

# The Southern Baptist EDUCATOR

News Journal of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools

Volume LXIX, No. 2

First Quarter-2005

## Christian Faith and the Academic Disciplines: Finding the Right Context for Discussion

Adapted from an article in *Intégrité: A Faith and Learning Journal*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (Fall 2004): 3-12

by **Bob R. Agee**

**Executive Director, ASBCS**

Of the 3,000-plus colleges and universities in the United States, approximately 1,600 are classified as independent not-for-profit institutions. At some point along the way, every institution has to address its heritage and determine the extent to which it will take responsibility for being faithful to that heritage. How does an institution that aspires to be a seriously intentional Christian institution of higher learning live out that dream?

Richard T. Hughes takes that question a step further in his chapter of the book *Faithful Learning and the Christian Scholarly Vocation* (2003). He probes the question, "How is it possible for Christian colleges and universities to mature into absolutely first rate institutions of higher learning while, at the same time, living out of the faith traditions that gave them birth?" (p.3)

Institutions that were started by denominations often have turned their backs on their faith heritage or pushed the foundational concepts of their faith perspective to the periphery of their thinking and have chosen to become small imitations of state universities with a few assorted religious activities.

As Hughes points out, in the quest for academic respectability, administration and faculty often sought ways for faith and the academy to "co-exist" rather than for the institution's faith heritage to inform and guide the teaching-learning process.

He warns that "If we frame the question in terms of coexistence...we have set ourselves up for failure and can surely anticipate that when our institutions achieve the levels of academic excellence toward which we aspire, the faith dimensions of our colleges and universities will inevitably wither away" (p.4). In the final analysis, we have to grapple with the question he raises: "Is it possible to embrace serious intellectual inquiry precisely because

of our Christian commitments, not in spite of those commitments?" (p.4)

All of us have heard and probably used the parade of ways that a school addresses the aspiration to be intentionally Christian institutions. There are many pieces of the puzzle. No one piece of the puzzle guarantees success in our efforts although each piece plays an important role.

We start by looking for faculty and staff who have the proper academic and experiential credentials and who attest to the fact that

they have had a personal experience with Jesus Christ and are active in a local congregation of Christian believers. Within the life of the institution, provisions are made to confront students with the truth and the claims of the Christian gospel. Opportunities for ministry and service are made available for students, faculty, and staff.

Programs, emphases, opportunities, and ministry personnel are evident in planning and programming the work of the college or

*continued on page 9*

### Tentative Schedule for ASBCS Annual Meeting, June 5-7, 2005 Westin LaCantera Resort, San Antonio, TX

#### SUNDAY, JUNE 5, 2005

2:00 PM – 4:30 PM ASBCS Board Meeting

7:00 PM – 9:00 PM First Plenary Session

#### MONDAY, JUNE 6, 2005

7:30 AM – 8:45 AM Presidents' Buffet Breakfast

Auxiliary Groups Buffet Breakfast

9:00 AM – 10:30 AM Second Plenary Session

10:30 AM – 10:45 AM Break

10:45 AM – Noon Workshops

12:15 PM – 1:45 PM ASBCS Business Luncheon

(Presidents and CAOs)

Auxiliary Groups Buffet Lunch

2:00 PM – 3:30 PM Workshops

7:00 PM – 9:00 PM Annual ASBCS Banquet – Westin LaCantera

#### TUESDAY, JUNE 7, 2005

7:30 AM – 8:45 AM Chief Academic Officers Breakfast

Auxiliary Groups Breakfast

9:00 AM – 10:15 AM Workshops

10:15 AM – 10:30 AM Break

10:30 AM – 12:00 PM Third Plenary Session

12:00 PM Adjourn

2:00 PM Golf Outing at LaCantera Resort (Site of Texas Open)

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Vol. LXIX, No. 2

## First Quarter 2005

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*The Southern Baptist Educator* (ISSN 0038-3848) is a news magazine published quarterly for administrators, faculty, staff, trustees and friends of member schools by the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools.

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“Legal Notes” is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information on legal issues facing Southern Baptist-related higher education. It is provided with the understanding that the publisher and editors are not engaged in rendering legal counsel. “Legal Notes” is not intended as a substitute for the services of a legal professional. If your institution needs legal counsel, a competent attorney should be consulted.

Annual subscription is \$8.00.

# 2004 Fall Enrollment at ASBCS Member Schools

	Full-time Equivalency	Total Headcount
1. Anderson College	1,409	1,667
2. Averett University	1,816	2,719
3. Baptist College of Florida	541	652
4. Baptist College of Health Sciences	713	803
5. Baptist University of the Americas	—	185
6. Baylor University	13,003	13,799
7. Belmont University	3,448	3,941
8. Blue Mountain College	342	389
9. Bluefield College	754	817
10. Brewton-Parker College	1,168	1,136
11. California Baptist University	2,718	2,905
12. Campbell University	9,561	11,232
13. Campbellsville University	1,344	2,052
14. Carson-Newman College	1,958	2,053
15. Charleston Southern University	2,190	2,875
16. Chowan College	673	687
17. Clear Creek Baptist Bible College	178	212
18. Dallas Baptist University	3,572	4,714
19. East Texas Baptist University	1,330	1,412
20. Fruitland Baptist Bible Institute	—	212
21. Gardner-Webb University	3,278	3,724
22. Georgetown College	1,284	1,835
23. Hannibal-LaGrange College	820	1,067
24. Hardin-Simmons University	2,154	2,392
25. Hawaii Baptist Academy	—	1,042
26. Houston Baptist University	2,052	2,257
27. Howard Payne University	1,415	1,319
28. Judson College (Alabama)	433	362
29. Judson College (Illinois)	978	1,220
30. Louisiana College	993	1,085
31. Mars Hill College	1,302	1,384
32. Mercer University	6,467	7,177
33. Mid-Continent University	857	833
34. Mississippi College	3,272	3,659
35. Missouri Baptist University	2,310	4,058
36. North Greenville College	1,682	1,759
37. Oklahoma Baptist University	1,482	1,684
38. Ouachita Baptist University	1,553	1,511
39. Palm Beach Atlantic University	2,704	3,066
40. Samford University	4,216	4,416
41. Shorter College	2,527	2,549
42. Southwest Baptist University	3,310	3,445
43. Truett-McConnell College	326	359
44. Union University	2,521	2,919
45. University of Mary Hardin-Baylor	2,863	2,706
46. University of Mobile	1,627	1,825
47. University of the Cumberlands	1,503	1,745
48. Virginia Intermont College	1,073	1,117
49. Wayland Baptist University	4,100	6,189
50. William Carey College	2,085	2,783
51. William Jewell College	1,370	1,558
52. Williams Baptist College	536	632
53. Yellowstone Baptist College	51	56
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>109,862</b>	<b>128,195</b>

Source: from information supplied by member schools. —=No data reported

## COMMENT:

# Another Exciting Success Story

Bob R. Agee, Executive Director, ASBCS



In December I had the privilege of attending a banquet at California Baptist University celebrating the tenth anniversary of Dr. Ron Ellis becoming President of that fine institution. Their Board of Trustees had insisted on the event and charged a committee of staff and faculty to plan the occasion. It was a delightful evening of celebrating fantastic achievement at the school over the past ten years.



Bob R. Agee

The Board took great pride in pointing to all that had been accomplished. Enrollment has grown by more than 300 percent, they achieved university status in 1998, six master's degrees have been added along with an additional bachelor's degree, additional land has been acquired to allow for future expansion of campus facilities (no small task in a very expensive real estate market), and five major construction projects have been funded and completed. Their budget has increased from \$11.3 million in 1994 to \$45.6 million in 2004 and the institution continues to operate with a balanced budget. Their annual gift income has increased 150% and endowment assets have doubled.

The university has experience significant success in virtually every area of their programs. They continue to climb in national rankings of academic programs, and they have become well known in the western United States for their service to the local community and for their involvement in international projects. They have recruited an outstanding faculty and staff

and have emerged from being a relatively unknown to being one of the leading private universities in that part of the U.S.

As I listened to government officials, educational leaders, and denominational leaders speak at the celebration, it was clear that there is a wonderful positive working relationship between the president, his staff, the faculty, students, the denomination, the community, and alumni. California Baptists are extremely proud of the school and what is happening there because it sends the signal to the larger world that Southern Baptists in California are serious players in the field of education. The mayor of Riverside, California, pointed to the fact that recent additions to the campus have totally changed the image of the university in the eyes of the community and they now see the university as worthy of their full support.

It didn't take long to figure out that a key factor in this amazing success story is their president, Dr. Ron Ellis. He brought to the task that exceptional combination of sound academic preparation, breadth of experience in higher education administration, a keen understanding of what it takes for an educational institution to succeed, a commitment to comprehensive long range strategic planning, a genuine heart for Christian higher education, a comprehensive and challenging vision for the future of the university, amazing fund-raising instincts, and an exceptional ability to surround himself with staff people who share his vision and commitment. Besides all that he brings a boundless energy and enthusiasm to the task that is infectious.

