SOCIAL DRAMA AT SOUTHWESTERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY:

THE DILDAY CONTROVERSY

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
University of North Texas in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

Webster F. Drake
Denton, Texas
December, 1995
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This study examines the events surrounding the firing of Russell Dilday at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary as a social drama. The results suggest that, for application to post-industrial cultures, adaptations need to be made to Victor Turner's original method. The addition of Thomas Farrell's anticipation phase, identification of the breach with the transgression, and examination of unique facets of post-industrial cultures such as economic factors and the role of the media are recommended modifications. In light of these differences, the study concludes that the state of affairs at Southwestern is characteristic of schism in a post-industrial culture.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis would not have been possible if not for the efforts of many people. I would like to thank Jay Allison for his tireless efforts in making this project a reality. Without his skill as an editor, creativity as a wordsmith, concern as a teacher, and compassion as a friend, this study would never have reached completion.

I also would like to thank the rest of the faculty of the Communication Studies Department at the University of North Texas for allowing me the leeway to pursue the line of reasoning displayed in this study throughout my degree plan. Specifically, John Gossett, Mark Deloach, and Ralph Hamlett contributed to the thoughts expressed in this study by critiquing my ideas and reasoning in each of their classes.

I also owe a debt of gratitude to all of the students, trustees, and faculty members of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary whose insight, keen observations at the time of the controversy, and willingness to help made this study possible. In particular, Charlotte Sullivan gave of her time and energy to serve on my thesis committee and added valuable insight and perspective.

Finally, I would be remiss if I failed to mention my parents for whom the love of learning and joy of discovery come so naturally. The lessons that I learned from them have served me well.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

On the night of March 8, 1994, the board of trustees of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (SWBTS) gave the seminary's president, Russell H. Dilday, excellent marks in his annual performance review. During that meeting, hundreds of students congregated outside the room where the meeting was taking place. Rumors had circulated that the board would fire Dilday that evening. The students gathered, praying and singing, as a sign of support for the embattled president, who was popular not only with the students but with the faculty as well. The outcome of the meeting assured both the students and Dilday that his job was secure.

The following morning, March 9, 1994, during the seminary's chapel service, the leaders of the group of trustees who were opposed to Dilday's moderate views prayed for his continued leadership of the institution and called for the establishment of peace with all Baptists. Within two hours of that service, in a closed-door meeting of the board, the same trustees led the vote to fire the president.

While Dilday was still in the meeting, the locks on his office were changed, and his administrative assistant was placed on immediate leave of absence. That afternoon, students jeered and booed as Ralph Pulley, chairman of the board of trustees, announced the firing. Professors at the institution and others called out
derogatory names at the trustees. With their actions, the trustees had created a situation that would have far-reaching implications.

The board's unprecedented move divided the faculty and students of SWBTS into factions along already existing ideological lines. The action also exacerbated tensions in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), the sponsoring agency for the seminary. The firing initiated a chain of events affecting people around the world. This study focuses on the firing, the events that led up to it, and the actions that followed it on the campus of SWBTS in Fort Worth, Texas. These events will be analyzed as a social drama.

Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed in this study is two-fold. First, as originally designed social drama was meant for application to pre-industrial, tribal cultures. Since its inception, social drama has been applied uncritically to many post-industrial cultures, but questions remain about the appropriateness of social drama's phases (breach, crisis, redressive measures, and reintegration/schism) for analyzing contemporary cultures. One problem addressed in this study is whether social drama, as a unit of analysis, needs to be modified for analyzing a post-industrial culture. Second, by applying social drama to the events surrounding the firing of Dilday at SWBTS, what new insights can be gained? The combination of method and event may lead to a more complete understanding of social drama as well as the events precipitated by the firing.
Scope of the Study

The limits of this study are defined to a certain extent by the effects of the event being studied. This study focuses primarily on events that transpired in the period from March 9, 1994, until the end of August, 1994. March 9 serves as the beginning of the drama because it was the date of the firing, which served as the breach. August 1994, was chosen as the end of the drama because during that time Ken Hemphill began serving as the new president of SWBTS. Hemphill was the last of the redressive measures instituted to restore equilibrium within the culture. The institution and operation of the last redressive measure marks an appropriate time to delineate as the end of the social drama because, as I argue in chapters four and five, the schism/reintegration phase of a social drama occurring in a post-industrial culture may lack closure for a significant amount of time. Some events before March 9 are examined for their significance as precursory to the event, and some occurrences after August are examined as examples of the continuing effects of the drama.

One limitation of this study is the fact that this social drama is a part of a larger, more complex drama that continues to unfold: the ongoing conflict between fundamentalists and moderates in the SBC. The present study focuses on what might be regarded as a microcosm of that major conflict and may serve as a means to better understand the larger conflict.

Methodology

In an attempt to answer the questions raised by this study, the following steps were taken. First, social drama as defined and used by Victor Turner and applied by
other scholars was researched. The primary texts from which Turner's method is borrowed are *From Ritual to Theatre* and *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors*. Because Turner chose to address social drama in a few chapters of several books instead of dedicating an entire volume to the concept, several of his other books also were examined. Applications also were borrowed from anthropological as well as historical and communication studies. These studies include dissertations and journal articles.

Second, materials concerning the Dilday controversy were gathered. As I was present on campus at SWBTS March 9, 1994, personal experience played a role in the collection of information about these events. I witnessed some of the events that transpired, and this first-hand knowledge helped me identify principal participants and potential research resources.

Relevant print and video/audio material served as one source of information. The media’s coverage of the events, including newspapers, magazines, Baptist papers, and special bulletins, served as a starting point for the research. Available personal and professional sources also were examined. These sources included video footage taken by students of the video production class at SWBTS, tapes made of press conferences, correspondence from the people involved, and chapel addresses. Collecting reports from a wide variety of sources provided a more complete picture of the events from a variety of perspectives, which helped insure a more balanced perspective on the events.

In addition I conducted formal interviews and had informal conversations with major and minor players in the drama to allow them to add relevant information to the
study. This process not only allowed me to present information from various perspectives, it added valuable information that was unavailable through more traditional sources.

Finally, the study analyzes the events as a social drama. This step identifies and analyzes significant acts in this conflict in order to understand the reasons that the controversy evolved in the manner that it did. Isolating actions within the drama allows for better analysis, interpretation, and synthesis.

Review of Literature

Applying social drama to the firing of Dilday at SWBTS suggests three broad areas of literature for review: social drama as a method of analysis, the conflict within the SBC, and the events that transpired from March 9, 1994, through August, 1994.

Social Drama

Turner describes social drama, the method of analysis used in this study, most thoroughly in *From Ritual to Theatre* and *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors* with brief explanations and clarifications in his other works. In addition to Turner's descriptions of social drama, this study also uses subsequent applications and refinements of the theory by ethnographers and historians. The primary criterion for selecting secondary sources was their practicality in illuminating the usefulness of the original theory.

*From Ritual to Theatre* and *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors* contain Turner's most thorough explanations of social drama. In both of these books Turner divides all conflicts within a particular culture into four phases. First, a breach occurs. In this
stage a social norm is transgressed by a member or group of members of a culture. This breach leads to a crisis. In this stage members of the culture choose sides between the individuals or groups involved in the controversy. Third, the authorities within the culture enter the conflict and apply redressive measures, the culture's formal or informal method of dealing with conflict, meant to bring the culture back into harmony. In the final phase, the parties in conflict either reintegrate or affect a schism.

The second area of literature about social drama relevant to this study is practical application found in doctoral dissertations and journal articles. The most important of these works is William Stone's "The Southern Baptist Convention Reformation, 1979-1990: A Social Drama," in which Stone uses social drama to examine the division between moderates and fundamentalists in the SBC. Stone's work is important for two reasons. First, it provides legitimacy for using this method to analyze a post-industrial culture. Second, the subject matter of Stone's dissertation makes it foundational for this study. Essentially, "The Southern Baptist Convention Reformation" is a macrocosm of the events that serve as the focus this study. Furthermore, since the SBC conflict has not yet concluded, the present study may serve as a valuable complement to Stone's work.

Other sources are used in the study where applicable. No fewer than thirty-six studies have been conducted since Turner first published his method of analyzing conflict situations. Although the subject matter of these studies is less directly relevant to my study, several offer specific adaptations of social drama that proved
helpful in establishing the basis for my application. Paul Strohm and Lawrence J. Taylor argue the validity of using social drama in historical studies without implementing each of Turner's four phases. Bennetta Jules-Rosette uses Turner's phases as a small part of her over-all study and argues the flexibility of the method by adapting the phases to fit her own purposes. Nancy Shields Kollman's emphasizes the redressive stage of social drama, which is particularly relevant to my study because of the complicated nature of the redressive stage in the Dilday controversy. Thomas Farrell argues for adding a phase to the drama, the anticipation phase. The last is the only specific adaptation borrowed for use in this study.

