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April 21, 1994

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**Chapman says Texas proposal  
undermines Cooperative Program By Herb Hollinger**

**Baptist Press  
4/21/94**

**NASHVILLE (BP)**--An open invitation to Southern Baptist churches in Texas to become much more directly involved in SBC missions by sending their gifts directly to support SBC world missions and ministries.

That, according to SBC Executive Committee President Morris H. Chapman, is what will happen if a proposal before a special Texas study committee is approved.

Texas Baptists' Cooperative Missions Giving Study Committee has moved toward recommending a Texas-oriented Cooperative Program, placing a primary focus on Texas Baptist causes but permitting funds designated for "worldwide Baptist causes" also to qualify as "Cooperative Program" gifts.

And "worldwide Baptist causes" could include a variety of things, such as the Southern Baptist Convention, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, Criswell College or any other Baptist entity.

If adopted, the proposal would dramatically change the longtime Cooperative Program relationship between the churches, the state convention and the Southern Baptist Convention, according to Chapman.

"The Cooperative Program which was adopted in 1925 is considered by most Southern Baptists to be a God-given method for funding world missions," Chapman said. "The Texas proposal as released is a far cry from what Southern Baptists have known, cherished and practiced."

"There is no 'BGCT Cooperative Program,'" Chapman said. "The Cooperative Program is a partnership which involves churches, state conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention. When any of the three participants is omitted you have a funding system, but not the Cooperative Program."

No recommendation has been agreed upon and probably will not be until the Texas committee's last scheduled meeting July 29, but the idea of a Cooperative Program with a focus on Texas Baptist causes and designation of funds beyond that to worldwide Baptist causes surfaced in the committee's April 18 meeting as the consensus favorite.

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The 22-member committee was appointed by Baptist General Convention of Texas President Jerold McBride after messengers to the 1993 convention approved a motion by Ben Loring, pastor of First Baptist Church in Amarillo, that such a panel be named to study how to "enhance cooperative missions giving in Texas" and make its recommendation to the 1994 convention in Amarillo, Oct. 31-Nov. 1.

The committee's chairman is Cecil Ray of Georgetown, former national director of the SBC Planned Growth in Giving emphasis and general secretary-treasurer of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

Loring was asked to speak to the committee's second meeting in Dallas to explain why he made the motion and what he meant by "enhance cooperative missions giving."

The Amarillo pastor said he meant that mission giving be more encouraged and affirmed rather than increased.

His church, he noted, has long been a supporter of the Cooperative Program but in 1990 out of concern for the direction of the Southern Baptist Convention had chosen to send its "out-of-state mission money" through the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

It was an "agonizing decision" by the church, a "protest move" to voice its disagreement, primarily with the SBC Executive Committee and some of its decisions.

At the time, Loring noted, more than 80 percent of gifts through the CBF were channeled to SBC causes, getting to the mission boards, seminaries and commissions, but bypassing the SBC Executive Committee.

Last year, Loring noted, his church contributed \$2,660 through the Cooperative Program and gave \$719,000 in designated gifts. Of that total, he said, \$465,000 went to Texas Baptist causes and \$254,000 was sent to the CBF. Of the total sent to the CBF, \$189,000 was forwarded to SBC entities.

Loring said his church's \$189,000 in support of SBC causes exceeded those of Houston's Second Baptist Church, whose pastor, H. Edwin Young, is president of the SBC. But, Loring said, the gifts of First Baptist in Amarillo somehow have been "devalued" because of the channel it chose, and he said he thinks it has hurt missions giving in his church.

Loring urged the committee consider a system of "fairness" in recognizing cooperative gifts that respects the autonomy of the local church in its mission-giving decisions, encourages giving rather than intimidates a church that may choose other avenues of support, and recognizes its assignment as an opportunity to affirm local church autonomy in decision-making and help each church feel it is a part of the process.

That "system," Chapman believes, will encourage SBC churches in Texas to give much more to SBC world missions causes than the 36.65 percent the Cooperative Program now receives from the Texas convention.

"Presently, Texas forwards only 17.75 percent of the CP gifts from Texas churches to the Foreign Mission Board and only 6.92 percent to the Home Mission Board," Chapman said. "This could increase dramatically under the new proposal."

"The Executive Committee has stood steadfastly by the partnership concept of the Cooperative Program. I am surprised that a Texas committee appears to be so ready to abandon something which has been greatly used of God to fulfill the Great Commission," Chapman said.

At the close of the first meeting of the committee in March, chairman Ray asked each member to submit ideas as to how they could accomplish their task. A digest by Ray of the various suggestions yielded five different "cooperative systems," studied by the committee April 18 in small-group sessions.

The consensus favorite was a plan calling for primary focus on promotion of the BGCT Cooperative Program. Gifts for the Texas CP budget and those designated for worldwide Baptist causes all would be considered Cooperative Program gifts. Each church would be required to designate how its gifts beyond Texas Baptist causes would be distributed.

In current practice, gifts for the Cooperative Program are divided 63.35 percent for Texas causes and 36.65 percent for Southern Baptist Convention causes. In the plan being considered, if it should emerge as the recommendation, a church will have to designate how its money beyond Texas causes is to be distributed. Funds would no longer automatically go to the Southern Baptist Convention.

The committee's next meeting is scheduled May 23 in Dallas.

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Toby Druin contributed to this story.

Missouri board votes protest  
of the way Dilday was fired

By Tim Palmer

Baptist Press  
4/21/94

ROACH, Mo. (BP)--The Missouri Baptist Convention executive board voted 31-6 to send a letter to trustees of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary to protest the trustees' manner of firing president Russell H. Dilday Jr.

Dilday himself will receive a letter of support; copies of both letters will be sent to the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee. The action came April 12 at the close of the board's quarterly board meeting at Windermere Baptist Assembly in Roach.

