



February 17, 2002

Dr. Morris Chapman
President and CEO
Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention
901 Commerce Street
Nashville, TN 37203

Dear Morris:

Your communication of February 13th copied to Bruce Coe & Gary Smith was awaiting my return from overseas. Although accusations of a personal nature, including questions of my intentions and motivations mentioned throughout your correspondence, are particularly distressing and hurtful, I will make no attempt, as is my policy, to reply. You are certainly entitled to that view of me. The same charges have frequently come from liberals and consequently sting profoundly when coming from a conservative. However, I accept them as your legitimate conclusions and regret more than I can say that something in my behavior apparently led you to these conclusions. I can only hope and pray that your assessment is mistaken.

However, since Bruce & Gary have now been made party to your views, I feel it imperative to provide my perspective on what I believe to be a factually wrong conclusion. Also I have included for Bruce and Gary copies of previous correspondence so that they might be aware of all that has been stated by each of us. To present my perspective as succinctly as possible, I will use "bullet" form.

- At no time did I suggest or even hint to Dean Nichols that he should pursue this or any other objective regarding the seminaries and the Executive Committee.
- I neither conceived the idea, nor did I communicate such an idea to Dean through anyone else.
- Although you are partially correct as to the extent of my knowledge, at no time did I encourage Dean to pursue his objectives.
- Although I did tell Dean that he would not succeed with his objective without your help, at no time did I encourage him any more than I discouraged him.
- I did share with Dean any information he requested, as I would with anyone else.
- You called me to ask my help to get Dean to cease and to desist. On reflection, the offering proposal was the only solution that I could think of because it would assist the seminaries (as I understand Dean's concern) and would possibly be a compromise with which he could live.
- Therefore, my proposal was in fact innocent in its motivation.

P.O. Box 1889
Wake Forest, NC 27588-1889
telephone 919-761-2222 || 919-556-8550 facsimile
email: ppatterson@sebts.edu || www.sebts.edu

- The three concerns that I expressed are indeed left unaddressed in this. These are my concerns, and if they are also Dean's (as they may be), we have not discussed them. My proposal was an effort to help accomplish what you wanted, as I understood it, as well as to meet Dean's concerns, as I understand them. My own ethical concerns remained unaddressed by my proposal.
- As I said to you several times, I repeat. I will not be drawn any further into disputes about money. My focus will be a renewed commitment to train preachers and missionaries and to address theological matters through writing. I will not even debate these issues with my fellow seminary presidents anymore. If SEBTS gets the "short end," as I suspect we may, then we will seek God's face and help; but I will not do your service, Dean's service, or even my own service in behalf of money. I refuse to be ruled by it, and I refuse to allow it the corrupting impact on relationships and indeed on the kingdom of God, which obviously it could have. No wonder the Bible declares the "love of money" to be the "root of all evil."
- I certainly disagree with your perspective on disclosure of salaries. You are entitled to your view, but I find it mystifying that we ask Baptists to support us and then refuse them information about how their money is spent. For this reason I, together with Jerry Rankin, provided precise information to BAPTISTS TODAY when they asked, even though I knew they intended to misuse the information. Any perks I have are also open to the SBC public in keeping with my policy of "goldfish bowl" Christian living. But that is my view and I understand that you have your own. I suppose that ultimately we will both answer to our Lord.
- In the event that I misrepresented your position anywhere, but particularly regarding my assumption that you would have a different view from my own on the ethical concerns mentioned in my previous letter, please forgive me. Well do I know the pain that arises from false accusation and the misreading of motives. I sincerely do not wish to inflict that on anyone, certainly not on you. If I made that mistake (I say "if" only because I do not know your views), then I humbly ask your forgiveness.

Now, concerning the seminaries, please note the following as matters of information.

- Comparing our professors' pay with other seminaries is not a problem and also is not helpful. It is not a problem since the ATS Fact Book has already done it for us, and our trustees are aware of the sad results. It is not helpful, however, since none of these others are recipients of SBC support or the distribution of CP funds.
- You, of course, are correct that our trustees could simply vote to increase salaries. What you fail to note is that all of the schools except one (GGBTS) are operating at 50% of the ATS benchmark for per capita spending (even GGBTS is less than ATS benchmark). This means that we are operating at an efficiency level far beyond expectations. Reallocation of funds means reduction of library (already a severe problem) reduction of facility upkeep, etc., which we cannot do without trouble from the accreditation agencies. In short, we would welcome an

“efficiency audit” for all SBC agencies by an independent firm. Maybe that is what is needed. In any event your proposal is not a constructive one as far as I can determine.

- Furthermore, 57% of our budget is currently salaries & benefits of professors and necessary support staff. Do you know of another school that comes close?

In conclusion, I want to make a personal statement, make one request, and offer one more “unsolicited suggestion.”

First, the statement: Morris, I do have the deepest concern about the godly professors in our schools who have given years to earnest preparation. After six decades of mostly liberal teaching, we finally have a generation of men who are Christ-like and church-centered in their perspectives. They accept, and I accept, that none will do as well financially as do pastors in congregations of 500 or more members (as a rule). They are willing to make this sacrifice in order to do what God has called them to do. But I do not accept that they be paid on “missions money” less than secretaries or third-level executives in any SBC agency. That is not right. It is not right for any professor to worry more about housing, education of their children, etc. If the Executive Committee and the SBC know the present plight of the seminaries and choose to do nothing, that would be the will of the people. The problem is that neither knows. I appeal to you to redress that wrong.

The request: I was surprised to know that the Executive Committee had a written, formally adopted statement, supporting the withholding of salary information from members of the responsible body with fiduciary accountability to the Convention. Although I would not think of withholding such information from any SEBTS trustee, I think they would be interested in seeing this policy. Will you please send me a copy of the policy adopted by the Executive Committee that allows only a limited number of the committee members to be aware of salaries.

Finally, please allow me an unsolicited proposal: Morris, bury this whole thing. In session you may well defeat Dean if he brings the matter up. And even if your personal estimates of me are 100% correct, you are pursuing the wrong culprit to chase me on this one. Later, a situation might arise in which you need your ammunition to shoot me for something I actually have done. Please stop wasting your bullets on me for what I have not done. And please do not accuse me of any attacks on the Executive Committee. I am able to differ with you as President & CEO without being at cross purposes with the Executive Committee itself. You and I are employees, not even voting members of our respective boards.

Now, Morris, about one thing we do agree. No ultimate good will arise from a matter like this coming to the convention floor. That is why I am totally amazed at the decision to withhold such information from any trustee vested by the convention with fiduciary responsibility. No one has anything to hide. Why should we make it seem that way? And why not work with Dean for some solution other than cease and desist? I cannot help but believe that the average messenger to the SBC would not be very pleased with

either piece of news, but I may be seeing that totally wrong. Perhaps I do not have as much feel for the *hoi polloi* as I had thought.

Morris, I am not angry with you. I am profoundly hurt by your assessment of my motives and intentions and even your allegations in this case about actions of which I am not guilty. You may be assured that I have laid them before God and asked that He search my heart for every wicked thought and intent. I have asked that God reveal to me all that He finds of guilt and then to cleanse and remove – or if I resist, to remove me instead. I do deeply desire to be a Godly man of pure heart and servant spirit. Thank you for helping me in this effort.

Until He Comes,

Paige Patterson

Enclosures

cc: Bruce Coe
Gary Smith