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Survey Ranks 45 ASBCS Schools Among Nation's Best

by **Bob R. Agee**
Executive Director
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Colleges and Schools

In the annual survey conducted by *U.S. News and World Report*, 45 of the 53 member institutions of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools (ASBCS) were listed among the nation's best.

Twenty-four of the member schools were listed in the top tier of institutions analyzed and compared in four categories. The magazine ranked the top 100 schools in each category and treats those schools as the top two tiers of institutions. Several ASBCS schools moved into the top tier this year, indicating significant progress and achievement in those schools.

Fourteen schools were listed in the third tier, and four were listed in the fourth tier. Two of the member schools were ranked in the top five among schools in their respective category with the highest graduation rates. Both Oklahoma Baptist University and Samford University were singled out for the high percentage of students who started their educational pilgrimage at those institutions and completed degrees within six years.

The national news magazine studied more than 1,400 institutions scattered across the U.S., gathering data from the schools themselves and soliciting opinions from peer institutions as to their perception of quality. Using a weighting system based on what the editors believe to be indicators of excellence, they develop a ranking in four categories: Best National Universities; Best Liberal Arts Colleges; Best Universities – Master's (by

region); and Best Comprehensive Colleges – Bachelor's (by region).

Their ranking is determined by analyzing data gathered on up to fifteen categories of information that include things like peer assessment; average graduation rate; average freshman retention rate; percentage of classes under 20; percentage of classes over 50; student/faculty ratio. The ranking system also analyzes data

on graduation rate, faculty resources, percentage of faculty which are full time, financial resources, freshmen in top 25 percent of high school class; acceptance rate of applying students; and alumni giving. The schools are then ranked against their peer institutions and assigned a score based on the accumulated data.

The 24 ASBCS member schools ranked in the top tier were listed in *Best National Universities*, *Best Universities – Master's* and in *Best Comprehensive Colleges – Bachelor's*. Baylor University was listed in the top tier of *Best National Universities* category, ranking 78th among the 249 institutions which fit the profile. These schools are evaluated based on the fact that they offer a "wide range of undergraduate majors as well as master's and doctoral programs." The group included 162 public institutions and 87 private institutions.

ASBCS member schools emerged in significant leadership positions within the *Best Universities – Master's* category. Samford University (3rd), Mercer

University (9th), Belmont University (15th), Mississippi College (25th), Carson-Newman (32nd), Union University (38th), Campbell University and Gardner-Webb University (tied for 62nd) and Cumberland College (64th) were ranked in the top tier of Best Universities – Master's in the South. Hardin-Simmons University (42nd), University of Mary Hardin Baylor (43rd) and Houston Baptist University (57th) were ranked in the top tier of Best Universities – Master's in the West. Samford University was also listed among the top five in graduation rate within the category of schools.

In the annual survey conducted by *U.S. News and World Report*, 45 of the 53 member institutions of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools were listed among the nation's best.

The *Best Universities – Master's* category looked at 572 schools which they determined fit into this group. These schools are those which provide a full range of undergraduate and master's level programs but offer few if any doctoral programs.

Among institutions ranked in the category *Best Comprehensive Colleges – Bachelor's*, ten ASBCS members schools made the top tier. In the West region, Oklahoma Baptist University (2nd), East Texas Baptist University (11th), and Howard Payne (13th) were ranked as top tier institutions.

In the South region, Ouachita Baptist University (5th), Shorter College (14th), Louisiana College (33rd), Mars Hill College (38th), Bluefield College (44th), Anderson College (45th), and Blue Mountain College (50th) were listed

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Schools Prominent in Survey...

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among the best in this category.

In the Midwest region, Judson College in Illinois (51st) was ranked in the top tier. Oklahoma Baptist University was also ranked fourth in the listing of schools in this category with the highest graduation rate among the *Best Comprehensive Colleges – Bachelor's*. The category includes 324 institutions which were evaluated by *U.S. News* and includes those schools which offer a wide range of undergraduate degrees in liberal arts and professional disciplines.

The magazine also ranked schools with outstanding undergraduate programs in business and engineering. The undergraduate engineering programs at Baylor University (21st) and Mercer University (32nd) were noted among those with best programs.

The number of ASBCS member schools ranked in the top tier was the highest in the history of the rankings by *U.S. News and World Report*. Several schools moved from third tier to top tier categories indicating strong effort on the

The area where most ASBCS schools were weakest is in the area of financial resources and alumni giving.

part of administration and faculty to strengthen their reputation for quality education.

Schools ranked in the third tier in their respective categories included fourteen ASBCS member schools. Among *Best Liberal Arts Colleges*, Georgetown College and William Jewell College were listed in the third tier of institutions.

Among the *Best Universities – Master's*; Averett University, Campbellsville University, Charleston Southern University, Palm Beach Atlantic University and the University of Mobile were listed among the schools in the South. California Baptist University, Dallas Baptist University, and Wayland Baptist University, were listed among the schools located in the West.

Within the category of *Best Comprehensive Colleges – Bachelor's* six

The number of ASBCS member schools ranked in the top tier was the highest in the history of the rankings by *U.S. News and World Report*.

member schools were ranked in the third tier. North Greenville College, Virginia Intermont College, and Williams Baptist College were listed among schools located in the South region. Among schools located in the Midwest region, Hannibal LaGrange College was listed in the third tier.

Seven ASBCS member schools were ranked in the fourth tier of their respective categories. Those listed included: Judson College (Alabama) among the *Best Liberal Arts Colleges*; Southwest Baptist University and William Carey College among the *Best Universities – Master's*; Brewton-Parker College, Chowan College, Mid-Continent University, and Missouri Baptist University were listed in the fourth tier among *Best Comprehensive Colleges – Bachelor's*.

Eleven ASBCS schools reported graduation rates in excess of 50 percent with Baylor (72 percent) and Samford (69 percent) leading the way with strong percentage of entering students graduating within six years. A close look at the reported freshman retention rates reflected that nineteen member schools reported above 70 percent retention rates.

The area where most ASBCS schools were weakest is in the area of financial resources and alumni giving. ASBCS member schools ranked very high in all the other categories only to find that their alumni giving rate prevented their overall score from being higher.

Achieving national recognition for the quality of education offered is a significant step for colleges.

Schools will use these rankings in various promotional material and presentations with target groups such as prospective students, alumni, and donors. Independent third party recognition of quality based on research adds to the credibility of the institutions within their communities. ■

COMMENT: The Future of Baptist Higher Education?

Bob R. Agee, Executive Director, ASBCS



In April 2005, the ASBCS and Baylor University jointly sponsored a conference on the future of Baptist higher education. Some of the leading thinkers among our schools and others with roots in Baptist history and heritage presented papers and led discussions designed to help us understand where we've been as Baptist institutions. Growing out of that excellent conference, a significant number of our presidents, chief academic officers, faculty and others contacted Don Schmeltekopf and me, urging us to develop a follow-up experience.



Bob R. Agee

In early October, 50 leaders gathered in Birmingham, Ala., to explore questions that will impact the future of Baptist institutions, particularly as they think about how to be academically excellent and intentionally Christian. The invitation list included people from each state in which Baptist colleges or universities are located. The list also included presidents, chief academic officers, other administrators, faculty and a group made up of trustees, pastors, laymen and denominational leaders.

The participants were divided into four discussion groups who spent Sunday evening, all day Monday, and Tuesday morning hammering away on the following discussion questions:

- What are the basic affirmations or presuppositions of a theological framework or statement of faith that an institution can develop to guide the way a

school offers education that is both academically excellent and intentionally Christian?

