

# THE BAPTIST EDUCATOR



News Journal of the International Association of Baptist Colleges and Universities

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## IABCU Moves to Samford University; Names Ashley Hill as Executive Secretary

The International Association of Baptist Colleges and Universities (IABCU) has moved from Nashville, Tenn., to Samford University in Birmingham, Ala., and a board member search committee has named Ashley Hill as executive secretary.

The move is part of the implementation of a reorganization plan approved by members of the Association last June, and it will reduce the number of paid staff members, cut the budget by nearly half, and reduce the dues scale paid by its 47 member schools by 50 percent.

Hill will be the only full-time paid staff member of IABCU and will assume many of the duties of Tim Fields, who retired October 10 as associate director. She began work on October 6.

David Olive, President of Bluefield College will serve as president and board chair through the June 2015 annual meeting. The current president and board chair will serve for one or two years and assume the duties of the former executive director position

most recently held by Mike Arrington who retired June 6.

Hill, who earned an accounting degree from Auburn University, has

experience as a business owner, writer, editor and social media consultant. She and her husband, Jonathan, have been married for 15 years, and are parents to two daughters, ages 12 and 6. She and her family are active members of Shades Mountain Baptist Church. Among the duties that Hill will assume are assist the IABCU president in the overall operation of the Association, collect all membership fees, serve as the Association's information and public relations officer, assist the president in maintaining and improving ongoing communications and good relationships with representatives of member schools, act as managing editor of *The Baptist Educator*, maintain the Association's website, maintain the Association's financial records, maintain the historical and legal records, maintain the corporate office, assist the president in planning and promoting Association events and board meetings, assist the president in maintaining good relationships with corporate sponsors, and serve as assistant secretary to the Board's recording secretary. ■



*Ashley Hill, IABCU  
Executive Secretary*



*Dwight M. Beeson Hall on the campus of Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama, is the new home of the International Association of Baptist Colleges and Universities.*

### New Contact Info for IABCU

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## The St. Louis Marriott West

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WELCOMES

International Association of Baptist Colleges and  
Universities

(IABCU)

Annual Meeting May 31-June 2, 2015

The 2015 annual meeting will be held in St. Louis, MO,  
home of Missouri Baptist University. Details and sched-  
ule will be posted soon on the IABCU website,  
[www.BaptistSchools.org](http://www.BaptistSchools.org).



David P. Gushee

This year's Hester Lecture speak-  
er will be Dr. David P. Gushee.  
Dr. Gushee is the Distinguished  
University Professor of Christian  
Ethics and Director of the  
Center for Theological and  
Public Life at Mercer University.  
Dr. Gushee will give three pre-  
sentations titled “Students,  
Baptists, & Education: Who We  
Educate, From What Theology,  
With What Paradigm.”

# Comment: The Important Work of Spiritual Formation

David Olive, IABCU President and Board Chair and President, Bluefield College

We all are engaged in doing the important work of spiritual formation on our campuses. While we may refer to it as campus ministry, faith formation or something else--and I imagine do it somewhat similarly yet differently--spiritual formation is a key part of who we are and what we do. As colleges and universities with rich roots in the Baptist faith tradition, you might say the shaping of our students' spiritual beings is in our DNA.

In seeking a contemporary definition of spiritual formation, I came across this one on the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware website: "Simply put, it is the ongoing work of God's Spirit in our lives, carving/shaping us into the increasingly unmistakable image of Jesus. It is a grace work of His, on our behalf. Yet, He chooses to invite our involvement in the process."

A few years ago, here at Bluefield College we made an intentional shift from "campus ministry" to "spiritual formation." We even hired a Christian Studies professor, Dr. Shawn White, to direct this important campus effort of spiritual shaping and growth.

Is there more to it than semantics? I hope and certainly believe there is and that there is more to it than simply changing the label. For example, what once was a standalone event--albeit a significant event--each week during chapel on Wednesday mornings, has now become an integrated component of other spiritual formation opportunities, including the classroom. Each week in advance of the chapel service, Dr. White reminds faculty of the semester's worship theme and shares an overview of what will be shared with students during worship. He encourages faculty to integrate relevant aspects of what is shared in chapel into classroom discussion.

Last year, for example, the fall semester theme was "Who Is God?" Early in the semester, an English professor seeking to



David Olive

gauge his freshman class's writing abilities asked the class to write about what they did or did not believe about God. In addition to providing the professor with an indication of where each student stood as an effective writer, he had the opportunity to engage the class in a conversation about God.