*Southern Baptist Warfare*

The major conflict in the SBC for the last sixteen years has been between fundamentalists and moderates. This struggle began in 1979, at the Pastor's Conference immediately before that year's Convention. Today, the leaders of the factions continue to struggle over whether a particular interpretation of the doctrine of inerrancy (a term used to define Biblical authority) should be a creed to which all Southern Baptists must subscribe in order to participate in governing the SBC. Because of the pervasiveness of the conflict, two books written by respected Baptist historians are be used to provide a history of the conflict within the convention and to contextualize and explain Dilday's firing in light of that conflict. Both books are published by respected Baptist publishing houses, are sold in Baptist bookstores, and currently are used in history courses at SWBTS. No history of the controversy has yet
been attempted by an author outside of Baptist culture that might provide a more neutral source.

Leon McBeth’s *The Baptist Heritage* is the primary text for Baptist history classes taught at SWBTS. This book contextualizes the struggle. *Heritage* is essential in understanding not only the background for the Dilday struggle, but also the larger struggles that the SBC has weathered during its history.

The second book, *What Happened to the Southern Baptist Convention?* by Grady C. Cothen, is significant for two reasons. First, the book provides a detailed explanation of the conflict. Cothen, a respected Baptist historian, presents a well-informed, detailed analysis of the 1979 conflict as well as the events that have followed. Second, this work provides a thorough list of references. Cothen synthesizes the volumes written by the time of his book’s publication into a workable size while still including vital details.

*Dilday’s Firing*

The amount of press coverage of the Dilday firing is remarkable. According to Naomi Harmon’s “A Guide to the Collection Concerning the Termination of Russell H. Dilday,” in the first seven days after the firing, seventy-seven articles were written for twenty-five major daily publications. The event was reported in media outlets as varied as the *New York Times*, the *Rocky Mountain News*, the *Sacramento Bee*, and the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. The event also was covered in fifteen monthly publications. Baptist state magazines reporting the story ranged from Maryland/Delaware to Louisiana and from Arizona to Georgia. Two books discuss the
firing as well. The extensive press coverage suggests the firing’s significance to Baptists across the nation.

The information from the media is supplemented with information gained through personal interviews. The interviews contextualize the events of March 9. Although the newspapers and magazines reported the facts of the events, many details were omitted. The information gained from the interviews fills gaps left by the media.

Significance of the Study

The primary need for this study is to add to the body of research that extends and clarifies the use of social drama for the analysis of events in post-industrial cultures and to further explain the events that took place between March 9 and late August 1994, on the campus of SWBTS. These reasons are equally significant in this study.

Social drama as a theory is still in its relative infancy and has yet to be completely analyzed and systematized. This study demonstrates some of its possibilities and questions some of its limitations. The study tests social drama as a unit appropriate for the description and analysis of events in post-industrial cultures.

Many questions arise when Turner’s theory is applied to events in post-industrial cultures. For instance, in a culture where the members must depend on the media for information, how widely publicized must the transgression of a norm become before the breach begins? What are the redressive mechanisms available in a culture where the acknowledged "authority" is a part of one of the feuding factions? What percentage of the population must leave before a social drama can be ruled a
schism? Can an apparent reintegration mask an ideological schism? What modifications must be made to the various phases of social drama for application to events in post-industrial cultures? How is the evaluation of a social drama affected when the culture in question is a sub-culture of a culture that is also undergoing a social drama? These questions apply to the Dilday controversy and are answered in this study.

The study also benefits Baptists anxious for information about the firing by filling gaps in knowledge concerning the controversy. Every form of analysis applied to a situation adds to the body of knowledge concerning that event. This study aids in an overall understanding of what happened during the period from March 9, 1994, until August 1994, on the campus of SWBTS.

Organization of the Study

This study consists of five chapters. The present chapter introduces the problem, provides a brief overview of the events that took place on March 9, 1994, and briefly indicates the significance of these events. Chapter two reviews the literature about social drama, focussing on Turner, and examining relevant work by other researchers. Chapter three offers a brief history of Southern Baptists, explains the present conflict in the SBC between fundamentalists and moderates, and contextualizes the Dilday incident. Chapter four analyzes the Dilday incident as a social drama. Chapter five consists of the conclusions reached in the study as well as implications for further research.
CHAPTER II

SOCIAL DRAMA

It is not a theorist’s whole system which so illuminates, but his scattered ideas, his flashes of insight taken out of systemic context and applied to scattered data. (Turner, *Dramas* 23)

Victor Turner named his “flash of insight,” which has helped illuminate the social condition, the social drama. He developed social drama as “a unit of description and analysis” (Turner, *Ritual* 9) for “public episodes of tensional irruption” (Turner, *Dramas* 33). “Social dramas . . . represent sequences of social events, which seen retrospectively by an observer, can be shown to have a . . . characteristic processual structure” (Turner, *Dramas* 35; *Ritual* 65).

This chapter is structured in three sections. The first section explains the social drama in principle. In addition to defining social drama, this section explains how Turner intended for it to be used. The second section examines the four phases of social drama. Specifically, this section details Turner’s vision of how a social drama progresses. Since Turner initially formulated social drama, many scholars have made adjustments to his original framework. The final section discusses refinements of social drama relevant to this study.
Social Drama Defined

Anthropologists and ethnographers use social drama to analyze conflict situations within cultures. For Turner, social drama serves two purposes:

For the scientist in me, such social dramas revealed the "taxonomic" relations among actors, and their contemporary bonds and oppositions of interest and friendship, their personal network ties, and informal relationships. For the artist in me the drama revealed individual character, personal style, rhetorical skill, moral and aesthetic difference, and choices proffered and made. (Turner, _Ritual_ 9)

In other words, social drama analyzes and takes into account both the cultural and individual factors as they affect conflict situations. This study utilizes both aspects of social drama. While it is true that the relationships among groups in the controversy at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (SWBTS) were one, perhaps the major, contributing factor in the onset of this social drama, individual style, character, and skill also played a major role in the proceedings.

Gross argues that "for Turner, social drama is a movement, not from revolution to consummation, but from threat to resolution" (397). Social drama is most useful when the "controversy is essentially an attempt to reorder social values without destroying the society [culture] that holds them" (Gross 397). In Turner’s scheme, a social drama fails when the existing hierarchy is not upheld, when the "two conflicting ideologies compete for hegemony at the expense of social cohesion" (Gross 397).
Social dramas are cultures’ efforts to hold themselves together. Turner refers to this tendency for a culture to hold together as "communitas" (Turner, *Ritual* 45).

One important realization about Turner’s particular hermeneutic is that he sees all of life as a constant flow. Each activity, event, and/or communication leads into and affects the next. Cultures are misrepresented when they are examined as static entities and described in static terms. Cultures can be described properly only in motion, because they are constantly evolving. The social drama, then, is a description of a moment in the evolutionary process of a particular culture. Life is viewed as a series of cause and effect actions and reactions. Consequently, understanding what comes before and after the drama is vital to understanding the drama itself.

The players in the drama also are worthy of mention. Who are the men and women who take part in a particular social drama? Turner claims that the "main actors are persons for whom the group which constitutes the field of dramatic action has a high value priority, . . . a 'star' group" (Turner, *Ritual* 69). In other words, the culture within which the drama takes place must be important to all of the players involved. Often, the loyalty of the players to the culture during a social drama exceeds even that of familial ties. "In the social drama, though choices of means and ends and social affiliation are made, stress is dominantly laid upon loyalty and obligation" (Turner, *Dramas* 35).

Comparison is another important aspect in social drama. One method of evaluating a social drama is by examining a given culture before and after the drama occurs to search for its effects. Every social drama has an effect on a culture.
One can compare the ordering of relations which preceded the power struggle erupting into an observable social drama with that following the redressive phase. The scope and range of the field will have altered; the number of its parts will be different; and their magnitude will be different. More importantly, the nature and intensity of the relations between parts, and the structure of the total field, will have changed. (Turner, Dramas 42)

Comparison is a powerful tool often used by anthropologists and communication scholars in the study of movements and cultures. The application of social drama to a conflict gives an observer definite points within the evolutionary process from which to choose when offering comparisons of life within the culture at different times. These points become evident because social dramas "partially suspend or unfreeze normal structural relationships and attempt to create a new consensus" (Elmes 433). This suspension allows an observer new insights into how the culture works.