He understands the value of teamwork which the administrative staff and faculty deeply appreciate.

Among the many things I appreciated about the evening was the fact that it was not just a celebration of the past ten years. In that usual Ellis way, the evening's focus shifted to the vision for the future and talk of more growth in enrollment and expansion of campus facilities and development of new programs. They will begin a School of Nursing in the Fall of 2005 and are discussing other key graduate programs where they believe they can make a contribution.

Ten years ago, California Baptists were raising the question as to whether it was possible to sustain and support a Baptist university

there. Enrollment had declined, the campus was in poor condition, financial support was meager, and the prospects for the future were bleak. Now California Baptists are singing an entirely new song as well they should. Here is a great example of a university that can work closely with their Baptist family and succeed in every area of the life of the university at the same time.

It is a privilege to work with our family of schools and to have the opportunity to share in your successes. We applaud every one of our schools and their great work of advancing the cause of Christ through Christian higher education. It really is possible to dream noble and exciting dreams for our schools and to see them come true. Thanks to every person who works to make those dreams come true in our family. Have a happy and prosperous 2005. ■

**It really is possible to dream noble and exciting dreams for our schools and to see them come true.**

## Robertson/Farmer/Hester Educational Loans Available to Faculty and Administrators

Robertson/Farmer/Hester Educational Loan funds designed to assist full-time faculty or administrators at qualifying Southern Baptist-related educational institutions to obtain their doctoral degrees and post-doctoral study/research are available from the Southern Baptist Foundation.

Applicants are required to be active members of a local Southern Baptist church and they must have been accepted in a program of doctoral or postdoctoral study. Professors and administrators can be awarded up to a maximum of \$10,000 over a five-year period with a

maximum of \$2,000 per semester and \$1,500 per summer term.

The loans are to be paid back in service at a qualifying Southern Baptist school at the rate of \$2,000 per academic year. If a loan recipient ceases to be employed by a qualifying Southern Baptist educational institution for any reason or fails to complete the degree in five years the loan must be paid back in cash plus interest.

Applications and policies can be requested by calling Margaret Cammuse at the Southern Baptist Foundation, 615-254-8823. Deadline for applications is April 15 for consideration for the next academic year. ■

# The University, the Church

by Thomas E. Corts

*Editor's Note: Thomas E. Corts, president of Samford University, Birmingham, Ala., delivered the following Hester Lecture during the annual meeting of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools May 31–June 2, 2004 at the Cool Springs Marriott Hotel in Franklin, Tenn.*

The New Testament concept of being “in this world, but not of this world,”<sup>1</sup> summarizes the dilemma of each of us, personally, and of our institutions. The church (in this paper, I shall use “the church” as representing the great body of all Christian believers)—and especially Evangelicals in America, have alternately “struggled with an inherent tension between ... keeping that which they defined as sacred uncontaminated by the profane world,” and “infusing the world with sanctifying influences.”<sup>2</sup> In other words, should we keep separate and apart from the world, or become involved in the world in order to win the world for Christ? From the first century A.D., and even under the Emperor Constantine and in the dark ages, there has been an uneasy coexistence between culture and Christianity—Caesar and Christ; *paideia* and *Logos*.<sup>3</sup>



Thomas E. Corts

Now by culture, I mean the totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, art, science, beliefs, and all products of human work and thought, the collected wisdom and sentiment of past and present.<sup>4</sup> In America, especially, our culture and our Christianity have been at times friends, and at times, enemies.

Yet, speaking in frank generalities, it is probably true today that modern American culture has overwhelmed modern American Christianity.<sup>5</sup> The ceaseless waves of messages from movies, newspapers, TV, have acculturated a sea of secularism and spawned a rip-tide, pulling American Christians under. At the risk of gross oversimplification, it seems that with deliberate speed in the post-World War II era, prosperity came to great numbers in this country, allowing the rising “middle class” Christian masses to imbibe the consumerist pop culture until bloated, and tranquilized by the transitory sweetness of the good life, to sink into the sea of cultural abyss.

The editor of *Christian Century* said in 1948 that three separate forces were bidding for ascendancy in the spiritual life of America: Protestantism,<sup>6</sup> Roman Catholicism, Secularism.<sup>6</sup> Secularism has won thus far, as we look back on the 50 years from 1950 to 2000, a time of radically shifting realities. Consider what happened in that approximate time frame. Virtually everyone with half an inclination and minimal preparation was able to go to high school and on to college. Marriage and the family came under harsh attack. Birth control made women freer. Sex was lifted from its undercover status in public conversation. Rebellion and civil disobedience became more acceptable. We confronted racial prejudice and outlawed segregation. Laws made work less offensive and demanding. Easy credit taught us not to defer our desires, but to have it all without waiting. Clothing styles and dress codes lost their modesty. Relentlessly catchy slogans and rhythms stuck in our brains so that we repeated advertising without conscious intent. Urban, so-called music, with ribald language, demeaning to women and flaunting street vernacular’s dirtiest words, tumbled from the lips of mere kiddies, sans anything harmonious. Holding to freedoms that the Founding Fathers likely never would have allowed, we

endured the outrageous—the truly uncouth outrageous—on TV half-time shows, on commercials, on billboards and in other public venues, stretching the bounds of public taste. We not only *tolerated* the cult of personality among “stars” of athletics, movies, TV and public prominence, we *made* those stars, sometimes even allowing them to invent themselves, and rewarding them with obscene profits as compensation for their illicit theft of the unmerited admiration of our young.

Perhaps it should be the last straw—but I predict it is not—that *TIME* Magazine has named among the 100 *most influential people in the world*, one Simon Cowell, a mere judge on a soon-to-fade television show called “American Idol,” a modified copycat of “Ted Mack’s Original Amateur Hour,” from 1948.<sup>7</sup> The hip hop group “Outkast” is on that same list. You see, ever so gradually, “what’s happening” weaves its way into public awareness, into tolerability and acceptance, into the culture.

And what of the church? I wish I could say, “Praise the Lord! The church has stood firm, unmovable against the cultural trash that least admirably represents our national scene.” But, sadly, I cannot. I had hoped that the billions we have spent on Sunday Schools, day schools, and vacation Bible schools would produce a generation that has its values correct.<sup>8</sup> I would have thought the vast sums spent on television preaching might have turned the tide. I wish all the church buildings and all the church-going had made a consistent and measurable difference. But we are left to admit: the divorce rate is about the same among those who attend church, and those who do not. The 70 percent of men between the ages of 18 and 34 who visit a pornography web site at least once a month, includes believers and church-goers.<sup>9</sup> The ranks of the high-and-mighty, white collar elite who have balked us for billions includes those Bible-carrying, church-going, God-talking criminals who will escape jail, only by legal slight-of-hand—if they do escape.<sup>10</sup> As the Barna Organization has concluded, “Peoples’ faith does not make as much of a difference as might be expected....”<sup>11</sup>

Now having already made so many strong statements, it is probably time for a disclaimer. In every generation it is the privilege of the old to condemn the young. It is probably characteristic that every reigning class of senior citizens thinks theirs was “the greatest generation,” and that whatever comes along afterward will not be as good. In the interest of full disclosure, I herewith admit to being a card-carrying member of AARP, to being granted the senior citizen discount at a fast food restaurant, even without confessing my age. While my intent in this paper is to be objective and fair, you can now beware.

I was a lowly graduate student when I first read a book by anthropologist Edward T. Hall, *The Silent Language*.<sup>12</sup> Hall’s idea is that communication is far more than what we *say*, it encompasses non-verbal communication, and the sum total of our actions and behavior. A subtle, subconscious patterning of conduct and behavior results from communication gathered into what we come to know as culture. (Edward T. Hall). In *sub rosa* ways we never recognize, these collective communications, woven into the warp and woof of our culture, become the ever-so-silently conveyed meanings that influence our atti-

**I had hoped that the billions we have spent on Sunday Schools, day schools, and vacation Bible schools would produce a generation that has its values correct.**

# and the *Culture*

tudes, that plant ideas, reinforce positions, fashion our taste and sense of propriety, cultivate familiarity – all by stealth.<sup>13</sup>

We have more means of messaging — they come at us faster than any other civilization in history — and from this torrent of communication, culture is going to be formed, modified, adapted, and with greater alacrity than ever before, even as other elements of culture will be more readily rejected, forgotten, shunted aside. This cheap, easy and almost continuous communication intensifies the impact of culture. For instance, our students' lives will be shaped by cell phones and e-mail, the ease with which they can communicate anywhere, anytime. They all have calling plans that access the world, and pre-programmed country codes to talk with friends in the military on aircraft carriers thousands of miles away, and to mission volunteers on other continents. In 1950, about a million overseas phone calls originated in the U.S. In 2001, the number was a staggering 6.27 billion.<sup>14</sup> E-mail messages float in cyberspace with unimaginable ease and cheapness, among the four billion existing web sites, with tens of thousands being added daily.<sup>15</sup> The computer and web-site are fast becoming teenagers' favorite source for entertainment.<sup>16</sup> Those e-mail messages and chat rooms, for good and for ill, affect our culture, uniting friends and families, accounting for billions of dollars of sales, provoking marriage and divorce, sharing information that resolves problems and heals disease, facilitating crime and mischief, and coordinating terrorist acts anywhere on earth.

