

## One Faith, One Task, One Sacred Trust (1997)

A Covenant Between Our Seminaries and Our Churches *"You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." II Timothy 2:1-2*

For over 135 years, the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention have looked to their seminaries for the training and education of their ministers. These six schools were established and undergirded by Southern Baptists in order that our churches may be served by a more faithful ministry. This is a critical moment in the history of the Southern Baptist Convention and for our seminaries. The six seminaries serving this denomination bear a precious and perishable responsibility on behalf of our churches; for we are entrusted with those who will be their ministers, pastors, preachers and servants. Looking to the dawn of the 21st century, we hereby restate and reaffirm our commitment to the churches we serve, to the convictions those churches hold and honor and to the charge we have received on their behalf.

### **One Faith**

**The church of Jesus Christ is charged to contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. Our seminaries, charged with the theological formation of ministers, must take this charge as central and essential to our mission. In an age of rampant theological compromise, our seminaries must send no uncertain sound.**

Let the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention know that our seminaries are committed to theological integrity and biblical fidelity. Our pledge is to maintain the confessional character of our seminaries by upholding those doctrines so clearly articulated in our confessions of faith; by teaching the authority, inspiration, inerrancy and infallibility of the Bible; by maintaining the purity of the Gospel and affirming the identity of Jesus Christ, by whose blood we have been redeemed and in whose name alone salvation is to be found; and by proclaiming with boldness the precious and eternal truths of God's Word.

In this we stand together, and we stand with our churches. We understand that those who teach take on an awesome responsibility and will receive from our Lord a stricter judgment. We stand before this convention and our churches to declare that we stand together in one faith, serving our Lord Jesus Christ.

### **One Task**

**Our mission is to prepare ministers for service. We cannot call ministers nor appoint them to service. Ministers, called by God and commissioned by our churches come to us in order that they may through our seminaries receive learning, training and inspiration for service. Preachers, evangelists, missionaries and those who minister throughout the life of the churches come to our seminaries with the hope that they will leave their programs of study better equipped, armed and matured for the faithful exercise of their calling.**

Our mission is to remain ever true to this task. We declare our unflinching resolve to provide the very finest programs of theological education for ministry. We will match theological fidelity to practical ministry, passion to practice, vision to calling and honor to service. This is our task.

### **One Sacred Trust**

**Our schools are not generic institutions for religious studies. We are the six theological seminaries serving the Southern Baptist Convention. We belong to you; we belong to the churches of this Convention. We are proud to carry your charge, and we declare our fidelity to you as a sacred trust. In this trust we stand before the Southern Baptist Convention, and we stand together.**

Through the trustees elected by this Convention, our churches must hold our seminaries accountable to the faith once for all delivered to the saints, to the essential task of training and educating ministers and to the sacred trust which unites our seminaries and our churches.

As the presidents of your seminaries, we declare our unbending and fervent resolve to uphold all of these commitments. We will lead our institutions so that no harm shall come to your students and ministers; so that they will be rooted and grounded in the truth; so that they will be trained as faithful and effective preachers and teachers; so that they will bring honor to the church and not dishonor; and so that we shall be able to give a good answer and receive a good report when we shall face that stricter judgment which is to come.

This is our pledge, our resolve, our declaration.

*One Faith, One Task, One Sacred Trust.*

Signed in the Presence of the Messengers to the 140th session of the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in Dallas, Texas, June 17, 1997.