A motion to send the letters was presented by Ray Crews, pastor of First Baptist Church in Carthage. Several board members seconded it simultaneously.

Crews' motion read: "I move that the Executive Board of the Missouri Baptist Convention go on public record with a letter of support to Dr. Dilday and a copy sent to the trustees of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention and a letter expressing our disapproval for the way in which this firing of Dr. Dilday was conducted.

"If approved these letters are to come from the Executive Board of the Missouri Baptist Convention through the officers."

"We have to take a stand and defend," Crews said. He told of a new believer in his church, an older retired man, who after reading of Dilday's firing commented, "Pastor, this is nothing but dirty politics, and I didn't know Christian men did this."

Benny King, director of missions for the St. Louis Baptist Association, argued against the motion. Southwestern graduate King said he personally disagreed with the trustees' action but he questioned the appropriateness of the executive board telling another board how to run its business. "We wouldn't like it if they did it to us."

Doyle Sager, pastor of First Baptist Church in Sedalia, pointed out the Missouri convention had approved a resolution regarding the Girl Scouts of America last year, and Southwestern Seminary is a much closer agency to the MBC since both relate to the Southern Baptist Convention.

Paul Brooks, pastor of First Baptist Church in Raytown, said, "I don't think it's helpful for this board to drag SBC political problems into this state." He said sending the letters would be divisive.

"I know some of those trustees and they're not bad people," Brooks said. He went on to repeat the assertion twice.

Brooks added none of the executive board knew what had gone on in meetings of Southwestern's trustees. "This is not our fight; this is not our business," he said.

Jim Jeffries, pastor of National Heights Baptist Church in Springfield, said the executive board had precedent for such an action, that it previously criticized the Foreign Mission Board.

"It is not unChristian to say, 'We decry unChristian behavior,'" he said. "We will not solve the problems by just hiding our heads in the sand and saying nothing."

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Jeffries did not send a letter to Southwestern trustees as interfering in their business. "We're not saying hire him back," he said. "We're not saying redo your work. We're saying this is not the right way to do it."

MBC President T.O. Spicer, director of missions of Spring River Baptist Association in Joplin, said he planned to draft the letters with input via a conference call next week with first vice president Brooks; second vice president Norman Mohr, pastor of Maryland Heights Baptist Church in St. Louis; and recording secretary Ann Mary Gilbert of First Baptist Church in Poplar Bluff.

"I would anticipate having the thing worked out and ready to roll by the first of the month, easily," Spicer said.

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SWBTS trustee: 7 wrongs  
committed in Dilday firing

Baptist Press  
4/21/94

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Trustees of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary should be held accountable for their actions in firing President Russell H. Dilday Jr. and should apologize to Southern Baptists for "seven wrongs" committed when they did it, according to trustee Wayne Allen.

Trustee chairman Ralph W. Pulley Jr., in response, said he is "increasingly confused over Dr. Allen's position, which seems to change almost daily."

Allen, pastor of First Baptist Church in Carrollton, Texas, and one of the seven trustees who voted against Dilday's dismissal March 9, has called for an emergency meeting of the trustees to discuss the "wrongs." But he has been thwarted by trustee officers even though at one time a majority were willing to reconvene, he said.

Pulley, a Dallas attorney, said Allen needs to "re-evaluate his position as a trustee and get back to working within the internal framework of the trustees."

In an April 20 news release, Allen said Southern Baptists have a right to demand an apology for seven "wrongs":

1) The plot to replace Dilday with a retirement buyout or to fire him was planned at least a week -- probably weeks -- before the trustee meeting with knowledge of only part of the board.

2) Knowledge of the plan was deliberately kept from Allen and at least two other trustees. The chairman told Allen it was kept from him because he would have gone to Dilday, "he would have called his friends and we would have had a mob scene." Allen said that instead of calling Dilday he would have demanded a meeting of the board to discuss the issue.

3) The impression was given to Allen, students, faculty and the president that no plot had been made. "This was deceit," said Allen.

4) Trustees were asked on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday before Dilday was fired about 11 a.m. Wednesday if there was a plan to fire him. They pretended they had no knowledge of it or denied it.

5) The trustee officers and another trustee who offered Dilday a "golden parachute" retirement package did not have the authority to make such an offer.

6) John Earl Seelig, who had requested early retirement rather than be fired in 1989, was back on campus as an employee the day of the firing, handling press releases. He was not approved by the trustees.

7) Changing the lock on the door of the president's office and denying him access to his computer, leaving the impression that some criminal act or at least an immoral act had been committed.

Allen said he sought an emergency meeting of the trustees to discuss the "wrongs."

"Because of these 'wrongs' thousands of Southern Baptists feel bitter and betrayed and have every right to feel that way," Allen said in the news release. "As trustees elected by these Southern Baptists we owe them an apology ... for the 'wrongs' committed. Failure to do so is to refuse to be accountable."

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But Pulley said Allen keeps changing his position.

"We have met with Dr. Allen, six (trustees) of us several weeks ago, and spent three hours with him. We left with an accord, now he has come back with this kind of approach," Pulley said.

"We feel we have answered his questions in our recent letter to all (SBC) pastors," Pulley said. "We really feel it is time for everyone to move on in the life of the seminary. We feel all have had their say in this matter and it is time to move on, to pray for the search committee, the trustees, the faculty, students and staff."

Seminary bylaws state that if a majority of trustees request an emergency meeting, the chairman must call for it. Allen said trustees Bob Anderson of Louisiana and Pat Campbell of South Carolina on April 13 had 20 of the 38 trustees who were willing to sign a letter requesting such a meeting.

However, two dropped out after receiving "very selected telephone calls," said Allen, and Pulley would not call a meeting.

According to Allen, Pulley and others said "Yes, we made some mistakes in the way it was done but a meeting wouldn't accomplish anything, so let's just move on."