All this communication capacity means news spreads rapidly and by multiple means, releasing gigabytes of information to impact our culture, which in turn, impacts each of us. (For example, Samford University had 185,000 internet hits in the month of April.) The capacity for names, and new words to appear suddenly in everyday usage is astounding. Terms like “24/7,” “text messaging,” “googling” have come from cyberspace to achieve practical usage.<sup>17</sup>

Politicians have known for years that name recognition is crucial. That is why yard-signs, billboards and TV commercials become so important to candidates. In the voting booth, if a voter has no strong conviction, he tends to pull the lever beside the name that seems most familiar – despite whether he knows anything about the individual.

Now, as media within our culture regularly discuss divorce, adultery, murder, racial strife, homosexuality — we are being conditioned. The terms become more acceptable, more a part of our subconscious, almost routine. That is true, also, of curses, and the four-letter words of movies and rap music, so offensive to my generation. They have become matter-of-fact to our children and grandchildren so that they have lost their shock value. Their frequent use breeds familiarity, in the same sense that brand names become ensconced in our memories, and repetition fastens candidates' names on the memory hook of our awareness.

Perhaps this subtle cultural influence can be seen more clearly by looking at a foreign country, where acquaintance with America is quite limited. In Damascus, Syria, the TV series “Seinfeld” airs twice daily. For many young Syrians it affords a chance to practice their English, and a window through which they see American culture. What will a young Syrian conclude about American culture on the basis of “Seinfeld?” Similarly, a Syrian teacher of English asks plaintively for help in explaining American family life to her students. She asked, “Does ‘Friends’ show a typical family?” To the Arab world, this is the insight we currently provide to our Christian culture.<sup>18</sup>

Clearly, the fourth estate, the public media, play a huge role. The average person among us was reported only a few years ago, to process at least 500 distinct messages per day through sensory perception.

With the advent of e-mail, fax, cell phones, text-messaging, etc., it surely must be at least double that number. The news buffet served to us every day by the media tends never to involve the routine, or the normal. It almost always relates some

extreme or exceptional human behavior. News professionals admit their inclination to feature what is unusual. “Dog bites man,” is not newsworthy. “Man bites dog,” is. And add to that the fact that our culture influences even the choices the media make. So, if the culture seems inordinately interested in sex, or in children, pets, or whatever, even the media's judgment about what to feature will be tainted by the culture. When a deranged mother is accused of murdering her children, the story leads, even if she was miles away, and obviously very ill. A basketball star is charged with rape. An adult teacher has children by one of the children on whom she developed a crush when he was her student. A child, barely a teen-ager, is kidnapped by a strange polygamist who plans to make her his wife.<sup>19</sup> Sexual-related torment of prisoners by guards at the Abu Graib prison in Iraq ran among the lead stories for 18 straight days, and is not over yet. These are all stories that have fascinated the public and have occupied our air waves, not just with one-shot, 30-second spots, but in an ongoing way – tying up the lead story position for days, and reflected in TV, magazines and newspapers, all looking for exclusive angles.

Now, my point is that our culture's seductive pull is strengthened by making evil interesting – far more interesting to most than good. There would have been nothing newsworthy, if, like the average household in America, that mother had given her children lunch, seen them to soccer practice, piano lessons, etc. The basketball star's visit to a Colorado resort would not have attracted attention. If an adult teacher taught her schoolchildren and went home to her family, why would media notice? Had the polygamist merely proposed to an Oregon teen-ager, it would have been rebuffed as ridiculous and unreported. That prisoners are in a Baghdad prison is expected, and not the stuff of breaking news. In each of these cases, it was the evil, the wrong, that made the situation exceptional and it was the evil that made purveyors of news confident of the public's interest.

What happens, when news of aberrant behavior is spread in headlines, photographs, news reel footage, and repeated over and again? Repetition is one of the great learning devices, and that wrongful conduct is planted in the mind. Unintentionally, evil is being advertised in prime media space, with the utmost emphasis, so that the masses cannot avoid it. Such advertising costs commercial corporations huge sums of money: yet evil is granted this prime play *gratis*. And worse, evil even gets favored positioning that no ad agency in America can obtain for its client at any price: the top right hand corner of the daily newspaper; the lead story on the 10 o'clock news; and repeat plays as emerging details enhance the story.

**“Does ‘Friends’ show a typical family?” To the Arab world, this is the insight we currently provide to our Christian culture.**

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## The University...

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So, we are victimized by the culture in a vicious cycle. Public taste seeks stories of deviant behavior, of persons with evil intent. The media give the people the stories of evil in the world, and the repetition of the accounts of evil make us all more at ease, more comfortable, less likely to object to stories of evil. Evil has a hayday.

You are familiar with *The Screwtape Letters*. With apologies to the memory of C. S. Lewis, I have this vision of Screwtape writing Wormwood something like the following:

“My Dear Wormwood,

Congratulations are in order. I must say you are working well with clothing designers, actors and actresses, movie makers, sports stars, media outlets and people who influence public taste. They are beginning to enjoy a little good old-fashioned lust. We could not be getting better publicity. Our side is well-represented in the best newspapers, TV, movies, and in all the media. And we are reaching the young who have the rest of their lives before them. Every adolescent school girl is striving to be sexy and seductive. In fairly short time, we have engineered a massive increase in the permissiveness society allows. Here and there one hears objections, but children have to learn that sexual expression is healthy, and they are going to know the facts of life sooner or later. It thrills me that people are not hearing all that virtuous pap: instead, every day they become more familiar with the naturalness of hatred, lying, adultery, promiscuity. As you know, we must be unrelenting in wearing down the objections of the Enemy. Greed, lust, enmity—people have to realize that these are just human realities. If you can keep it up, dear Nephew, evil will be better known than Coca Cola, people will no longer mouth all that religious stuff, unhappiness will be long-lasting, and we will have achieved success.

Your affectionate uncle,

SCREWTAPE

(Adapted after the style of C. S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*, 1961.)

None of us single-handedly chose this culture that spreads evil more readily than virtue. Yet it is the culture in which we do our work, the culture in which our lives are lived, and in which our institutions will falter or prosper. It is the culture of the people we serve.<sup>20</sup>

Perhaps it is true, that as the social authority of the church and Christians seemed to wane, we sought and found ways to compromise and appease the culture. The general public, especially in the South, delights in *talking* about Christian faith and even buying books about it<sup>21</sup>—why in 2002, *Publisher's Weekly* noted that for the first time in history, the best-selling non-fiction book and the best-selling fiction book were both from Christian publishers.<sup>22</sup> Pressed to accommodate, perhaps in a vain attempt to retain our importance, Christians emphasized the wrong things—e.g., politics, particular candidates, stem cell research, monuments to the Ten Commandments, etc. We in the church are guilty of playing our own “star” game—allowing the cult of personality to dominate churches, denominations, the religious music scene, the Christian book market. One scholar accuses: Concessions intended to make Christ more palatable to an increasingly secular public may have secularized and “commodified” Christianity, in order to keep numbers in our churches, to keep selling Christian books, to keep at least some level of the society’s focus on our faith.<sup>23</sup> “The issue is not that evangelical Christians are tainted by interaction with secular culture, but rather that the boundary between ‘secular’ and ‘evangelical’

has become ever more permeable as evangelical media have grown over the past twenty years.”<sup>24</sup>

Culture, the silent language, threatens every Baptist college and university and every university leader. When most of our institutions were founded, it was common to link higher education to religious purposes. We could be proud of the fact that even many a state university sprang directly from, or from familiarity with evangelical colleges. Many a state university charter originally had something in it about building character, about God-given truth, or some such phrase. In the 1890’s almost every state university required chapel and many required Sunday church attendance. Identification with a local church was common and state university presidents were often ministers. (For example, all the presidents of the University of Alabama from its founding in 1820 to 1900 were ordained ministers, mostly Baptist, including Basil Manly.)

But as colleges and universities became more sophisticated, as Darwinism rose to importance, as higher criticism of the Scriptures became more commonly known, the culture began to shift and so did the willingness to be identified with Christianity and with the church. According to George Marsden, the result was that “By the 1920’s, the evangelical Protestantism of the old-time colleges had been effectively excluded from leading university classrooms.”<sup>25</sup>

As Marsden has so well demonstrated in his book, *The Soul of the American University*, it was big-hearted, open, thoughtful individuals who dropped much of the religious influence of our colleges, out of a desire to be tolerant, to grant freedom. In their desire to allow freedom of choice and not to make faith compulsory – as if it *could* be; in their desire to be inclusive of all views, and to be pluralistic, they came to exclude all religious perspectives. Specific events hastened the transformation, but the culture was wearing down society’s tolerance for church colleges or for Christian influence in state colleges.