The umbrella of spiritual formation spans beyond a worship hour and conversations in the classroom; faculty and staff are engaged in leading women's and men's bible studies each week. We have even woven para-church ministries into our efforts to shape hearts and minds of our students, including Fellowship of Christian Athletes and Young Life. For example, we have provided office space on campus for two local area Young Life chapters. While Young Life is principally focused on building relationships with middle school and high school youth with the intent to introduce them to Christ, the Young Life directors are leading "Club" activities for our college students on campus each Wednesday night. As one of the directors has shared, "We give them a little more depth in our bible

*In conjunction with the sharing of knowledge and inculcating a love for lifelong learning, can there be anything more important we have the privilege of doing than shaping the spiritual lives of our students into the increasingly unmistakable image of Jesus?*

study time, but we realize there are students here who are 'seekers' and wanting to know more about Christ and what it means to be a follower of Christ."

In conjunction with the sharing of knowledge and inculcating a love for lifelong learning, can there be anything

more important we have the privilege of doing than shaping the spiritual lives of our students into the increasingly unmistakable image of Jesus? You and I are truly fortunate and blessed to have this privilege bestowed upon us.

Please share your thoughts on how you are focusing on spiritual formation and transforming lives on your campus. Visit the new Member Forum on the IABCU's website, <[www.BaptistSchools.org](http://www.BaptistSchools.org)> (password is IABCU) and share what you are doing at your college or university so that we can learn more from one another.

Partnering with you in faithful service. ■

## Mark Your Calendar

IABCU Dessert Reception at SACSCOC December 8, 2014, Nashville, TN

8-9 p.m. in Cumberland I Room at the Omni Hotel

# Baptist Identity and Education in a Non-Denominational Era

By Bill J. Leonard

James and Marilyn Dunn Professor of Baptist Studies and  
Professor of Church History,  
Wake Forest University School of Divinity

**Editor's Note: The following article was delivered as the second of two Hester Lectures at the IABCU Annual Meeting June 1-3, 2014 in Charleston, SC. Both current and back issues of *The Baptist Educator* are available for free download on the IABCU website at <[www.baptistschools.org](http://www.baptistschools.org)>.**

On the eve of the American Revolution, Anglican Parson Charles Woodmason described the carryings on among the people called Baptists in the “Carolina backcountry”. He wrote:

They don't all agree in one Tune. For one sings this Doctrine, and the next something different—So that people's brains are turn'd and bewildered. And then again to see them Divide and Sub divide, split into parties—Rail at and excommunicate one another—Turn (members) out of one meeting and receive (them back) into another. And a Gang of them getting together and gabbling one after the other (and sometimes disputing against each other) on abstruse Theological Questions . . . such as the greatest Metaph[ys]icians and Learned Scholars never yet could define, or agree on—To hear Ignorant Wretches, who cannot write . . . discussing such Knotty Points for the Edification of their Auditors . . . must give High offence to all Intelligent and rational Minds.<sup>1</sup>

Woodmason was as correct as he was condescending. Indeed, many 21st century observers would concur that contemporary Baptists still give “high offense” across the ideological spectrum in the church and the public square. When Representative Keith Ellison (D-Minn), the first Muslim ever elected to Congress, took his oath on the Koran, Virginia Representative Virgil Goode (R-VA), a Baptist, wrote to constituents: “[I]f American citizens don't wake up and adopt the Virgil Goode position on immigration there will likely be many more Muslims elected to office and demanding the use of the Koran.”<sup>2</sup> Goode, a University of Richmond graduate, is listed on the October 24, 2012 *Our Campaigns* web page as “conservative, anti-embryonic stem cell research, anti-marijuana legalization, anti-affirmative action, anti-civil unions, anti-gay marriage, pro Alaska/off-

shore oil drilling, pro-gun, pro-Bush tax cuts, pro-capital punishment, pro-life, pro-Baptist.”<sup>3</sup>

Former President and Baptist Sunday School teacher, Jimmy Carter, as described in Randall Balmer's new book, *Redeemer: the Life of Jimmy Carter*, reverses entirely the congressman's list of political positions.<sup>4</sup> Carter's book *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid* (2006), in which he criticized the Israeli government for building settlements in the West Bank and a wall of separation between Israel and Palestinian territories, set off a firestorm from many Jewish and Christian leaders alike. Writing in *Christianity Today*, David Aikman wrote, “Mr. President, fellow born-again Christian, your role as an impartial ‘man of peace’ has never been more in question.”<sup>5</sup>

Likewise, Baptist ministers in Winston-Salem, North Carolina illustrate the wide boundaries of pastoral public engagement. In July of 2010, Reverend Ron Baity, pastor of Berean Baptist Church, an Independent Baptist congregation in Winston-Salem, demanded an apology from the North Carolina legislature when, after being named chaplain for a week, he was told he could not pray in “Jesus' name.” Baity prayed in “Jesus' name” anyway and was told his services were no longer warranted. “They're telling me how I need to pray,” Baity declared. “That is establishment of religion.”<sup>6</sup>

