

The Enquiry

Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

Volume 10, Number 8

March 21, 1974

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 CHURCH STAFF-CHURCH RELATIONS
 REPRESENTATIVE FROM VIRGINIA
 TO BE ON CAMPUS MARCH 27
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James Massey of the pastor-staff-church relations office of the Baptist General Association of Virginia will be on campus Wednesday, March 27 to talk with graduating seniors interested in serving in Virginia.

Appointments may be made in the Field Education Office.

There will be a LUNCHEON for students from Virginia as well as for graduating seniors at noon in the cafeteria. Students will buy their own lunches and join Massey in the private dining room.

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 THEO PATNAIK OF BAPTIST WORLD ALLIANCE
 TO BE CHAPEL SPEAKER APRIL 3
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Theo Patnaik, associate secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, will speak in a special Missionary Day observance here April 3 at 10 a.m. in chapel.

Patnaik has responsibility for youth work with the BWA, a voluntary fellowship of 91 Baptist conventions and unions in 73 countries.

He previously was director of Baptist ministries among international students on 11 university campuses in the San Jose-Stanford, Calif., area from 1967 to 1971, when he joined the BWA staff in Washington, D.C.

A native of Calcutta, India, Patnaik was ordained to the ministry by Providence Baptist Church in Charlotte in 1963. He is a graduate of Calcutta Boys School and Calcutta Bible College in India, and earned the B.A. at Willinm Jennings Bryan University, the M.Div. and Th.M. degrees at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in California.

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O*P*I*N*I*O*N

STUDENTS AND STUMBLING BLOCKS by Mike Creswell

After listening to much talk from students, one reaches the inescapable conclusion that the main disappointment students face upon coming to seminary is not the seminary itself.

It is not the buildings or the curriculum or the professors that are bitterly disappointing to students.

The biggest disappointment is the other students.

What is so disappointing is not the theological stance of students, for this spectrum is very wide from left to right. What is so disappointing is not their lack of scholarship and application, though a case could be made for this.

The disappointing thing about students is the way they live, the lifestyles they set for themselves, the habits they have formed, the examples they set, the way they react to themselves and others. Examples of these ways they are disappointing are many, but a few are discussed here.

Paul writes convincingly in Romans 14 about the need to avoid putting stumbling blocks in the way of a brother. While we are to avoid judging others, we are to avoid practices that guide others astray, even though to us the practice is harmless.

"If your brother is being injured by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love," Paul writes. "Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding...everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for any one to make others fall by what he eats; it is right not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that makes your brother stumble."

Students who smoke are stumbling blocks. What kind of an example is this to set, when smoking is proven to be dangerous? If parents in your church are trying to convince their young people not to smoke--what kind of help can you give them?

Students who drink fit this same category, but are even bigger stumbling blocks. They have no respect for themselves, the ministry or for others. There is no justification for it!

Students who are overweight are stumbling blocks. How does failing to take care of oneself fit into any doctrine of man? How can students think so little of themselves, their families or their ministry? What kind of example are they setting for the church member struggling with a diet? Is there a medical problem? Medical help is available. Is there an exercise problem? A full recreational program complete with gym is under-used here.

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OPINION, cont.

The time to work at reducing weight is now, before you become any older. (And a great many of us need to shape up more, especially editors whose principal exercise is pressing type-writer keys!)

Students who thoughtlessly mark up library books are stumbling blocks. If someone spattered paint on a classroom window, nobody would like it, for we all look through windows. The paint would impair our vision. Marking in library books also impairs our vision--it impairs our seeing ideas. It is intensely distracting to have one's eyes stumble over trite remarks in the columns or wade through gross underlinings. The principle of writing in a library book is the same as that of damaging other seminary property--it is a crime against everyone in each case.

Such marking in books first of all reveals an inflated ego and excessive pride, and several other things as well: one, that the student thinks very wrongly that he is as familiar with the subject as is the writer who probably spent years with his work; two, that the student is not willing for the writer to express his views in an open marketplace of ideas; and three, that the student thinks others who read after him will care one little bit about what he has scribbled--a serious misjudgement. Not only is it evidence of a lack of respect for one's self, the seminary and for others, but it is an invitation to spread the practice. A stumbling block!