Among specific influences, we could spend a great deal of time on the new rationalism of the latter 19th century, the Scopes trial and the stress over evolution; the rise of the scientific age; the celebration of youth immediately after World War II, and the subsequent rebellion and the defiance of youth in the sixties, the national anger over Viet Nam; permissiveness flaunted by the Woodstock generation; the institutional requirements imposed by federal aid. Well-intentioned, powerful influences slanted our culture from a position that was totally accepting and expecting of heavy religious influence, to a posture of almost disdain for religious concepts within the higher educational institution. Indeed, there seemed to develop almost an inverse index: the more intentionally religious was an institution, obviously the less academically strong it was, and the less respect it tended to garner in academic circles.

The reality is that culture is still working against the believing evangelical Christian. Many individuals in our society would defend our right to believe whatever we desire, including all the tenets dearest to the evangelical heart, but the culture leans against our institutions. Consider a few ways our culture is foe, rather than friend.

First, our society does not warm to people who take their religion seriously—any religion. It is simply not cool to be too much concerned about matters of deep conviction that can so readily distinguish one person from another. The movies, TV, the media? They are all a bit uncomfortable making religion an important subject. When ABC employed Peggy Wehmeyer, she was the only correspondent of a national news network who was devoted to religion. Supposedly, in a financial tight, ABC terminated Peggy’s contract and, for all the money spent on news-gathering in this country, not a single major TV network has a religion correspondent. The big daily newspapers, if they have a religion section, confine it to an emphasis once per week, and

**Culture, the silent language, threatens every Baptist college and university and every university leader.**

might not have even that, were it not for the prospect of significant church advertising that tends to come along with it.

A perfect illustration has been the flap over Mel Gibson's movie, "The Passion of Christ." First, we endured the enormously inflated charges that the film was anti-semitic. The media almost appeared to enjoy playing "gotcha." Then, it seemed there was amazement at the film's box office success, but no one knew quite what to say about it. Generally, the media found certain extremes to report, and then stepped back to a roster of quotations from people who were impressed by it and from people who were merely mystified by it. It seemed newsworthy, but they did not know how to fit such a powerful message about Jesus into their generalist approach.

We have to admit that a civilization that prides itself on pluralism and diversity cannot focus on one particular religion, let alone the strong convictions of evangelical Christianity. Our society likes soft, friendly and cozy words about religion – "values," "faith," "virtues," etc., but it is uncomfortable with confessional religion, or profound claims. "Touched By An Angel" is about as hard core religious as the networks can abide.

Thus, if our society refuses to respect and exalt Jesus, why should we be surprised if it does not sanction and condone OUR devotion to Jesus. (As Duane Litfin and David Dockery, our previous lecturers have urged, if Jesus is to be Lord of each of us, and Lord of our institutions, we cannot expect society to be impressed by that confession, nor to respect and esteem us for it!) After three decades in this role, as president of a Baptist college, I conclude that there are many people, even many *Christian* people, who are uneasy about organized religion, embarrassed about being too public about Jesus Christ, and not likely to risk being too closely identified with our institutions. The more obviously Christian our institutions are, the less appealing we are to the broad public.<sup>26</sup>

Another way culture works against Christian higher education is size. While most of our institutions are smaller than the state universities, our society sees significance in numbers. It assumes that no university would *actually choose* to be small. Even in church circles, perhaps because of our devotion to the concept of church-growth (what church would not want to grow?), we expect every institution wants to enroll more. Ask a newspaper editor, which is more important: a city of 15,000 or a city of 1500? Which has greater significance: a business that has gross sales of \$150 million or \$50 million? Which would you rather have move to your city: a plant employing 1500 persons, or a plant employing 150? You see, ever so subtly, our culture values big numbers—numbers which most of us do not have.

The above-mentioned prejudices support another cultural force that opposes us, publicity and recognition. We are fortunate that many of our institutions are cited in *U.S. News & World Reports* rankings. But we know that other rankings have looked askance at universities with required chapel, required religion courses, etc. We all know certain accrediting and recognition agencies that still doubt that our Christian standards do not interfere with quality academics. And most of us have faced foundation executives, eager to have their foundations' names listed among supporters of big-name universities, but skeptical about whether our institutions are worthy.

Of course, there is the subject of sports. Each of us lives in a state which has big athletic powers. People who claim to be deeply committed to Christ, in the vise-grip of our culture, find major athletic events such as football games prime spots for doing business, for making the social scene, for making contact with old friends. I cannot explain the grip these sports have on folks, even some who never enrolled at the particular institution. Yet, I confess that there is great media appeal in mass events—large arenas and stadiums filled with cheering fans who pay multi-thousand-dollar sums for the privilege of buying a ticket. In a culture that fixes on big events, and mass occasions, the 10,000 at a Baptist college football game holds no special appeal. Consider the money involved: The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, for

example. In 1993, Nike paid UNC-Chapel Hill \$11 million for five-year exclusive rights to put its Nike swoosh on the UNC uniforms, shoes, coaches' jackets, etc.<sup>27</sup> (Donald G. Stein, *Buying In or Selling Out*, p. 24) That is powerful competition for small Baptist colleges.

Now, I would like to tell you that you should cheer up because you will find affirmation among the people of our Baptist churches. Unfortunately, that is not the case. Our own Baptist people have a hard time granting us the respect we deserve. In a reversal of just the last several years, the major state university, in most regions, is more attractive to prospective students, even among high-income families, than a private, let alone "Christian" college or university.<sup>28</sup>

And the student culture tends to be influenced by the name-game. The more prevalent a name, the stronger the brand, the easier it is to decide, just as with politicians and name recognition. So, when a student tells his friends he is thinking about one of our institutions, he is not likely to get reinforcement from peers, or family, or even guidance counselors.

Truth be told, I dare say most of our close church-going friends believe that each one of us would drop the reins of the college we now

**Most of us are where we are out of deep personal conviction, a conviction that is incomprehensible to many.**

hold and run a 40-yard dash to get to be president or provost or chief business or student affairs officer at our local state university. More than a decade ago, I was contacted by a headhunter who wanted my name in the pool of candidates for the presidency of a distinguished institution, well-endowed, with no crises. Hardly thinking about it, I said, "I'm afraid

I'm not your man. You know, I would not know how to give a cocktail party, and my conscience wouldn't allow it, if I knew how." He seemed surprised, but we talked about that and he assured me that was not a requirement. I told him that for a person with my values and beliefs I was probably where I ought to be. He was mystified, disbelieving—as though thinking, "he doesn't realize what he's rejecting"—but respectful. (I will also say that he never called me again!) Most of us are where we are out of deep personal conviction, a conviction that is incomprehensible to many.

What shall we do? First, we need to work harder to make our own constituents aware of what our institutions are, and proud of what we offer. We still have too many devout Baptists in our own areas who have never been on our campuses, met our students and professors, or considered our distinctives. All the public relations efforts we aim at the general public, might first be aimed at Baptists.

Secondly, we ought to review our mission statements with a hard eye on the distinctive difference our institutions profess, and if we profess it, does it happen in practice? We need particularity—product differentiation—to show how we are unlike the marketplace. Many such statements are so cliché-ridden they almost smell like mothballs. We highlight a few pious phrases to pacify the sponsoring denomination, phrases such as "Christian context," "Christian environment," or "Christian atmosphere." Next, we generally appease the faculty, paying homage to the scholarly and academic side, saying something about "academic excellence," despite difficulty citing anything about our institutions that truly excels. Our institutions should not be suffering identity crises. We should know who we are, and whose we are, and be secure in that identity. We cannot expect great institutions to spring from mediocre or fanciful intentions. Mission statements need to be articulated to trustees, to prospective faculty, to all personnel and to students. Peter Drucker said: "The first task of the leader is to make sure that everybody sees the mission, hears it, lives it. If you lose sight of your mission, you begin to stumble and it shows very, very fast."<sup>29</sup>

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## The University...

(continued from page 7)

Surely, one way to resist the fiery darts of our culture is to know and to have agreed upon what you wish to achieve.

I once visited a college as a consultant. It was in trouble with its primary accreditor. It was running a significant deficit. It was being accused by federal authorities of some serious financial lapses. It had poorly qualified personnel teaching even graduate courses. Yet all the blather of the mission statement was about “Christian” and “excellence,” “finest,” and “best.” When confronted the President told me, “Well, that’s what we’re aiming for.”

Associating our institutions with the God of the universe, we need to be certain that we are working to be exceptional institutions. Truthfulness is required. Shabbiness—in academics, in the physical campus, in treatment of individuals, in administrative practices—is not worthy of our Lord. Where we are uncomfortable about weaknesses, we should move to correct them. Where claims are overstated, we should change them. And we should have the courage NOT to participate in practices that compromise our integrity—if we had time, we could have a rousing discussion on the ethics of tuition discounting, as currently practiced.