Allen noted his previous meeting with Pulley, the other officers of the board and three other trustees and had agreed to accept "the intent of their heart" as being sincere in firing Dilday.

But regardless of the "intent of their heart," unless some repentance and apology is shown by the board of trustees in a special called meeting, then they are refusing to be accountable, Allen said.

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Toby Druin of the Texas Baptist Standard and Herb Hollinger of Baptist Press contributed to this report.

Supreme Court denies appeal  
by Christian second-grader

By Tom Strode

Baptist Press  
4/21/94

WASHINGTON (BP)--The U.S. Supreme Court has refused to accept a case in which a second-grade student was prohibited from showing to public school classmates a video of her singing a Christian song.

The Supreme Court's refusal lets stand lower court decisions which ruled the student's free speech, free exercise of religion and equal protection rights were not violated.

Second-grade student Kelly DeNooyer brought the videotape to a Livonia, Mich., school in 1990 as a part of a program designed by her teacher with the purpose of increasing the children's self-esteem. The program, called "VIP of the Week," allowed a child each week to bring possessions from home to show the class.

The tape showed DeNooyer singing a solo at a worship service of a Baptist church she attended. The song described a person who had received Jesus as Savior at a young age.

After reviewing the tape, the teacher refused to allow it to be shown. School officials supported her decision. In their brief, school officials cited the religious message and problems arising from the use of videotape as reasons for the decision. The opposing brief said the religious content was the only reason given initially to DeNooyer's mother, Ilene, for its rejection. Other reasons were added later, the DeNooyer brief said.

During the "VIP of the Week" program, the teacher permitted a Jewish student to bring a menorah to class and explain it.

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The district court ruled the school is a closed public forum and officials have a right to regulate reasonably the content of speech. The court also said there was no evidence the school had "substantially burdened any central religious belief or practice." The opinion said there was no equal protection violation because the school had a "rational basis" for distinguishing between the videotape and the speech about the menorah.

In 1993, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth District affirmed the district court decision in *DeNooyer v. Livonia Public Schools*. The court said the teacher's concerns about the use of videotape were sufficient reasons for upholding the lower court opinion without considering the other questions raised.

"Let's hear those who laud the Lemon test defend this one," said Michael Whitehead, general counsel of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, of the April 18 action. "They say Lemon keeps the government neutral on religion, but a second grader can tell the difference between neutrality and hostility."

The Lemon test, which was instituted in the 1971 *Lemon v. Kurtzman* opinion, requires a government activity to pass a three-part standard in establishment of religion cases. In order to avoid being a violation of church-state separation, Lemon says an activity must: 1) Have a secular purpose; 2) not primarily advance or inhibit religion and 3) not foster excessive entanglement with religion.

In a case awaiting a decision by the Supreme Court, the Christian Life Commission has filed a friend-of-the-court brief asking for the replacement of Lemon with a test more accommodating of religious free exercise.

"'Lemonistas' are so zealous to avoid an implied message that a school official endorses religion that they lose sight of the distinction between government action and private action," Whitehead said. "This 7-year-old child and all her classmates know she is not the government. These kids won't think Kelly's 'show-and-tell' tape is establishing a school religion any more than they think Johnny's pet garter snake is being endorsed for school board lawyer."

"'Lemonistas' can be so passionate to protect nonbelievers from feeling like second-class citizens but so heartless toward this little girl, who now knows that second-class citizenship is reserved for Christians."

The establishment clause case awaiting a court ruling is *Board of Education of Kiryas Joel Village School District v. Grumet*.

In the same case, the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, former religious liberty voice for the Southern Baptist Convention, has joined a brief defending the Lemon test. BJC General Counsel Brent Walker could not be reached April 21 for comment on *DeNooyer v. Livonia Public Schools*.

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Southern trustees approve  
new degree, fee structure

By Pat Cole

Baptist Press  
4/21/94

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Southern Baptist Theological Seminary trustees, meeting in semiannual session April 18-20, approved a two-year degree program for the seminary's Boyce Bible School and a restructured fee schedule for all seminary academic offerings.

The Louisville, Ky., seminary's trustees authorized Boyce to award an associate of arts degree in Christian ministry studies. Founded in 1974 to provide ministerial training for non-college graduates, Boyce has been granting diplomas to people who complete its course of study.

Seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr. said the new degree has met the requirements of accrediting agencies and should "increase portability" for Boyce graduates who want to transfer their work to four-year colleges. The seminary, he added, is committed to quality "pre-baccalaureate but not baccalaureate" theological education.

Several students already are completing requirements for the associate degree and will graduate in May.

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In approving a new fee structure, trustees shifted the seminary away from a system that charged a flat matriculation fee to nearly every student to one that bases matriculation fees on the number of courses taken. Currently, most Southern students pay \$650 per semester. Baptist masters-level students next year will pay \$500 per semester plus \$75 per course up to a maximum of \$950 per semester.

Mohler said the "benchmark" rate for students next fall will be \$800 per semester. That will be the cost assessed to a master's-level Baptist student taking four courses. The seminary will continue its practice of recent years of charging non-Baptist students double the rate of Baptist students.

Baptist students will pay \$900 per semester to enroll in the doctor of ministry program and \$850 per semester to pursue research doctorates. The fee for the research doctorates actually will be \$1,500, but students will be eligible for a \$650 grant each semester for up to eight semesters.

Baptist students at Boyce Bible School will pay \$350 per semester plus \$75 for each course up to a maximum of \$800 per semester. The current Boyce matriculation fee is \$550 per semester.

Under provisions of the fee structure, the seminary in the fall of 1995 will begin charging non-Baptist fees to Baptist students of denominations other than Southern Baptist. Mohler said that policy will parallel policies of the other five SBC seminaries. He emphasized the policy is consistent with the seminary's central purpose of educating Southern Baptist ministers.