- What aspects of historic Baptist doctrine/theology have relevance to Christian higher education and what significance should they have for developing a theological/philosophical framework for the way we offer education?
- What does it take for a Baptist college/university to be at the same time academically excellent and intentionally Christian in the 21st century? (e.g. curriculum, programs, research, professional development, etc.)
- What are the hurdles or issues to be addressed by administration, faculty and boards as a college/university attempts to be both academically excellent and intentionally Christian?
- What ought to be included in an institution's mission statement, core values and institutional goals that demonstrate an institution's commitment to being both academically excellent and intentionally Christian?
- What practical suggestions can we offer to schools regarding faculty hiring and professional development that can help a school carry out its faith mission?

The discussion groups gave interim reports on their discussions at each mealtime and in the concluding session on Tuesday morning. Each group was led by a convener and a recorder, and each group will prepare a written report. A committee will merge the content and emphases of each group into a report that will be circulated among the presidents and chief academic officers of each of our member schools.

The groups were intentionally

diverse, and that rich diversity of perspective generated some excellent discussion, ideas and suggestions. The goal was to develop materials and suggestions for our schools that can help them as they face the future. Hopefully every campus family will create some kind of forum for discussing the same six questions previously listed.

I am deeply grateful to those who attended the Conclave and participated so openly and seriously in the discussions. It became obvious to those

The decision to remain academically excellent and intentionally Christian involves many choices that administrators, faculty and boards make, and none of those can be taken for granted.

attending that each school faces the awesome task of developing its own strong clear sense of mission and identity, and each school faces its own set of challenges. It also became clear that the decision to remain academically excellent and intentionally Christian, rooted in our Baptist heritage, involves many choices that administrators, faculty and boards make, and none of those can be taken for granted.

The openness and thoroughness of the discussion and the wonderful spirit among the participants reinforced my own sense of gratitude for the privilege of serving this wonderful group of institutions. ■

ASBCS Scheduled Events

ASBCS Board Meeting and Reception

December 5, 2005

Hyatt Regency, Atlanta, GA
Board dinner/meeting 5-7 p.m.
Reception open to all ASBCS
faculty and staff 8-9 p.m.

2006 ASBCS Annual Meeting and Workshops

June 4-6, Embassy Suites Convention Center,
Charleston, SC
Make hotel reservations at
www.baptistschools.org



Accreditation Issues

Facing Christian Colleges and Universities

by James Rogers

Editor's note: This lecture was presented at the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools annual meeting and workshops in San Antonio, Texas, June 7, 2005 by James Rogers, retired Executive Director of the Commission on Colleges for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). Rogers was one of three presenters of the annual ASBCS Hester Lectures.

During my 20 years as Executive Director of the Commission on Colleges, I have come to know and appreciate the Baptist presidents in our region, many of whom have been instrumental in the development of our standards, both the *Criteria* and our new *Principles of Accreditation*.

When thinking of the contributions made by Baptist presidents in our region, two names come to mind, namely, Tom Corts, who served as chair of the steering committee that provided the overall guidance in developing our new *Principles*, and Kirby Godsey, who assisted him as the principal leader of the task forces that developed the technical aspects of our new *Principles*. These two individuals are largely responsible for our new system of quality assurance, a system that is gaining national recognition and a warm reception by our member institutions.

Having come from the presidency of a private college, I am particularly sensitive to the special challenges of the small, private college and the special role that Christian colleges play in the development of our future generation.

Unfortunately, we often take much that we value for granted, and the accreditation process is no exception. This uniquely American phenomenon has been in existence since the late 1800s. It was founded on the premise that “less government is best government” and “free people should and ought to govern themselves.” Today, it has become the recognized determiner of quality in schools, colleges and the professions across this country. For decades, it has been used by banks, foundations, parents, students and even the federal government as an invaluable determiner of institutions with high academic quality.

The federal government decided to join our “bandwagon” in the early 1960s as the Korean veterans were returning and wanted to use their G.I. bill benefits in acceptable colleges and universities. By restricting G.I. bill benefits to accredited colleges and universities, the federal government received some degree of assurance that Title IV monies were being wisely invested. Unfortunately, over the years, this attachment by the federal government to what we were already doing, has injected federal intrusion into our process. In the minds of many in



James Rogers

Washington, the sole reason for accreditation is to determine those institutions that should legitimately dispense Title IV funds. As a gatekeeper to these funds, every five years when the higher education bill is being reauthorized, we are forced to engage in difficult and costly discussions and debates with Congress and the Department of Education over additional regulations and burdens. These efforts deplete our resources and redirect our attention from our real mission: quality assurance and institutional improvement.

The accreditation community is not a willing player in this role as gatekeeper; however, the alternatives for institutions are unacceptable. Would the higher education community prefer to have its self-regulatory

Commission address quality assurance or would it prefer that the states or federal government assume

this role as it applies to access to federal funds? This will always be the issue that institutions must decide for themselves when they view the role of accreditation and its value to higher education.

Institutions with ties to a denomination face a number of challenges, but one issue is somewhat unique to private institutions in general within our membership—the challenge of private institutions maintaining financial stability regardless of economic downturns.

For a recent five-year period, Commission staff researched the reasons institutions had been placed on public sanctions. When comparing public and private institutions on sanctions, we learned that 60 percent of the institutions on sanction were private and 40 percent were public. When we began to look more closely at the reasons for this disparity, one overwhelming factor became evident, namely, inadequate finances. Not all of the institutions in the private sample were denominationally-affiliated, but by far, the majority were. Without question, securing and maintaining adequate finances would be the number one challenge, not only for Christian colleges, but for all private institutions.

Securing and maintaining adequate finances would be the number one challenge, not only for Christian colleges, but for all private institutions.

Next to finances, perhaps the greatest challenge our denominational institutions face is dealing with the issue of church vs. board control.

Having served a 15-year tenure as president of a private institution, I am keenly aware of the difficulties associated with balancing budgets and raising adequate funds to support operations. I am also aware that the resources being contributed by a denomination may carry a *quid pro quo* expectation that may translate into undue intrusion and control. I would be the first to admit that there are so many elements that contribute to a quality educational experience, but certainly adequate financial support is inherent in all of these factors. I know from personal experience about the unending challenge of securing outside funds. Most of you do it well, and the quality of your institutions reflects that commitment. As we think about accreditation issues facing your institutions, I know of no other challenge that has greater significance or that will contribute more to the long-term survival of your institutions than securing and ensuring adequate financial support.

In addition to adequate financial support, let me touch on four other special challenges that faith-based institutions face as they conduct their business and live up to the agreed-upon expectations of the higher education community in our region or any region.

1 Being true to your mission during a time of tremendous change in higher education

The rapidly changing landscape in higher education presents as many challenges as it does opportunities, especially for small, private denominational institutions. Unfortunately, many presidents and higher education leaders do irreparable harm to their institution's reputation and financial viability as they deal with these challenges. Rapid changes in the curriculum to satisfy local demand without appropriate environmental scans and objective cost estimates can quickly enmesh an institution in significant overhead and support expense. In many instances these unforeseen costs are covered through borrowed money or shifting funds from programs that are essential to the accomplishment of the institution's mission.

It has been interesting and revealing to hear college presidents and academic leaders describing their ventures into distance learning and electronic delivery. Without question, these programs have academic "pizzazz," and are viewed by many as a hallmark of academic innovation and cost savings. However, what many institutions fail to realize is that it is expensive to offer quality distance learning programs and courses comparable to those offered on campus.