After Martin Luther King memorial events last January, the *Chronicle*, Winston-Salem's African-American-based newspaper, wrote of one of the city's most public Black preachers, “Rev. Dr. John Mendez, a well-known activist and pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church, encouraged attendees to stand with the NC NAACP as it once again starts a new slate of Moral Monday protests. Mendez, who was arrested in the state capitol building last year during one of the protests, said the movement has caught fire, attracting thousands to Raleigh to protest the direction the Republicans have taken the state. ‘We are in a struggle for democracy,’ Mendez said.”<sup>7</sup>

Emmanuel Baptist Church has affiliation with the National Baptist and Progressive National Baptist Conventions. Baptists stay controversial on the right and the left.

And then there are all those internecine “Baptist battles” fought incessantly in the pew and the press. Not only are their ceaseless debates over issues of gender and sexuality, race and multiculturalism, creationism and evolution, but centuries-long differences remain on questions of election and predestination, limited and general atonement, and open and closed baptismal policies. Some Baptist groups even revisit the wine versus grape juice arguments in Holy Communion. Many Primitive Baptists in this region of the country never bought into the Temperance Movement, viewing total abstinence

from alcohol as “liberal” and unbiblical, often fermenting their own wine for use in communion. John G. Crowley cites a Georgia Primitive Baptist who “once remarked that the Missionary [Southern Baptist] and Methodist use of grape juice in communion was quite appropriate, since their doctrines bore the same resemblance to truth as grape juice bore to wine.”<sup>8</sup> When 21st century Baptists “divide and sub divide, split into parties, rail at and excommunicate each other,” not just in the “Carolina back-country,” but on CNN, wouldn’t any self respecting national university want to distance itself from its Baptist origins as quickly as possible?

Indeed, Baptists then and now seem a community of unending dissent, declaring themselves as divisively and at times disgustingly as did their frontier forebears. Publicly and privately, Baptists remain an unruly lot, given to unceasing pontification on assorted theological, ethical and political issues. Truth is, being Baptist was never all that respectable. As their earliest critics saw it, Baptists demonstrated bad theology, bad citizenship, and bad manners every time they opened their mouths. They were heretical, underclass peasants who held erroneous religious opinions and lacked the educational sophistication to articulate them appropriately.

So here we sit “in the year of our Lord,” or the Common Era 2014, asking why in the world would a college/university with Baptist roots want to reference, even privilege, a questionable, often embarrassing, past on the way to an enlightened future. Given Baptist behavior past and present, should the university bother to own its Baptist origins and identity henceforth and forever?

Owning Baptist origins and identity seems to become more complex if not difficult with every passing year for many schools and churches alike. The issues are as likely to be demographic and cultural as theological and ecclesial, and most of you probably have your own list. Mine goes like this. Maintaining Baptist identity and connections in higher education is difficult because: 1) Baptist denominational and congregational entities—local, state, national—are in major transitions, disconnects, debates, schism, and quests for identity; 2) Many if not most congregations and their denominational counterparts are facing increased financial difficulties, forced to rethink their budgetary connections to many programs and agencies, educational institutions included; 3) As we noted in yesterday’s discussion, students, faculties and donors give increasingly less attention or commitment to denominational identity and loyalty; 4) At many schools—students and faculty have limited experience with a Baptist ethos in their religious orientation; 5) Student bodies increasingly reflect broader national religious trends that cover a spectrum from “nones” who have little or no religious affiliation, to non-denominational churches with limited or no denominational connections, to non-Protestant or even non-Christian backgrounds; 6) While some schools, intent

on retaining a Christian identity are moving to incorporate varying evangelical or mainline groups into previously Baptist-related environments, those that continue to cultivate Baptist roots and connectionalism are compelled to ask what kind of Baptist school they want to be—given the divisions among Baptist denominations, churches and individuals; and 7) Finally, some schools are forced to acknowledge that in their specific regional or demographic setting, traditional Baptist identity is simply not something they can afford, no matter what their specific Christian commitments may be. (There should have been something in that list to delight or offend everyone here today.)

As a historian who happens to be a Baptist, I would suggest that aspects of the Baptist past are worth considering whether schools use the infamous “B” word in our public statements or not. Frankly, I think there are many reasons for revisiting the Baptist past in order to inform a school’s present and future. To own the best contributions does not require claiming the entirety of Baptist history, nor does it mean scrambling to find something worth retaining in order to be historically correct. Rather, we could be intentional about revisiting a school’s past with appropriate research before jettisoning uncritically the movement that birthed that school. What in the Baptist visions offer insight toward the future whether we reference these embarrassing forebears or not? Are there elements of the Baptist past that may get the attention of those who have ignored or dismissed such identity as viable? Before moving to elaborate dogmas, schools may want to find segments of the Baptist past from which to begin discussion with those who have little knowledge of that history.