"This is an important step toward protecting the primacy of our mission to prepare ministers for service in the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention," said Mohler in an interview after the meeting. "This is the right policy for this institution -- and it is right in light of our denominational commitment. We are The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. We proudly know to whom we belong."

Mohler told trustees the average Southern student's matriculation fee will continue to be similar to those charged by other Southern Baptist Convention seminaries. He emphasized all SBC seminaries are able to charge substantially less than non-SBC seminaries because of Cooperative Program support.

When fees at Southern are compared to non-SBC schools, Mohler said even non-Baptist students receive as much as an 80 percent discount from what they would pay at another institution.

Mohler indicated students will pay the Southern Baptist rate if they hold membership in a church that is eligible to send messengers to the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention. The SBC Constitution and Bylaws require churches be in friendly cooperation with the convention and contribute at least \$250 to the work of the convention to qualify for a messenger. He said all Southern Baptist seminary presidents had agreed to follow the definition of a Southern Baptist church set forth in the SBC Constitution and Bylaws.

During his report to trustees, Mohler unveiled "Foundation '95," a 16-page document that lists the seminary's "central commitments" and "program objectives" over the next 18 months. The plan describes itself as a "platform for understanding and directing this transitional moment in the life of Southern Seminary." It addresses a broad spectrum of institutional concerns ranging from the academic program and the library to fund-raising and student recruitment.

Mohler noted this year's enrollment is up 5 percent over last year. He said student applications for next year are running "as much as 60 percent" ahead of the number of applications received at the same time last year.

Deferred and cash gifts to the seminary so far this year total more than \$7 million, Mohler said, adding the seminary could be headed for a record year in donations. "I say that with great appreciation and unbounded appreciation both to those who gave the money and to God," he noted.

In other action, trustees:

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-- unanimously elected Dennis E. Williams to a tenured faculty position in Christian education. Mohler has selected Williams, chairman of the department of educational ministries and administration at Denver Seminary, to be dean of Southern's school of Christian education effective May 1. He succeeds William B. Rogers who resigned last year to return to full-time teaching duties.

-- approved a \$17.4 million budget which includes a 3.5 percent pay raise for all employees.

-- re-elected the board's officers to a second term. They are Richard White of Franklin, Tenn., chairman; John Allen of Richton, Miss., first vice chairman; and David Miller of Heber Springs, Ark., second vice chairman.

-- passed a policy setting guidelines for faculty and staff who accept remunerative employment outside the seminary.

-- approved a procedure for addressing concerns or complaints regarding faculty members. This policy is directed toward matters not considered serious enough for dismissal.

-- heard a report from the trustees' financial board that an architect is proceeding with drawings for the Honeycutt Campus Center's final phase which will include food service and conference facilities. The financial board also reported it had authorized a study to determine the feasibility of converting two campus housing units, Rice Hall and Judson Hall, into a hotel-like facility for conference participants and other campus guests.

-- granted tenure to Thom Rainer as an associate professor of evangelism and church growth. In February, Rainer was named dean of the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth.

-- Promoted Boyd Jones II and Betty Bedsole from associate professor to professor of church music.

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Genesis 1-11 trustworthy,  
says scholar Walter Kaiser

By Mary Wimberley

Baptist Press  
4/21/94

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--"Nowhere is the talk of the modern biblical scholar filled with more difficulties than in the first 11 chapters of Genesis," said Old Testament scholar Walter C. Kaiser Jr.

Kaiser, author of the newly published "An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics" and numerous other works, spoke April 12-14 as this year's biblical studies lecturer at Samford University's Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Ala. Kaiser is the Colman M. Mockler professor of Old Testament and director of the biblical foundation for ethics program at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, Mass.

If a case for the reliability of Genesis 1-11 is to be mounted, certain challenges must be met, said Kaiser, citing such charges as the material originating in oral tradition, the lengthy lifespans of Old Testament patriarchs, the amazing Tower of Babel and the question of history versus myth.

The case for oral tradition is weak, Kaiser said, since there is little indication the writer depended on anyone's memory or verbal recollection.

"When the suggestion of oral sources was first made, it was presumed that even the very possibility of writing had not yet presented itself to Moses or his times," Kaiser said. Modern scholars now know that Moses, and even young boys, could write by the middle of the second millennium B.C., he noted.

On the subject of lifespan, Kaiser said, "Our conclusion must be that God did intend for individuals to live forever before the Fall (of man) intervened. However, the effects of sin can be seen over the incalculable millennia that transpired between Adam and Abraham in that the drift of the total number of years steadily slide downward, and the same was generally true for the ages at which men were able to sire children."

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Concerning the Tower of Babel, Kaiser said, the possibility of one world language and the idea that the people of the plains of Shinar thought they could build a city with a tower that "reaches to the heavens" have raised suppositions that this is a scientifically impossible story. But where details of the story can be verified, it is found dependable.

An example is the author's use of accurate information about Mesopotamian building techniques, Kaiser said. For instance, the people of Shinar had to make their own bricks instead of using stone, and they used tar or bituminous matter for mortar, a practice that is common in Mesopotamia but not elsewhere.

"Reaching to the heavens" may reflect the Mesopotamian practice of building Ziggurats, or temple towers, he said.

Recent scholarly progress on claims that the earth at one time spoke one language leads to the conclusion that so-called "scientific impossibilities" are not necessarily such when carefully explored, Kaiser.

The bulk of Genesis 1-11 is in narrative form, not poetic, Kaiser said, asserting the literary type is historical narrative interspersed with reports, lists, sayings and a few poetical lines.

Kaiser further answers the question of historiography by noting the text contains numerous personal names and identifiable cultural items such as gold, cities and towers, any of which could expose the text to error.

"The content runs head-on into a description of the real world rather than recounting events belonging to another world or level of reality," Kaiser said.

Events are presented in a linear succession and viewed as a progression of happenings belonging to a certain order of sequencing, he said.