Social Drama Explained

According to Turner, the social drama is lived out in four specific phases. This section explains the breach, crisis, redressive measures, and reconciliation/schism phases of social drama methodology.

_Breach_

The first stage is the breach. A breach is defined as the "infraction of a rule of morality, law, custom or etiquette in some public arena" (Turner, Ritual 70). "A
breach is signalized by the public, overt breach or deliberate nonfulfillment of some crucial norm regulating the intercourse of the parties" (Turner, *Dramas* 38). The point of emphasis in the breach is that the act must be public and affect the entire culture. Social drama is not designed for analyzing conflict between individuals. "A dramatic breach may be made by an individual, certainly, but he always acts, or believes he acts, on behalf of other parties" (Turner, *Dramas* 38). In a social drama the entire culture is impacted, not simply a few individuals. For Turner then, the breach is "an act deliberately defiant of social routines" (Gross 398).

**Crisis**

Out of the breach, a crisis arises. The crises phase is when everyone in the culture chooses sides in the conflict. This phase is characterized by the polarization of a culture. The members of the culture, during crisis, "attempt to assert their own and deplete their opponents' paradigms" (Turner, *Dramas* 15). Crisis is the time when anger and strong emotions are displayed. A great deal of the rhetoric in a social drama comes out of this phase as both parties attempt to support their positions and to persuade neutral parties to choose their side in the conflict. Although, the redressive phase produces judicial and official pronouncements, no persuasion is required because both sides of the conflict are required by the norms of the culture to accept the decision or leave. Thus, the crisis phase produces the largest amount of rhetoric and actions by which to describe and analyze the social drama.
A culture comes closest to showing its true nature during the crisis phase.

This second stage, crisis, is always one of those turning points or moments of danger and suspense, when a true state of affairs is revealed, when it is least easy to don masks or pretend that there is nothing rotten in the village. . . . For the society is here at its most self-conscious and may attain the clarity of someone fighting in a corner for his life. (Turner, Dramas 39, 41)

During crisis, "there is a tendency for the breach to widen and extend until it becomes coextensive with some dominant cleavage in the widest set of relevant social relations to which the conflicting or antagonistic parties belong" (Turner, Dramas 38). Every social drama takes place along a cultural time line and, as such, deals with feelings, prejudices, and biases that already exist though usually below the surface. "The phase of crisis exposes the pattern of current factional intrigue, hitherto covert and privately conducted, within the relevant social group" (Turner, Dramas 38). Thomas Farrell even goes as far as adding an extra step preceding the breach called "anticipation" (162). During anticipation, according to Farrell, all of the tension and conflict in the culture is downplayed, hidden, or ignored. The conflict is present, but a breach is required to bring it into the open. Social dramas tend to divide cultures along these already existing lines.

**Redressive Measures**

The third stage of the drama is what Turner deems redressive measures.

During this phase, "society adjudicates rival claims" (Gross 398).
In order to limit the spread of crisis, certain adjustive and redressive "mechanisms," informal or formal, institutionalized or ad hoc, are swiftly brought into operation by leading or structurally representative members of the disturbed social system. (Turner, *Dramas* 39)

Powerful members of the culture bring these measures to bear upon a crisis as quickly as possible in an attempt to preserve their culture.

The redressive phase is important to anthropologists because it demonstrates clearly the ability of a culture to handle conflict situations. Turner advises researchers to "study carefully what happens in phase three and ask whether the redressive machinery is capable of handling crises so as to restore, more or less, the status quo ante" (Turner, *Dramas* 41).

Cultures vary concerning their method of redress. Generally, every culture has a prescribed manner for dealing with problems of this nature. Often, redressive mechanisms are informal, but in post-industrial cultures a formalized board, legislature, judicial system, council, or committee is more common. The importance of the redressive phase lies in the mechanism itself, not necessarily in who implements the mechanism. The primary concern then becomes, how a culture holds itself, with all of its norms and values, together. Alan Gross invokes Walter Fisher's "good reasons" theory of human rationality when discussing redress.

Whether the outcome of social conflict is revolution or resolution depends, then, on the efficacy of the redressive machinery: it must at the same time pass judgment and have as the basis for that judgment
the ultimate in what Walter R. Fisher calls "good reasons;"
transcendental values which "reveal one's most fundamental
commitments." In successful redress, these values, which are "generally
taken for granted," must form a highly compatible set because "no
hierarchy of values exists to resolve the conflict of transcendental
values." (Gross 406; Fisher 380, 382)

No matter who is mediating the conflict within a culture, that group or individual
should consider the well-being of the entire culture when making binding decisions for
the culture.

The chief purpose of a social drama, as opposed to other models of conflict
management, is the restoration of peace within a culture. Therefore, this phase
determines the success, failure, or even completion of the drama itself.

When regress fails, there is usually regression to crisis. Regression to
crisis tends to become a matter of endemic, pervasive, smoldering
factionalism, without sharp, overt confrontations between consistently
distinct parties. (Turner, Dramas 41)

Unlike other theories of conflict management, Turner's model "best elucidates the
ways in which societies attempt to contain conflict, to see to it that public controversy
leads not to revolution, but to a reaffirmation or a restructuring of existing controversy"
(Gross 397). Other models focus on the destruction or rending of cultures, Turner's
redressive measures point to the tendency of cultures to hold together in the face of
conflict. When redressive measures work, the culture stays together and peace is restored. When redress fails, a schism occurs, or the drama reverts to crisis.

Reintegration/Schism

The final stage of a social drama is either a reintegration of the parties in conflict or a schism, where the parties in conflict form two autonomous groups. Turner calls reintegration "a stage in which the warring parties become part of a new status quo" (Turner, *Dramas* 41). Schism occurs when the warring parties' "antagonism is . . . socially recognized and legitimated" (Turner, *Dramas* 41).

Three possibilities exist for a social drama: success, failure, and incompletion. In order for a social drama to be a success, a reintegration of the two parties must exist. The parties must accept the redressive mechanisms and agree to rejoin the culture as fully functioning members. The culture then resumes operation with the same participants but in a slightly altered form due to the evolutionary effects of social drama.

If, however, the two contesting parties cannot settle their differences through the redressive measures instituted during the drama, a schism occurs. Turner calls this type of permanent separation a failed social drama, "the social recognition and legitimization of irreparable schism between contesting parties" (Turner, *Dramas* 41). A schism is readily apparent in pre-industrial, primarily agricultural communities where, if two conflicting parties part ways, a spatial separation results. One group moves to a new location. The occurrence of a failed social drama is more difficult to detect in a post-industrial culture. Factors such as employment opportunities, cost of
living, and housing availability make it difficult for the disenfranchised group to change geographic locations, even if they felt the move necessary. In such cases, the culture may stay together physically but split in other less observable and definable ways. The group also might have difficulty forming a new autonomous culture.

The third possibility for social drama is that it will not reach completion. When the redressive measures fail, a social drama often slips back into the crisis stage. The culture may continue to function as a unit in such cases. The problems and tensions will be ignored and downplayed once again until another breach forces them back into public consideration. The incomplete social drama becomes the anticipation stage for another breach, and only a social drama that passes through all four phases will be able to solve the enduring problems of the culture.

Social Drama Applied

Since Turner formulated and published his insights into social drama, many refinements have been made by scholars in various fields. The most significant of these refinements has been the adaptation of the tool to the field of history (Farrell, Haines, Hylton, Jules-Rossette, Stone, and Strohm). Turner, an ethnographer, did the majority of his research with the Ndembu people of the Katanga region of Zaire while living among them (Turner, Ritual 66). Consequently, he designed social drama as a tool for reporting the findings of ethnographers. However, later scholars demonstrated that social drama is an adept tool for use in historical studies. Of these historical studies, William Stone’s work is most significant.
Stone's "The Southern Baptist Convention Reformation, 1979-1990: A Social Drama" summarizes the refinements made to social drama by previous scholars. Three facets of Stone's work apply to this study. First, his work validates the use of social drama as a tool in an historical study. Stone did a great deal of rhetorical research and structured his writings around the literature published over the course of the drama. His knowledge was based on research into historical artifacts such as transcripts of speeches, newspaper articles, magazine editorials, and books. Unlike an ethnographer, Stone did no on-site observation of the culture's proceedings for his study. Although Stone's work was not the first to adapt social drama to historical studies, it validates prior research by Farrell, Harry Haines, Dory Hylton, Bennetta Jules-Rossette, and Paul Strohm, which applied social drama to historical events.

Second, Stone's work uses social drama for the analysis of a post-industrial culture. Turner claims that "social drama . . . can be isolated for study in societies at all levels of scale and complexity" (Turner, Dramas 33). This view is supported by Gross.

