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- KENTUCKY -- Explicit film complicates Simmons affair at Southern.
- NORTH CAROLINA -- Seminarian 'washes the feet' of AIDS sufferers he befriends; photo.
- CALIFORNIA -- Los Angeles pastor urges churches to take advantage of global changes.
- NORTH CAROLINA -- Retiring bookstore manager was Southeastern 'best-kept secret; photo.

Seminary begins 'formal review' of Simmons' use of explicit film By Marv Knox

Baptist Press
1/6/93

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Professor Paul Simmons' showing of a film on quadriplegics and sex in a master's-level ethics class is "under formal review," according to Roy Honeycutt, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Honeycutt issued a two-sentence statement Jan. 6 addressing Simmons' further-strained relationship with the Louisville, Ky., seminary after his showing of the film late last semester.

"The matter related to the use of sexually explicit material in a recent class session taught by Dr. Paul Simmons is under formal review in accordance with seminary policies and guidelines," Honeycutt said. "Due to the sensitive nature of current discussions with Professor Simmons, the seminary will have no further comment at this time."

Simmons has been under fire from trustees for almost three years because of his pro-choice position on abortion and controversial views regarding homosexuality. An attempt to resolve the issue failed Dec. 15 when trustees voted 34-21 against buying out his contract at a cost of up to \$362,000.

About that same time, Simmons showed the film. It was described on campus as "graphic" and "sexually explicit" and reportedly prompted protests from angry and embarrassed students, some of whom filed formal protests with seminary administrators.

By the time seminary offices opened Jan. 4, rumors had spread that Simmons, who has taught at Southern Seminary since 1969, had been suspended. Seminary sources denied the suspension, but some response from administrators is expected soon.

Sources on campus hinted the Simmons' issue might be resolved by week's end. Although a suspension is among the possibilities, Simmons might be reassigned, taking him out of master's-level classes. He is scheduled to teach two such classes in the spring term, in addition to his graduate-level instruction.

"Right now, I'd have to say, 'No comment,'" Simmons said when reached at his home.

Trustee chairman Wayne Allen, a pastor from suburban Memphis, Tenn., noted the film issue is "not a trustee matter at this time."

"This is being handled administratively," he said. "It is an administrative matter, and I have every confidence it will be handled in a competent, Christian manner."

Rick White, chairman of the trustees' academic personnel committee and a pastor from suburban Nashville, could not be reached for comment.

After trustees failed to buy out Simmons' contract in December, some trustees said they would pursue formal dismissal hearings against Simmons at their board meeting in April.

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Art Toalston contributed to this story.

Seminarian 'washes the feet'
of AIDS sufferers he befriends By Sonja Post

Baptist Press
1/6/93

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Some people pray for good health, a long life full of blessings and snow every Christmas, but few pray to be the Good Samaritan.

Servanthood is all Eric Raddatz, a Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary student, seeks.

Raddatz "washes the feet" of people inflicted with AIDS by leading a Bible study at HUSTEAD house in Raleigh.

At the house, where up to five AIDS patients can live, he began volunteering to provide any relief care needed by washing the dishes or taking out the trash.

As he cared for their needs, Raddatz became friends with some people who don't have the luxury of sidestepping the issue of death.

Raddatz, 49, is in his second year of the associate divinity program. He and his family moved from Frostburg, Md., so he could attend seminary.

During his first year, Raddatz took a class called, "The Church and the Disadvantaged" which chose to study AIDS as one of its three topics.

As Raddatz did research for the class, he said he became concerned with the lack of emphasis AIDS received among Southern Baptist churches.

Raddatz contacted Cullin Gurganus, executive director of the AIDS service agency for Wake County, and asked him to speak to his class along with Bill Brantley, a member of the board of directors for the agency.

Raddatz, one of three on a class panel, asked Gurganus and Brantley questions. Afterward the class participated in an open discussion.

"It was just a time to get different points of view in. It gave me a real understanding of how the Baptist church (sic) understands AIDS."

Raddatz said, "The issue of AIDS was dropped and the conversation turned to homosexuality."

The issue remained unresolved. "I saw that the church needed someone to talk to them and alleviate their fears about AIDS," he said.