"The cyclical view of time, so often found in the cosmologies of the ancient Near East, never once appeared in Genesis. It is this linear view of events and happenings that actually inaugurates the very discipline of history, rather than being antagonistic to it," Kaiser said.

Genesis 1-11 clearly does not fit into such categories of myth, parable or allegory, Kaiser said.

"While it is the story about God, more than about mortals, it is decisively about how God worked in the lives of humans to effect his purpose," Kaiser said.

"Genesis 1-11 is totally reliable and trustworthy when judged by the written claims of the author and judged according to the literary conventions of the day in which that author wrote.

"It is only when we introduce our modern conventions and criteria that we begin to allege that the writer was more primitive than ourselves and that he erred in several areas such as historical, scientific and cultural.

"But these charges rapidly dissipate when the criteria are shifted to viewing the text from the author's verbal commitments and truth-intentions."

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Alabama convention questions  
university's Nicaragua campus

By Mark Baggett

Baptist Press  
4/21/94

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (BP)--The University of Mobile's new campus in San Marcos, Nicaragua, has come under fire by Alabama Baptist State Convention leaders who say the campus raises financial and legal liability problems for the convention.

The dispute began last August, soon after Mobile College officially became the University of Mobile and opened the doors of the San Marcos campus. By the time of the annual state convention meeting last November, the convention's state board of missions had disclaimed any connection with the San Marcos campus and convention President Dewey Corder of Birmingham had appointed a four-member subcommittee to study the issue.

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In a series of meetings last fall and this spring, the subcommittee, working with Alabama Baptist Executive Secretary Troy Morrison and convention attorney Chriss H. Doss, outlined at least 17 "concerns" about the Nicaragua venture, ranging from the university's financial health to the feasibility of the campus as a missions endeavor.

In an April 15 meeting, the state board of missions' executive committee approved a recommendation from the subcommittee stating the University of Mobile had violated convention bylaws by failing to get convention approval before borrowing money for the campus.

The executive committee also asked the University of Mobile to take the following actions, as requested by the subcommittee:

1) the university's board of trustees limit funding for the San Marcos campus to specifically designated funds and to funds generated by the campus, and not Cooperative Program funds allocated by the state convention.

2) the university supply the state board of missions with a breakdown of the funds already spent on the campus -- Cooperative Program funds, private donations and other sources. The executive committee asked the university to recoup all Cooperative Program funds spent on the Latin American campus and return them to be used at the Mobile campus.

3) the university incorporate the San Marcos campus as a separate corporation and indemnify the state convention from all potential liability connected with the campus.

University of Mobile President Michael Magnoli issued this statement after the April 15 meeting:

"The trustees of the University, the University's legal counsel, and I adamantly deny that the bylaws of the Alabama Baptist State Convention were broken in the establishment of the branch campus. However, in the spirit of Christian harmony and Baptist unity, I plan to recommend to the trustees of the University on April 26 that the report adopted by the Executive Committee on April 15 not be contested when it is presented to the Board of Missions. There are still several very important points that need to be resolved, but I believe they can be worked out in a brief session with the subcommittee. Alabama Baptists have been presented with an unparalleled mission opportunity in Central America, and we must do everything possible to lay aside individual differences in order to assure success of the Lord's work."

Morrison, who first raised concerns about the campus in an August 1993 letter to Magnoli, said the concerns affect his job responsibility as treasurer of the state convention, and that the university has left the state convention "out of the loop" in implementing the campus.

"I will say up front, this is not a political problem in the convention," Morrison said. "It would be political only if people want to make it that way for their personal agenda. It is not personal from my standpoint. It is not adversarial, nor have I been argumentative.

"I raise the issues because as treasurer of the convention I have certain responsibilities and liabilities in how I handle the monies sent to me by the churches. The major bylaw that affects me personally is that the treasurer will receive and disburse funds as authorized by the convention in its annual session."

Like Morrison, Magnoli said he wanted to avoid political problems within the state convention. In a front-page story in the Sunday, April 17, Mobile Register, Magnoli was quoted as saying, "I'm not interested in creating a moderate-conservative battle. I'm not interested in creating a convention problem. I just want to run my little university and get on with it."

But Magnoli said he and university officials have been frustrated by the series of meetings that have questioned the Latin American campus without giving the university due process to respond. He said the Nicaragua campus is a "wonderful opportunity for international outreach and evangelism" and all decisions of the trustees related to the campus have been "open and transparent."

Magnoli also said the university has tried to resolve the financial and legal issues and "remains committed to eliminating, as much as possible, financial responsibility and legal liability for the convention." But Magnoli said he believes the inquiries into university affairs amount to the convention "micro-managing" the university and said Morrison (an ex-officio board member of the university's trustees) failed to raise any of the concerns at board meetings.

"The executive secretary has been fully informed from the beginning," Magnoli said. "He attended all trustee meetings and received copies of all correspondence relative to the Nicaragua venture since its inception."

Morrison, however, said that when the project was first mentioned in the trustees' spring 1992 meeting and on other occasions, it was stated that no convention funds would be used. "If only private funds were to be used in the venture," Morrison said, "I'm not involved in that. Those funds would have to be spent according to the designation of the giver. It's not in my assignment to tell the entities how to spend funds."

But Morrison said his concerns about convention approval for the project stemmed from a memorandum from Magnoli to the trustees alluding to a \$2.28 million loan with AmSouth Bank. He said he dictated a letter to Magnoli Aug. 18, 1993, asking if the university intended to get approval for the loan from the state board of missions and also raising questions about safety.

The campus at San Marcos, 60 miles from Managua, the capital city, first held classes in the fall of 1993, offering courses in business, computer science and natural science to 150 students. Built in the 1960s, the campus has 22 classrooms, along with library, residential facilities, administrative offices and cafeteria. It had been idle for 13 years when it was acquired by the University of Mobile on a 30-year lease for \$100 per month with the government of San Marcos.