Training faculty in the art of such delivery, as well as securing the adequate equipment to offer such quality programs, requires significant financial resources. Many times these costs have not been budgeted nor can they be recovered during the first few years of operation. In many cases the motivation for the development of such programs can be expressed in one word: "survival."

A clear understanding of your mission is what should drive all the decisions regarding programs, expansion, etc. The temptation to expand, for whatever reason, needs to be carefully considered so that the outcome of such a decision enhances the institution's effectiveness and mission and does not detract from core values or deplete valuable resources that are needed to support the institution's fundamental *raison d'être*.

2 Maintaining a healthy relationship with the denomination while asserting autonomy

Next to finances, perhaps the greatest challenge our denominational institutions face is dealing with the issue of church vs. board control. All accrediting entities, whether in our region or elsewhere, have an expectation that a college's board is the ultimate authority for the institution and holds the institution's welfare in trust. The board has the responsibility to uphold and perpetuate the philosophy and mission of the institution. In doing so, our Commission and most other regional commissions would expect the board to be autonomous, to operate with a sensitivity to and within the framework of the institution's mission, to avoid any conflicts of interest that would compromise its decision-making, to ensure that decisions are not controlled by a minority of board members or by interests separate from the board, and to be free from undue influence and pressure from outside sources as it acts to protect the institution from similar pressures.

In addition, accreditation standards place as the board's highest responsibility the selection and nurturing of a qualified and capable president who can lead the institution within the framework of the institution's mission and governing structure. It is also expected that the president be accountable to the board and that his or her principle responsibility be to carry out policies as established by the board.

It is equally important for institutions and boards to: (a) maintain a distinction between the policy-making function of the board and the role of the president, administration, and faculty in administering and implementing those policies; (b) respect and support the role of the faculty in academic and governance matters; (c) establish the procedures for the appointment of administrators and faculty as well as all other policies that affect the institution's ability to carry out its mission; and (d) define and protect the institution's procedures for safeguarding academic freedom.

In our work with private, faith-based institutions, we encounter boards that, for all the best reasons, inject themselves into the daily operations of their institutions. In most cases, once it is called to their attention that such conduct is outside the realm of good practice in higher education, they modify their behavior quickly.

In other situations, we find boards and denominations that either do not understand or do not care to understand the important division that must take place between the denomination and the institution. For these difficult situations, our approach has been one of helping to educate and enlighten boards regarding the proper relationship that should exist. In many of these cases, our Commission is the only entity that can intervene on behalf of the institution and not suffer financial or political consequences. These situations, although rare, enable higher education peers to exert instructive pressure that normally results in positive change. Most board members are dedicated, decent and well-intentioned individuals. However, to be effective, board members need instruction in their proper role within the governance structure of the institution. There is no more important responsibility of a president than ensuring that trustees are properly informed and understand their role vis-à-vis the institution.

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Accreditation Issues...

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3 Balancing independence with public accountability

One of the strengths of the peer review process is that every institution is judged by peers in accord with the same commonly accepted standards. When an institution opts to undergo the accreditation process—whether seeking initial accreditation or continuation of accreditation—it is agreeing to adhere to the decisions of these peers and to have the results of their findings made public. So, even though accreditation is a private, self-regulating process, membership with the Commission on Colleges requires public accountability.

Over the years, when the Commission has had to impose public sanctions on institutions, it has done so reluctantly because it clearly understands the possible impact from such publicly-proclaimed actions, such as: (a) change of leadership; (b) diminished fund raising, (c) decreased student enrollment, and (d) diminished support from the community. Even though the Commission may empathize with institutions when negative or adverse decisions are made, it also understands that if the self-governance process is to be effective, it has an obligation to the membership and to the public to act when sanctions are warranted. These are soul-searching decisions because our Commission is composed of 77 elected members from our College Delegate Assembly who represent the myriad of institutions in our membership and who know that their own institutions will be held to the same standards. In my 20 years with the Commission, I have seldom witnessed a situation where sanctions, once imposed, did not become the catalyst for corrective action and significant improvement in the institution.

Private and public institutions receive moral and financial support from a variety of outside sources. Such support requires good stewardship and appropriate accountability on the part of the institution. Over the years, the public and these outside sources have demanded that institutions receiving their support be able to show whether students are learning what the institution claims it is teaching.

In line with that thinking, our Commission and most other regional commissions have incorporated increased expectations regarding student learning in their standards. All accrediting commissions now expect institutions to provide greater documentation regarding student achievement, and our new Quality Enhancement Plan has at its core the assumption that any enhancement of quality would have greater student learning as its goal.

The amount of Title IV monies received by private institutions in this country amounts to billions of dollars. In the minds of most politicians in Washington, the accreditation community has an obligation not only to its institutions, but to the public as well. According to the pundits in Washington, the public is clamoring for more information about institutions and especially accreditation decisions. This situation presents a special challenge for private institutions. As we confront this issue (which by

the way is not a problem for the public institutions), there will have to be a greater willingness on the part of institutions to have additional information made available to the public. We are required by federal regulations to notify the Department of Education of final actions within 30 days of the final decision made by the Commission; 24 hours if the action is adverse and results in a loss of status with the Commission. Once that information is released, the Commission has little control over its public dissemination.

The process adopted by our Commission and used in our region meets, if not exceeds, the expectations that may be imposed on the accrediting community through the reauthorization of the *Higher Education Act*. Considering the mood in Washington on this matter, I think it behooves all of us to continue to work to develop ways to sensitively disclose our decisions to the public. I think this is our obligation to the public and to all constituents that support our educational goals.

4 Special pressures facing faith-based institutions

I want to briefly identify a number of special challenges facing faith-based institutions as they relate to accreditation expectations in our region:

- the financial vulnerability to a changing market and economic downturns
- the dependence on enrollment numbers for financial stability
- the temptation to expand offerings as a way of attracting students, even though the institution may not have the personnel or other resources to do so
 - the pattern of some institutions in selecting presidents based on their faith or standing in the church rather than on their leadership qualifications for guiding an institution of higher education (we would hope both would be considered)
 - a curriculum with a higher percentage of liberal arts programs, which makes it more difficult to assess and measure student achievement
 - the existence of governing board members with strong faith-based ties to the institution resulting in a stronger-than-normal sense of ownership
 - the tendency to hire faculty more for their faith than for their academic qualifications (both are preferred)
 - the effects of academic freedom on the content and methods of teaching

Our Commission and its elected commissioners, with a high percentage of private colleges and universities in their memberships, have a great deal of respect for accredited faith-based institutions and recognize the important role that you play in educating the total student—in the intellectual area as well as the religious and moral areas. Our nation's moral fiber is strengthened by the work that you do and by your complete dedication to the students that you serve.

The issues I've mentioned are challenges confronting a number of accredited institutions. I am confident that by working together we can continue to strengthen higher education and preserve our unique system of quality control through peer evaluation. ■

Our new Quality Enhancement Plan has at its core the assumption that any enhancement of quality would have greater student learning as its goal.

Solitary Places

by Stan Poole
VP for Academic Affairs
Ouachita Baptist University

Editor's note: The following article was adapted from a devotional presented at the annual meeting of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools, June 7, 2005.

Here we are in the final session of a meeting in which we have been advised of the financial difficulties we face, warned of the legal minefields that could erupt at any moment on our campuses, and apprised of the political pressures that could sabotage our attempts to be faithful to our mission—pretty sobering stuff. But we've also had a chance to relax in a beautiful setting, to renew friendships, to laugh and share the stories of our lives, and to encourage one another through sharing our common experiences. I'm grateful for those opportunities, as I know you are.