Those students who steal library books or deface them have severe personal problems and should seek spiritual or psychological help immediately--preferably both. That such things should happen here is amazing. Several students were heard recently openly announcing their intention to steal certain books in the library which are rare and out of print!! This is shameful to say the least, but one day Someone will say much more. A person with such an attitude, however, obviously does not believe this.

The purpose here is not to pass judgement, but to call on students to realize the need to get their lives in line with what they purport to believe, and with what they purport to proclaim.

Students are famous, even here, for ringing the bell calling for change. But in many cases students shouldn't ask for whom the change bell tolls--it tolls for them.

With such attitudes prevalent in the ministry, is it any wonder America is in such a mess? "You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trodden under foot by men."

Where is our prophetic heritage in the ministry today? And where is the prophetic lifestyle to match?

O*P*I*N*I*O*N

AGAINST COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE AT COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES
by Mike Creswell

You probably have heard the familiar story of the man who watched his wife prepare a ham for baking in the oven.

As he watched, she cut off both ends of the ham squarely as it rested in the spacious baking pan, and wasted good meat.

"Why do you cut off the ends of the ham like that?" he asked.

"Because my mother did," she replied.

The man asked his mother-in-law the same question. She, too, said she did so because her mother had done so.

Finally, the man drove over to Grandma's house to ask her why she had cut off the ends of the ham. She said, "I always had to cut the ends off the ham because my baking pan I had was too small." The man rushed home to tell his wife of his discovery.

Often a tradition is followed from generation to generation--sometimes at the loss of great amounts of ham or other valuables, with no thought given as to why such procedures are followed.

The seminary's forcing graduates to participate in graduation exercises is just such a tradition.

One looks in vain through the seminary catalogue or other printed guidelines for a statement either stating that such

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OPINION, cont.

attendance is required, or giving reasons for the requirement. Yet it is an unwritten rule passed along from year to year just as the ham-cutting. It is a tradition, and tradition alone, apparently.

This is a policy that needs to be examined very carefully by the appropriate body within the seminary structure for it is a mistake that such a policy exists.

The graduation ceremony is, among other things, a hold-over from the Middle Ages in Europe. It is a ceremony comparable, when viewed sociologically, to rites of passage in the most primitive societies. Therefore, like any ritualization of event, the graduation ceremony has a tendency to take on meaning larger than the event itself, and in this case the "event" simply is picking up a slip of paper certifying that one has completed certain academic requirements. It is certain that on this campus the graduation ceremony has acquired a large amount of significance, as is shown by the attendance requirement. But it must be asked whether this significance is real and therefore given by the participants, or by the school requirement that they be present, and thereby unreal. Here is the heart of the matter.

The graduation ceremony is a symbol and connotes meaning (that one has graduated), just as baptism is a symbol and connotes meaning. The ritual of graduation connotes meaning in two directions--to the public at large (visitors, spectators, etc.) and to the graduating students who participate, if the students derive meaning from it.

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OPINION, cont.

Before participation in a graduation ceremony can be of any value (aside from its being the only way to get that important slip of paper), it must impart to the participants some meaning--it should speak to the participants in some way. The meaning must be decided upon by the participants only. This is how meaning derived from baptism works: it must be a meaningful experience for the person being baptized to be worthwhile, regardless of what sort of experience it is for those persons watching or performing the baptizing. One cannot dictate to a person being baptized what the actual experience of the baptism is to be--for it will mean different things to different persons. And to compel someone to undergo baptism when the ritual is meaningless to them is foolish.

Similarly, if a graduating student has no desire to participate in the graduation exercise because he would derive no meaning from such participation, he should feel free to pick up his diploma in the business office or some other convenient place--like his mailbox at home. If a graduating student wants to participate because the ceremony means something to him, he should be able to feel free to do so.

Tradition is no reason at all to make attendance at commencement mandatory for graduates!

To compel students to participate in it merely because the exercise provides an impressive ritual to finish the year in style (if that be the rationale), is folly for several reasons other than the main one that it is potentially meaningless to the participants.

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The ENQUIRY

OPINION, cont.