Raddatz said his heart breaks for humanity and for his father who has been diagnosed with AIDS.

"I've seen the face of death and I know how my dad will die," Raddatz said.

His father, 81, received a contaminated blood transfusion during quadruple-bypass heart surgery in the mid-1980s before blood was tested for the virus.

Impetus for Raddatz's ministry was his father's diagnosis, the death of a close friend who had AIDS and participation in the seminary class.

After the class discussion, he began to volunteer as a relief caregiver at the Raleigh HUSTEAD house. Once he was comfortable he asked people in the house if they would like to hold a Bible study. Three agreed.

"I wasn't hired as a chaplain. I am there when spiritual matters come up and they usually will because it's young people facing death," Raddatz said.

"The idea is presence evangelism. Like Jesus did in the Gospel of John, I wanted to set myself as an example of a servant.

"The only way I would be accepted was to do the dirty work," he said.

When Raddatz tells people about the ministry, they appreciate what he's doing but explain they could never do it, Raddatz understands.

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"It's very hard to practice what you preach. I've got a long way to go before I'm an example to anyone."

Raddatz said he knows the difference between espousing beliefs and living their reality.

"The epistle of James says perfect love has no fear," he said. But sometimes Raddatz said he does fear.

"When I'm there, it never crosses my mind that I'm at risk. They're my friends. When I'm gone, that's when I think about it."

It helps to understand the disease, to know how you can and can't catch it, Raddatz said.

"But the more I've learned about the disease, the more it appears that they (doctors) don't know anything," he said.

Knowledge may be scarce about contraction of the disease, but no one at the house takes any chances.

"The patients are very protective of us. Frank, a patient, had cut his hand. When I came in to give him a hug he showed it to me so I wouldn't get blood on me. They are all very aware of it," Raddatz said.

Raddatz said he feels called to be there, despite any legitimate fears he might have.

"The bottom line is people need care and that's what we are called as Christians to do."

Plans for Raddatz's ministry are two-fold. First, he wants to work through education to reach individual churches to alleviate fears and get people involved in the ministry.

Second, he wants to provide a Christian-based home for people with AIDS in each Baptist association in the state.

North Carolina has three family-care centers now that can hold a maximum of five people, Raddatz said.

He said he plans to buy or build a house in Wake Forest for AIDS patients. "We need fund-raisers, actually we need big ideas for big money."

Raddatz said he hopes to draw support from the Southern Baptist Convention.

"It seems the church, especially the Southern Baptist church (sic), is like the Pharisee who passed the helpless man on the road rather than the Samaritan who stopped to help," he said.

Raddatz said he doesn't think the church will be able to ignore AIDS much longer.

"I'm banking on the fact that the Southern Baptist Convention will have to do something now or soon in the future," Raddatz said. "They recognize that it's there now, even if they don't talk about it."

"I'm networking like crazy and I have all the confidence in the world because my partner is God."

Raddatz's said his confidence in God will only help him as he has to juggle the infancy of his AIDS ministry, morning seminary classes, his family and a job.

Raddatz said he will seek the continued support of his campus church, Wake Forest Baptist.

"Wake Forest Baptist has been dynamite help. As much as I've done, I wouldn't be able to do this without them or Tom Jackson, the pastor," he said.

Raddatz said he would like to hold AIDS education seminars at the school and hopes to build the proposed house near the seminary so students will have access to it.

He said his goal is to get people aware and involved before AIDS becomes their best friend's nightmare or they have to explain to their little girl why daddy loses strength every day.

"I try to put a face on it when I talk to people. I try to get it out of the abstract and make it real ... but it will be ... soon," Raddatz said.

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Post is a staff writer for The Wake Weekly in Wake Forest, N.C. Used by permission. (BP) photo available upon request from Southeastern Seminary's news office.

Los Angeles pastor urges churches
to take advantage of global changes

By Cameron Crabtree

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)--Recent changes in world outlook have given churches unprecedented opportunity to minister across the globe, a California pastor said.

"You have the opportunity as never before to give yourself and to lead your people wherever God places you for the gospel to go to the needs of the earth and for every people of the planet to initially hear as never, never, never before in human history," said Tom Wolf, speaking at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary.