Magnoli said he hoped the Nicaraguan campus would serve 500 students within four years and students would be recruited from all over Central America as well as Mexico and Venezuela. So far, more than \$1 million has been spent on the leased property, Magnoli said, primarily in renovating the building and grounds. He said he expects the university to spend a total of \$2 million in capital improvements. The campus has incurred operating expenses of \$238,000 this year, but Magnoli said he expected the campus to pay for its operating expenses by next year.

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Possible hostage crisis listed  
as concern by Alabama officials

Baptist Press  
4/21/94

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (BP)--The possibility of a hostage crisis is among the questions raised by an Alabama Baptist State Convention subcommittee assigned to study the University of Mobile's new campus in Nicaragua.

Other questions raise uncertainty over the Nicaragua campus as an effective missions venture and whether university capital funds should be invested in a leased foreign property.

A four-member subcommittee was appointed last fall by convention President Dewey Corder of Birmingham to study the University of Mobile campus in San Marcos, Nicaragua, which had begun its first fall semester.

In addition to key concerns whether the university had obtained proper convention approval to expend funds on the venture, the subcommittee warned that "an 'international incident' could occur since the campus is being leased from a foreign government."

The subcommittee distributed newspaper items from 1993 that describe hostage situations in Nicaragua and refer to an unstable political situation.

"There are news reports that the Sandinistas and Contras have waged war recently," added Troy Morrison, the state convention's executive secretary. "My greatest fear is that there could be a retribution by taking American hostages. If there is an international incident, where does that put the University of Mobile or the state convention?"

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University of Mobile President Michael Magnoli, however, argued in a story in The Alabama Baptist that Nicaragua is far safer today than most metropolitan areas of the United States. In addition to his own trips to the country, he said his daughter and his wife spent extended time there, along with others from Mobile Baptist churches, and never raised concerns for their safety.

As for the question of President Chamorro's government, Magnoli said, "Although many challenges remain on the horizon, Mrs. Chamorro's government has made tremendous strides in the last four years after 13 years of civil war, communism and international boycotts."

As to the viability of the Nicaragua campus as a missionary enterprise, the university has actively promoted the campus as a "beachhead" for Southern Baptist missionary efforts and university officials say they have been warmly received. Despite the fact that Nicaragua and other Latin American countries are predominantly Catholic, Magnoli said the people in Nicaragua are eager to see "family values and Christian influence" restored after the communist reign.

But the subcommittee and Morrison expressed concerns that no religion class was being taught this first year of operation and that so many of the university's contacts in San Marcos are Catholic and in some cases communists.

"I am not anti-Roman Catholic," Morrison said, "and neither are Alabama Baptists. But I do not believe Alabama Baptists want to support a Roman Catholic campus in a foreign country."

"I have preached in 17 different countries, and my major job is promoting missions. But what kind of missions endeavor is it? What kind of witness are we making in an impoverished country when we support the elite and the wealthy? Is it geared to fit Baptist or Roman Catholic doctrine? I'm not sure you can make it a missionary endeavor."

Morrison released an April 15, 1994, letter from Don Kammerdiener, executive vice president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, who described his visit to the San Marcos campus.

Kammerdiener said there could be obstacles to evangelism efforts. "There is no question in my mind that an evangelical university could function with a strong Christian witness in Nicaragua if it chose to do so," Kammerdiener said. "What I cannot affirm, however, is whether there are any conditions in the contract or agreements between the city of San Marcos and Mobile University which might prohibit such witness."

Magnoli insisted the campus will provide Alabama Baptist churches with a base of operations for Christian ministry programs in Nicaragua and Latin America. Already, he said, Dauphin Way Baptist Church in Mobile has plans to build an elementary school in the region.

Most of the faculty will be from the United States, Magnoli said, and the reason no religion course was taught in the first year was because "Southern Baptist educators with proper credentials were not available to teach them."

Magnoli also defended the mayor of San Marcos, Ernesto Ortega: "He is an entrepreneur for his town. He is the hardest-working man I've ever known, and he is the reason we're down there. He has worked for us, found labor for us, and has gone out on a limb politically. In every way, he has supported our church services and efforts as Southern Baptists."

Concerning the financial side of the venture, Morrison stated, "I think it's a bad business deal, investing \$2 million (and over 30 years, many more millions of dollars) on property that belongs to a foreign government."

"If I'm the only one who has concerns, let's have the benediction and go home. But the subcommittee, the executive committee and the state board of missions -- they all have these concerns."

"Right now, I would like to take the proposal to the state convention. It is a win-win situation for me. If the convention says it's a great project and we're willing to take the risk, that's OK with me."

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"But in my position, the financial integrity of the convention has to come first. I don't want to do anything that will und rmine the integrity f the individual entities, but I can't sit by and let an entity do something that will bring the convention to financial disaster.

"The convention must be concerned about the liabilities and financial integrity of its entities located in Alabama. If we lose that, we have no missionary or evangelistic endeavor anywhere."

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Church's Thursday night service  
readies Seattle for the weekend By James Watters

Baptist Press  
4/21/94

SEATTLE (BP)--Norman Finch is upbeat about the Thursday evening services at Anchor Baptist Church making a hit in the area just north of University of Washington's sprawling Seattle campus.

"This service is our doorway to a lost community around us," Finch said.

"People who come on Thursday night might not be willing to come to a traditional Sunday morning service. The Thursday service gives us an opportunity to reach these people for Christ."

Anchor Baptist is a new church on the block in Seattle, yet at a familiar location, using the stately facilities once called Brookhaven Baptist Church. A few old-timers from the glorious days of the past are still around and, curiously, are Finch's greatest fan club in the changes afoot.

Jim Godsoe, retired language missions director for the Illinois Baptist Association, is one of the fans. "Actually, Brookhaven had gotten down to mostly a handful of senior citizens," said Godsoe, who served was the church's interim pastor before Finch arrived. "We still have most of our members from before. Though the changes from Brookhaven days have not all been universally welcomed, the new and exciting spirit at Anchor has."

