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Texas Baptists reject defunding  
of Baylor, BJC; re-elect Maples

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press  
11/11/92

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas (BP)--Messengers to the Baptist General Convention of Texas decisively rejected attempts to defund Baylor University and the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and overwhelmingly adopted a \$63.5 million basic Cooperative Program unified budget for 1993.

The 107th annual BGCT, which drew more than 6,200 registered messengers to the Bayfront Plaza Convention Center in Corpus Christi, also re-elected Dick Maples, pastor of First Baptist Church of Bryan, to a traditional, second one-year term as convention president.

Billy Sluder, pastor of First Baptist Church of Cotulla, Texas, introduced the motion to amend the budget to delete the \$4 million Cooperative Program allocation for Baylor University and divide the funds equally among the other seven Texas Baptist universities.

"For more than 100 years, nobody doubted that Texas Baptists had enough sense to own and operate Baylor University," Sluder said. "Then, all of a sudden last year, it's assumed that we don't have enough sense to operate it. That bothers me. I don't think that Cooperative Program funds should go to support Baylor University."

On Sept. 21, 1990, the Baylor board of trustees voted to change the university's charter to create a virtually self-perpetuating governing board of regents. Previously, the university had been governed by a 48-member board of trustees elected by the BGCT.

At the 1991 BGCT meeting in Waco, Texas, a record 11,159 messengers approved a new relationship between the convention and Baylor in which the BGCT elects 25 percent of each class of Baylor's governing board and Baylor elects the remaining 75 percent, giving "due and careful consideration to the suggestions of the BGCT."

Speakers opposing the amendment cited the number of Baylor students preparing for Christian ministry and the university's contributions to Texas Baptist and Southern Baptist life. Supporters of Baylor defunding cited the decreased BGCT representation on the university's governing board.

Ted Tedder of Thousand Oaks Baptist Church of San Antonio, introduced the motion to delete from the budget the \$63,000 allocation for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, the Washington-based, religious liberty watchdog organization.

The BJC was defunded in recent years by the Southern Baptist Convention, and the religious liberty and church-state affairs assignment was transferred to the Christian Life Commission. SBC leaders of the past decade were critical of the BJC position opposing state-sanctioned prayers in public schools and vouchers for parochial schools.

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Speakers for and against the motion to defund the BJC centered their arguments on whether they felt adequately represented in Washington by the CLC.

"I'm among those Baptists who no longer feel represented by the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission," said Bill Bruster, pastor of First Baptist Church of Abilene, Texas. "But I believe there is room enough in Baptist life for all of us."

The 1993 Cooperative Program budget includes a basic operating goal of \$63.5 million and an additional \$5.3 million challenge goal. It represents no increase over the previous year.

The budget allocates 63.35 percent for Texas causes, including more than \$8 million (12.67 percent) for the state missions commission with its programs of evangelism, church extension, missions and Sunday school/discipleship. Other Texas causes include support for eight universities, seven hospitals and homes for children and the elderly in multiple locations throughout the state.

The budget also directs more than \$23 million (36.65 percent, the same division as last year) to worldwide Southern Baptist causes, including support for home and foreign missionaries, six seminaries, the Radio and Television Commission and other entities.

Maples, newly re-elected president of the 2.5 million-member Texas Baptist convention, told reporters at his post-election news conference he would be inclusive in his appointments and "reach out to all Baptists."

Maples, who had been endorsed both by the Baylor Alumni Association and the moderate Texas Baptists Committed organization, promised to be "a bridge to bring Baptist people together" in his second one-year presidential term.

"Texas Baptists are a family," Maples insisted. While acknowledging there are deep differences of opinion within Texas Baptist ranks on some issues -- including continuing funding for Baylor University -- he said there is "no breach that cannot be bridged."

BGCT presidents traditionally are granted a second term without opposition, and Maples said he was "surprised" when it was announced San Antonio evangelist Rudy Hernandez was allowing himself to be nominated. Maples won his second term by a 4,326-1,572 vote.