Turner's point is not that all societies are fundamentally alike; rather, he holds that issues which mobilize fundamental conflicts in any society inevitably mobilize those conflicts in the form of a social drama.

(Dramas 398)

Nevertheless, Turner's stages were designed specifically for analyzing events in pre-industrial cultures.
The concepts of "breach" and "reintegration/schism" are particularly well-suited for a pre-industrial culture. Stone, however, adapts both of the phases successfully to the post-industrial world. Breach in a pre-industrial culture can be almost instantaneous with the transgression of the norm because the entire culture lives and works in the same geographic location. Such is not the case in a post-industrial culture. Turner argues that the breach occurs when the violation of the cultural norm is made public within the culture. While pre-industrial cultures often are geographically bound, post-industrial cultures are global. In such cases pinpointing and describing the breach becomes more complex.

The reintegration/schism phase also must be re-examined. In today's world, a culture often cannot effect a spatial separation. This difficulty had to be recognized, and the definition of the phase had to be adjusted accordingly. Although Stone argues for reintegration in his drama thus failing to highlight the shortcoming of Turner's definition of schism, Stone's definition of the culture of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) as global does point out the necessity of altering Turner's definition of schism.

Finally, Stone's subject matter is important to this study. The present study is essentially a microcosm of Stone's work. "Reformation" covers the same type of conflict material that is covered in this study. The one benefit of this study, however, is that this drama has ended. Ideologically, the culture at SWBTS is split. All that remains is for sufficient time to pass so that the ideological split can be carried out spatially. The immediate spatial separation that is plausible in pre-industrial cultures
takes longer in post-industrial cultures. The social drama in the SBC, on the other hand, continues to fluctuate between crisis, redress, and reintegration. Stone argues that the two sides of the conflict are reintegrated but at the same time admits that much tension remains unresolved. Hence, this work is a good complement to Stone's.

Therefore, Stone's work is vital to the present study in two ways. First, Stone summarizes the refinements made to social drama by scholars since Turner which are useful to this study. Second, his subject matter contextualizes the Dilday conflict.
WORKS CITED


CHAPTER III

CONFLICT IN THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) is the single largest non-Catholic Christian denomination. "Over fourteen million strong, Southern Baptists number a million and a half more than all the Jews throughout the world" (Barnhart 1). The term "Southern" is somewhat misleading. The SBC has "conventions in 38 states" (Barnhart 1), congregations in all 50 states (Cothen, What 25), and missionaries in a majority of the countries in the world. The size of the SBC alone makes its turmoils noteworthy; any conflict within the SBC has global implications.

Size alone does not adequately describe the importance of the present conflict between fundamentalists and moderates within the SBC. The SBC also has an extremely prominent membership and range of influence. Its members include such prominent national and international leaders as President Bill Clinton and former President Jimmy Carter. Furthermore, the last four United States Presidents have addressed the annual convention either in person or via television. The importance of the present struggle is highlighted by the fact that, at the SBC’s 1993 annual convention, fundamentalists tried to pass a motion condemning Immanuel Baptist Church in Little Rock, Arkansas, Clinton’s home church, for not censuring him for his stance on abortion (Cothen, New 8). A struggle for control over a religious organization that influences the president of one of the world’s superpowers would
probably alarm the average person, no matter their nationality. The present conflict in
the SBC has relevance to people around the world regardless of their religious
affiliation or geographical location.

Chapter three contextualizes the social drama at Southwestern Baptist
Theological Seminary (SWBTS) by describing the conflict that has been raging within
the SBC since 1979. The first section examines the roots of the conflict. The second
section defines the terms and parties in the conflict. The final section describes the
rhetoric and actions of the conflict. No study of this conflict could be inclusive.
Therefore, the specific incidents seminal to the conflict or directly related to the social
drama at SWBTS are emphasized.

Roots of Conflict

William Tillman, an ethics professor at SWBTS, jokes that the roots of the
conflict between fundamentalists and moderates in the SBC originated "somewhere
around 33 a.d. [sic] [the crucifixion of Christ]" (Tillman). The hyperbole suggests that
the conflict in the SBC has roots that trace back to the beginnings of the SBC in 1845,
and even of the Baptist religion in 1612.

Baptists first called for religious liberty in 1612, in Thomas Helwys' A Short
Declaration of the Mystery of Iniquity (Hobbs). The principle of religious liberty has
developed over the years into the idea that all Christians have the right to discern the
will of God for themselves in any particular circumstance through scripture reading
and prayer. This precept, the "priesthood of the believer," led to a great deal of
doctrinal variety among Baptists and served them well in an era when the main goal
of non-Catholic, non-Church of England denominations was to stay together as a
group and avoid entanglements with secular authorities.

For the long-range continuity and unity of a denomination, however, religious
liberty creates problems as a foundational doctrine. A denomination is, by definition,
based on like beliefs. How could a denomination exist and thrive based on diverse
beliefs? No central doctrine other than belief in Christ as a personal savior and
baptism by immersion were binding. The contradictory principles of liberty, embodied
in the "priesthood of the believer" doctrine, and uniformity, would lead the SBC into
its most dramatic conflict.

The SBC branched away from the Triennial Convention, an every third year
meeting of American Baptists, in 1845 over a variety of issues, the foremost being
slavery (McBeth). Before World War II Southern Baptists were essentially a regional
people and were highly reflective of their society. Baptists of the Southern variety
avoided much of the doctrinal conflict that beset their Northern counterparts for
essentially two reasons. First, their purpose for joining together was missions. The
purpose of the SBC, as founded in 1845, was to cooperate in the "proclamation of the
Gospel" (Cothen, What 2). "Evangelism and missions were the bread and butter of the
Baptists in the South" (Cothen, What 25). The SBC did not form in order to establish
an orthodoxy.

Second, Southern society before 1945 was essentially agrarian, rural, and cut
off from modernist influences. "The South encountered the issues of modernity from
fifty to seventy-five years after the North" (Cothen, What 23). As opposed to most
other denominations Southern Baptists relied on congregations to ordain its ministers, and thus many of the ministers were bi-vocational preachers who had received little formal education (Cothen, What 26). Many of these pastors were well-meaning, hard-working people who did good jobs of ministering to their churches. Their lack of formal training, however, kept newer forms of Biblical criticism out of Baptist congregations for most of the twentieth century. Therefore, Southern Baptists were shielded from dissimilar views. This situation still exists today in many small churches throughout the Southeast (Davis), and many fundamentalists would take the SBC in a direction which would effectively eliminate newer forms of Biblical criticism from the local church level altogether (Maples).

As Baptist seminaries grew to a place of prominence within the SBC, a two-tiered system of pastors formed. On one level, uneducated pastors served in many of the churches in small towns. On a second level, seminary graduates with more sophisticated educations in Biblical criticism began to fill the pulpits of larger churches as well as positions of leadership in the SBC. Over the years a chasm between the two groups developed. "As the more urbane middle class grew and its clergy continued control of the denominational mechanisms, the distance between the groups sometimes tended to grow" (Cothen, What 26). Members of the first tier, mostly rural and uneducated, were denied positions of leadership in the SBC (Cothen, What 26). These rural pastors became disenchanted with the SBC's leadership because they felt left out of the business of the SBC and because they did not understand much of the seminary graduates' theology.
This two-tiered system caused a great deal of disenfranchisement between the SBC's leadership and its laity. "Some among the Inerrancy Party [fundamentalists] charge that the rank and file, bill-paying Southern Baptists have not the faintest notion of what is being taught behind the walls of their seminaries" (Barnhart 33). This lack, or alleged lack, of knowledge about what was happening in the SBC's seminaries was a determining factor that helped lead to the conflict in the SBC. In many ways the conservative resurgence of 1979 was an attempt to narrow the gap between the classes taught in Southern Baptist seminaries and the sermons preached in Southern Baptist churches.

Two factors present in post-World War II Southern society, led to the conservative resurgence. First, the South was becoming more pluralistic and modern. "Southernness begins to end at the end of World War II" (Cothen, What 23). New ideas came into the South from all directions. Many Baptists served in the war and were thus exposed to new ideas via the military. Also, immigration played a major factor. "Immigration to the Sun Belt began in earnest several years after the war. Alien ideas and religions invaded the land that had been controlled by Protestants" (Cothen, What 23). Southern societies also became more urbanized. These changes were unwelcomed by the fundamentalists who felt that their whole way of life was being challenged. Cothen argues that fundamentalists were more comfortable with the traditional Southern perspective.