It is grossly unfair to December graduates to compel them to drive several hundred miles from other states merely to participate when they may have no such interest. Consider the fact that in May many of these graduates will have been in new positions a short time. Consider the fact that gasoline will be short in May, despite the lifting of the oil embargo, and will be at all-time high prices. Consider the fact that overnight accommodations and other expenses must be taken from what probably is already a taxed budget. Consider the fact that many May graduates would much prefer to take a much-needed vacation immediately following final examinations before beginning full-time work. It is simply not morally right for the school to require attendance at all here, nor to apply any sort of pressure towards attendance.

The absolute minimum the school should do is have another exercise in December if attendance is to be required at some exercise or other. Seminary officials need to ask themselves what price they want to attach to formality, to tradition--to a requirement potentially futile and meaningless. As things stand now, a lot of valuable "ham" is being wasted--money and time, etc.

Undoubtedly, many students will choose to attend commencement as a fitting end to their seminary pilgrimage. This is fine. But for those who would rather not bother, it should be fine also. Right now there is no such freedom. Students who would like to have that freedom should become vocal now, before graduation next year comes around.

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O*P*I*N*I*O*N

ON REV. DAVIS' LETTER

There are a number of conclusions indicated in Rev. Davis' letter in this issue one would like the opportunity to discuss, but as he indicates, for him the matter is closed. Perhaps it would be appropriate for some students to comment on his feelings.

Had he but taken the trouble to ask, he would have found the seminary has provided channels of communication for students with grievances. Woody Catoe, director of student activities, has been assigned the work of putting students into touch with the right persons so that grievances can be handled. He said recently several complaints have been cleared up this year. His office is on the second floor of Mackie Hall.

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O*P*I*N*I*O*N

ATTEND CHAPEL THURSDAY, MARCH 20

A special chapel service will be held Thursday, March 21, devoted in part to honoring President Olin T. Binkley's service to the seminary.

As this is the only official student recognition of his contribution to the life and work of the school, the ministry and the community, students should be there. It is good and proper that such recognition should come to such an outstanding man.

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KEN SMITH IS NEW PRESIDENT

Ken Smith was elected president of the student body Tuesday when he defeated Gerald Reeves 151 to 114.

An important constitutional change failed by a vote of 238 for and 69 against, failing to receive the necessary two-thirds majority vote of the student body.

Other election results: vice president Milt Lewis, 142, over Sam Murphy, 127.

Secretary, Martha Wellman.

Arts Committee, Randy Cash, 201 over Lee Tuten, 56.

Athletics, Jim Sample, 177, over Richard Moretz, 78.

Chapel, Jim Tucker, 144, over David Ford, 116.

Ethics, Betty Bates over Owen Duncan, 125.

Off-Campus Ministries, Dick Swift, 167, over Keys Pendleton, 102.

Social, Sheryl Fanning, 194, over Barbara High, 75.

Student Welfare, Doug Baltzegar, 142, over Dave Stanford, 115.

Seminary Council, Vickie Barrett, 205, over Lou Ann Hendricks, 140, and Michael Mason, 193.

MRE, Sandra Lowder over Gloria Washburn.

Certificate, John Perkins.

M.Div. Sr. representatives, top three, Jay Brabben, 43; Gordon Knight, 57; Ronnie Russell, 58; and Willie White 54.

M.Div. Middler representatives, top three, Randy Gibson, 65; Bill Mitchell, 71; Keith Roberts, 63; and Kay Smith, 68.

Letter to the Editor

February 28, 1974

"The Enquiry
Southeastern Baptist Seminary
Wake Forest, N.C. 27587

Greetings:

Recently a letter appeared in the "Southern Baptist Journal," the publication of the new Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship, which attacked the teaching of Dr. T.L. Lorenzen of this Institution as "Heresy." My name was withheld from publication of the letter at the request of the Editor of the Journal, not at my request. However, there was never any question of who wrote it, for I had had a similar letter published in this "Enquiry" in 1973.

I want to publically admit to my fellow students, to the Faculty and Administration of this Seminary, to Dr. Lorenzen and to other interested parties concerned, that I feel I used a poor choice of words in describing what essentially was my "hurt" over certain matters experienced by me as a member of the New Testament Survey class as taught by Dr. Lorenzen. I apologize to Dr. Lorenzen for these indiscretions. They were never meant to be personal attacks on the man, although I must be the first to admit that they appear to be exactly that.