There are multiple options for emphases within the Baptist framework. Early Baptist identity was characterized by emphasis on biblical authority, liberty of conscience, a believers’ church in which all who claimed membership were required to testify to an experience of grace through Christ, believers’ baptism by immersion (1640s), congregational church polity, associational cooperation, an ordained clergy within the priesthood of the laity, religious liberty, and theological diversity as to who could be saved and how. Amid those essentially sectarian characteristics, an enduring legacy, worth claiming I believe, involves the importance of uncoerced faith as the doorway to a believers’ church grounded in the power of conscience and the inevitability of dissent.

Make no mistake about it; those who founded the first Baptist church in Amsterdam in 1609 began as an unashamed Christian sect of second generation Protestants, born of the idea that the church should be composed only of believers, those who could testify to a work of grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Baptists understood conscience and dissent in light of the need for sinners to be regenerated, made new creations through conversion to Christ. Yet in their assertion that

*Continued on page 6*

**Given Baptist behavior past and present, should the university bother to own its Baptist origins and identity henceforth and forever?**

conscience could not be compelled by either state-based or faith-based establishments, they flung the door wide for religious liberty and pluralism in ways that even the founders may not have fully understood. By regeneration, they meant, in the words of a 1679 confession (the Orthodox Creed): “those who are united unto Christ by effectual faith, are regenerated, and have a new heart and spirit created in them through the virtue of Christ his death, resurrection, and intercession, and by the efficacy of the holy spirit, received by faith.”<sup>9</sup>

Conscience and religious liberty were not based on secular theories (although they would impact them) but on the necessity of uncoerced faith grounded in conscience and mediated through a congregation of Christian believers. A commitment to freedom of conscience led Baptists to oppose religious establishments and develop principles of religious liberty that anticipated modern pluralism. Why? Because faith could not be coerced by government or state-privileged churches.

Thomas Helwys’ classic work, *A Short Declaration of the Mystery of Iniquity* (ca. 1612) was perhaps the earliest Baptist document to articulate issues of conscience directly. One of its most widely quoted passage begins: “Let the King judge, is it not most equal that men should choose their religion themselves, seeing they only must stand themselves before the judgment seat of God to answer for themselves, when it shall be no excuse for them to say, we were commanded or compelled to be of this religion by the king or by them that had authority from him.”<sup>10</sup>

Baptist leader Leonard Busher wrote in 1614 (*Religions Peace: or, A Plea for Liberty of Conscience*): “And as kings and bishops cannot command the wind, so they cannot command faith; You may force men to church against their consciences, but they will believe as they did afore, when they come there; for God giveth a blessing only to his own ordinance, and abhorreth antichrist’s.”<sup>11</sup> True faith was grounded in freedom to choose or reject God’s gift of grace on the basis of conscience before God alone.

Thomas Helwys anticipated our country and increasingly our campuses when he wrote four hundred years ago: “Let them be heretics, Turks, Jews, or whatsoever, it appertains not to the earthly power to punish them in the least measure.”<sup>12</sup> Baptist founders insisted that religious liberty was essential as a means of freeing individuals to follow their own consciences even when they chose not to be Christians. As pluralism becomes more normative and more complex, we need not hide the fact that our Baptist forebears set it in motion well

before the Enlightenment claimed it.

So Baptists began as a community of dissent. They challenged political and religious establishments in a variety of ways. First, they were non-conformists who often refused to abide by the rules of religious uniformity demanded by the state-based churches of their day. Second, they rejected any laws of church or state that compelled financial or devotional support for a religious communion in which they had no VOICE. Third, they defied any church that attempted to legislate belief by virtue of birth, economic status, or culture privilege; and sought to separate from it. Fourth, they institutionalized (in the best sense) a new spirituality born of religious experience anchored in conscience and community—a dissenting approach to entry into faith and grace.

Anglican priest Daniel Featley’s description of seventeenth century Baptists illustrates the basis of their radical non-conformity. His list of Baptist teachings is clearly an establishmentarian nightmare. It also provides insight into how seventeenth century dissenters were perceived by their religious-political enemies. Featley described Baptists’ beliefs as follows:

“First, that none are rightly baptized but those who are dipt.” [They rejected the socially mandated mode of baptism.]

“Secondly, that no children ought to be baptized.” [They cast aside the link between baptism and citizenship—i.e. to be born into a “Christian” state required immediate baptism into the Christian Church.]