I want to reflect on one more challenge we face. It is more personal, but ultimately no less vital for our institutions. It is the challenge of maintaining spiritual vitality in the midst of our hectic days. I don't know if you've had this experience, but there usually comes a point about three or four weeks before the end of the semester when I wonder how I can possibly manage to get through it all.

The calendar seems to accelerate with an absurd number of meetings; my to-do list becomes unmanageable; my email inbox exceeds the storage limit; and then some crisis I could never have anticipated comes to light. During such periods, I tend to develop a siege mentality, hunkering down to get through the rest of those frantic days. About the most I can muster in terms of spiritual sensitivity is a kind of prayer-on-the-run: "Lord, just help me make it through this one."

While I don't consider this my normal state of mind, I know that it has become more common than I would like to admit. Recently I've been reading a book by John Ortberg titled *The Life You've Always Wanted: Spiritual Disciplines for Ordinary People*. He makes the point that our lives are often characterized by what he calls the "hurry sickness."

"Hurry is not just a disordered schedule," he writes. "Hurry is a disordered heart." This book has reminded me of how important it is to balance the busy activity of my work and my family life with the disciplines of prayer and reflection that are essential for spiritual health.

Both by teaching and example, Jesus offers us a model for balancing active engagement and contemplative withdrawal. Typically, when we think of Jesus' ministry, we focus on his

actions: teaching his disciples in the Sermon on the Mount, feeding the 5,000, healing the blind and lame, casting out demons, taking on Pharisees in public debates. These activities were of course central to his ministry, but we often forget that Jesus also needed time alone. In the fifth chapter of Luke, we read: "[Yet] the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed." Here we are reminded that Jesus' compassionate response to the needs around him comes out of his intimate relationship to the Father, a relationship he maintains by periodically turning away from the constant demands of ministry.

Jesus taught his disciples to do likewise. When he sent the twelve apostles out to minister in his name, they preached the need for repentance, they cast out demons, and they healed the sick. But when they returned to report their experiences to the Master, he was acutely aware of their need for renewal. In Mark chapter 6 we read: "Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, 'Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.' So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place." (6:30-32)

These solitary places provided Jesus and his disciples the opportunity to re-connect with the source of their strength and to experience that peace that passes all understanding. As much as we yearn for this kind of renewal, we face tremendous pressures from a world that largely devalues contemplation.

One of these pressures is a relentless focus on productivity. Consider just one example—the literature on time management. With literally hundreds of titles such as *101 Ways to Make Every Second Count* and *57 Ways To Take Control Of Your Time And Your Life*, we are expected to function more or less like machines, with every moment programmed to achieve measurable results.

Another pressure comes from the value we place on a strong work ethic. My father, who grew up on a farm in central Louisiana, was fond of saying to me when I was kid, "Boy, if I just had a cotton field to put you in, maybe you would turn out to be something."

I'll admit that, growing up in a small town, I had a certain lack of appreciation for the benefits of picking cotton. But I've always known that one of my dad's great virtues is his work ethic, and as an adult,

I came to be deeply grateful that he modeled that for me. I have also come to understand, however, that there is a line beyond which a strong work ethic becomes an unhealthy obses-

Jesus' compassionate response to the needs around him comes out of his intimate relationship to the Father, a relationship he maintains by periodically turning away from the constant demands of ministry.

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Solitary Places

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sion, one that is especially seductive precisely because it can seem so morally justifiable.

Perhaps our greatest obstacle to finding those solitary places is simply our discomfort with silence. We are inundated by a flow of information from radio, TV, and newspapers, from books and magazines, from email, the Internet, and cell phones. We become information addicts, but we seldom find in this chaos a connection to our deepest source of truth and reality. By contrast, we often find silence and solitude unproductive if not downright unnerving. Yet "solitude," Ortberg suggests, "is the one place where we can gain freedom from the forces of society that will otherwise relentlessly mold us."

In a world that tends to compartmentalize everything, action and contemplation are often considered enemies. But in his book *The Active Life*, Parker Palmer has wisely suggested that these "are not contradictions, but poles of a great paradox that can and must be held together." The bad news is that paradoxes can't be reduced to a few simple steps or a how-to formula. The good news is that Christ himself lived the paradox. As we surrender ourselves to him, we grow in our ability to hold together these poles of action and contemplation.

Robert Frost, the great New England poet-philosopher, was no stranger to this paradox. In his poem "Birches," Frost reflects on his childhood practice of climbing up to the top of birch trees until they tip over and set him back down on the ground. The poem seemingly begins as a nostalgic recollection

of a carefree childhood, but by the end, climbing birches has become a metaphor for transcendence—a momentary withdrawal from the active life that allows the speaker to return to earth with renewed hope. Listen to the last part of Frost's poem:

So was I once myself a swinger of birches.
And so I dream of going back to be.
It's when I'm weary of considerations,
And life is too much like a pathless wood
Where your face burns and tickles with the cobwebs
Broken across it, and one eye is weeping
From a twig's having lashed across it open.
I'd like to get away from earth awhile
And then come back to it and begin over.
May no fate willfully misunderstand me
And half grant what I wish and snatch me away
Not to return. Earth's the right place for love:
I don't know where it's likely to go better.
I'd like to go by climbing a birch tree
And climb black branches up a snow-white trunk
Toward heaven, till the tree could bear no more,
But dipped its top and set me down again.
That would be good both going and coming back.
One could do worse than be a swinger of birches.

If we are to avoid the pathology of the "hurry sickness," we must embrace the paradox of action and contemplation. We will need to discover the solitary places where we can renew our relationship with the One who called us to our vocation in the first place. And as we do, we will experience the joy of a transcendence that redeems our frantic days and brings us back to our daily tasks with renewed vision, energy, and hope. ■



Consortium
for Global
Education



Eighteenth Annual CGE Meeting

by Carolyn Bishop, president, CGE

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Editor's Note: The following report is reprinted from the CGE website at <cgedu.org.>

The Eighteenth Annual Meeting of the Consortium for Global Education met at Missouri Baptist University hosted by Dr. Alton Lacey, President. In attendance were strategic CGE university and college faculty and CGE international partners who came with specific information about international projects and issues.

CGE was pleased to have Dr. Luke Zhang, Chairman of GLG LifeTech, as our guest speaker. Dr. Zhang is responsible for the formulation of business strategies and overall management of the Chinese operations as well as the international global strategy planning. Dr. Zhang obtained his Ph.D. (Pharmacology) from Vanderbilt University in the U.S., M.S. (Pharmaceutical Chemistry) from Shanghai First Medical University in

China and M.B. from Shandong Medical University in China.

Dr. Zhang introduced the opportunity for CGE to establish the first American-style private university in China. The new university will teach all the courses in English, be based on an American higher education model, and incorporate a foundation of academics, character, healthy lifestyle, spiritual development, and responsible citizenship. Dr. Zhang is a CGE strategic partner in this endeavor and has been actively working with the Ministry of Education and other critical agencies on licensing, funding, education, and building requirements.

Brian Palmieri, CEO & Treasurer, GLG LifeTech, was our banquet speaker. He challenged the participating CGE universities and colleges to accept this opportunity in China, and join the CGE Staff in taking action. The university will be a first-level university with degree programs designed by

our consortium of American private universities drawing from our strongest academic programs. If you want to be a part of this international opportunity, please contact the CGE Office.

CGE held their annual business meeting to affirm their vision and goals for 2005/2006. The CGE Executive Committee welcomed new members; Dr. Ron Ellis, President of California Baptist University, Dr. Alton Lacey, President of Missouri Baptist University, and Dr. Craig Turner, President, Hardin-Simmons University. CGE extended appreciation to Dr. Paul Armes of Wayland Baptist University, Dr. Robert Imhoff of Mid-Continent University and Dr. Jim Netherton of Carson-Newman College for their service.