"If it does not happen, it will not be because of a lack of technology, transportation or communication, but because of disobedience by God's people."

Wolf is pastor of The Church on Brady in Los Angeles. Turbulent changes around the world in recent years have shifted thinking in several key areas, he pointed out.

"In governmental consensus, we have moved so that there is now a global consensus concerning participatory democracy over revolutionary dictatorship," Wolf said. "There has emerged worldwide an economic consensus toward a market-driven, competitive-driven, private sector economy over a state-controlled, directed, public sector economy."

However, consensus about "world culture" has not yet formed, according to Wolf, because of contention between four dominant belief systems:

-- Incumbent humanism. "Humanism is not dead. It is incumbent and still reigns, but it is being challenged."

-- Neo-animism. "People of the Third World, people outside of the United States, understand animism because they live with it." It is a battle for the understanding of the spirit world that even the western world is facing as never before, Wolf said.

-- Militant Islam. Islam now exceeds the number of committed Christians in England and is growing rapidly in the United States, Wolf said. "In 1963 in the Birmingham jail, Dr. Martin Luther King reminded the clergy, 'I am not your enemy. You have a choice' between serious change led by Christian ministers or a change that is grappling for the heart of what he then called Negro America by Islam. Dr. King's words were prophetic."

-- Evangelical Christianity. "Of a certain vibrant and powerful kind that knows the Scripture and knows the power of God in its life."

Wolf said it is this kind of evangelical Christianity that is turning Latin America Protestant at a faster rate than northern Europe turned Protestant during the Reformation -- and the kind that must challenge the Islamic world and other faiths capturing the hearts and minds of people throughout the world.

"I believe that in this generation, there is going to be a call for a clear thinking in regard to the Christian faith and its interface with other world views than at any other time," he said. "May God raise up from his people, from the people in this nation, from Africa, from Europe, from Asia, from wherever, and burden our hearts in this generation to see the message of Christ go to the ends of the earth."

Golden Gate is one of six Southern Baptist seminaries and the only SBC agency in the western United States. At the seminary's December commencement, the 41 students who graduated represented 13 states and three countries.

Retiring bookstore manager was
Southeastern 'best-kept secret' By Jon Walker

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--In 1960, a young woman, fresh off a year of missions work in Nigeria, enrolled at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. As registrar Fred Sandusky enrolled her, he asked, "How are you going to pay for your seminary education?" The young woman said she was not sure: "I might have to sell my car."

Sandusky suggested she apply for a job at the Baptist Book Store in Raleigh, so Jeannette Scott left the registrar's office and applied for a job that led to 32 years of ministry. Scott is retiring this January from the Baptist Book Store on Southeastern's campus, where she has been manager since 1966.

"She is the dean of our seminary bookstore managers," said Bruce Munns, a regional director in retail sales with the Baptist Sunday School Board. "Everybody looks to her as a focal point. She is known for her deep, abiding love for Southeastern seminary and the students. It is her calling, her ministry."

Originally, Scott enrolled at Southeastern because she needed some seminary education to go back to the mission field, but once she graduated nothing seemed to challenge her except working in the Baptist Book Store. "I saw I could make a contribution at the bookstore, where I didn't see myself making a contribution anywhere else."

Scott said she found it particularly challenging over the years to work with theological books. "I tried to stay ahead of where the theology was changing and to figure out what books were needed."

Dick Stevens, owner of nearby Stevens' Book Store, said Scott's seminary background gave her a knowledge of theology books not found among most Baptist Book Store workers. He said that knowledge has allowed her not only to help students but also keep the store stocked in a helpful manner.

Her ability to keep the Baptist Book Store at the seminary properly stocked, despite disorganized professors and over-anxious students, is one of Scott's greatest strengths. Southeastern professor Al Meiberg said, "Jeannette is one of the best-kept secrets at Southeastern. She is persistent in trying to get the materials needed, and she will bend heaven and earth to do that."

Scott said she has spent many years trying to outguess what books to order for classes when the professors were late in getting her their book lists. "Sometimes you guess right, sometimes you don't," she said. "You learn to swing with it. They have a lot of other responsibilities and I knew when they got their lists together, I would get it."

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