Southern culture was suited to hierarchical values. These value systems had developed over the years. Men were superior to women,
whites over blacks, government over the citizen, employer over employees. Flynt [Wayne Flynt, head of the History Department of Auburn University] sees the reassertion of hierarchal values in the Southern Baptist Convention as more important in the "conservative resurgence" than theology. (Cothen, What 23)

Second, fundamentalism was sweeping the nation. Northern Baptists had dealt with the issue years before, but now, with the influx of new ideas into the South, fundamentalism arrived. One view of fundamentalism is to see it as "essentially the extreme and agonized defense of a dying way of life" (Cothen, What 30). Since one characteristic of fundamentalism is the need of an enemy (Cothen, New 7), in the South that defense took the form of an all-out attack on anything construed as liberal. It is ironic that, in a real sense, both the ideology, fundamentalism, and the enemy, liberalism, came to the South during the same wave of modernism. Fundamentalism, a militaristic style of theology/control (Cothen, New 8), arrived in the South at the same time that Southern society began to face such major issues as Vietnam, the civil rights movement, and the sexual revolution. All of these issues ran contrary to traditional Southern values (Cothen, What), and the presence of a control-mindset with so many new ideas burgeoning created a ripe battleground for the ensuing conflict.

Terms and Definitions

A description concerning the terms and principles around which the present controversy centers is needed before delving into its details. Until 1979, the group that would later be referred to as moderates were firmly in control of the SBC, and
fundamentalists were outsiders. At the Pastor's Conference of that year, the positions of the groups began a process of change that would continue over the next eleven years (Stone). For that reason, the moderates refer to the conflict as a fundamentalist takeover. The fundamentalists call it a conservative resurgence.

The conservative resurgence/fundamentalist takeover controversy in the SBC caused Baptists to reexamine the priesthood of the believer doctrine which promoted diversity among the ranks of Baptists. In the tradition of J. R. Graves in the 1850's and J. Frank Norris in the 1940's (McBeth 447, 620), the modern-day fundamentalists have attempted, for the past sixteen years, to control what Baptists think and believe. In 1969, W. A. Criswell, pastor of the powerful First Baptist Church of Dallas and one of the founders of Southern Baptist fundamentalism, argued for defining Baptists on the basis of what they believe.

There are among us liberals, conservatives, fundamentalists; open communionists, closed communionists, alien immersionists; persons who would emphasize the social application of the gospel; those who would emphasize evangelism. ... In my humble judgment, I think we ought to take those articles of faith of 1925 and 1963 and say: "This is what it is, being a Baptist. If you don't believe that, you are not a Baptist." (Cothen, What 69)

The fundamentalist-moderate conflict chronicles that battle for the control of Baptist thought and efforts to define what a Baptist believes.
District Court Judge Paul Pressler founded the present fundamentalist party. As a Sunday School teacher in Houston in the years preceding the conflict, Pressler’s students would bring him their textbooks for his examination (Cothen, What 5). He was shocked by many of the things that his students were taught at Baylor University, Texas’ largest Baptist school. Pressler decided that at least one of the SBC’s seminaries should be conservative according to his definition of the word. For years, he sought influence at New Orleans Seminary, but was denied it by the school’s president, Grady Cothen (Cothen, What 5). Pressler set his sights higher.

Dr. Paul Pressler . . . deserves the title of Chief Strategist of the Inerrancy Party [fundamentalists]. It was he who studied the Southern Baptist Convention constitution and by-laws for the purpose of offering Paige Patterson and other defenders of inerrancy his counsel as to how they might gain control of the convention agencies and institutions. The newly elected president of the Convention appoints new members each year to the Committee on Committees, which in turn nominates members to serve on the powerful Committee on Boards, Commissions, and Standing Committees; on the shoulders of this second committee falls the responsibility of nominating to the Convention the trustees and overseers authorized to determine to a great extent the makeup of the agency or institution under each board’s charge. (Barnhart 6, 7)

Paige Patterson, president of Criswell Center for Biblical Studies, was the theologian for the inerrancy movement. Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in
Memphis, was the chief spokesman for the movement. Together, Pressler, Patterson, and Rogers set about to bring the SBC in line with their view of conservative theology.

The fundamentalist party surfaced with a definite agenda. Cothen names three planks in the fundamentalist platform. First, fundamentalists asserted that the SBC's seminaries were becoming too liberal. Second, they believed that inerrancy was the only proper view of the scriptures. Third, fundamentalists believed that conservatives had been under-represented on boards of the SBC in the past (Cothen, What 97).

From the beginning of the conflict, the fundamentalists were more organized and more focused than the moderates, who were simply dedicated to maintaining the status quo.

Despite some disagreement among scholars as to the differing aims of fundamentalism, most agree that the primary goal of the fundamentalists in initiating this conflict was to establish conservative doctrine as orthodoxy for the SBC (Cothen, Shurden, and Davis). Therefore, their view of conservative theology is significant. The fundamentalists are often referred to as inerrantists because of their strict insistence upon the use of the word "inerrant" to define the Bible. A problem arises because little agreement exists over the meaning of the term. Cothen demonstrates how authors define the term differently. Kantzer uses etymology as the basis for his definition.

The word inerrant derives from two Latin words meaning "not wandering" with "from the truth" to be supplied. The basic meaning in English and its cognates in other western European languages is "not
wandering from the truth” or "truth without any mixture of error."

(What 130)

Humphreys’ definition highlights the congruency between spiritual and scientific truth.

The word is negative; it means "without error." The meaning, however, is positive; it is an affirmation that everything that the Bible teaches, is error-free. . . . This includes its assertions in the fields of history and science as well as religion and spiritual matters. (What 130)

Feinburg argues that inerrancy only applies to the original documents.

Inerrancy means that when all facts are known, the Scriptures in their original autographs and properly interpreted will be shown to be wholly true in everything that they affirm, whether that has to do with doctrine or morality or with the social, physical, or life sciences. (What 131)

Cothen’s assemblage of perspectives demonstrates the range of accepted definitions for the term.

Not only are several definitions available, several types of inerrancy also have been delineated. David Dockery lists five: naive, absolute, balanced, limited, and functional (Cothen, What 131). Naive inerrantists believe that God actually dictated the Bible to its writers (Cothen, What 131). Absolute inerrancy claims that the Bible is completely true and that its writers "intended to give a considerable amount of exact data in such matters" (Cothen, What 131). This view claims that the Bible is scientific and historical as well as religious. The balanced view accounts for the fact that the Bible was written by humans and thus has a limited scope. This view claims that the
Bible is completely true but was written from the perspective of people living in the first century B.C. Limited inerrancy claims that the Bible is strictly a religious book and thus is inerrant in matters of "salvation and ethics or faith and practice" (Cothen, What 131). The final view, functional inerrancy, claims that the Bible is inerrant in that it always and completely "accomplishes its purpose" (Cothen, What 132).

Most, if not all, Baptists would fit into one of these categories. Moderates, however, choose to use the word infallibility instead of inerrancy. "Inerrancy asserts that the Bible in its original documents is totally without error. Infallibility stresses that the Bible is unfailing in accomplishing the purpose that God intended" (Barnhart 38). The problem in this conflict is now more than simply defining people as inerrantists, though. On one side, the issue has become making sure that all Baptists are a certain type of inerrantist. On the other side, the issue is now a refusal to be referred to as an inerrantist because of the political connotations of the word.

Although little agreement exists as to what inerrancy actually means, all of the definitions share the idea that the Bible means what is says. "Many believers fear that without flawless Scriptures to support it, Christianity may eventually be regarded as just another ancient mystery religion doomed to fade into the night" (Barnhart 33). The chief document of Christianity must be defended in order to preserve the religion. This theory often is referred to as the slippery slope (Cothen, What 134). Essentially, the theory states that compromising on one issue of theology as literally stated in the Bible would result in surrendering all of the tenets of Christianity. The metaphor is
that of a climber stepping out onto an icy slope and sliding all the way back down the mountain because there is nothing to stop the slide.

Another perspective on the inerrancy controversy holds that the conflict concerns emphasis, not wording. Dilday was labelled as a moderate for his book, The Doctrine of Biblical Authority, because the book shifted the emphasis of the debate from the nature of scripture to its purpose (Cothen, New 116). The debate concerns not only interpreting the Bible according to a certain set of fundamentalist beliefs, but also the basic foundation of what should be debated.

No one really knows what the average church-goer in the SBC believes. In deference to the doctrine of "priesthood of the believer," Baptists do not require a creedal commitment for membership in a local church and along with local church membership comes SBC membership. A statement of belief in Christ and subsequent baptism by immersion are the only requirements for inclusion. Also in deference to the "priesthood" doctrine, Baptists have never taken a thorough survey of member beliefs. Historically, both sides in the controversy can claim support. Southern Baptists always have been known as centrists in terms of their theology in comparison to other Protestant denominations, but they also always have been known as a "people of the Book."