CGE will be hosted by California Baptist University and Dr. Ron Ellis for the September 22-23, 2006 meeting. Please put these dates on your calendar to join us in Riverside, California next year! ■

Legal Notes:

Creating a Disaster-Resistant University

By Terry J. Price



Between man-made and natural disasters, the challenges of managing and recovering from a crisis have become all too common for colleges and universities.

Although hurricanes have dominated recent headlines, earthquakes damaged three universities in the Los Angeles area in 1994, the Red River flooded the University of North Dakota in 1997, windstorms forced the relocation of 600 students and caused four million dollars of damage to Syracuse University in 1998, and a midnight fire destroyed a residence hall, killing three students at Seton Hall in 2000.

Disaster preparedness can help your institution anticipate potential hazards and limit their interruption to the mission of the college or university. It may not be possible to prevent disasters, but with preparation you can mitigate the damage.

Use existing institutional organizations and structures to obtain information necessary for a plan and for the eventual implementation in case of a disaster. Begin at the top with institution-wide committees and work your way down to academic departments. Institutions offer a wide range of ancillary services for its administration, faculty and students such as clinics or hospitals, elementary schools, housing and food services and parking. All such resources should be considered when planning.

It is particularly important when planning to include three specific groups at your institution:

- (1) campus security, police and any other emergency services such as fire and medical;
- (2) the environmental health and safety office; and
- (3) the office of risk management whose job it is to reduce the vulnerability of the institution to hazardous events. Risk management should work with your insurance carrier to make sure you have as many risks identified and insured as possible.

During the events of September 11th and hurricane Katrina, first responders were isolated due to failures in the communications systems. Both reminded us of the importance of redundant communications systems and off-site back-up locations for critical data. Plans should be in place to evacuate administration, faculty and students and to communicate with them afterward so that the institution will know their condition and location.

Disasters regularly force institutions to suspend classes and activities. Lengthy interruptions can cause the cancellation of a semester, triggering both the loss of revenues and refunds of tuition, room, and board. Unless employment contracts excuse performance, the university may be required to continue salary payments to faculty and other contract employees. Contingency plans should be in place for such eventualities.

Institutions should initiate lines of communications and establish liaisons with governmental entities responsible for local emergency management. Your state, if not your community, will have an emergency manager whose primary job is to

provide resources about disaster preparedness in your area. Your institution should have a close working relationship with local government. Risk reduction by one benefits the other.

Be cognizant of local infrastructure when planning. Institutions should establish contacts with all providers of local utilities, both to obtain important information about the security of your utility connections in advance of a disaster and to determine plans for a response to a loss of utilities caused by a disaster. Roads, bridges and transit systems are vital to an effective emergency response and to evacuations from institutions. Local transportation specialists can provide information about such resources and help institutions with evacuation plans.

The college or university should also identify sources of temporary housing in advance of emergencies that damage or destroy residence halls and apartments.

Some states allow directors of nonprofit corporations to adopt emergency bylaws which take effect when an extraordinary event prevents a quorum of the corporation's directors from assembling. These bylaws are only effective during the emergency but can help the institution continue to function in a crisis.

Educate students about risk reduction and educate parents of students about your institution's disaster plan. The steps you take to reduce your vulnerability to both natural and man-made disasters and hazards can reduce the uncertainty parents and students have about student safety and their investment in their higher education.

Institutions of different types and sizes have successfully completed their own risk assessments and hazard mitigations plans. However some colleges and universities have decided that it was more prudent to hire an outside company to conduct risk assessment and to help identify and rank vulnerabilities to various hazards. Contact peer institutions, professional associations, and local, state and regional emergency management offices to help you decide which route to go and to help you identify companies that provide these services.

For additional information you can download the FEMA publication "Building a Disaster-Resistant University at <<http://www.fema.gov/fima/dru.shtm>>. ■

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

Plans should be in place to evacuate administration, faculty and students and to communicate with them afterward so that the institution will know their condition and location.



New Shorter Trustees Elect Chairman, Praise Newman

The Shorter College Board of Trustees met Oct. 21, at the college's North Atlanta campus. The meeting was the first for the new governing body elected by the Georgia Baptist Convention.

During the meeting, well-known Georgia Baptist pastor Nelson Price of Kennesaw, Ga., was elected chair of Shorter College's Board of Trustees. Price is pastor emeritus of Roswell Street Baptist Church in Marietta, Ga.

Kevin Snodgrass of Rome was elected vice chair of the board, and Joy Battles of Silver Creek, Ga., was chosen as secretary of the board. Joining them on the board's Executive Committee are members-at-large Roger Willis of Lawrenceville, Ga.; David Harper of Silver Creek, Ga.; and Ken Watkins of Lawrenceville, Ga.

The board praised Harold E. Newman for his service as interim president and adopted a resolution affirming its strong support for him as president. Newman has served as interim president of the college since Jan. 1, 2005. The board indicated that the college's bylaws require that a presidential search be conducted before the hiring of a president.

"Today's meeting was an extremely positive one, and I am heartened by the cooperative spirit that I felt throughout the day," Newman said. "With the legal dispute behind us, we are now able to focus on Shorter College's future and on providing exceptional educational experiences for our students. After today's meeting I am more certain than ever that the trustees and the college's faculty and staff can successfully work together. The board consists of 30 individuals from a wide variety of professions, whose diverse skills will aid the college in numerous ways. I look forward to working with the entire board and with Dr. Price as chairman. His interest in and concern for Shorter College is evident, and he will be an asset to the institution during this crucial period."

In his remarks to the board, Newman described the role of the college leadership as a "sacred trust to care for the college." He outlined current college operations and highlighted both successes and coming challenges. "Shorter College is poised and ready to become the premiere higher educational institution in Georgia Baptist life. Together, we can make that dream a reality," Newman said. ■

—from Shorter College website news

TBC Rejects Belmont's Request to Change Covenant

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Members of the Tennessee Baptist Convention (TBC) executive board failed to approve a proposed covenant of affiliation between Belmont University and the TBC Sept. 13, leaving the future relationship between the two entities in jeopardy.

Belmont has been a TBC-affiliated entity since 1951, but in recent months university trustees expressed the intention to allow non-Baptists to comprise up to 40 percent of their board of trustees. Belmont made such a proposal in the covenant of affiliation document it submitted to the TBC for approval.

By a 44-29 vote, TBC executive board members rejected a recommendation from the convention's education committee to approve the covenant.

After the vote, the TBC executive board tabled a motion that would have addressed the future relationship between the two entities, preferring instead to give Belmont's trustees an opportunity to respond before the next executive board meeting Nov. 14.

Belmont and two other Tennessee Baptist universities, Union University at Jackson and Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, each receive \$2.3 million in funding annually from the TBC.

If Belmont and the TBC ultimately sever their relationship, Tennessee Baptists might decide at their annual meeting in November what to do with Belmont's funding. Members of the TBC executive board unanimously approved covenant documents from Union and Carson-Newman. ■

KBC, Georgetown College Propose New Partnership

Officials of Georgetown College and the Kentucky Baptist Convention (KBC) are proposing a new partnership agreement that would enable the college to have a self-perpetuating board of trustees while maintaining historic ties between the two organizations.

The agreement, announced in a press conference on the Georgetown campus October 17 in Georgetown, Ky., is being proposed by a special 14-member joint workgroup formed in August to discuss the working relationship between the two entities.