“Thirdly, that there ought to be no set form of Liturgy or prayer by the Book, but onely by the Spirit.” [They demanded the freedom to determine their own spirituality apart from

government enforced prayer.]

“Fourthly, that there ought to be no distinction by the Word of God between the Clergy and the Laity but that all who are gifted may preach the Word, and administer the Sacraments.” [They challenged the status of a privileged religious class that controlled theology and admission to the sacraments.]

“Fifthly, that it is not lawful to take an oath at all, no, not though it be demanded by the magistrate.” [The oath reflected the loyalty of citizenship. Baptists would swear only to God, not governments.]

“Sixthly, that no Christian may with good conscience execute the office of civil magistrate.”<sup>13</sup> [They knew, didn’t they?]

Every article in this fascinating list reflects degrees of both political and religious non-conformity among Baptists theologically, liturgically and politically. Their dissent had clear political and religious implications. To put it in more 21st century terms, Baptists offered an alternative spirituality to the religious uniformity of their day, introducing a framework for a new pluralism that would ultimately win the day in much of the West.

Nonetheless, Baptists in the U.S. also offer their own neg-

**As pluralism becomes more normative and more complex, we need not hide the fact that our Baptist forebears set [religious liberty and freedom of conscience] in motion well before the Enlightenment claimed it.**

ative illustrations of culture-bound religion that used religious language to undermine Christian ideals, reflecting various ideas and practices no longer acceptable in any college or university. Almost en mass, Baptists in the South and their respective educational institutions tolerated chattel slavery as a social given, insisting that it was sanctioned in the infallible text of Holy Scripture. In 1822, a decade or two before many of our schools were founded, Richard Furman, pastor of First Baptist Church, Charleston, declared before the South Carolina legislature: "Had the holding of slaves been a moral evil, it cannot be supposed, that the inspired Apostles, who feared not the faces of men, and were ready to lay down their lives in the case of their God, would have tolerated it, for a moment, in the Christian Church." Furman concluded: "In proving this subject justifiable by Scriptural authority, its morality is also proved; for the Divine Law never sanctions immoral actions."<sup>14</sup> Slavery and segregation shaped our region and our identity as individuals, churches, and schools. Segregation too.

Baptist-related schools in the region remained segregated generally until the 1960s, many like Wake Forest and Mercer, admitting people of color from Africa before people who lived next door. When Nigerian Sam Oni applied to Mercer in 1962, he wrote: "I am so anxious to come to Mercer not only because it is a Christian institution, but it would afford me the opportunity of meeting many of the good people of the Southern Baptist Convention who have done so much for my own people."<sup>15</sup> It was John Mitchell, the Mercer director of admissions, who exercised the dissenting, dare we say prophetic Baptist tradition, writing to the university president:

"Mr. Oni was converted through the work of a young man who was graduated from our university. Would this young Christian understand that the doors of the university which prepared the missionary who brought the Gospel are closed to his converts? Indeed, he has a closer relationship to our university than the Negro of Macon, Georgia. He is one of our constituents."<sup>16</sup>

Directors of admissions at many of our schools opened the door to integration by calling Baptists to live up to the implication of the salvation (and liberation) they declared at home and abroad. Sam Oni became an African witness that soon extended to "the Negro of Macon." Gospel dissent finally set things right. To my knowledge, the only two SBC-related schools to host Martin Luther King, Jr. in their chapels were the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (1961) and Wake Forest University (1962). Seminary president Duke K. McCall once told me that the seminary lost upwards of a quarter of a million dollars in donations for that chapel service, a service sponsored by a group of "young Turk" professors all of whom have gone on to their eternal reward. Today, in Charleston, we say it was money well spent.

Likewise, there were the education controversies between Baptist schools and the denominational entities that sponsored them. While Baptists then and now desperately wanted their children to receive the intellectual and economic benefits of higher education, many feared that it would somehow "steal their faith" and after four years at Baptist schools, or certain of them, their sons and daughters would "never go to prayer meetin' again." Preachers were particularly in danger. As one old 19th century Baptist preacher allegedly fretted: "We don't really favor an educated ministry, we saw what it did to the Presbyterians." The teaching of evolution, hard fought in the early twentieth century by the likes of Wake Forest president and scientist William Louis Poteat, illustrated the distance that readily developed between Wake Forest and its Baptist constituents in the 1920s! Today, many of your schools are caught between those who think you are patently uncritical on issues of Bible, politics and science and those who think you've sold out to Satan and his secular minions.

Given those disconnects, early and late, perhaps it is important to ask one more time what we want to do with our Baptist parents—own them, warts and all, on the way to a new academic and religious future, or lock them away like mad men and women in the attic, arcane anachronisms as embarrassing in the present as in

**So today, amid the diversity of schools, constituents and culture, I'm suggesting that Baptist-related schools begin dialogue with Baptists and non-Baptists on campus by owning this major portion of their history.**

the past.