**Associating our institutions with the God of the universe, we need to be certain that we are working to be exceptional institutions. Truthfulness is required.**

Well, you might ask, any *other* words of encouragement? A number of years ago, I was in a small group of Christian college presidents that met with Dr. Martin Marty. Marty asked, in our society, where can we find anyone to encourage faith development in the young? Of course,

the church: but, he pointed out, the church has young people for such a short time—only a few hours a week at best, and then only for a couple of years. The media, he asked? Could newspapers, magazines, and TV promote faith development? After a litany of such possibilities, he concluded that the Christian college may be the last best hope for promoting the development of a vibrant personal faith that is strong enough to last. That is a noble purpose. Let us hold to it, and not shrink from claiming it.

Two other points for your own personal mental health. Seize that high ground and remind yourself that there is solid, reasonable justification for our Baptist colleges and universities. “Civilization is doomed unless the hearts and minds of men can be changed, and unless we can bring about a moral, intellectual and spiritual reformation.”<sup>30</sup> That was not spoken by Billy Graham, but by Robert Maynard Hutchins...in 1947. (Marsden, p. 408) Who has the greatest chance at that sort of reformation, if not Baptist colleges? Back in the 1950’s, there was no correlation between a college education and religious belief, according to surveys. By the 1970’s, the college-educated were far less likely than others in this country to attend religious services or hold Christian views.<sup>31</sup> Shall we give over the educated—surrender them to the culture?

Make your peace with the reality that your institution is not like all others; it has a higher and holier calling. No matter the bias of the culture. And make your peace with the reality that the recognition and respect bestowed on other institutions may never be yours in a culture like ours. But then, you are not accountable for being popular with the local Chamber of Commerce. “When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound, and Time shall be no more,” you will account to the Lord God for your stewardship. Therefore, be certain that, if

Baptist colleges were someday, somehow, to be outlawed, we would see one another in jail.

### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>John 17.16-18; I Cor. 5.10; Colossians 2.8, 20.

<sup>2</sup>Candy Gunther Brown, *The Word In the World* (2004), p. 6.

<sup>3</sup>“In Christ, therefore, they [Christians] claimed to possess a principle of understanding superior to anything existing in the classical world. By this claim they were prepared to stand or fall.” Charles Norris Cochrane, *Christianity and Culture* (1957), p. vi.

“This is not a struggle to be settled by mere blows, as though the contending forces were nothing more than masses in motion. Nor is it a mere battle of abstract ideas, to be conducted in the rarefied atmosphere of the academies. What it demands is a united effort of hand and heart and head, in order to expose the fictitious character of secular valuations and to vindicate the reality of Christian claims.” (p. 516)

<sup>4</sup>Definitions of “culture” are many and varied. Taking some concepts from Edward T. Hall, *The Silent Language* (1959), we can consider key elements: “Culture is communication and communication is culture.” “Culture is not one thing, but many.” “Culture is concerned more with messages than it is with networks and control systems.” “There is no experience independent of culture against which culture can be measured.” “Cultural indeterminacy and cultural relativity are not easy concepts.... They mean more than what is good by one set of standards may be bad by some other.” (Hall, pp. 169-170)

<sup>5</sup>Nathan Hatch, historian of American Christianity, states that “...plausible arguments can be made that, at all levels of American society, the juggernaut of secularism rolls on, pressing religious belief into smaller, less consequential territory.” Nathan Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (1989), p. 211.

<sup>6</sup>Quoted in George M. Marsden, *The Soul of the American University* (1994), p. 401.

<sup>7</sup>“The 100 Most Influential People,” TIME (April 26, 2004).

<sup>8</sup>Of course, Christian colleges and universities could be mentioned as having benefited from church support. I believe it likely that, while the influence of the Christian college has been qualitative, rather than quantitative, we could find that strong leadership in the church, overwhelmed as it may be by the culture, has still come from the ranks of Christian colleges and universities.

<sup>9</sup>Jonathan A. Knee, *The New York Times*, May 2, 2004.

<sup>10</sup>The churchmanship of Kenneth Lay, former CEO of Enron, son of a Baptist minister, and trustee of Houston’s First United Methodist Church has been extensively profiled. Richard Scrusby, former Chairman and CEO of HealthSouth, and his wife have been photographed carrying a Bible into the courtroom, and have been regular attenders at Moutaintop Church in Birmingham, Alabama. Greg Garrison story released by Religious News Service, May 30, 2003.

<sup>11</sup>www.barna.org

<sup>12</sup>Edward T. Hall, *The Silent Language* (1959).

<sup>13</sup>Hall said, “...the ultimate purpose of this book...is to reveal the broad extent to which culture controls our lives.” (p. 38)

<sup>14</sup>John Steele Gordon, “The Fifty Biggest Changes in the Last 50 Years,” *American Heritage* (June-July, 2004), p. 23.

<sup>15</sup>Gordon, “The 50 Biggest Changes,” *American Heritage* (June-July, 2004), p. 24.

<sup>16</sup>One site, subservientchicken.com, is an interactive view of a person in a chicken suit, who responds to the viewer’s computer commands, a subtle ad for Burger King. The ad agency that created the site says it has received more than 215 million hits, with the average visitor remaining at the site for seven minutes. Rob Walker, “Poultry-Geist: If we’re so sick of marketing, why are we watching this chicken?” *New York Times Magazine*, May 23, 2004, p. 18.

<sup>17</sup>The ability to customize such communications is amazing and sometimes alarming. *Reason Magazine*, to emphasize its story on “databasification,” in its June, 2004 issue, individually personalized 40,000 subscriber copies with a cover featuring the subscriber’s name in large type, an aerial photo of the subscriber’s neighborhood, with the subscriber’s actual residence/office circled. Inside, certain facts such as average daily commuting time for that zip code, average income, etc., were cited.

<sup>18</sup>“Changing Minds Winning Peace,” The Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy in the Arab and Muslim World (Washington, D.C., 2003), p. 21.

<sup>19</sup>The cases of Andrea Yates, Kobe Bryant, Mary Kay LeTourneau and Vili Fualaau (1992), and Elizabeth Smart received extensive and repetitive coverage in daily newspapers, news-magazines, etc.

<sup>20</sup>I am not quite as pessimistic as some. “Some critics argue that the seductive culture spawned by television and related communications technologies has



already obliterated, beyond repair, the very premises of democratic promise.” William Greider, *Who Will Tell the People: The Betrayal of American Democracy* (1992), p. 312. “If the mass-media culture has permanently robbed people of their democratic capacities, then the deeper governing problems – or their remedies – will have no meaning to ordinary citizens.” p. 313.

<sup>21</sup> “[T]he United States contains more citizens who value religion than other western industrial societies.” Hatch, p. 210.

<sup>22</sup> Bruce Wilkinson’s *The Prayer of Jabez* and Tim F. LaHaye’s and Jerry B. Jenkins’s *Desecration: Antichrist Takes the Throne*, eighth in the *Left Behind* series. Cited in Brown, p. 243.

<sup>23</sup> “By degrees religion itself took on the shape of a commodity.... [It] looked for ways to appeal to all consumers using the techniques of advertising and publicity employed by other merchants.” R. Laurence Moore, *Selling God: American Religion In the Marketplace of Culture* (1994), p. 6.

<sup>24</sup> Heather Hendershot, *Shaking the World for Jesus* (2004), p. 24

<sup>25</sup> Marsden, p. 4.

<sup>26</sup> Hatch, himself a prominent academic, as Provost of The University of Notre Dame, wrote: “In the world of higher education, theologians and church leaders no longer operate from a position of strength. To avoid being considered second-class citizens, they are pressured to make accommodations to the secular definition of values at the core of the university.” p. 119

<sup>27</sup> Murray Sperber, “College Sports, Inc.: How Big-Time Athletic Departments Run Interference for College, Inc.,” in Donald G. Stein, *Buying In or Selling Out* (2004), p. 24.

<sup>28</sup> “Suddenly, State Universities Have More Allure,” *The New York Times*, November 10, 2002.

<sup>29</sup> Peter Drucker, *Managing the Nonprofit Organization* (1990), p. 45.

<sup>30</sup> Quoted in Marsden, p. 408.

<sup>31</sup> Robert Wuthnow, *The Struggle for America’s Soul: Evangelicals, Liberals, and Secularism* (1989), pp. 34-35. ■

## Christian Faith...

(Continued from page 9)

that for the presuppositions and conclusions of our particular academic disciplines. I have discovered that faculty members tend to be more uncomfortable in this arena than they are in the *faith and learning* conversations.

### What Is a Faith and Disciplines Emphasis?

Several decades ago, educators within church-related institutions, Southern Baptist and otherwise, began discussing needs and concerns within our ranks that could help us do a better job of communicating the Christian faith in our world. Groups such as the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities, the Education Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, the Pugh Charitable Trust, and the Lilly Endowment began to promote the notion that schools which claim a Christian heritage should give fresh thought to what it would take for our schools to be distinctively Christian. At the same time, Christian scholars throughout the academy began to challenge us to stir new conversation within our faculties about the implications of the Christian faith to our various academic disciplines.