The workgroup was formed at the request of the college, which is seeking to meet Phi Beta Kappa academic standards.

The plan must be approved by messengers to the Kentucky Baptist Convention who will meet Nov. 15-16 for the Convention's annual meeting at the Frankfort Convention Center and by the college's Board of Trustees.

If approved, the new partnership agreement will replace the existing covenant between the KBC and the college approved in 1987. Under that agreement and in previous agreements dating back to 1942, the KBC has the right to elect Georgetown's trustees in return for providing financial support. Georgetown presently receives approximately \$1.3 million each year through the KBC.

All but eight of the 24 trustees are currently required to be members of Kentucky Baptist Convention churches. The remaining eight are Baptists from other states. All trustees are elected by messengers at the

Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meeting. This election follows a process in which trustees are nominated by the Georgetown College president and approved by the KBC's Committee on Nominations.

The trustees are elected to serve four-year terms. Under the new plan, the college's trustee board will become self-perpetuating with KBC funding phased out over a four-year period. Ultimately, the college would move to having a trustee mix that is at least 75 percent Baptist.

Under the agreement, scholarships will continue to be available for Georgetown College students through the Baptist scholarship funds administered by the Kentucky Baptist Foundation and through KBC scholarship funds. Kentucky Baptist churches will also be free to designate to funds given through the KBC to Georgetown College.

The KBC and Georgetown College will also jointly fund a campus minister at the college, and will seek other ways to partner.

Georgetown College will also bring an annual report to the Kentucky Baptist Mission Board and will be provided space for an exhibit in the annual meeting exhibit area, as well as at other KBC events.

The proposed partnership agreement marks a new chapter in the long relationship between Kentucky Baptists and Georgetown College. The Kentucky Baptist Education Society incorporated Georgetown College in 1829 and established it as the first Baptist college west of the Allegheny Mountains. ■

—from Georgetown College website news

Baylor University Regents Elect Distinguished Alumnus John M. Lilley as President

The Baylor University Board of Regents November 3 unanimously elected Baylor Distinguished Alumnus and University of Nevada, Reno President Dr. John M. Lilley as the University's 13th president. Dr. Lilley was the 11-member Regent Presidential Search Committee's unanimous choice and will take office Jan. 9, 2006. He succeeds Dr. Robert B. Sloan Jr., who became university chancellor on June 1.



John M. Lilley

The son of a Louisiana Baptist pastor, Dr. Lilley, 66, majored in music at Baylor, earning bachelor's degrees in 1961 and 1962 and a master of music degree in 1964. He earned his doctorate in music at the University of Southern California in 1971 and his scholarship is focused on musical works from the Baroque and Modern eras. The Baylor Alumni Association awarded him its 2005 Distinguished Alumnus Award, the organization's highest honor, in January.

Since being named the University of

Nevada, Reno's 14th president in April 2001, he has led the major research and land-grant institution through a comprehensive strategic planning process that incorporated the best ideas of faculty, staff, students and friends. He has presided over an expansion of the institution's external funding, created new research centers and institutes to further its scientific outreach, and strengthened the leadership team to create a more responsive, more nimble team that focuses on the academic mission of the university.

The University of Nevada, Reno was founded in 1864 and is comparable in size to Baylor with approximately 16,000 students, including more than 11,000 undergraduates, and more than 800 full-time faculty members. Its 11 schools and colleges include a statewide School of Medicine, and the institution also operates a cooperative extension program in all of Nevada's counties. It fields seven NCAA Division I men's teams and 12 women's teams and is a member of the Western Athletic Conference. The university's athletics department earned a "best in the nation" rating for providing opportunities for women in sports, according to the Kennedy Index, a study released in August by Penn State University-

York professor Charles Kennedy.

Lilley began his academic career as a faculty member at the Claremont Colleges in California. In 1976, he was named assistant dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Kansas State University, where he chaired the college's curricular affairs committee, led a reform of the college's general education requirements, and supervised the student advising program.

Prior to being named president of Nevada, Reno, Dr. Lilley was the head of Penn State Erie. Over a 21-year period, he led The Pennsylvania State University through a period of dramatic growth.

In July 2002, Penn State's trustees voted to name the Erie campus' new library in Dr. Lilley's honor. At the same time, he received Penn State Erie's top honor, the Behrend Medallion, for outstanding service to Penn State and the Erie community.

While a student at Baylor and USC, Lilley, a licensed Baptist minister, served as minister of music at two Baptist churches. He and his wife, Geraldine (Gerrie), have four grown children and three grandchildren. ■

—from the Baylor University website

North Greenville College Changes Name to North Greenville University

by North Greenville University staff

TIGERVILLE, S.C.—Years of work and more than a decade of expansion at North Greenville culminated in a name change that better reflects the size and spirit of the newly named North Greenville University.

In September, the school's board of trustees acted on a recommendation and voted unanimously to officially change the name.

A decade ago, North Greenville had a debt of \$3 million and an enrollment of 300 students and many were contemplating closing the northern Greenville county school.

Blue Mountain Expands All Programs to Male Students

by Blue Mountain College staff

Blue Mountain College's Board of Trustees, has unanimously voted to open all its programs to male students effective January 2006.

Founded as a college for women in 1873, the College located in Blue Mountain, Mississippi, modified its mission in 1956 to include male students who were preparing for the ministry and those taking non-degree courses.

Bobby P. Martin, Chair of the Blue Mountain College Board of Trustees, said that "opening all programs to male students at Blue Mountain College is evidence of the institution's commitment to serve students

Since that time the school has experienced tremendous growth in student body, facilities and in its reputation as an academic institution.

Because of the growth in those areas, as well as the addition of a graduate studies program, on September 23, 2004 the school's board established a University Status Committee comprised of members from the student body, faculty, staff and board.

The committee discussed the possible positives and negatives of a name change. After establishing some ideas, the committee commissioned a survey of alumni and

who desire to study in a Christian environment. The College has successfully served male students for the last fifty years and is now positioned to broaden its influence by enrolling men in all of its programs."

James Lewis, a 1977 graduate of the College and trustee, said, "Blue Mountain College has a responsibility to move forward in order to broaden her influence...."

Blue Mountain College's president, Bettye Rogers Coward, noted the importance of preserving an institution's core values upon which it was founded while responding as necessary to current educational needs. ■

friends of the school. "The results of the survey validated what we already thought," said Dr. J. Samuel Isgett, Executive Director and Dean for Graduate Studies and the chairman of the committee. "We saw overwhelming support for becoming a university and for the name 'North Greenville University' specifically."

While the change is official and faculty and staff have been asked to refer to the school as "North Greenville University," there will be a period of transition as college is replaced with university across the campus. The name change will also bring with it a reorganization of the university's academics.

To finalize the move to university status several other steps must be completed. Legal documents must be changed to reflect the new name. North Greenville is a South Carolina Baptist institution, therefore, the South Carolina Baptist Convention must approve the change to the documents.

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, which accredits the school, must also be notified of the change.

With the addition of millions of dollars worth of new facilities, a student body of over 1,800 and the beginning of the graduate studies program, the school felt strongly that now was the time to move forward with the name change. ■

Gifts & Grants



Campbellsville University Receives \$1 Million Kresge Grant

Campbellsville University successfully completed a \$6.7 million Kresge Foundation challenge grant three months ahead of schedule. As a result Kresge gave CU a grant of \$1 million. The grant will be used toward

construction of the new E. Bruce Heilman Student Complex, which contains the Winters Dining Hall and Davenport Student Commons. This grant puts gifts and pledges for the \$5.5 million complex at \$4.3 million.