Especially appreciated, Godsoe said, are the young adult families, children in tow, packing Anchor's pews for the Thursday evening services. "Brookhaven had come to be a church without children. It thrills the socks off us now to see families fill up this church facility."

Finch arrived in Seattle last September, hailing from Dallas, where he served three years as associate pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church. Growing up in Albuquerque, he graduated from Texas Tech and SMU Law School before settling at the prestigious Dallas firm of Fulbright and Jaworski. During his four years of legal practice he sensed God's call to Christian ministry. He graduated from Dallas Theological Seminary last spring with a master of theology degree.

Brookhaven Baptists were excited from the first about what their new, young pastor with experience in reaching students and young adults could do in their strategically located part of town. They were ready for change, even willing to consider a new name to symbolize the reorganization of the congregation's way f approaching its up-scale community. But why a Thursday evening service?

Finch was determined not to make changes that would disrupt Brookhaven's faithful ministry over the years, and especially any that would discourage the faithful few who had kept the church from bankruptcy as its membership declin d. Sunday morning and Wednesday services would continue without major change.

Outdoor-oriented Seattle, Finch then discovered, begins its weekend on Thursday night, Friday being the "get set" day for the "go" at quitting time Friday afternoon. A contemporary service to reach the unreached, therefore, would have to be on Monday, Tuesday or Thursday nights. Monday night football was tough competition and the schools already had the option on Tuesday nights.

A Thursday night church activity might actually benefit from the weekend excitement, the church reasoned with Finch, catching university students and young adults in the mood for a fast-paced evening of entertaining family fun focused on spiritual values before rushing off for the weekend.

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"We do not call our Thursday evening event a worship service," Finch said, "though for the Christians involved, it is a high experience of worship. We simply advertise it as a 'Contemporary Christian Service' from 7:00 to 7:55 p.m., with a few extra minutes downstairs in the fellowship hall, which becomes 'Anchor Cafe' on Thursday evenings.

"The attendance has been remarkable. We have added new members in most every service the past seven months," he said.

The growing momentum is the result of two factors, according to Finch. "The first is an unprecedented number of new members immediately getting involved in ministry. The second is the ability this church has discovered to minister to people of all ages and backgrounds. These two things mark the bridge-building now in progress at Anchor Baptist."

The journey of the new believer at Anchor is symbolized by the three weekly services at the church. The first is the Thursday evening service, an unabashed outreach for the largely unreached "Asleep in Seattle" generation. On firm biblical and theological grounds, Finch said, this event is planned to make it easy and cool for the unreached to drop in and enter in.

People brought to faith in Christ through this outreach are immediately channeled into a weekly Sunday evening discipleship training event. As they respond to an ever-widening life of ministry, they move naturally into the third step, the "believers' service" on Sunday morning.

Finch calls the Sunday morning event a "blended service," embracing both contemporary and traditional elements. Its design aims to give the new believer full access to the fellowship of the total congregation, while also providing all believers a worship experience in the presence of the living God.

The crucial Thursday evening outreach finds its heartbeat in "the band," a collection of professional-level musicians who lead the service. The group rehearses every Thursday "on the way home from work," beginning with the vocalists at 5 and adding the instrumentalists as they arrive about 6.

A wide variety of other professional skills come in out of the marketplace to provide technical power for the evening. Stage lighting accentuates the action, and a crew armed with PowerPoint 3.0 on a Macintosh PowerBook projects a multi-media evening on a Sharp liquid crystal projector, backed by a JVC video deck. The best in Seattle.

Other new members are pressed into service in welcoming lines beginning in the parking lot and leading to the vestibule, and in policing the pews to be sure ample pens and response cards are available -- and that leftover items from other church events are cleared away. As 7 o'clock approaches the building is alive with action inside and out, upstairs and down.

Thursday evening at Anchor is contemporary, Christian and a service to God and the unreached generation in north Seattle. Part entertainment, part informational and unapologetically evangelical, the full-house attendance on Thursday evening is given a stirring Christian experience before bustling off to home and the weekend ahead.

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(BP) photo available upon request from the Northwest Baptist Witness newsmagazine.

(BP) Brites

Compiled by Art Toalston

#### Teen got more than a job

WEST FRANKFORT, Ill. (BP)--A local pastor drove up while some boys were playing basketball to ask David Green to come by the church later. A teen who did odd jobs, Green assumed the pastor had some work for him. But when he got to Second Baptist, Wendell Garrison opened his Bible and talked about life and God. The encounter, 29 years ago, still is having an impact. Green accepted Christ as his Savior that day to fill the "empty place" in his life. It was "very emotional, dramatic and exciting. I remember Wendell and me hugging, rejoicing." Green's new faith came after friend Mark Speers first invited him to Sunday school. Now 44, Green has traveled the world with the Air Force and the U.S. with various businesses. Now he's home in West Frankfort as publisher of three newspapers and at Second Baptist. Asked why he's a Baptist, Green said, "First, I was invited to a Baptist church . . . . Mark and his parents cared about this little boy with holes in his jeans."

#### One more word for Jesus yields faith

HOLLY HILL, Fla. (BP)--Ready to leave for a missions trip to preach in Tanzania, Africa, John Jennings, pastor of First Baptist Church in Holly Hill, Fla., visited with a neighbor. "He knew about my trip," Jennings said. "For nine months I had shared with him. One time a word, another more and yet more . . . but he had not received Christ. Just before leaving him, I said, 'Before I go far away to speak about this Jesus, I want to know that if I never return, or if you depart this life before I return, I will meet you in heaven. Won't you, now, receive Jesus?' This man, way in years, took my hand, nearly crushing it, and said, 'Yes, I will!'"

