's life;
- 69 percent support the necessity of parental consent before a girl under 18 can obtain an abortion.

Ramsey said the survey reveals it is the "conviction of the American public that (abortion) is wrong. What is missing is an equal conviction that this must be brought to an end." The pro-life movement needs to find "radically different," yet "rational" methods of educating a society ill-informed on the extent of abortion, she said.

"I think the church is just as uninformed and misinformed as the rest of the American public," Ramsey said.

Other significant findings of the survey are:

- 77 percent of respondents believe abortion is at least the taking of a human life;
- 50 percent believe at conception an unborn child's right to live surpasses the woman's right to choose;
- 16 percent of "strongly pro-life" voters and 9 percent of "strongly pro-choice" voters would refuse to vote for a candidate with whom they disagree on abortion but with whom they otherwise mostly agree;
- 62 percent agree teenagers should have access to birth-control methods even if their parents do not approve;
- 69 percent believe there are few moral absolutes.

The survey was based on in-person interviews with 2,174 adults of voting age by the Gallup Organization in May 1990.

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Religious educators must be
interpreters, Baptist historians told By Carol Woodfin

Baptist Press
4/30/91

NASHVILLE (BP)--The tradition of faith received from the past must always be interpreted when making it known in the present, a religious educator told Baptist historians and educators attending a historical conference on "Religious Education in Southern Baptist Churches."

A movement from the past to the present is not a simple, linear process in which the formulations of belief are passed on intact and unchanged, said Mancil Ezell, addressing the joint meeting of the Southern Baptist Historical Society and Southern Baptist Historical Commission in Nashville, April 23-24, reminded participants. "Such a movement is a complex, life-imbued process in which the "tradition of faith always creates its impressions on those who live it."

Ezell, director, church media library department of the Baptist Sunday School Board, spoke on "Models of Religious Education: Presenting the Old Time Religion to the Video Generation." He warned against using audio-visual and related materials without considering their appropriateness for specific needs. While instructional media can be of great help in presenting information and facilitating learning, they cannot be a substitute for religious education. "We must remember that the Southern Baptist church is in the people business, not the technology business."

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John D. Hendrix, Basil Manly Jr. professor of Christian education Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., advocated a return to a "primitive curriculum" in religious education. "A primitive curriculum is stripped of all the clothing we drape around ourselves to keep us from seeing and hearing, listening and speaking. ... It is experience Primitive curriculum requires the safe discovery or return of one's own voice," he said.

Tracing the development of plans for learning through several cycles in history, Hendrix reminded listeners of the parable of the sower in Mark 4. "The seeds that we sow randomly and everywhere are very small compared with what they will eventually produce."

Other speakers examined teaching and training leaders in the local church and the role of the minister of education in Southern Baptist life.

William B. Rogers dean of the School of Christian Education at Southern Seminary, evaluated biblical and historical images and models of teaching. In the period 1945 to 1975 selected program goals of the Baptist Sunday School Board often fell short of good teaching, tending towards "ecclesiastical claustrophobia" and "educational isolation," he said. Structures failed to free persons, claimed Rogers. "Too often we worship at the feet of the gods of efficiency and productivity. The tendency to ask persons to serve organizations, rather than the other way around, is much too prevalent."

Relatively few church members really want to be trained, claimed Lucien E. Coleman Jr., "because training is preparation for involvement, and involvement can be costly." Coleman, professor of adult education at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, addressed the gathering on "Training Leaders in the Local Church." Training has been important among Southern Baptists, he said, due to "a deeply held belief in the ministry of the laity."

Training has been carried out through Baptist young people's union (BYPU), Baptist training union, church training, and now, discipleship training. But in what Coleman termed "a cornucopia of training agencies and activities, even the stout-hearted can grow faint. ... More is not always better," he concluded.

While the minister of education has roots that extend to the time of Jesus, as a distinct vocational calling the profession is a 20th century development, observed Bruce P. Powers, professor of Christian education at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. Emerging out of the Sunday school movement and advances in secular education, the role of the minister of education has fluctuated between that of Jack or Jill of all trades and vocational, ordained minister.

The professional status of the Southern Baptist minister of education has increased significantly since the 1960s, Powers noted. The profession is now at a crossroads. The appeal to return to tried and proved methods must be coupled with a "reclaiming of the teaching ministry of the total congregation."

A four-member panel challenged participants to consider "Contemporary Issues and Answers in Religious Education." These include the influence of non-Southern Baptists, non-resident members, enlisting of leadership, growing diversity, and declining participation in discipleship training and youth programs.

"The Southern Baptist Convention is the most integrated Protestant denomination in the world," said Peter Kung, manager of the language/new work section of the special ministries department at the Sunday School Board. Yet denominational structures remain insensitive to this ethnic presence.

"Ethnics become mission objects rather than mission partners," noted Kung. He urged a greater acceptance of ethnics as church and denominational leaders and an emphasis on better training of persons for teaching in different cultural environments. "We must allow contextualization and adaptations," said Kung.

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