The completion of the challenge comes on the heels of receiving a \$750,000 grant

from the Richard D. Van Lunen Foundation in June, which was previously CU's largest private foundation grant. This grant will be used for the construction of the School of Nursing.

MBU Receives \$1 Million Pledge for Spartan Sports Complex

Carl and Deloris Petty, members of Parkway Baptist Church, pledged a \$1-million matching grant to help fund construction of a sports and recreation complex at Missouri Baptist University. The \$8 million facility will boast a gymnasium, fitness facility, training room, conference space, staff offices, new locker rooms, and a student lounge.

Dallas Baptist University Completes Challenge Grant Effort

Dallas Baptist University President Gary Cook has announced that the institution has raised \$7.9 million as part of the Ruth Ray Hunt Challenge Grant Campaign. By raising these funds, DBU has become eligible to receive a total of \$5 million in matching gifts from the Ruth Ray Hunt Philanthropic Fund of Communities Foundation of Texas. These gifts, combined with the \$500,000 gift given by the Hunt family to help formulate the campaign in 2000, bring the total funds raised through the Hunt Campaign to \$13.4 million.

UMHB Receives \$100,000 Gift

Roy and Jean Potts of Belton, Texas, recently completed a \$100,000 charitable gift annuity that will benefit the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor. Mr. and Mrs. Potts will receive income from the gift annuity for their lifetimes, and the university will receive the principal. The gift is unrestricted, which means the university may use the proceeds for any educational purposes deemed appropriate. ■

North Carolina Colleges Request Convention Study

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (ABP)—Campbell University, Chowan College, Gardner-Webb University, Mars Hill College and Wingate University—the five colleges and universities that relate to the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina—recently asked the convention for a formal study of its legal relationships with the schools. Such a study could lead to examining and reconsidering ties between the convention and some of the schools. ■



Call for Papers

Young Scholars in the Baptist Academy

July 24-28, 2006
Regent's Park College, Oxford, UK

Description
Protestants of various stripes including Baptists are turning regularly to the roots of their faith traditions for a richer understanding of worship and witness. The work of theologians such as Thomas Oden, Robert Webber, and Daniel Williams, the appearance of biblical commentary series such as the *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture* (IVP) and the *Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible* (Brazos Press), the dialogues between Baptists and Roman Catholics in contexts such as *Evangelicals and Catholics Together*, and the development of university curricula that give attention to Christian traditions indicate the extent to which Baptists have joined other Christians in affirming and appropriating that which has been "handed over" to them, in the etymological sense of *traditio*.

Young Scholars in the Baptist Academy will convene a select group of participants across academic disciplines to explore the recovery of Christian tradition within Baptist life, with special attention to the ways in which Baptist higher education should critically and constructively engage those developments. Seminar participants might explore such questions as: What can Baptists learn from the larger Christian tradition within which they are located, and in what ways does this tradition bear upon the life of the university? What do Baptists have to contribute to the breadth of the Christian tradition, and how can the Baptist academy provide an effective voice both within and beyond the tradition? What practices and virtues generally discernible as a part of the Christian tradition are worthy of cultivation within the Baptist academy? While biblical, historical, and theological resources for approaching these questions are needed, the seminar organizers intend to include scholars from wide ranging academic areas in these discussions.

Details
Prospective participants may apply by submitting a letter of application, a letter of institutional support, current vita, and a 750-word abstract by March 1, 2006. Submissions are welcomed from any scholar identifying with the Baptist tradition, with preference given to junior level faculty at Baptist colleges and universities. Seminar participants will receive a \$1000 stipend, lodging, and meals at Regent's Park College, Oxford. Further information is available by contacting Roger Ward at Roger.Ward@georgetowncollege.edu.

Young Scholars in the Baptist Academy is an initiative of Georgetown College, supported by a grant from Lilly Endowment, Inc. Additional funding and support is provided by The Baylor Institute for Faith and Learning.

Visiting Committee:
Andrew Chesnut, Missouri State University
Douglas Henry, Baylor University
Elizabeth Newman, Brazos Theological Seminary of Bedford
Margaret Bull, Baylor University
Roger Ward, Georgetown College

www.meetinghouse.net

Go to <www.baptistschools.org> to see the new Sallie Mae powered resource "Help for Students and Parents Preparing and Paying for College."



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Mission Documents : What Do They Say about

by Garry M. Breland

Vice President for Academic Affairs
Hannibal-LaGrange College

An examination of the mission documents of the member colleges and universities of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools (ASBCS) reveals much information about those institutions and also much variation in the mission documents themselves.

During 2004 and 2005 I compiled mission documents from the websites of all 51 regionally accredited member colleges and universities.¹ Since information posted on websites is revised from time to time, some mission documents may have already undergone revision. Current, official publications should be consulted for up-to-date information about each institution.

The term mission documents is used here to refer to any of several statements that describe and define an institution, including statements of mission, vision, purposes and values.

I did rudimentary analysis of a few key concepts related to religious identity in an effort to better understand how these institutions see themselves and how they communicate their identities.

The first analysis revealed how the mission documents express the Christian identity of the institutions.

A word search of all the statements shows that the term "Christian" appears at least 126 times. Nearly all the statements expressed in a prominent way an identity as either Christian, Christ-centered, or with reference to Judeo-Christian values or principles.

"Christian" is used to modify a great number of terms, among them: faith (16), environment (9), values (9), community (6), liberal arts college or institution (6), principles (5), service (5), institution (4), worldview (4), character (3), education (3), life (3), atmosphere (2), ideals (2), principles and teachings (2), college, school, lifestyle, academic community, development, philosophy, heritage, heritage and values, history and tradition, context, personality, scholars, servant leaders, virtues, vision, stewardship, influence, ministry, integrity, leadership and service.

Even though careful effort was made to select the most relevant phrases and clauses from the statements, different selections than those that follow could be made. These selections are abbreviated to enhance comparison, but the full statements of each institution

1. The idea for this compilation was first suggested by Mary Beth Breland, who is conducting a study of writing instruction at Southern Baptist Colleges and Universities for a Ph.D. at the University of Missouri - Columbia.

should be consulted for a more complete understanding of each particular institution's claims.

Each ASBCS member institution and the reference to the school's Christian identity is as follows:

Anderson College: Christian liberal arts institution

Averett University: Christian heritage and values

The Baptist College Of Florida: Operate within the context of a Christian worldview

Baptist College of Health Sciences: Grounded in Christian principles Education offered within a Christian environment

Baylor University: Integrating academic excellence and Christian commitment within a caring community

Belmont University: A Christian community of learning and service

Blue Mountain College: Rooted in the values or the Christian faith

Bluefield College: Connecting Christian principles and learning

Brewton-Parker College: Informed by the Christian faith

California Baptist University: Preparing and qualifying ministers and others for Christian work

Campbell University: A community of Christian scholars

Campbellsville University: A comprehensive, Christian institution

Carson-Newman College: Offers a Christian liberal arts education

Charleston Southern University: Christian environment

Chowan College: Founded upon Judeo-Christian values

Clear Creek Baptist College: Preparation for adults called to Christian service

University of the Cumberlands: Liberal arts program enriched with Christian values

Dallas Baptist University: Christ-centered quality higher education

East Texas Baptist University: Committed to the integration of learning and faith in pursuit of truth

Gardner-Webb University: A caring Christian community based upon Christian principles and values

Georgetown College: Commitment to Christian values

Hannibal-LaGrange College: Liberal arts education in a distinctively Christian environment

Hardin-Simmons University: Believing academic excellence and Christian faith to be complementary