However, Maples insisted the decision by Hernandez -- who was backed by the Texas Baptist Conservative Fellowship -- was "perfectly all right" and would not effect their longstanding friendship.

Asked if he supported a recently announced plan by Southern Baptist Convention President Ed Young to name committees to study and seek solutions to areas of disagreement within the SBC, Maples said he considered it a "step to healing" he applauded.

When pressed, Maples added Young, pastor of Houston's Second Baptist Church, could begin the healing by being inclusive in his own presidential appointments.

Sam Medina, attorney and bivocational pastor of Alliance Baptist Church of Lubbock, Texas, was elected first vice president by a 3,160-1,523 vote over Sandy Sandlin, pastor of First Baptist Church of Beaumont, Texas.

In the race for second vice president, messengers elected Bill Blackburn, pastor of Trinity Baptist Church of Kerrville, Texas, by a 3,341-1,493 vote over Charles Clary, pastor of Tate Springs Baptist Church of Arlington, Texas.

Medina and Blackburn had been endorsed by the Baylor Alumni Association and Texas Baptists Committed. Sandlin and Clary had been supported by the Texas Baptist Conservative Fellowship.

Messengers rejected proposed constitutional changes regarding a \$50,000 salary cap for new convention employees and a prohibition on persons from churches significantly contributing to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship serving on state convention boards.

Extended debate followed the motion by Watson Franks of Lakewood Baptist Church of Zavalla to amend Article VII, Sec. 4 of the BGCT Constitution to instate the salary cap. The proposed cap would not have included benefits such as insurance, annuity or Social Security and would have included a yearly cost of living adjustment. Salaries in Christian service should be determined "according to needs, not degrees, worth or value," Franks said.

B.F. Risinger Jr., pastor of First Baptist Church of Corsicana, chairman of the BGCT administrative committee, pointed out the convention's executive board employee salary structure has been studied extensively.

Studies have determined salaries are "in line" with other nonprofit organizations and churches, and salary increases at the BGCT have ranked third from bottom among other state Baptist conventions, Risinger said.

Messengers also rejected a motion by Billy C. Collins, pastor of Hurlwood Baptist Church of Lubbock, that no one be appointed to any BGCT board "if they are from a church which gives more than 75 percent of their money to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship."

The original motion by Collins said, "The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship draws large sums of money away from our institutions."

John Leland Berg, pastor of West Oaks Baptist Church of Houston, spoke against the motion, saying it would create a connectionalism between the national Southern Baptist Convention, the state convention, regional associations and local churches. Such a connectionalism would violate local church autonomy and Baptist polity, Berg said.

Texas Baptists voiced support for abstinence-based, age-appropriate sex education in schools and called on Congress to pass the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. Messengers approved resolutions on teen pregnancy, sexual values and religious liberty.

A resolution on sexual values noted homosexuality, adultery, incest and pornographic activity are "distortions" of the biblical sexual ethic of fidelity in marriage and abstinence outside of marriage.

The media "frequently conveys sexual values which are contrary to healthy human sexuality," and legislative attempts to pass nondiscrimination laws "threaten to promote inappropriate sexual behavior," according to the resolution.

In part, the resolution urges Christians "to promote biblical sexual values through involvement in the community, participation in the political process, and other effective methods such as letter-writing and sponsor boycotts."

Churches should take the lead in teaching biblical sexual values to children through preaching, education and other programs, according to the resolutions.

BGCT messengers strongly affirmed the Religious Freedom Restoration Act which could restore the requirement that government must have a "compelling interest" -- not just a "reasonable" interest -- before it could interfere with religious practice.

The 1993 BGCT is scheduled for Oct. 26-27 at the Dallas Convention Center. However, final determination concerning dates and format of the meeting will be decided by the BGCT executive board at its Dec. 8 meeting.

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Hawaii Baptists begin 50th year,  
hear words of thanks from Kauai

Baptist Press  
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PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii (BP)--Hawaii Baptists launched their 50th anniversary year and received thanks from the mayor of Hurricane Iniki-ravaged Kauai during their annual meeting Nov. 5-7.