Discussions revealed an awareness that there are Christian faith issues in virtually every academic discipline. In the sciences, there are those points of tension between the conclusions of science and traditional religious understandings as well as tension between the scientific methodology as a way of knowing and more intuitive ways of knowing. In the social sciences, there have emerged explanations of human behavior and methods for dealing with human behavior that appear to be in conflict with principles and ideals fostered by traditional Christian belief. In the professional disciplines, there are issues of practice which can and often do generate tension between state of the art information and the ethics of how that information should be used in addressing issues. The way we understand our world, the way we understand and deal with human development, the way we define mankind's place on the planet, and the way we explain the pilgrimage and the destiny of humanity—all have significance for the Christian faith.

There is no clear-cut, universally agreed-upon set of answers to the points of tension. While there may be general understanding of beliefs, it is inappropriate to try to develop some creed or dogma which tells us how these points of tension should be understood or resolved. We also face the dilemma that the academic world has, for most of this century, frowned upon the idea that a scholar's religious beliefs ought to have anything to do with either his/her research or his/her efforts

at teaching. George Marsden has reminded us in his book *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship* (1997): "During the first half of the twentieth century talk about the 'Christian' character of the academic enterprise diminished, as it was increasingly recognized that to identify the project with any one religious tradition would be divisive. Religion came to be regarded as an extra-curricular activity" (p.17). He goes on to describe how various denominations built ministries on the edges of campus, but the classroom was given up to a totally secular, often anti-Christian perspective. It does not take long to detect a prejudice against the idea of a Christian point of view in virtually any academic discipline in most secular institutions today. When voices of prejudice may not be heard, almost certainly there are the echoes of effort to trivialize and marginalize a person's religious beliefs as having little or nothing to do with the general understandings within an academic discipline.

To make matters worse, few faculty members have been afforded the opportunity to think through the implications of the Christian faith to the presuppositions or conclusions within their chosen field of specialization in any kind of formal setting during their graduate experience. The majority of faculty in Christian colleges and universities received most, if not all, of their graduate education in totally secular settings.

Because graduate education places heavy emphasis on objectivity and great care is taken normally to avoid value judgments or value perspectives in the research, we seldom are provided a forum where Christian scholars within the same discipline or across disciplinary lines can talk about the significance of the Christian faith and the teachings of scripture to the current understandings within the discipline. A careful analysis of the curriculum structure and the content of courses in graduate programs reveals that these opportunities have not been available to the person aspiring to teach or do research. The end result can be a fine Christian person who is competent in his discipline but has not come to grips with those issues or points of tension which really do make a difference in the way he treats the subject matter.

The painful reality is that merely putting in the classroom a professor who has appropriate academic credentials and is an active member of a Christian church does not guarantee that Christian education is going to take place. The complexity and multiple dimensions of contemporary life have fostered a tendency for us to be able to segment and fragment life in such a way that people can have strong religious beliefs which are compartmentalized for their Sunday or church existence but which have little to say to or about what they do on their jobs or in their neighborhoods. A faith and disciplines empha-

sis is designed to engage us in dialogue with peers about what the issues are within our disciplines that have some connection with a biblically based Christian faith. Through those conversations and the debates and dialogue that may be stimulated, we may be moved to a new level of understanding about the significance of our faith to the discipline itself and perhaps catch a new vision of the significance of our disciplines in the larger arenas of life.

Such dialogue is never intended to produce a creed or some uniform set of answers or solutions to the dilemmas within our areas of specialty. In *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship*, George Marsden quotes Robert Wuthnow, a respected Christian scholar, as saying, "Christianity does not so much supply the learned person with answers as it does to raise questions" (p.65). Educators who are serious about the effort to stimulate more and deeper conversation about the relationship between the Christian faith and the various academic disciplines, however, point out that these discussions can help to make us even more sensitive to our students and the biases, prejudices, and perspectives which they bring to the classroom. The dialogue with each other can help us think through the way we can address the points of tension in a way that does not destroy a student's faith but rather helps him to move to new levels of understanding about life and his faith.

### Integration and Conversation

So much of our approach to life promotes fragmentation and compartmentalization. Eventually, we evolve into thinking about life in fragments and compartments: we have a work life, a personal life, a family life, a church life, and a leisure life. We often live each of those fragments so separately that they seldom, if ever, intersect.

In order to stimulate a new level of intellectual and spiritual energy in every area of life, we need to develop a faith that continually grows in its depth of understanding and its breadth of application, and we should be willing to apply it to the way we think about life, people, and everything we think and know. I have contended for years that the most effective teacher is one who is on a pilgrimage of growth and development, who is excited about that pilgrimage, and who assists students with their own pilgrimage of growth and development. When our faith is touching our academic world and affecting the way we think about applying our professional knowledge and skills, we are stronger and more effective teachers.

There is also the challenge for faculty members to commit themselves to ongoing *conversation* with others within the profession about the issues of the integration of the Christian faith to the world of professional knowledge and practice. Dr. Harold Heie, for-

mer chief academic officer at Gordon College in Massachusetts, aptly writes:

There is a cancer that is growing rapidly in the Christian community, the cancer of polarization that ends conversation. The tragedy is not that Christians disagree with each other on some critical issues. In fact, such disagreement can be the bedrock of good education. The tragedy is that we find it increasingly difficult to talk to each other about our disagreements, so that we can learn from each other. Dialogue has too often been replaced by monologue. Conversation has often been replaced by contestation. The great new challenge facing Christian higher education...is to create structures that will overcome this insidious drive toward polarization and contestation. (p. 68)

### **Understanding Faculty Resistance to the Emphasis**

I have observed that there is often resistance and reluctance on the part of some faculty to add this emphasis to their professional considerations.

The excessive emphasis on specialization, which has come to characterize the academy, contributes to a reluctance to venture outside our own disciplines. This results in a failure to see relationships between and within various bodies of knowledge and therefore, we do not encourage thinking about the interrelatedness of knowledge. There are few opportunities for exploration of the relationship between literature, history, the arts, the sciences, much less the consideration of the relationship between the content and substance of the Christian faith to the presuppositions and conclusions of the various bodies of knowledge.

We are prone to consider "faith" a purely private and personal matter and resist the idea of working through faith implications in an overt and conscious way or even to raise faith issues related to our professional responsibilities. We have separated the "sacred" from the "secular" so much that we have ended up translating our "separatist" tradition into an "isolationist" mentality. The general public wants us to keep our religion to ourselves and not to mix it into understandings of wholesome effective business, industry, community, education or politics.

We ourselves are limited in the understanding of our personal faith. The Baptist and other Evangelical/Protestant understandings of the way a person becomes a Christian tend to emphasize the initial transaction resulting in "salvation." We fail to heed the admonition to "Love God with all our hearts, all our minds, all our strength." We tend to know far more about our academic disci-

plines than we do about our faith or our chosen church's theological heritage. The end result is that we give far more authority to the content and presuppositions of our disciplines than we do to our faith commitment.

### **Where Do We Go from Here?**

The best context for a serious faith and disciplines/faith and learning emphasis is within a comprehensive, systematic, and institutionally supported professional development program.

If you look at faculty development programs at Christian institutions over the past several decades you will find an on-going interest in probing the significance of the Christian faith to the educational process. Organizations such as the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools and the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities devote considerable attention to promoting the notion that colleges and universities which aspire to be distinctively/intentionally Christian will make the integration of faith and learning a major focus on the campus.

The most effective faculty development program will be formal, ongoing, comprehensive, systematic, and mandatory. An effective professional development emphasis will plan opportunities for faculty to explore issues such as understanding the developmental needs of students; examining the current research on learning styles; improving instructional methods in light of the growing understanding of how students learn; using effective testing and measurement of progress; using technology in teaching and learning; identifying faith questions within the various areas of specialty; and offering opportunities for professors to hear presentations and interact over the implications of the Christian faith to the current issues within the various academic disciplines. Faculty members will be encouraged to continue their research and development within their particular academic discipline.

An effective professional development program will include a variety of opportunities. Faculty can form reading groups and discussion groups both within disciplines and across disciplinary boundaries to explore issues in all the concerns defined above. The faculty development committee can plan, and the institution can support large-group presentations by leading thinkers to stir faculty interest in probing further and deeper in all areas of professional development. The study and conversation will take place in a non-threatening atmosphere where the faculty members are genuinely interested in learning and growing.

At Oklahoma Baptist University during the early 1980s, the faculty and administration worked together to develop a program where-

by every faculty member (including the president and chief academic officer) was required to develop an annual professional growth contract. The growth contracts contained a faculty member's assessment of strengths and weaknesses; stated development goals for the coming year, including personal, spiritual, and professional areas of concern; and stated activities in which the faculty member would engage. In the growth contract, the faculty member had the opportunity to request funds to assist in his/her participation in professional development activities.

A faculty development committee was assigned the task of reviewing the growth contracts and making recommendations to the chief academic officer as to where funds might be distributed. Within the institutional budget, there were funds allocated for professional development, and over the years, we were able to raise additional funds for faculty development.