Houston Baptist University: A Christian liberal arts institution

Howard Payne University: Christian frame of

reference

Judson College (AL): Private, undergraduate institution of liberal learning and professional study related to the Alabama State Convention

Judson College (IL): Evangelical Christian college

Louisiana College: Educational program ... informed by the Christian faith

Mars Hill College: Academic community rooted in the Christian faith

Mercer University: Affirming religious and moral values that arise from the Judeo-Christian understanding of the world

Mid-Continent University: Christ-centered higher education

Mississippi College: Christian institution

Missouri Baptist University: An evangelical Christian liberal arts institution of higher learning

North Greenville University: A Christian school

Oklahoma Baptist University: A Christian liberal arts university

Ouachita Baptist University: A church related, liberal arts university

Palm Beach Atlantic University: Devoted to lifelong, Christ-centered scholarship, service, and citizenship

Samford University: Learning experiences and relationships in a Christian community

Shorter College: Commitment to the Christian faith and strives to integrate Christian values within its whole process of education

Southwest Baptist University: Christ-centered, caring academic community

Truett-McConnell College: To equip students to make a positive impact for Christ through disciplined scholarship and Christian discipleship

Union University: Equipping people to think Christianly

University of Mary Hardin-Baylor: A Christ-centered institution of higher learning

University of Mobile: A Christian institution of liberal arts and sciences

Virginia Intermont College: A liberal arts-based, baccalaureate-granting institution

Wayland Baptist University: Academically challenging and distinctively Christian environment

William Carey College: A caring Christian academic community

William Jewell College: An institution loyal to the ideals of Christ

Williams Baptist College: Philosophical orientation of a conservative Christian worldview, Judeo-Christian heritage, and western culture

Yellowstone Baptist College: Philosophy of

the Identity of Baptist Colleges and Universities?

the college is consistent with the doctrines of the Christian faith

Baptist Identity

Identification with the name "Baptist" varies widely. In the statements of seven institutions the only place "Baptist" appears is in the name of the institution.

The statements of fifteen institutions expressly refer to affiliation with a state Baptist convention.

In the statements of six other institutions some reference is made to a relationship with a state Baptist convention (stated in some other way than affiliation: e.g., covenant relationship, owned by, related to).

In seven statements there are references to "Baptist" without reference to a state Baptist convention (e.g., Baptist heritage, founding, distinctives, tradition).

For sixteen institutions there is no mention of the term Baptist at all in the mission statement.

Integration of Faith and Learning

Explicit language carrying ideas of integrating faith and learning is found in the mission statements of twenty-one of the fifty-one colleges and universities (41%). Mission statements do not describe fully the actual practices of institutions and the absence of a reference to integration of faith and learning does not imply that the institution does not value or engage in those efforts, rather it merely signifies that their mission documents do not contain language to that effect.

The twenty-one schools and their specific language related to integration of faith and learning are as follows:

Anderson College: To recruit qualified Christian faculty and staff committed to the challenge of integrating faith and discipline.

Baylor University: To educate men and women for worldwide leadership and service by integrating academic excellence and Christian commitment within a caring community. Affirming the value of intellectually informed faith and religiously informed education. Advancing the frontiers of knowledge while cultivating a Christian world-view.

Bluefield College: Connecting Christian principles and learning. Equip its students for life by blending a strong core of liberal arts studies with career-oriented programs and with the students' personal faith. The college seeks to authentically integrate faith and learning into a Christian worldview.

Campbell University: Helping students develop an integrated Christian personality characterized by a wholeness of body, mind and spirit that includes a method of critical judg-

ment; an appreciation of the intellectual, cultural, and religious heritage; stewardship of the body; and a sensitive awareness of the world and society in which they live and work with persons. No conflict between the life of faith and the life of inquiry.

Dallas Baptist University: To produce servant leaders who have the ability to integrate faith and learning through their respective callings.

East Texas Baptist University: As a Baptist university we are committed to the integration of learning and Christian faith in the pursuit of truth.

Hardin-Simmons University: Believing academic excellence and Christian faith to be complementary, the University emphasizes the need for interaction between faith and reason.

Houston Baptist University: The integration of scholarship, service, and spirituality essential to liberal arts education is nurtured in an environment of open inquiry. Students are encouraged to think critically, to assess information from a Christian perspective.

Howard Payne University: An educational experience that integrates faith, learning, and living.

Louisiana College: Affirming the proposition that all truth is one and that all truth is God's truth, the College is committed to the task of integrating faith and learning in a context of free inquiry.

Mid-Continent University: Facilitate student development by promoting the synthesis of academic knowledge and Christian values for spiritual, physical, social, and intellectual maturation.

Mississippi College: As a Christian institution, Mississippi College values the integration of faith and learning throughout the educational process.

North Greenville College: The college strives to prepare students to become better, contributing members of society by educating the whole person through an integration of academic discipline, a Christian lifestyle, and an enriched cultural experience while offering students the best opportunities for spiritual growth, academic training, and Christian service.

Oklahoma Baptist University: As a Christian liberal arts university, OBU transforms lives by equipping students to pursue academic excellence, integrate faith with all area of knowledge, engage a diverse world, [and] live worthy of the high calling of God in Christ.

Ouachita Baptist University: Seeks to combine the love of God with the love of learning.

Palm Beach Atlantic University: The univer-

sity is devoted to lifelong, Christ-centered scholarship, service, and citizenship integrating personal faith and academic discipline for a global community.

Shorter College: The College affirms a commitment to the Christian faith and strives to integrate Christian values within a nurturing community in its whole process of education.

Southwest Baptist University: The mission statement of the University implies there will be a fusing of the liberal arts with career preparation and the Christian faith with learning.

Truett-McConnell College: The mission statement of the University implies there will be a fusing of the liberal arts with career preparation and the Christian faith with learning.

Union University: Equipping persons to think Christianly and serve faithfully. We will seek to establish all aspects of life and learning on the Word of God, leading to a firm commitment to Christ and His Kingdom. This commitment calls for all faculty and staff to integrate Christian faith in all learning and doing, based on the supposition that all truth is God's truth and that there is no contradiction between God's truth made known to us in Holy Scripture and that which is revealed to us through creation and natural revelation.

University of Mobile: As a Christian institution, the University of Mobile explicitly seeks to combine critical pursuit of knowledge with cultivation of religious awareness.

William Jewell College: William Jewell College believes that learning and service make their greatest impact when informed and inspired by an active Christian faith.

Other Religious Language Used

A study of the mission documents revealed the following frequency of other religious language: Spiritual: 43, God: 35, Jesus, Jesus Christ, or Christ: 35, Bible or Biblical: 17, Church: 16, Evangelical: 2, conservative: 1.

Conclusion

There is evidence in the mission documents of ASBCS institutions to show a serious intent by the schools to identify themselves as Christian institutions. Most of the institutions (35) also identify themselves as Baptist in some way, although only 21 refer to a relationship with a state Baptist convention. At least 22 of the schools have explicit references to the integration of faith and learning in their educational programs. ■

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Historic Charleston Tour Planned for ASBCS Spouses

A tour of historic sites in Charleston, South Carolina is planned for spouses of conference participants during the annual meeting of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and schools June 5, 2006. The tour which will begin at 9 a.m. will include Charleston's beautiful historic district with a stop at the Heyward-Washington House c. 1772 which houses the finest collection of Charleston made furniture in the city and St. Michael's church, the oldest church in the city. Also on the tour will be First Baptist church built in 1822. This congregation was organized in the late 1600s. The tour will include homes along the Battery, 18th Century Rainbow Row, public buildings and other points of interest. The group will have lunch at A. W. Schucks. ■



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