The convention was organized July 16, 1943, with 24 messengers representing five churches on two islands. Now the convention encompasses 100 congregations.

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JoAnn Yukimura, mayor of Kauai, addressed the convention to express appreciation for the work of 250-plus Hawaii Baptist volunteers and others from Southern Baptist state disaster relief units in mass feeding operations on Kauai following Hurricane Iniki.

More than 250,000 meals were served by the volunteers from Sept. 15 through Nov. 5.

Yukimura recounted she and other emergency officials were in the emergency operations center in the courthouse basement in Kauai after the hurricane, wondering how to feed people sheltered in the civic center, when word arrived that Baptists were coming with a field kitchen.

The convention, which drew 262 messengers, was to have met at the Kauai Hilton but because of ongoing emergency conditions on the island the site was changed to First Southern Baptist Church of Pearl Harbor. The 1993 annual meeting will be in Kauai Nov. 11-13 at a yet-to-be-determined site.

In launching their 50th year under the banner "Iupile Papekiko Hawaii" (Hawaii Baptist Jubilee), messengers heard recollections by Sue Nishikawa, who attended the first convention meeting. Nishikawa, now retired after longtime work as Hawaii Woman's Missionary Union director, is a member of Waikiki Baptist Church.

Also, readings from the first convention's minutes of significant actions and names of churches represented were presented by David and Betty Petherbridge. She is the daughter of the convention's first executive director, Victor Koon, who led the state's Baptists from 1949-58. The Petherbridges are members of University Avenue Baptist Church in Honolulu.

Messengers adopted a 1993 budget of nearly \$2.4 million, an increase of 5 percent over the 1992 budget.

The new budget increases Hawaii Baptists' support of international and national missions and ministries funded by Southern Baptists' Cooperative Program to 30.2 percent of the budget, up .65 percent over the current year.

Elected by acclamation were new convention officers: president, Paul Oyer, lay member of Honolulu's Olivet Baptist Church; first vice president, Katsuro Taura, retired director of church development for the state convention and member of Honolulu's Wai'alae Baptist Church; and second vice president, Lefanoga "Ray" Viliamu, pastor of Makakilo Baptist Church in Makakilo. Henrilyn Akima, member of Honolulu's Komolani Baptist Church, was re-elected recording secretary.

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O.W. Efurd and Art Toalston contributed to this report.

Teen-agers blinded to dangers  
of promiscuous sex, author says

By Chip Alford

Baptist Press  
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NASHVILLE (BP)--Every 13 minutes, someone, somewhere contracts HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

The deadly disease already has claimed 140,000 lives and is expected to kill more people in the next two years than during the last 10.

So, how can teen-agers -- armed with these types of statistics and the knowledge that AIDS is transmitted primarily through sexual contact -- surrender time after time to involvement in premarital sex?

"They are really just blinded," explained Southern Baptist evangelist Rodney Gage. "Many have a void in their lives because their desire for intimacy has not been met. And Satan has lied to them and told them (sexually promiscuous behavior) is the way to find love and fill that void."

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Gage, whose father Freddie Gage also is a well-known evangelist, has spoken to more than 1 million students in public and private schools across the country. Though his "Wise Up" school assembly program mainly focuses on the hazards of drinking and driving, he also takes time to talk with teens one-on-one about a number of contemporary issues.

"I became overwhelmed by the number of students who came up to talk with me about their problems," Gage said. "(They would talk about) the guilt and shame that they felt. And all too often it was because of sexual sin."

After finding there was little written about sexuality and AIDS from a Christian perspective, Gage decided to research the subject for several months and put his findings in book form. The result is "Let's Talk About AIDS and Sex," released in October by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's Broadman Press.

"Young people out there are confused because they are getting so many mixed messages," Gage said. "They may be hearing one thing at church or from their parents, but then the media is telling them something entirely different.

"I wanted to get the message out about what God says about AIDS and sex, what the Bible says about it, and to let young people know Jesus Christ is the ultimate answer to their problems."

Gage claims a lack of education about AIDS and sexuality isn't the problem.