There was an understanding that the administration would never see the growth contracts and they would never be used in promotion/tenure considerations. The faculty voted overwhelmingly to make the program mandatory for all faculty.

Over a period of fifteen years, numerous faculty members chose to complete their terminal degrees with institutional support and encouragement, became active in discipline specific academic organizations, and chose to do ongoing research and writing for publication. By incorporating the faith and disciplines and faith and learning concerns into a comprehensive professional development emphasis, faculty members found a more inviting comfort level for the discussions.

If the professional development program is to have the desired impact on helping the institution take giant steps toward being distinctively/intentionally Christian, there should be serious guided scholarly efforts to identify the major issues within the various academic disciplines that have implications to the Christian faith. The effort will be made to think through and identify some major tenets of the Christian faith that have some relevance to a faculty member's academic specialty. Attention will be given to focusing on the learning process and the developmental needs of students, and faculty will discuss with each other a Christian understanding of students and of their educational process.

I have concluded that the most effective faculty development effort flows when the faculty votes to make it mandatory and the administration is willing for the faculty to administer the program. I have also observed that the most effective faculty development programs happen when the institution is willing to invest financial resources.

The most important force in guiding an

*(continued on page 16)*

# 2003-04 & 2004-05 Tuition at ASBCS Member Schools

Tuition prices listed include the 2003-04 and 2004-2005 years. Current prices are subject to change at any time without notice. Amounts do not include student fees, books, or room and board. Tuition is based on varying semester hours at each school.

Source: *Chronicle of Higher Education* "Tuition and Fees Report," October 29, 2004 and information from individual schools.

	<u>2003-04</u>	<u>2004-05</u>		<u>2003-04</u>	<u>2004-05</u>
<b>ALABAMA</b>			<b>MONTANA</b>		
Judson College	\$9,020	\$9,420	Yellowstone Baptist College	\$2,160	\$2,160
Samford University	\$13,154	\$13,944	(OBU CREDIT COURSES ARE \$110 PER CREDIT HOUR)		
University of Mobile	\$9,370	\$9,840	<b>NORTH CAROLINA</b>		
<b>ARKANSAS</b>			Campbell University	\$13,541	\$14,500
Ouachita Baptist University	\$14,100	\$15,170	Chowan College	\$13,400	\$14,100
Williams Baptist College	\$8,150	\$8,600	Gardner-Webb University	\$14,160	\$15,130
<b>CALIFORNIA</b>			Fruitland Baptist Bible Institute (North Carolina Residents)	\$920	\$920
California Baptist University	\$14,684	\$15,940	(Non-Baptists or Out of State)	\$1,060	\$1,060
<b>FLORIDA</b>			Mars Hill College	\$15,458	\$15,922
Baptist College of Florida	\$5,600	\$6,650	<b>OKLAHOMA</b>		
Palm Beach Atlantic University	\$14,890	\$16,360	Oklahoma Baptist University	\$11,580	\$13,162
<b>GEORGIA</b>			<b>SOUTH CAROLINA</b>		
Brewton-Parker College	\$9,850	\$11,070	Anderson College	\$13,115	\$14,225
Mercer University	\$20,796	\$22,050	Charleston Southern University	\$14,426	\$15,292
Shorter College	\$11,705	\$12,770	North Greenville College	\$9,300	\$9,760
Truett-McConnell College	\$9,828	\$10,786	<b>TENNESSEE</b>		
<b>HAWAII</b>			Baptist College of Health Sciences	\$4,500	\$4,500
Hawaii Baptist Academy (Grades K-6)	\$8,250	\$8,250	Belmont University	\$15,954	\$16,220
(Grades 7-12)	\$8,750	\$8,750	Carson-Newman College	\$13,620	\$14,420
<b>ILLINOIS</b>			Union University	\$14,450	\$15,350
Judson College	\$16,050	\$17,150	<b>TEXAS</b>		
<b>KENTUCKY</b>			Baptist University of the Americas		\$1,320
Campbellsville University	\$12,824	\$13,952	Baylor University	\$18,500	\$19,780
Clear Creek Baptist College	\$4,400	\$4,400	Dallas Baptist University	\$11,010	\$11,610
Georgetown College	\$16,370	\$17,750	East Texas Baptist University	\$10,290	\$12,000
Mid-Continent University	\$9,080	\$9,350	Hardin-Simmons University	\$12,176	\$13,376
University of the Cumberland	\$11,458	\$11,868	Houston Baptist University	\$11,355	\$12,915
<b>LOUISIANA</b>			Howard Payne University	\$11,150	\$12,000
Louisiana College	\$9,650	\$10,300	University of Mary Hardin Baylor	\$11,540	\$12,380
<b>MISSISSIPPI</b>			Wayland Baptist University	\$8,450	\$9,250
Blue Mountain College	\$6,800	\$6,820	<b>VIRGINIA</b>		
Mississippi College	\$11,529	\$11,836	Averett University	\$17,000	\$18,430
William Carey College	\$7,815	\$8,115	Bluefield College	\$10,165	\$10,615
<b>MISSOURI</b>			Virginia Inter mont	\$14,400	\$15,200
Hannibal-LaGrange College	\$9,960	\$10,870			
Missouri Baptist University	\$12,230	\$13,580			
Southwest Baptist University	\$11,550	\$12,480			
William Jewell College	\$16,500	\$17,500			

## Legal Notes:

# Mark Your Calendar—Congress Requires Convocation at Your School on September 17!



by Jim Guenther

**M**ark your calendar. Your school will have a special convocation September 17. Remarkably, it was not scheduled by the convocation committee, the President, the Provost, or the board of trustees. Congress called it.

It will be “an educational program” about the United States Constitution.

Congress did not say your school must have this program on this day every year on this subject. It only said your school must have this program on this day every year on this subject if your school wants to continue as an eligible institution whose students can receive federal financial assistance. I am pretty sure you will want to have the program.

This new requirement adds one more condition to the present multitude of rules which accompany the receipt of federal dollars, directly or indirectly, by your school. Speak kindly to the folks in your financial aid office. I can't think of anyone in your institution who is responsible for complying with more regulations.

Someone will need to put into place a procedure which will cause September 17 to be marked each year by an educational program about the United States Constitution which involves your student body. And someone will need to be delegated with the responsibility for coming up with the program, choose the hour, and so forth. And, I expect, the United States Department of Education will require your President to sign a statement each year swearing that the program was timely conducted for your students.

What do you make of the new rule? On the one hand, it is apparent, at least to me, that the American public, including, I expect, that part of the public which makes up your student body, is in dire need of education about the Constitution and the American experiment with democracy. Senator Robert Byrd, the author of this new rule and a recognized constitutional scholar, puts it blunt-

ly: Americans are “hugely ignorant” about history.

On the other hand, is it wise (or, as I will ask later, constitutional) for any Senator to be able to make law out of his pet idea of what institutions of higher education ought to be doing? The late Senator Patrick Moynihan observed many years ago that Congress has nationalized higher education. By that he meant that Congress had decided to assume control over colleges and universities, those belonging to the states and those, like yours, which are private, for the purpose of utilizing these institutions to achieve various goals identified by Congress as worthy. Colleges and universities, and public elementary and high schools, are now conscripted to fight in what someone may call Senator Byrd's “war on constitutional ignorance.”

Perhaps, therefore, your reaction to the new rule will turn on how important you think it is to eradicate ignorance on this subject and how effective you believe this strategy will prove to be.

But, since we are focused on the Constitution, maybe one ought to pause in the first place and ask, “What gives Congress the right to make this rule?”

Is an act of Congress invalid unless it is affirmatively authorized under the Constitution? The Constitution spells out most of the powers of Congress in Article I, Section 8. They include the powers to regulate interstate commerce, to coin and regulate currency, to establish post offices and roads, to declare war, support armies and a navy, and to govern the District of Columbia, among other things. Is “Calling Convocations” in there?

And what about the fact that education has traditionally been seen as the province of state government? The Tenth Amendment says: “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.”

So, I suggest that your first September 17 Convocation on the Constitution deal with

the question: “What is the constitutional authority of Congress to require this convocation?”

That ought to evoke some enthusiasm among students who enjoy questioning authority. It should also spark a healthy states' rights debate. In the process, your students may learn something about the Constitution and the theories of enumerated and implied authority. All that would please Senator Byrd although he might bristle at any suggestion that his bill was unconstitutional.

“But, if you want to talk about what's unconstitutional, I'll tell you what's unconstitutional,” the Senator might say. “It's President Bush's doctrine of preemptive war, the notion that the President can declare war, without a declaration adopted by Congress.” On this, Byrd has taken to the Senate floor armed with a quote from Lincoln:

The provision of the Constitution giving the war-making power to Congress was dictated as I understand it, by the following reasons. Kings had always been involving and impoverishing their people in wars, pretending generally, if not always, that the good of the people was the object. This our Convention understood to be the most oppressive of all Kingly oppressions; and they resolved to so frame the Constitution that no one man should hold the power of bringing this oppression upon us.”

