

Baptist Briefs

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Blog endorsements? Never mind. Several high-profile Southern Baptist Convention leaders—including SBC President Frank Page, International Mission Board President Jerry Rankin, LifeWay President Thom Rainer and Union University President David Dockery—have withdrawn their endorsement of the SBCOutpost.com blog, a forum created by reform-minded pastors within the convention. In a column carried by Baptist Press, the communications arm of the SBC Executive Committee, Page wrote: “Personal attacks are on the rise. I recently removed my endorsement ... when a hoped-for and needed place for dialogue on the Internet degenerated quickly into a place of personal attack against denominational leaders as well as those who are advocating reform. For Christ’s sake, stop!”

Calvinism conference set at seminary. Founders Ministries—a group devoted to advancing Calvinist doctrine in the Southern Baptist Convention—will team with Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary to sponsor a national conference on Calvinism Nov. 26-28 at Ridgecrest Conference Center. The conference, “Building Bridges: Southern Baptists and Calvinism,” will include speakers from Southeastern, Southwestern and Southern seminaries, along with several pastors and LifeWay representatives.

Morality activist confesses to soliciting prostitute. Moral activist and conservative Southern Baptist Convention leader Coy Privette received “deferred prosecution” on six charges of aiding and abetting prostitution at his recent court hearing. Deferred prosecution means Privette will have his record wiped clean if he performs 48 hours of community service, complies with probation requirements for a year and pays court and probation costs. Privette, former executive director of the Christian Action League of North Carolina, admitted to investigators that he had sex with an accused prostitute, according to the prosecutor at the hearing. He had served as president of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, trustee chair at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., and a trustee of the SBC’s Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

Death benefits erase university debt. Thanks to a substantial life insurance policy on the late Jerry Falwell, the university he founded is now debt-free, according to university officials. Jerry Falwell Jr., Liberty University’s chancellor and son of its founder, announced the \$34 million policy during a fall briefing with faculty and staff. Part of the money also went to nearby Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Va. Liberty University had struggled with debt since a series of defaults in the 1980s. It reached a debt of \$82 million in 1992, according to Associated Press reports, but the debt had since been reduced to \$27 million.

Group narrowly votes to stick with BJC. By a slim margin, a small Baptist denomination voted to remain part of the [Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty](#) despite disagreements over church-state relations. Delegates to the Seventh-Day Baptist General Conference in Oregon voted 279-234 to remain part of the Washington-based watchdog group. However, in a later vote, the group approved a recommendation instructing

Seventh-Day Baptist leaders to send leaders of the agency a letter conveying the “significant concerns” about continued involvement in the Baptist Joint Committee.

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Baptist churches, in Texas, the BGCT, the nation and around the world.