Also, I want to make it clear to anyone interested to have read this far, that the decision to write this letter has not come from any pressure, criticism or duress from outside sources. I have had no confrontations with members of the Faculty, especially Dr. Lorenzen. I am aware of the feeling of several of my fellow students and they are not without good reason. I hope that this letter will be seen as a step toward maturity.

I have been a member of a Southern Baptist church since being converted to Christianity. Before that, I was raised attending a Southern Baptist Church from the Nursery to the Intermediate Department. I have attended SBC Conferences at Ridgecrest. I was licensed to Preach by a SBC church. I was called as Pastor by a SBC church and Ordained to the Ministry by a SBC church. My experience with all literature in Sunday School, Church Training, R.A.'s, Music Education, etc., have formulated a SBC tradition within my personality. I have been taught that the Bible is God Word (sic), that it is without error, that it was given by inspiration of God and it is without error, that it is to be used as a guide for Christian growth and maturity. To me, through my SBC experience, it is indeed "Holy."

Then I came to the Seminary. I was advised to take New Testament Survey under Dr. Lorenzen. I saw the "Holy Bible" attacked from a Theology foreign to my experience. Questions were raised as to the validity of my 25 years experience in being

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LETTER, cont.

taught the SBC tradition and doctrines. And I reacted to what I termed "a sense of departure from the orthodoxy". My reaction has been foolish and wrong. But I defend my reasoning.

Readers will note that I have never called for the resignation of Dr. Lorenzen, nor do I wish to see his service with the Seminary terminated. In a proper focus, his methods and approach to Biblical studies have been good, even for me (believe it or not, I have taken two courses under Dr. Lorenzen)!

I believe, in fact, that Dr. Lorenzen should be allowed academic freedom to teach as he has learned and as he has studied through personal inquiry. I defend his right to question whether there exists indeed, an "American Theology". But I also defend my right to expect to receive something from a Seminary which has been supported with funds I have contributed through Southern Baptist Churches over the past 30 years, which represents the stance of traditional doctrine of the New Testament taught in those churches during that same time. I did not receive it in Dr. Lorenzen's New Testament Class.

Had the course he taught been entitled "German Theology of the New Testament" I might have later taken it as an elective. As it now stands, the only New Testament Survey course for which I will be allowed credit by this Seminary did not represent the traditions of the churches who sent messengers to the 1970 and 1971 Southern Baptist Conventions. These same messengers voted to direct the Executive Committee of the SBC to withdraw Vol. #1 of the Broadman Bible Commentary from circulation for much the same reason I have given for my dissatisfaction with my experience with New Testament Survey as taught by Dr. Lorenzen.

For me, the matter is closed. I cannot use what I have been taught by Dr. Lorenzen in the type Southern Baptist Church which I will Pastor. But I would not deny his right to teach as his own conscience dictates. I do not hold the SBC to be correct in every phase of her work and will work from within the system (ie: The Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship) to seek revival of the very foundations upon which the SBC has stood since her founding. If I find that there is need for reform at Southeastern Seminary, I will count it my duty and privilege to call for and work toward those reforms, in a sensible and productive manner, and not in the manner I have shown through the thoughtlessness of the past months. I regret that I cannot recall those words, hastily spoken. I can only seek to cover them with rational action. May God be my judge.

Sincerely,

(Signed) Rev. Winburn C. Davis

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LIBRARY HOURS
POSTED FOR HOLIDAYS
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The following schedule has been set for the library
over Easter break:

Friday, April 5	7:45 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
Saturday, April 6	CLOSED
Mon.-Thurs., April 8-11	8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
Fri. and Sat., April 12, 13	CLOSED
Sunday, April 14	CLOSED (EASTER)
Monday, April 15	8 a.m.-10 p.m.

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TUMBLESTONS LOSE FATHER

The father of Dickie and Richard Tumbleston
died March 17 after a lengthy illness. Let us remember them
and their family...

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NEW CAMPUS NEWS BULLETIN
BEGINS PUBLICATION NEXT WEEK

Next week a new campus news bulletin will be started on campus that will carry notices of meetings, organizations and related matters.

The bulletin will be distributed Mondays. Deadline for receiving copy is the Thursday before at noon. Woody Catoe, who will edit the publication, asks all organization leaders to get him news of events that need to be publicized.