#### She had more faith than they realized

TAIPEI, Taiwan (BP)--The second time Tan Goatli came to church in Taipei, Taiwan, someone suggested prayer for the woman's eyes. "I didn't understand what the problem was and still don't," recounts Southern Baptist missionary Nan Sugg, "but doctors in two major hospitals had told her there was nothing that could be done." But: "Over the next few weeks, her eyes gradually improved," Sugg reported. "She says they are fine now and she can see clearly. When she told me about it during Sunday school, I asked her if, since God had healed her eyes, she would like to invite Jesus into her life and become a Christian. She said, 'Oh, I did that the first time I came here.' Her daughter, a Christian for several years, had been sharing with her. One exposure to a clear presentation of the gospel in the church was all it took to help her step into the kingdom."

#### The results could be mind-boggling

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. (BP)--Mind-boggling. Imagine, says Richard Ross, Baptist Sunday School Board staffer who helped brainstorm the "True Love Waits" campaign for sexual abstinence until marriage: "The impact of these young people's decisions is potentially mind-boggling when you consider the number of pregnancies that may not occur, the number of infectious diseases that may not be caught, the number of emotionally healthier people and marriages that may result, the witness for Christ that will be stronger in their lives."

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**That trucker just may have a heart**

WHEELING, W.Va. (BP)--Someday you may meet a trucker in heaven. Says John Forloins, chaplain at the T.A. Truckstop and its Truckers' Christian Chapel in Wheeling the past two years, "One driver, who was saved during the first part of my ministry here, stopped in to talk and told me he is now a bivocational pastor in the southern part of West Virginia." Forloines says of truckers, "These people are the salt of the earth. True, there are those who are boisterous and argumentative and, yes, those who drink and blaspheme. But, oh, how many there are who are fine Christians. I have met deacons, assistant pastors and others who miss being in their own church and are seeking a place to worship. There are those who are seekers after the truth and those who have problems and need someone to talk with and pray with."

**He's a 'faithful extremist' for Jesus**

BISMARCK, N.D. (BP)--As president of the Dakota Southern Baptist Fellowship, Durward "Dude" Garrett, pastor of Temple Baptist Church in Fargo, N.D., says he intends "to encourage and strengthen pastors and churches to be 'super faithful' servants of Jesus. By super faithful, I mean we should take faithfulness to an extreme. I seldom promote extremes. Moderation is wise counsel in most situations. But when it comes to serving Jesus faithfully, I don't think we can be too extreme."

**No shortage of opportunities to care**

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (BP)--Circuit Judge John Ward says he concludes his morning prayers each day by telling God, "Lord, I want to volunteer today for whatever it is you have for me to do." And God answers, regularly providing him witnessing opportunities, says Ward, a member of Park Hill Baptist Church in North Little Rock. It's not so unusual, Ward says. "How did people come to Jesus? In trouble, sick, in distress. Do we have any shortages of those types of people today?"

**There's more to Nashville than the Opry**

NASHVILLE (BP)--Nashville's Two Rivers Baptist Church was named "Best Place of Worship" in the Nashville Scene weekly's 1994 "Best of Nashville Reader's Poll." The newspaper noted, "No surprise that, here in the Protestant Vatican, the Buckle of the Bible Belt, a church without any bells or smells would win this category. Two Rivers may look more like a new college campus than the cathedral of Notre Dame, but they're feeding the flock in other ways -- with mighty fine preaching, a legendary singles ministry and a very warm welcome to newcomers. At Two Rivers, worship is most definitely a verb." The church's pastor is Jerry Sutton. Additionally, the church placed second in the "Best Church Choir" category.

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He had to get locked up  
to learn how to look up

By Connie Davis

Baptist Press  
4/21/94

PETROS, Tenn. (BP)--At the age of 24, Mark Cunningham became a Christian. Three years later he committed the crime that put him in prison with a 20-year sentence.

He didn't really understand Christianity before committing the crime, he reflected. He hadn't learned "on the outside" what he learned in a discipleship course at Brushy Mountain State Penitentiary in Petros, Tenn.

Cunningham and other prisoners at Brushy Mountain have access to many religious experiences, because an array of groups -- Christian, Jewish, Muslim and various sects -- come into prisons to lead services, revivals and studies.

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But when a MasterLife course was offered, Cunningham said it sounded different. And it was.

Although it was to be restricted to a small group, the word spread as those in the course talked about it and more men joined, Cunningham reported. The leader, Ray Maynard, Tennessee Baptist Convention prison ministry consultant, stretched the guidelines advising small groups, to accommodate from 15 to 20 men for the sessions.

The time spent weekly in the study was an escape from regular prison life, in which prisoners generally aren't sociable and many encourage strife, Cunningham said.

People who didn't get along with each other attended the six-month study and began to understand each other, he said.

"All of us (taking the course) had been saved. But we needed something to bring us together for fellowship. That means so much in a correctional facility," Cunningham said.

"For a bunch of convicts to get together and fellowship and just praise the Lord, it was a new experience," he said.

Maynard was one reason for the success of the course, Cunningham reported, noting none of the prisoners doubted his commitment. Maynard, who also is a director of missions for the Union Baptist Association in Sparta, Tenn., drove 180 miles each evening to lead them.

Maynard also has the gift of making people -- "even prisoners" -- feel loved, Cunningham said, adding, "You feel that no matter what you've done, he's your best friend."

Maynard's attitudes made the men feel comfortable enough to share, he added, which is an integral part of discipleship courses.

Maynard also was inclusive, Cunningham said. Some groups which lead religious meetings have a "you and us" approach, he said. "With Ray it was always 'us.'"

Cunningham went on to take Experiencing God and Making Peace with Your Past, other discipleship courses published by the Baptist Sunday School Board.

"I've grown more as a Christian while I have been locked up than when I was on the street," he said.

It's understandable, said Cunningham. Living the Christian life is harder "on the outside" because of the many temptations.

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