So today, amid the diversity of schools, constituents and culture, I'm suggesting that Baptist-related schools begin dialogue with Baptists and non-Baptists on campus by owning this major portion of their history: The importance of a vital faith born of a nurturing and nurtured religious experience, and a celebration of the Baptist contribution to the power of conscience and the presence of pluralism in American religious life. I love the image that proto-Baptist Roger Williams gave for establishing Providence and with it the colony of Rhode Island in 1636 and the First Baptist church in America by 1638/9. He bought land from the Native Americans and sent word: "I having made covenant of peaceable neighborhood with all the sachems and natives round about us, and having, in a sense of God's merciful providence unto me in my distress, called the place Providence, I desired it might be for a shelter for persons distressed of conscience.... I communicated my said purchase unto my loving friends ... who then desired to take shelter here with me. . . ." <sup>17</sup> One postmodern adaptation of that proto-Baptist heritage might mean that our schools might indeed renew a commitment to being and becoming "shelters for persons distressed of conscience." When immigrants showed up, Williams asked "whether or no such as may hold forth other worships or religions, Jews, Turks, or anti-christians, may not be peaceable and quiet sub-

*Continued on page 8*

## Baptist Identity and Education...

Continued from page 7

jects, loving and helpful neighbours, fair and just dealers, true and loyal to the civil government.” He concluded that, “It is clear they may, from reason and experience in many flourishing cities and kingdoms of the world.”<sup>18</sup>

He and Dr. John Clarke, the Newport founder, invented Rhode Island, with its charter that anticipated religious America as it declared:

“No person within said Colony, at any time hereafter, shall be in any wise molested, punished, disquieted, or called in question for any differences of opinion in matters of religion, . . . but that all and any persons may, from time to time, and at all times hereafter, freely and fully have and enjoy his and their own judgments and consciences in matters of religious concerns throughout the tract of land hereafter mentioned.”<sup>19</sup>

Conscience and religious liberty did not mean silence or a nebulous syncretism, however. Rhode Island Baptists argued unashamedly with their opponents (and each other). They spoke their views freely and passionately, but asserted

the right of others to do the same. They insisted that it was only through religious liberty was such debate possible, since there was a thin line between disagreeing with persons and silencing them in the name of God or government. For these early Baptists, dissent was a direct result of the freedom of conscience, individual and communal. Indeed, references to conscience as a foundation of dissent abound in 17th century Baptist documents. Baptist literature provides a fascinating commentary on the role of conscience as enlivened by an individual’s faith commitments.<sup>20</sup>

Similar phrases are utilized in the so-called *Orthodox Creed* of General Baptists in 1679.<sup>21</sup> It states: “And the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute blind obedience, destroys liberty of conscience, and reason also, it being repugnant to both.”<sup>22</sup> The call to un-

coerced faith produced the necessity of dissent.

As Baptists moved South in the Revolutionary era, they continued to press their radical understanding of conscience. Baptists in Virginia challenged the Anglican religious establishment and were fined or imprisoned for refusing to secure preaching licenses from the state. John Leland, friend of Madison and Jefferson, rejected any suggestion that America

was a “Christian nation,” writing: “The liberty I contend for, is more than toleration. The very idea of toleration, is despicable; it supposes that some have a pre-eminence above the rest, to grant indulgence; whereas, all should be equally free, Jews, Turks, Pagans and Christians. Test oaths, and established creeds should be avoided as the worst of evils.”<sup>23</sup> Leland wrote: “Whether, therefore, the Christian religion be true or false, it is not an article of legislation. In this case, Bible Christians, and Deists, have an equal plea against self-named Christians, who . . . tyrannize over the consciences of others, under the specious garb of religion and good order.”<sup>24</sup> Given these historical and contemporary realities, how might Baptist approaches to matters of conscience and dissent inform the future of this or any “no-longer-Baptist-university?”

First, in what ways might a university become, in the words of Roger Williams and John Clarke, “a shelter for persons distressed of conscience” AND an academic community that would itself distress the consciences of faculty and student alike in response to the

**Second, in a university environment where pluralism and uncoerced faith are taken for granted, how do we speak about faith, sectarian or secular?**



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great issues, ideas and injustices of our times? How might we determine to nurture a safe environment where consciences are enlivened even as they collide?

Second, in a university environment where pluralism and uncoerced faith are taken for granted, how do we speak about faith, sectarian or secular? In a religiously volatile world, is it still important to discern, if not challenge, those implicit or explicit religio-political establishments that seek privilege and entitlement through sectarian or secular hegemony over politics, religion, educational institutions and economics, economics, economics?