Conservative Resurgence/Fundamentalist Takeover

Two factors hastened the onset of the present conflict in the SBC. First, fundamentalists called into question the theology taught in Baptist universities and seminaries. Who was to determine what was to be taught in the SBC’s schools?
Fundamentalists believed that the theological education offered in Southern Baptist schools had to be made to fall in line with at least the basic tenets of the Baptist faith. This belief was the first step toward removing priesthood of the believer from the classroom. For years the SBC handled the issue of doctrinal uniformity by subscribing to an "Abstract of Principles" (Shurden xvii) to which seminary faculty and administrators had to commit. The principles were vague enough to go unchallenged and for years the SBC continued with business as usual under the guise of like beliefs.

The second step in hastening the conflict was the adoption by pastors of business-based principles of leadership. In the past twenty-five years, Baptist pastors have begun to adopt principles of leadership based more on corporations than on ministry. The pastor became the CEO of the church, or according to Criswell, the "ruler of the church" (Cothen, What 246). The pastor, then, proscribes the beliefs of his church members. This same principle works for trustee-members dictating their beliefs at the seminaries. Moderate pastor Richard Jackson noticed that "Southern Baptists are abandoning one of their cherished doctrines—the priesthood of the believer—by surrendering control of their denomination to a handful of 'high priests'" (Cothen, What 246). Priesthood became relevant only at the top of the power structure. Baptists were adopting an organization similar to that of the Catholic Church.

The present conflict began in earnest in 1979, at that year's Pastor's Conference. The Pastor's Conference historically had been the domain of the leaders who would become the fundamentalists. That year, though, the rhetoric of these men
was "unconventional, agitative, and demagogic" which, according to William Stone, signaled the beginning of the SBC conflict (67).

Although the Pastor's Conference was the first time the fundamentalists had directly challenged the SBC's leadership, they already had been hard at work. They arrived in Dallas with a set "agenda" (Cothen, *What* 4).

May 10, 1979. *The Christian Index* has [an] article by Toby Druin in which Paige Patterson and Paul Pressler confirm reports that meetings had been held in at least fifteen states to encourage messengers to attend the SBC in Houston to elect a president committed to biblical inerrancy. May 24, 1979. *The Christian Index* reports that Harold Lindsell, president of the Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship, said in an interview with the Memphis *Commercial Appeal* that it is time for Southern Baptists to face the issue of inerrancy even if it meant the loss of 500,000 members. (Shurden ix)

Fundamentalists arrived at the Pastor's Conference and the annual convention with a mission, an organization, and a willingness to accept the consequences of their actions.

At the Pastor's Conference, fundamentalist Homer Lindsay, Jr. presided while a panel of preachers lashed out at alleged "liberals" within the SBC (Shurden ix). Stone lists four specific acts at the Conference which signalled the onset of the conflict. First, fundamentalists openly campaigned for the presidency of the SBC and voted as a block (Stone 66). Open campaigning for any office had been an unspoken taboo in the SBC, but "fundamentalists attended the 1979 Pastors' Conference with the
expressed purpose of breaking a tradition and reforming the denomination through elections" (Stone 67). The second significant act in beginning the conflict was the direct endorsement of a particular candidate by a speaker at the Conference (Stone 67). Public campaigning techniques at the annual convention also had been discouraged. "Of course, there had been minor political actions before on behalf of others who had served as president... These brought laughter, disgust, or some votes—according to the effectiveness of the effort" (Cothen, *What* 6). At this conference, however, "Criswell strongly and emotionally endorsed Rogers for president of the convention" (Cothen, *What* 13).

Stone identifies the third controversial act as the "vicious" rhetoric of evangelist James Robinson (67). Robinson's rhetoric was more that of a warrior exhorting troops to battle than of a Christian minister. Last, Stone identifies the fundamentalists' endorsement of the "New Christian Right's agenda for national politics" as a controversial act (75). The SBC, as an institution, always had attempted to maintain the facade of neutrality in the political arena, in terms of endorsing individual candidates, preferring to leave political decisions and alliances to the consciences of the individual members. True, the SBC had long been vocal about individual issues (abortion and homosexuality, for example), but no individual candidate or party had ever received the exclusive endorsement of the SBC. The 1979 Pastor's Conference changed that.

At that year's annual convention, Rogers was elected over six other candidates for president on the first ballot (Naylor 209). Despite assuring leaders on both sides
that he intended to be fair in making his appointments, his intentions soon became apparent.

He [Rogers] would not appoint a person to anything who does not believe the Bible is inerrant. This was probably the first time that a single doctrinal position would become the criterion for all appointed and elected officials of the convention. (Cothen, *What* 16)

This revelation by Rogers coincided with the announcement of the fundamentalist agenda for the SBC by the other co-founders of the movement.

In May 1980, Patterson and Pressler revealed their plan for long-range control of the SBC (Shurden xi). Pressler expounded on this plan in September.

In a speech at the Old Forest Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, VA, Paul Pressler announces that the Fundamentalists "need to go for the jugular--we need to go for the trustees." Said Pressler, "We are going for having knowledgeable, Bible-centered, Christ-honoring trustees of all of our institutions who are not going to sit there like a bunch of dummies and rubber stamp everything that’s presented to them." In answer to a question about giving to the Cooperative Program, Pressler said, "Work within the framework of the Cooperative Program." He added, "Give at least enough to have the maximum number of messengers [to the SBC]." (Shurden xi)

Also in September 1980, Cecil Sherman began the moderate movement at the Gatlinburg Conference in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. Seventeen moderate ministers met to
discuss possible ways to counter the fundamentalist assault on the SBC (Shurden xi). Sherman lists five reasons why the meeting took place: to organize the moderates politically, to advocate the position that the SBC had not become liberal, to express pleasure with the stewardship of the present SBC managers, to express loyalty to the SBC, and to remember the SBC’s history and polity (Sherman 22).

At the 1981 Convention, fundamentalists began to assert their position on inerrancy in a creedal manner. Herschel H. Hobbs, primary author of the 1963 "Baptist Faith and Message" and generally regarded as a moderate, made the following motion.

[We, as Baptists, should] reaffirm our historic Baptist position that the Holy Bible, which has truth without any mixture of error for its matter, is our adequate rule of faith and practice, and that we reaffirm our belief in "The Baptist Faith and Message" adopted in 1963, including all seventeen articles, plus the preamble which protects the conscience of the individual and guards us from a creedal faith. (Shurden xi)

Apparently, Hobbs intended to reaffirm the non-creedal and voluntary nature of "The Baptist Faith and Message." The fundamentalists used the statement for other purposes, though. "During later debate on the motion Adrian Rogers asked that some of Hobbs’s [sic] comments which reflected the inerrantist tendency be read into the record. Later Hobbs’s comments would be cited by Fundamentalists as evidence that ‘The Baptist Faith and Message’ article on the Bible was an inerrantist statement"
The reinterpretation of Hobbs' motion was another early sign that the fundamentalists were ready to lead the SBC toward creedalism.

In 1984, the moderates joined the battle. That year, three of the seminary presidents, Russell Dilday, Roy L. Honeycutt, Jr. (Southern Baptist Theological Seminary), and Randall Lolley (Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary), launched an all-out attack on fundamentalism. "Dilday preached a fiery sermon at the SBC in Kansas City deploring the political machinations of Pressler and Patterson" (Shurden xiii). Dilday's sermon was the first time that he aligned himself politically within the SBC.

At the 1985 Convention, a "Peace Committee" was established "to determine the source of the controversies in our Convention, and make findings and recommendations regarding these controversies" (Shurden xiii). Neither side respected the committee's 1987 decision, though. The wording was too ambiguous for the fundamentalists, and the content displeased the moderates (Stone 166). The report affirmed that unorthodox theology was being taught in the SBC's seminaries (Stone 166) and thus justified the fundamentalist's reformation tactics. Landrum Leavell, president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, called the report a "colossal $300,000 failure" (Stone 166).

In 1986, the fundamentalists began to reveal additional goals for the SBC. In May, the theologian who originally began the inerrancy controversy, Clark Pinnock, issued an apology. He claimed that inerrancy is not "well supported exegetically" (Shurden xiv) and argued that the conflict in the SBC was not about theology, but was
a "fight between evangelicals and fundamentalists, not liberals and conservatives" (Stone 164).