That could be the second year's September 17 program: the meaning of Article I, Section 8(11), the power of Congress “To declare War.” Your students could learn about the separation of powers.

If you need an overarching slogan for these programs, you might use a Jeffersonian quote: “If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, it expects what never was and never will be.” ■

*Jim Guenther is a partner in the law firm of Guenther, Jordan & Price, P.C. in Nashville, Tennessee, (615) 329-2100.*

**New Mailing Address for the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools**  
**Effective February 1, 2005 our new address will be:**

**Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools**  
**8120 Sawyer Brown Road, Suite 108 • Nashville, Tennessee 37221**  
**No change in phone or fax: Phone 615-673-1896 • fax: 615-662-1396**



## SACS Places Louisiana College on Probation for Violating Standards

By Robert Marus

PINEVILLE, La. (ABP) -- The major accrediting agency for schools in the South has placed Louisiana Baptist College on probation for a year for violating the agency's standards.

Louisiana College officials announced that the school was placed on probation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Members of the association's Commission on Colleges voted to make the change at their regularly scheduled December meeting in Atlanta.

Probation from the SACS is a more serious sanction than a warning or "notation" on the school's record, but less severe than the full removal of accreditation. The school will have 12 months to prove it is in compliance with the agency's standards.

Louisiana College has been roiled by controversy for several years, with much of it coming to a head in the past two years as a group of conservatives gained a majority on the institution's board of directors. All board members are appointed by the Louisiana Baptist Convention.

In the past few months, the college's president, chief academic administrator and board chairman have resigned. Only a week after being introduced to the Louisiana Baptist Convention—the college's newly called president unexpectedly withdrew his application for the job, citing "governance issues."

Earlier this year, a special committee from the accrediting agency visited the college's campus on a fact-finding mission. Committee members determined that Louisiana College was not in compliance with several of the association's standards regarding academic freedom and proper board governance.

"The committee concluded, based upon extensive interviews with members of the board of trustees, senior staff and faculty that a significant portion of the board of trustees of Louisiana College are influenced if not controlled by the agenda of the Louisiana Inerrancy Fellowship and the Louisiana Baptist Convention," the SACS report read. The study team said an agenda from the inerrancy group—established as a political movement within the Louisiana Baptist Convention—had unduly influenced the board's work.

Among the controversies on campus were two trustee-initiated policies that many professors said violated academic freedom—a 2003 move to require prior approval of class texts and materials by administrators and more recent actions that made the board more closely involved in faculty hiring and that required new faculty hires to be in agreement with the Southern Baptist Convention's 2000 "Baptist Faith and Message" statement.

According to a statement released by Louisiana College, interim school President John Traylor, the school will meet that goal. "It is my opinion that SACS is calling on the institution to recognize the seriousness of the accrediting standards. Trustees, administration and faculty must take the steps necessary to move the college into full compliance, lest we lose membership in SACS," the statement read.

It continued: "The entire college community—trustees, administration, faculty—have committed themselves to the actions necessary to bring Louisiana College into compliance with the standards of accreditation." ■

## Cumberland College to Become Part of the University of the Cumberlands

by Shawn Bryant

Director of Public Information, Cumberland College

Williamsburg, Ky.-The Cumberland College Board of Trustees announced that on January 7, Cumberland College became a part of the University of the Cumberlands.

"The mission of our college will not change, only the name which is more reflective," stated Cumberland College President Jim Taylor. "Cumberland will continue its traditions and affiliation with Kentucky Baptist Convention seeking to strengthen these ties."

The four academic units that comprise University of the Cumberlands will be: Cumberland College (the undergraduate liberal arts program), Hutton School of Business/Management, the Center for Leadership Studies and the Graduate & Professional Education program.

"Just as Harvard University has Harvard College as its liberal arts college and Brenau University has Brenau College as its undergraduate liberal arts college and Elon University has its undergraduate college as Elon College, so, too, will University of the Cumberlands maintain its undergraduate liberal arts college, Cumberland College," explained Taylor.

"Cumberland's primary focus has always been, and will continue to be, on the undergraduate education," commented Cumberland College Vice President for Academic Affairs Don Good. "Therefore, the name 'Cumberland College' will still be used in reference to the undergraduate program. However, we also award graduate degrees and are certainly strong on the service aspect."

Founded on January 7, 1889, Cumberland College is becoming what it has been classified as for many years by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, a comprehensive university.

"Carnegie has for years designated or classified Cumberland in the category of Master's Colleges and Universities II, therefore, it seemed appropriate for the institution to become University of the Cumberlands," Taylor said. ■



## Lilly Foundation Awards \$2 Million to Mercer's McAfee School of Theology

Lilly Endowment Inc. of Indianapolis, through its "Making Connections Initiative" program, has awarded a grant of nearly \$2 million to the James and Carolyn McAfee School of Theology of Mercer University.

The grant will allow McAfee to partner with churches in a pastoral-residency program. McAfee will work with churches in the Southeast to establish approximately 30 two-year residencies for graduates who are preparing to be pastors. The first six residencies will begin in the summer of 2005.

The salary and benefits will be paid equally by the grant and the participating church. ■

# Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools

## Annual Meeting and Workshops

(REGISTRATION 2 P.M. SUNDAY JUNE 5, FIRST PLENARY SESSION 7 P.M., ADJOURN AT NOON ON TUESDAY JUNE 7.)

# HOTEL RESERVATION REQUEST FORM

June 4-8, 2005

Guest room rate listed below is offered two days before and after the actual meeting dates

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Arrival Date & Time (Please specify AM or PM) \_\_\_\_\_

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- All deposits for room reservations are fully refundable if a room is cancelled 72 hours or more prior to the arrival date.

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## Christian Faith...

(Continued from page 10)

effective broad-based professional development process on a campus is the committee to which the task is assigned. The faculty development committee is responsible for planning programs, presentations and activities that will provide healthy and meaningful settings for these conversations and studies to take place. That committee becomes the champion for the importance of professional growth and development growing out of the conviction that none of us knows all we need to know nor have we learned all we need to learn to be the most effective we can possibly be at our assigned task. The administration's willingness to assign the responsibility and trust the committee to do its work of pushing each other toward higher levels of excellence helps create an atmosphere of trust between faculty

*Institutions that determine to be distinctively Christian stand in a unique and challenging place as they prepare people of character and values for effective work in every profession.*

and administration that is most desirable. The willingness to engage in faith and disciplines and faith and learning exploration is a growth issue, both intellectually and spiritually, and growth seldom takes place in brief sporadic encounters or as afterthoughts.

As a whole, there is a great need for faculty members to develop a comfort level with serious exploration of these issues. While there are many scholars within the academy who are venturing into the questions and probing possibilities, there is still much to be done. A faculty member should be asking himself/herself the question, "Am I willing to become serious enough about the faith and disciplines emphasis to become a champion for the emphasis on my campus and a major player in the larger arena of Christian higher education?" Institutions that determine to be distinctively Christian stand in a unique and challenging place as they prepare people of

character and values for effective work in every profession.

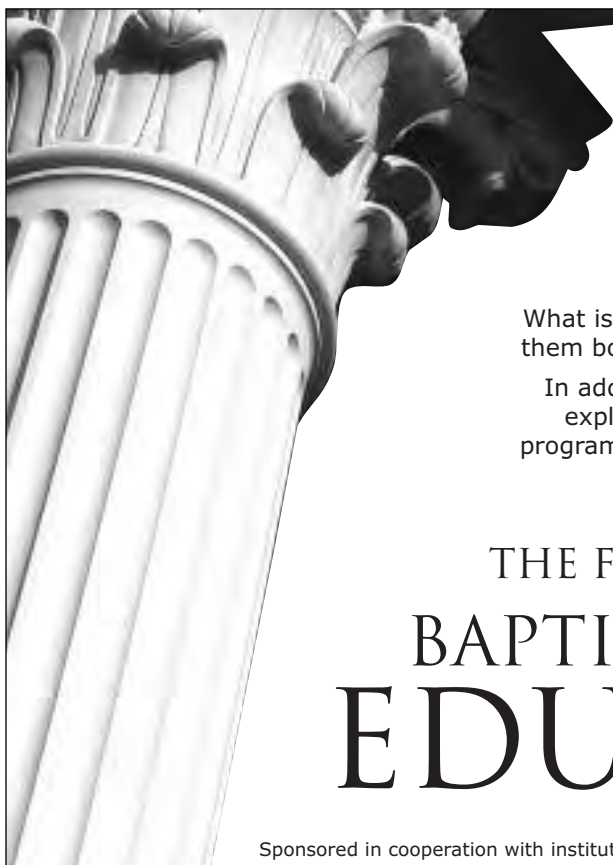
Any institution will be well-served to make this emphasis a topic of long-term consideration. We are one giant step closer to being distinctively Christian colleges and universities when we engage each other in this kind of dialogue. It will enrich our personal and professional lives and make us more effective at what we do. It will take us miles down the road toward offering education that is genuinely Christian in substance and content.

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