"The problem is they're getting the wrong kind of education. They are hearing that premarital sex is OK as long as it's 'safe sex.' But there is no safe sex," he said, adding condom usage cannot always prevent the spread of the HIV virus.

Backing up his claim, Gage includes in his book comments from health experts like Theresa Crenshaw, a physician who served on the President's Commission on AIDS. Crenshaw said: "Saying that the use of condoms is safe sex is in fact playing Russian roulette. A lot of people will die in this dangerous game."

"Even (professional basketball star who announced earlier this year he is HIV-positive) Magic Johnson has started telling kids 'no sex is the safest sex,'" Gage added.

But the "abstinence" message can be a hard sell to young people, Gage admitted, especially since they are living in a country he described as "obsessed with sex."

On a recent visit to a convenience store, Gage said he noticed every magazine displayed on the shelves had a sexually suggestive picture on its cover or some headline about an article on sex to draw readers inside.

"I am personally appalled by what I see and hear on TV and in magazines," he said. "Sex is being used to sell all kinds of products and programs."

The media also is promoting the belief that sex outside of marriage is morally acceptable, Gage said.

"The average young person will watch about 10,000 sexual scenes on TV in one year," he said. "Of those, more than 80 percent will take place between people who are not married to each other."

He also cited a "TV Guide" story that reported 34 million people watch the music video television channel, MTV, every week.

"MTV is always taking things about as far as they can go. It's garbage and trash and young people can become enslaved to this kind of thing. They've heard it and seen it for so long they've become desensitized to it."

While young people may be hearing about the dangers of AIDS, Gage said many are not aware of the different types of consequences that can result from involvement in premarital sex.

"There are the physical consequences, such as the possibility of contracting AIDS and teen-age pregnancy, but there are other consequences, too.

"First of all, there are spiritual consequences. God says sex outside of marriage is wrong and when we disobey him it harms our relationship with him. 1 Corinthians 6:19 tells us that the sexually immoral will not inherit the kingdom of God.

"There are also mental consequences, the pain of dealing with failures and mistakes.

"And finally there are the emotional consequences, the guilt and shame. These can be devastating to young people."

But there is an answer, Gage said, adding the first step is leading young people to faith in Christ and to understand and accept his forgiveness. Also important, he said, are making sure teens are disciplined in their faith and have a strong support group of Christian friends.

Youth pastors and other church leaders should also work with young people and their parents to help develop better relationships at home, he said.

"A lot of things go back to the home. Laying down rules without (developing) a relationship leads to rebellion," he said.

The church can help, Gage said, by offering Bible-based sex education classes, providing a loving atmosphere for teen-agers and "standing up and speaking out against the problems that are occurring in our homes and in our country. We can make a difference as Christians if we get involved."

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(BP) photo inquiries may be phoned to Gage's office, (817) 545-1468.

West Virginia Baptists boost  
percent of budget for CP

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SHEPHERDSTOWN, W.Va. (BP)--West Virginia Baptists hiked the percentage of their budget designated for Southern Baptists' Cooperative Program by 0.5 percent during their annual meeting Nov. 6-7.

The convention's 1993 \$1.6 million budget includes 28 percent designated for Cooperative Program-funded international and national missions and ministries by Southern Baptists.

The state budget is a \$40,000 increase over the 1992 budget.

Some 190 messengers representing the 150-plus Southern Baptist churches and missions in West Virginia attended convention sessions at Covenant Baptist Church in Shepherdstown.

Messengers approved a resolution voicing support for action by the Southern Baptist Convention last June to declare churches sympathetic to homosexuality as "not in friendly cooperation" with the SBC and thus ineligible to send messengers to the national annual meeting.

Messengers also approved a feasibility study of a toll-free number for the state convention headquarters in Scott Depot.

Elected as new convention officers were: president, Harry Kinchen, pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Parkersburg; first vice president, Ron Larson, pastor of Shepherdstown's Covenant Baptist; second vice president, Bernard Toppings, pastor of North Charleston Baptist Church; and recording secretary, Jack Dial, layman from Highlawn Baptist Church in Huntington. Only the first vice president's race had a second nominee.

