

HILLTOP

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Mars Hill College, Mars Hill, North Carolina

Friday, December 11, 1987

Leon Smith Addresses Forum

Some senators felt that since the Senate is theoretically supposed to voice the opinions of the entire student body, sending the letter without informing the students would be an injustice.

Therefore, the idea of the forum was conceived and acted on. The Campus Life Committee presided over the forum, and committee members asked a question to each panel member. After the initial questions were answered, the audience was invited to follow up with additional questions.

During the discussion, panel members voiced their concern for the situation at Southeastern and emphasized that Mars Hill, for the meantime, is safe from changes similar to those recently instituted at the seminary.

Smith assured audience members that he was conducting statewide

body of the situation in the North Carolina State Baptist Convention. The need for the information arose during a Student Government Senate meeting on November 19. Chief of Defense Tom Cabaniss and Senator Lea Pardue presented a letter to the Senate to send to the Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and to other concerned parties throughout the state.

The letter stressed a concern for the recent turnover involving the Board of Trustees at Southeastern and the resulting changes in the policies and practices of that institution. It also affirmed efforts of the seminary's faculty to preserve academic freedom and "to resist the forces of theological tyranny that demand only a myopic view of Christianity be presented and insist upon one interpretation of the Scriptures."

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The group listens attentively.

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Dr. Sawyer spoke about changes that might occur if a group similar to the one now presiding over Southeastern came into power. He discussed possible changes in administration, faculty requirements, and campus life. He also said that different textbooks would be used and that the curriculum would change.

Dr. Bentley elaborated on the relationship between the state convention and Mars Hill College. He said that the convention elects members to the College Board of Trustees in return for the funding that they give to the school. He also said the agreement allowed him to request trustees and that the convention had generally appointed the trustees that the college requested. Two exceptions have occurred during Bentley's career at Mars Hill, and Bentley said that the replacement trustees had served well.

Dr. Godwin spoke about the situation that exists in the Southern Baptist Convention on the national level and protested against the actions that

the ruling powers in the convention had taken in an attempt to run the convention as they wished.

An audience member said that he was concerned about the "blatant bias" of the panel. He said that if Mars Hill conducted itself according to its liberal arts background, then conservative elements should have been present at the forum.

Cabaniss responded to the student's protest by recounting his efforts to contact people who held opposing viewpoints and of the difficulties that he encountered in trying to contact these individuals.

Smith then stated that the panel was biased and that caution should be used by both sides because "narrow-mindedness could go both ways." He closed by saying that open-mindedness would be necessary to resolve the issues at hand and that the problem of theological disparities in the Southern Baptist Convention would, in time, be solved.



Clockwise: Dr. Joseph Godwin, Dr. Leon Smith, Dr. Fred Bentley, Dr. Ann McAnear, and Dr. Tom Sawyer.

He stated that his appointees would share the commitments that Southern Baptists adhere to: missions, education, evangelism, and benevolence. He also stressed that the members would not have an agenda to gain control of the convention to impose restricting beliefs or practices.

Financial Aid Director Ann McAnear discussed the financial aspects concerning a drastic change of college policies. She said that funding would change if Mars Hill became a strictly Baptist "Bible college." McAnear said if that were the case, then funding from the state convention, approximately \$900,000, would not change but the school would have to take a cut in federal funding.

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Tie a Yellow Ribbon

Laura Smithwick
Staff Writer

An old legend goes that a man in prison wrote his family to say he was finally coming home. Unsure of his reception there, he asked that they tie a yellow ribbon around an old oak tree if he were welcome. As he rode the train into town, he would see the tree and know whether or not he still had a home. To his delight, he found the oak covered with yellow ribbons on every limb, signifying his family's

Southern Baptists who want to take a stand for what Marie Bean calls "academic freedom with integrity — it's in keeping with the Baptist tradition."

Not only students and faculty of North Carolina campuses, but non-academic people as wide-spread as the convention are wearing the ribbons. The first to wear them were faculty and students at Southeastern



A yellow ribbon.

Insomuch as it means acceptance and affirmation of people in crisis and distress, the supportive yellow ribbon has lately been adopted by Southern Baptists who want to take a stand for what Mars Hill College Chaplain Rev. Marie Bean calls 'academic freedom with integrity — it's in keeping with the Baptist tradition.'

eager acceptance of him.

This idea was carried over in the 1970's popular song "Tie a Yellow Ribbon," by Tony Orlando and Dawn, in which an estranged lover asked for the same sign of acceptance. In the 1979-1981 hostage crisis in Iran, Americans wore yellow ribbons that stood for support and hope for the hostages' release.

Insomuch as it means acceptance and affirmation of people in crisis and distress, the supportive yellow ribbon has lately been adopted by

Baptist Theological Seminary who were distressed when an October 12-14 meeting of the Board of Trustees resulted in the resignations of the school's president and dean (effective in July, 1988).

At the October meeting, the trustees decided to alter the way the seminary appoints its faculty. Randall Lolley, Southeastern's president who recently resigned, said shortly after the meeting, "Future faculty appointments will embrace biblical inerrancy."

Continued on page 4

From the SGA:

A wishes students to respectfully or negatively to the consideration of passing resolution: Responses sent to P.O. Box 1-C.

UTION BY THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION MARS HILL COLLEGE

For the past thirty-seven years, the Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary has continued the vision of its founders for honest, theological education and placed the commission of its singular purpose; the faculty and administration of Southeastern continue to minister in Christ and affirm academic freedom; we, the Student Government Association of Mars Hill College convey our disappointment and our stern disapproval of any actions taken by the trustees to restrict academic freedom, and to hinder the historical right of free interpretation of the Scriptures by a free church; we, the Student Government Association of Mars Hill College, support the faculty and administration in their fight with all due haste and expediency.

Be it therefore resolved, that the Student Government Association of Mars Hill College fully support the faculty of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in their struggle to maintain academic freedom, an open classroom, and to resist the forces of theological tyranny that demand only a myopic view of Christianity be presented and insist upon one interpretation of the Scriptures.

Be it further resolved, that the Student Government Association supports the faculty, administration, and students of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and encourage them to continue their fight with all due haste and expediency.

And be it finally resolved, that we the Student Government Association protest all efforts to restrict educational freedoms, to establish a creedal and hierarchical church and academic polity, and affirm our support for the community of Southeastern and its struggle, the rights of academic freedom, and the precious right of a free conscience in a free church.

Submitted by,

Thomas E. Cabaniss
Chief Justice-SGA
Mars Hill College
For the Mars Hill SGA

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