Third, might their radical understanding of conscience encourage us to an equally radical concern for VOICE—an environment in which everyone can speak even when the differences are vast and irreconcilable? (Roger Williams, for example, not only called for fair payment to Natives for their land, but wrote the first native language lexicon, giving them voice to their new invaders.)

Finally, with the Baptists might we explore more explicitly the nature and boundaries of dissent in the face of such issues as mass culture, media religion, and the struggle for global resources. Such dissent might compel us to take a chance—stake our lives—on ideas that inform and overpower, even when we know they will never secure majoritarian approval.

As a professor of “Baptist Studies,” with one of the few chairs of that title in the country, I remain impressed by the early Baptist courage and dissent in behalf of uncoerced faith, freedom of conscience, and religio-political dissent, and I hope that my employer, Wake Forest University, will find ways to own its Baptist roots, even if they bear witness to only a tiny spark of its desired progressivism. Other schools with continuing Baptist connections may expand the list. We owe it to ourselves to reference and celebrate the identity of those 17th and 18th century dissenters obsessed with conscience and voice for heretic and atheist alike and their successors in 1834 who

hoped against hope that the little “normal school” in that little North Carolina town would impact a region and ultimately a nation. Amid historic and contemporary embarrassments, their monumental commitments and sacrifices should not be forgotten. Indeed, a university hesitant to own its past may have difficulty articulating its future.

On the other hand, also as a Baptist, I think that in its 180th year, Wake Forest University might just as well strike the Baptist references from its mission statement all together. As a religious community, Baptists have never done well with privilege, whatever form it takes. Parson Woodmason was right then and now, we don’t all “agree in one tune,” you see, it’s a matter of conscience.

#### Notes

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7. Todd Luck, “Ministers Give Residents a lot to Ponder,” *The Chronicle* January 23, 2014, <http://wschronicle.com/2014/01/ministers-give-residents-a-lot-to-ponder/#sthsh.VuljV8B.dpuf>.

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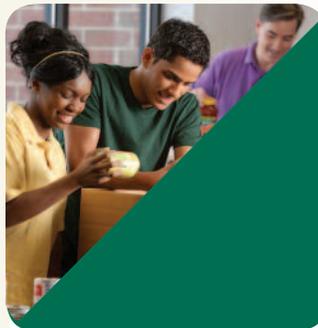
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22. *Ibid*, 331-332.

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# Today's Philanthropic Windfall, Tomorrow's Albatross



How could such wonderful gifts go so terribly wrong?

University A owned 101 works of art created by a celebrated artist. The entire collection had a present-day value of \$60 million.

University B had a dormitory “dedicated to the education of teachers for a region sorely in need of them” and constructed largely “with funds raised at personal sacrifice during the Great Depression, by Tennessee women. . . in memory of their fathers and brothers” who fought in a time of war.

The announcement of a new gift can be a heady time for any university, especially during difficult economic days. Sometimes a generous donation turns out to be a Trojan Horse complete with unexpected and unpleasant consequences. Consider the unhappy tales of Universities A and B, better known as Fisk University and Vanderbilt University.

Since 1949, Fisk University owned a collection of the paintings and photographs of Georgia O’Keeffe. Fisk accepted the gift, which eventually numbered 101 pieces valued at \$60 million, subject to several conditions.

The collection had to be exhibited intact with no other artwork in the same room. It had to be housed in “as safe a building as possible.” The collection had to be continually locked or under constant surveillance. Most significantly, Fisk’s president promised “Fisk University will not at any time, sell or exchange any of the objects in the Collection.”

By 2007, Fisk was facing financial circumstances that jeopardized its ability to continue as an educational institution.

Fisk claimed that its accreditation was in danger, and that loss of accredi-

tation would likely require Fisk to declare bankruptcy and scale back or cease operations. In light of its financial predicament, Fisk would be unable to comply with the gift conditions within a matter of months. And yet, if Fisk undertook to sell any of the artwork in order to preserve the institution and the remaining portion of the collection, it risked losing the entire collection, receiving nothing in return.

Fisk endured some seven years of lawsuits before getting permission to sell a half-interest in the collection to a museum for \$30 million.

Peabody College for Teachers accepted \$50,000, a significant gift during the Depression, to help build a women’s dormitory to be named “Confederate Memorial Hall.” After Vanderbilt

University acquired Peabody, students, faculty, and administrators expressed great discontent

with the name, saying it did not honor the heritage of Vanderbilt’s now-diverse population. The name was repeatedly identified as a major impediment to the university’s progress, so Vanderbilt’s chancellor announced that the name would be changed to simply “Memorial Hall.” The Tennessee Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy sued, and the court determined that the university had breached the conditions placed on the gift.