After this reversal by Pinnock, fundamentalists began emphasizing other issues. In June, Patterson said that fundamentalists would tie the hiring of denominational employees to their positions on abortion, euthanasia, school prayer, and federal budget reduction (Cothen, What 148). The fundamentalists had co-opted almost completely the right-wing Republican political platform. When asked how the new moral agenda would be received by the rank and file, Patterson replied, "I think it'll go over nearly as well as the inerrancy thing" (Cothen, What 148). In September 1990, the "Fundamentalist-dominated board of trustees impose[d] Peace Committee report as new creedal statement for hiring at Southern Seminary" (Shurden xvii). The conflict was now openly political.

Cothen discusses how the SBC changed its manner of dealing with political issues.

Matters of individual conscience, about which there had always been difference of opinion, now became matters for denominational pronouncement. There had always been resolutions presented to the annual meetings on a wide variety of subjects, and they were sometimes adopted and sometimes defeated. They were usually ignored by anyone who disagreed with them. . . . The point of difference came to be that any resolution passed by the convention now in the minds of some,
became a matter of "mandate" to agencies, and sometimes to state conventions and local associations. (Cothen, *What* 141)

Fundamentalists within the SBC began trying to prescribe the political beliefs of everyone in the SBC, thus directly challenging the "priesthood of the believer" doctrine.

Although several political/nontheological issues existed, two stand out in particular. The issues are, in every sense, theological; however, at this time in the conflict, they became primarily political. Abortion was the biggest of these issues (Cothen, *New* 149). Beginning in 1980, "abortion became the litmus text for orthopraxis" (Parham 209). Historically, Baptists have been pro-life. The debate within the SBC became: What are the conditions under which abortion is acceptable? Much debate and many motions later, a great deal of disagreement still exists. The SBC has taken the stance that abortion is wrong unless a danger exists to the life of the mother (Cothen, *What* 146), but many Baptists disagree with this stance. Cothen argues that abortion was "an issue on which there was little true difference of opinion among Southern Baptists." The issue was taken up and "pushed by fundamentalists to the point of divisiveness" (*What*, 152).

The second divisive area has been the question of women serving in positions of ministry. This area has been particularly divisive because the job of deciding whom to ordain historically had been left to individual congregations (Cothen, *What* 142). In 1984, the annual convention adopted a position opposing the ordination of women (Cothen, *What* 145). After that time, people were chosen or rejected for
positions on boards, agencies, and even on the mission field based on their stance on the ordination of women (Cothen, *What* 142). Another doctrine that historically had been a matter of differing opinions became a test of orthodoxy and fellowship.

Over the next fifteen years Southern Baptist agencies and seminaries changed hands as fundamentalists took over the leadership of the SBC. In 1986, the fundamentalists gained control of Golden Gate Seminary. In 1987, the Home Mission Board and Southeastern Seminary changed hands. The Christian Life Commission, the SBC’s agency concerning moral issues, changed in 1988. Over the next five years the Baptist Press, the Sunday School Board, the Baptist Joint Committee, the Executive Committee, the Foreign Mission Board, and Southern Seminary all changed hands (Allen 12). By 1990, all of the SBC’s major boards and agencies were controlled by fundamentalist-dominated boards of trustees, and all but one of its seminaries was being run by a fundamentalist president.

The crowning jewel in the SBC’s collection was yet to change hands. Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, the largest and long regarded as most moderate of the SBC’s seminaries, was the last hold-out of the old moderate regime.
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CHAPTER IV

THE DILDA Y CONTROVERSY

Chapter four applies the phases of social drama as defined and developed by Victor Turner and refined by other scholars, particularly Thomas Farrell, to the conflict situation centered around the firing of Russell Dilday as president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (SWBTS). This controversy runs from March 9, 1994, through the end of August 1994. Obviously, no description of the activities in that time frame could be exhaustive; this chapter attempts to describe the events that best highlight social drama as a method of description and analysis.

Anticipation

Before describing the actual controversy, Farrell's anticipation phase (162) requires elaboration. Farrell never defines the phase; he simply uses it. In his application of social drama to the Winter Olympics of 1984, Farrell includes the events which led up to the point of the breach. Without these events, the social drama may or may not have occurred, but the intensity and severity of the breach would have been affected by their absence. In this study, the anticipation phase is defined as that period of time or set of events which, when observed retrospectively, can be seen as leading directly or indirectly to a breach.
The anticipation phase for the Dilday social drama lasted fifteen years. The first event in the anticipation stage of this drama was the onset of the fundamentalist/moderate conflict within the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) as described in the previous chapter. Dilday was a member of the old moderate regime, and the board of trustees gradually came to be dominated by fundamentalists.

The second act of anticipation was the publication of Dilday's book, *The Doctrine of Biblical Authority*. In the book Dilday claims that "since even avowed inerrantists cannot agree on the full meaning of the term, it is obvious that inerrancy has limited value as a designation for the authority of the Bible" (97). Concerning his book, trustees state that "from a decidedly biased position, Dr. Dilday is dedicated to berate, misrepresent, and assail those who hold the Bible to be God's inerrant, infallible, and authoritative Word" (Pulley). The publication of his book and subsequent trustee reaction marked the beginning of the tension between the two conflicting parties.

The next incident in the anticipation phase occurred at the 1984 Southern Baptist Convention when Dilday delivered a sermon that was construed as an attack on the "political machinations of Pressler and Patterson" (Shurden xii). Dilday's sermon was his first public statement concerning his political loyalties within the SBC. Also during this time, the fundamentalists were gradually gaining a majority on the board of trustees at SWBTS. The combination of the fundamentalist gains on the SWBTS board and Dilday's sudden political alliance pitted the president against the
board for the first time. As Dilday became more outspoken and the board became more fundamentalist, tension inevitably grew.

The tension first reached the boiling point in 1989. During their Spring meeting, the SWBTS trustees almost fired Dilday, five years earlier than the actual social drama. T. Bob Davis, a Dallas dentist and executive secretary of the board, said that the trustees should have fired him at that time (Davis). Board chairman Adrian Rogers decided not to take action, however, when a group of local pastors led by Charles Wade, pastor of First Baptist Church of Arlington, besieged their meeting with singing, praying, and protesting (Maples). After that incident, most observers felt that Dilday’s departure from SWBTS was simply a matter of time.

The 1989 trustee meeting also effectively demonstrated the new stance that the SBC was taking in regard to the operation of its agencies and institutions. Fundamentalist leaders took a much more business-like, corporation-based approach to leadership than had the old moderate regime. For example, one moderate believed that God had called him to stay in the trustee meeting after the trustees had called for an executive session, and upon telling the board this, one trustee told the man that "God has nothing to do with this. You need to leave now" (Davis). This statement may seem insignificant to a person outside of the SBC culture, but for insiders the comment marked a significant move away from the running of SBC enterprises based on Biblical principles and towards an approach based on business principles. The SBC officially had become big business as opposed to a cooperative missions endeavor. This turn is significant to the present study because one of the complaints
of Dilday's supporters against the trustees voiced in the crisis stage was that the handling of the firing was done according to "business-world protocol" (Cothen 102) and not with traditional Baptist empathy, compassion, and loyalty.

The 1989 meeting ended with an agreement between Dilday and the trustees that Dilday would no longer speak out against fundamentalism in the SBC. Except for an uneasy tension during trustee meetings and a few minor disagreements, the business of SWBTS essentially returned to normal for the next five years (Chism). The trustee meeting in Spring 1994, ended the truce.

One other factor in the anticipation phase needs to be noted before discussing the Spring 1994, trustee meeting. No specific time or event is associated with this factor. Rather, it was a general shift in attitude among the SWBTS faculty with regard to the board of trustees. During the years that the fundamentalists were gaining a majority on the board, the faculty and staff gradually lost faith in the board. The faculty had known and trusted the old moderate board members (Tillman). The moderates had worked their way up in the SBC serving on state boards and committees. The old trustees had developed a mutual trust with the faculty over the years. When the new fundamentalist trustees began to serve, the faculty did not know them (Tillman). The new trustees were men with limited experience on Baptist boards and were viewed as outsiders. The new board had been appointed based on their stance on inerrancy and experience outside the SBC culture rather than on their experience on Baptist committees and/or boards.
Coming into the 1994 trustee meeting, two major areas of disagreement existed between the trustees and Dilday. The chief problem concerned the School of Church Music and the trustees’ mandate to cut administrative costs. The dean of the School of Church Music, James McKinney, was to retire on August 1. Dilday proposed combining the position of dean with that of executive vice-president and allowing Scotty Gray, who already was serving in the latter role, to fill both positions (Reynolds 190). The trustees felt that the School of Church Music needed to go in a new direction and were prepared to vote down Dilday’s recommendation (Davis).