Messengers also heard a first reading of a proposed sharpening of the purpose statement in the convention's constitution, to be voted on during the convention's 1993 sessions, Nov. 5-6, at Memorial Baptist Church in Beckley.

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The proposed purpose statement reads: "The purpose of the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists is to assist and encourage affiliated churches and associations to fulfill the Great Commission."

The current wording states: "This Convention is the agency through which cooperating churches in their autonomous capacities can work together in the enterprises they collectively deem necessary in carrying out Christ's commission (Matthew 28:19-20)."

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Rick Hatley contributed to this report.

Business world awakening  
to the value of chaplains

By Brian K. Smith

Baptist Press  
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NEW ORLEANS (BP)--As tensions mount in today's industrialized society, Southern Baptists are working to meet the challenges of the work place through business and industrial chaplaincy.

Many corporations and businesses have recognized the need for chaplaincy ministries: Workers, being human, often cannot help but bring their problems and pains to work.

"Chaplaincy humanizes the work place," noted Lew Dawson of the Southern Baptist Convention Home Mission Board's chaplaincy division during a recent visit to New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Major corporations and unions have begun to staff full-time chaplains and "their work increases production," Dawson said. A pamphlet distributed by the chaplaincy division credits chaplains with reducing employee theft, decreasing sick time due to stress-related illnesses and treating chemical dependency.

Due to their special relationship with all levels in a company, chaplains often are called on to mediate problems between employees and management. Industrial chaplains also are asked to perform weddings and funerals and are available to help in family problems away from work.

Employees often need someone to speak to confidentially. An industrial chaplain takes his work to where the employee works. Occasional visits to management, executives and employees gives him the perfect opportunity to establish relationships beneficial to the pastoral counseling process.

Another possibility for businesses interested in offering counseling to employees is to utilize local chaplaincy services which employ a staff of chaplains. The chaplains make themselves available to several companies who each pay a fee to use the service. Rotating the responsibility of being on-call with others in the service, these chaplains can offer a 24-hour ministry to employees.

Current ministers interested in industrial and business chaplaincy also could consider serving on either a bivocational or volunteer basis. A minister may offer his services to a company as a means of outreach to the unchurched as well as a service to the community. Once convinced that a chaplain's ministry is an asset to a company, management usually welcomes the good intent of the minister, Dawson said.

Promoting industrial chaplaincy since 1958, the HMB chaplaincy division has directed work in this area through denominational endorsement, conferences and seminars and has monitored professional standards, advised chaplains and administered scholarships to prospective chaplaincy students.

For more information on industrial and business chaplaincy, contact Billy D. Donovan, HMB chaplaincy division, 1350 Spring St. NW, Atlanta, GA 30367-5601, (404) 898-7423.

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Brian K. Smith is a student writer at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Getting permission to hurt  
can be freeing, couple says

By Charles Willis

RAPID CITY, S.D. (BP)--Melanie and Philip Fike are giving people permission to hurt.

While that may seem a strange concept to some, the Fikes believe it will relieve burdens for many people and ultimately become an outreach tool for their church.

Philip Fike, pastor of Westside Baptist Church in Rapid City, S.D., and his wife, Melanie, spent a week at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center last summer learning how to help others cope with long-lasting emotional pain.

While they previously had taught family ministry classes at their church and throughout South Dakota, their expertise was in courses such as Southern Baptists' "Covenant Marriage" and "Parenting by Grace."

While Philip had plenty of pastoral experience in counseling, Melanie wasn't so sure she would be happy studying the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's new LIFE Support course, "Making Peace with Your Past."

"I was put off by the term 'dysfunctional family,'" Melanie Fike admitted. "I felt it was an excuse. But then someone in the class explained that the prefix 'dys' means painful and my resistance went away."

The idea of participating in a face-to-face group was another point of concern for Melanie Fike because she said, "I felt I'd have to have all the answers. I soon learned this book is not intended for use in a therapy group, but for a support group. The following Sunday night at church, I talked for more than an hour about my experience."