The court said Vanderbilt must return the present value of the gift—now in excess of \$750,000—if it insisted on renaming the dormitory. Vanderbilt abandoned the name-change, and the grand portico supported by eight giant pillars still bears the name “Confederate

Memorial Hall.”

How can an institution protect itself from having a good gift go bad? The best advice is to have a carefully drawn gift agreement that contains key provisions applicable to the gift, especially if the gift is “in kind” (in the form of land or personal property) or is subject to any restrictions. The gift agreement should cover such things as:

- What exactly is being donated?
- How must the gift be used?
- What conditions apply to the gift, and how long do they continue in effect?
- If the donor will get something in return (naming rights, etc), how will the university report that to comply with IRS requirements?
- If the gift is in the form of a pledge, what happens if the pledge is not fulfilled?
- How and when can the university dis-

**Every significant gift should come with a carefully considered and flexible gift agreement that protects the institution’s options for the future.**

pose of the gift?

- Can a collection be dismantled?
- What part of a monetary gift can be expended currently and what must become part of a permanent endowment? ■

Don’t pull a Trojan Horse into your campus. Every significant gift should come with a carefully considered and flexible gift agreement that protects the institution’s options for the future.

James D. Jordan is a partner in the law firm of Guenther, Jordan & Price, 2100 West End Ave., Suite 1150, Nashville, TN 37203, e-mail: <JDJordan@GJPLaw.com>, phone: 615-329-2100.

## Educational Loans and Scholarships Available to IABCU Faculty and Administrators to Pursue Doctoral Degrees

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 postdoctoral 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 or 800-245-8183. Deadline for applications is April 15 for consideration for the next academic year. ■

### IABCU Board Creates New Associate Membership

The board of the International Association of Baptist Colleges and Universities has created a new associate member category for individuals who have served as president, chief academic officer or in another senior leadership position at an IABCU member institution but who retire or take a position at a non-member institution.

Annual dues for this membership category is \$35 per year. Associate members are encouraged to attend the annual meetings each year and attend the annual dessert fellowship at SAC-SCOC meeting ■

## IABCU Revised Annual Member School Dues Effective October 2014–2015

Dues levels are based on total budget of each institution

(New associate membership category for former or retired top IABCU administrators is \$35 per year)

Current Budget	Current Dues	Revised Dues
\$4,999,999	\$550	\$275
\$9,999,999	\$1,100	\$550
\$14,999,999	\$1,650	\$825
\$19,999,999	\$2,200	\$1,100
\$24,999,999	\$2,750	\$1,375
\$29,999,999	\$3,300	\$1,650
\$34,999,999	\$3,850	\$1,925
\$39,999,999	\$4,400	\$2,200
\$44,999,999	\$4,950	\$2,475
\$49,999,999	\$5,500	\$2,750
\$54,999,999	\$6,050	\$3,025
\$59,999,999	\$6,600	\$3,300

## IABCU Executive Director Mike Arrington and Associate Director Tim Fields Retire

The announcements last year of the impending retirements of both staff members of the International Association of Baptist Colleges and Universities (IABCU) sparked the recent reorganization of the association founded in 1949.

As a result of a year-long study conducted by a commission, members of the association on June 2 approved a plan to move offices from Nashville, Tenn., to the campus of Samford University and reduce the staff to one full-time paid staff member.

Executive Director Mike Arrington, who retired June 6, was elected March 1, 2008.

A Nashville, Ark., native who earned the B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Arkansas, Arrington joined Carson-Newman as provost and vice president for academic affairs in 2001.



Arrington

Missouri.

Arrington lives in Rome, Ga., with his wife Pam. They have a daughter and two grandchildren.

Previously, he served for 27 years as a history professor and in various administrative positions at Ouachita Baptist University, where he was elected chief academic officer in 1986. He began his career in education as a social studies teacher in

Associate Director Tim Fields who retired October 10, began working for IABCU in January 1997 as a contract worker. He began full-time employment in June 1998 along with the election of Bob Agee as executive director. Fields served as interim executive director after Agee's retirement and prior to the election of Tom Corts as executive director. Corts served for four months before leaving to work in 2007 for then President Bush in the Department of Education.

Fields, a Kansas native, earned a B.S. in Journalism from Kansas State University and an M.R.E. from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He served Southern Baptist Convention agencies for 26 years in communications roles including the former Baptist Brotherhood Commission, the Christian Life Commission and the former Education Commission. Fields also served since 1996 as president of Fields Publishing, a book publishing company. He served as a newspaper reporter, photographer and editor while in college and seminary.

Fields will continue to live in Nashville, Tenn., with his wife Linda. They have three daughters and four grandchildren. ■



Fields



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