The Fikes say they believe for too long some churches have emphasized guilt and shame rather than being a facilitator of healing for the guilt and shame persons already have. They quote a pastor friend who once told them, "God is in management; we are just in sales."

"We don't have to make people perfect," Philip Fike has concluded. "We just have to show them the way."

Melanie Fike said she believes her Glorieta experience was God's way of showing her what God has planned for Westside Baptist Church. During the week following her report to the church, persons began to ask to participate in a Making Peace with Your Past group.

Currently leading the first such group in her church, she will not discuss details of sessions because of the "covenant of confidentiality" each participant signs. She did say the seven women who are meeting with her are "pretty open, pretty candid."

The workbook-format material, Melanie Fike said, "sends a message to Christians that it is OK to hurt. When people wound us, we've been taught we are supposed to have a Christlike response. This course gives you permission to hurt. It is very much a feelings-based approach.

"People are not perfect, hurts happen, there is sin in the world and we do suffer," she said the course teaches. "But we look to Jesus for our hope for day-to-day living."

She said the group she is leading now has experienced "a lot of deep emotions, a lot of tears and opening up of old wounds."

Churches "have missed the step of setting people free to hurt and to grieve. We've always had to go outside the church for support groups. Now we can go inside the church where it is OK to be who we are in Christ," she said.

Fike said he has learned he doesn't have to be a perfect pastor.

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"That's very freeing," he admitted, adding he believes people need to see the church "not as an institution, but as a family. We have so many people today who don't have a family, or a whole family."

In many cases, Melanie Fike adds, as adults we may hurt because we never got the "blessing" (approval) we wanted from our parents.

"But we have the blessing of the Lord. He chose us; he died for us."

She said being able to forgive "even a dead parent" can help some people "move on to newness, a new way of life."

"We need to love and listen," she continued. "Wherever Jesus went, he made people whole."

Soon Philip Fike will begin a group for men at the church. With several groups trained, they hope some potential leaders will emerge for other groups.

Eventually, they hope to offer Making Peace with Your Past to persons outside the church through word-of-mouth or even local newspaper advertising.

"Our goal is to have groups that include no church members," Philip Fike said. "We hope to use this as a means of evangelistic outreach by meeting needs outside the church."

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by BSSB bureau of Baptist Press.

Baptist seminary grads include  
8 Bishops, 6 Popes, 2 Elders

By Jon Walker

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WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Donald Christian says being a minister with a last name like his has opened doors and started conversations over the years. "It has given me the opportunity to share a witness or to plant a seed. Having the name Christian does make you think about living up to your name."

Christian, now pastor at Moffett Memorial Baptist Church in Danville, Va., is one of three Christians to graduate in the last 42 years from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest. Southeastern has also graduated 8 Bishops, 6 Popes, 4 Churches, 2 Elders, 1 Parson, 1 Preacher and 1 Usher.

What's it like being a Bishop in a Baptist church? Monte Bishop, pastor at Thomas Memorial Baptist Church in Bennettsville, S.C., said it has provided much humor over the years. When he first moved to South Carolina, the state's paper ran the headline "Baptist Church Calls Bishop."

James Parson, now a retired minister in Clinton, N.C., said some members of his congregation took to calling him Parson Parson.

With the maiden name of Preacher, Claudia Preacher Brantley, associate pastor at the nondenominational Restoration Church in Chesnee, S.C., said people usually "want to know what's going on" when she tells them her full name. "When they find out it is my real name, they say 'I guess it was prophetic.'"

Also among Southeastern's 6,403 graduates are 2 Shepherds, 1 Word and 1 Scripture.

Lee Scripture, pastor at Wicomico Baptist Church in Wicomico, Va., said when he was a student at Southeastern enrolled in John Durham's class, the professor thought the registrar was trying to play a trick on him. He said many people still do not believe it is his real name.

In more common nomenclature, the seminary also has graduated 99 Smiths, 53 Johnsons and 43 Joneses.