The second area of disputation concerned the speaker for the school’s commencement the following May. SWBTS customarily invites graduation speakers two years in advance. In this case, Dilday had invited Keith Parks, the president of the SBC’s Foreign Mission Board (FMB). In the two-year interim, though, Parks had left the FMB to become the director of missions for the newly formed moderate organization the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) (Cothen 116). In an earlier meeting, the trustees had asked Dilday to rescind Parks’ invitation because they viewed the CBF as a rival organization to the SBC. Dilday wanted Parks to speak, however, and planned to renew the debate at the trustee meeting.

During the trustee meeting, which generally lasts two or three days, four more events occurred that fit into Farrell’s concept of the anticipation phase of social drama. Before the official meetings began, the trustees met with Dilday at the Holiday Inn in Fort Worth to discuss his performance. According to Tom Chism, Director of Institutional Development at the time, “that’s kind of the time that they sort of chewed
him out and criticized him publicly." Several people came to the meeting to support Dilday but were asked to leave by the trustees (Chism). This meeting marked the beginning of rumors that Dilday was to be fired.

Second, on the evening of March 8, the trustees met to give Dilday his annual performance review. Dilday was evaluated on "nine criteria and received positive marks on all nine. Their comments on his performance included terms such as 'great, wonderful, [and] glorious'" (Cothen 101). The criteria, however, were Dilday's own. He brought the ratings sheet into the meeting, gave himself a rating, and then asked for the trustees' opinions (Davis). Nevertheless, at that meeting, many of the trustees expressed concern about certain aspects of Dilday's leadership of the school (Davis). The school's declining enrollment and the direction of the School of Church Music were both mentioned (Davis). Some disagreement still exists about whether the evaluation was positive.

The factor that led to the breach in this drama, though, was not the evaluation. Rather, it was the trustee's denial that they planned to fire Dilday. Because of the rumors circulating on campus, Dilday specifically asked the trustees if he would be fired. They responded, "There is nothing to those rumors" (Cothen 101). Some consider this statement by the trustees as the immediate cause of the breach (Dickens). Almost everyone within that culture realized that Dilday and the trustees had extreme ideological differences. Many believed that he would be fired within a relatively short period of time (Dickens). Furthermore, the trustees clearly were operating within the boundaries of their authority when deciding to fire the president. The school's
guidelines specifically state that the president serves at the discretion of the trustees (Dickens). The trustees’ statement about the firing, however, directly contradicted their intentions. The majority of trustees, including the executive board, not only knew that the firing would take place, they already knew the exact vote (Tillman). Thus, in the minds of the moderates, the trustees who were planning the firing blatantly lied, destroying their credibility. To some, the issue was “integrity” not the firing (Dickens). The exposure of the trustees’ lie, in many minds, tore the social fabric of SWBTS.

To the trustees, their comment to Dilday was simply a matter of timing. During the performance review, several hundred students had gathered outside of the boardroom and were singing and praying as a sign of support for the president. The trustees knew that firing Dilday at that point would leave them to face angry students for the rest of the evening and during all of the meetings the following day. The executives on the board who were planning the firing made a conscious decision to delay the firing until the last order of business of that semester’s meeting (Davis). The trustees also believed that Dilday would accept the early retirement plan that they were to offer (Davis). The trustees even had memos to the faculty pre-printed that announced Dilday’s retirement. The next day some of the faculty received those faulty memos by mistake (Dickens). The trustees believe that Dilday began this social drama when he “arrogantly” refused to retire (Davis). Thus, the trustees and Dilday left the performance review with differing impressions.
William Tillman, a professor of ethics at SWBTS, was present when Dilday emerged from the appraisal meeting and announced that all was well. Tillman describes what gave rise to his sense of uneasiness.

...there were some of them [trustees] who walked down the double staircase and some who walked out a door away from the group and one of the fellas' standing and talking to me, a student, said, "What do you think?" I said, "It doesn't look good. The trustees are not carrying on conversation with the students." And, I said, "You look at their eyes. What they're thinking is different from what Dilday's thinking."

(Tillman)

Perceptions like these added to the growing sense of dread among faculty members and students.

The third act of anticipation during the trustee meetings was the 9:00 meeting on the morning of the firing, which was open to the seminary community. "Anything that had been initiated by Dilday was promptly tabled and would be taken up in the Fall meeting" (Tillman). The trustees had carefully "choreographed" how that meeting was to run (Tillman). The manner in which that meeting was conducted signalled to many that Dilday would not make it through the last day of trustee action.

The final act in the anticipation stage of the drama was the chapel service immediately before Dilday's firing. During this service, which was planned by the board of trustees, the students added to the tension by giving Dilday a standing ovation (Chism), presumably because they thought he had made it through the
trustees' session. Michael Marshall, a board member who already knew of the impending firing, prayed for Dilday's continued leadership of the institution (Morris). Then, Ollin Collins, another board member who knew, preached a sermon on peace within the SBC (Tillman). Both the prayer and the sermon focused on taking politics out of denominational work, saying things such as, "Our main task is evangelism" (Tillman). The service was viewed as a positive sign for Dilday. That day's chapel service in no way changed the course of the drama; it simply intensified the feelings of some of the people who were soon forced to choose sides in the drama.

Immediately after this service, the breach stage of the drama began.

Breach

Turner describes the breach phase of a social drama as "the infraction of a rule of morality, law, custom or etiquette in some public arena" (70). I argue that a refinement needs to be made in this phase when analyzing a post-industrial culture, however. For contemporary cultures, the phase needs to begin when the infraction is made, regardless of public knowledge. Post-industrial cultures are often based on ideological boundaries rather than geographical boundaries. Therefore, the members of the culture do not find out about the transgression of the norm corporately. Instead, the breach happens in stages as members of the culture find out about the breach individually or in groups via official means, the grapevine, or the media. The breach evolves instead of explodes. In a post-industrial culture, identifying when a transgression becomes public is arbitrary, even subjective. For these reasons, I begin the description of the breach in this case with the transgression of the norm and
discuss its evolutionary process. The breach phase lasts until all, or a majority, of those in the culture know about the transgression.

The firing of Dilday was done in private. First, a group of four trustees, Ralph Pulley, Davis, Damon Shook, and Gerald E. Dacus, met with Dilday in his office and asked him to retire. Without even looking at the retirement package (Davis), Dilday replied that "God led me here, and I had no leadership from the Lord that this was the time to retire" (Cothen 102). When Dilday asked why he was being fired, Pulley, the newly-elected board chairman responded, "We don't need a reason. We have the votes to do it, and we will. And it will be with no provision for anything if you don't accept the early retirement plan" (Cothen 102). After that, Dilday stood, shook the men's hands, and said that they each had to do what they felt called of God to do (Davis). The men then proceeded to the Truett Conference Room to join the rest of the trustees.

Before convening the meeting, a group of the trustees, led by Pulley, gathered in the foyer presumably to lay their final plans (Chism). When the meeting resumed, an executive session was called, which meant that only Dilday, the vice-presidents, and the trustees could be in the meeting. The meeting lasted for about two hours (Chism). At approximately 12:30 the motion was made that the president be fired, a ballot vote was taken, and the president was fired (Reynolds 190). In the case of this social drama the majority of the board of trustees instigated the breach by voting 26-7 to fire the president (Reynolds 190) after specifically telling him that his job was safe.
I argue that the firing instigated the breach and not a point later in the day when the firing became public knowledge for two reasons. First, the manner in which the firing was conducted was instantly recognized as a violation of the seminary’s cultural norms. The split vote of the board foreshadowed the controversy to come. William Tolar, vice-president for academic affairs and provost, accepted the chair of the committee of seminary officers who would run the seminary until an interim president could be named, but only after stating that he did not approve of the action or the manner in which it was handled (Reynolds 191). The action was divisive even before the news left the conference room.

Second, no consensus exists as to the definition of public. In a post-industrial culture consisting of thousands of people, no specific number can be established that would properly define public for that culture. At least thirty-five people were in the meeting. Three reporters were at the back door listening. Twenty or thirty heard the news when Dilday came out of the back door. The news travelled back into the main lobby where three or four-hundred others waited. That afternoon at a press conference, Pulley made an announcement to the entire student body. Replays of the press conference were played on that evenings’ newscasts across the country. The informing of each of these groups represents another step in the evolution of the breach phase of this social drama. None of these groups, however, stand out from the others as being more important. For these reasons, it is appropriate to begin the breach phase of this social drama with the transgression of the norm.
The other actions taken by the trustees during the breach included: 1) changing the locks on Dilday’s office "before I [Dilday] got out of the building;" 2) changing his computer password (Cothen 102); 3) hiring an ally, John Earl Seelig, who had been released by Dilday in 1990, to serve as a consultant in public relations for the interim president and the board in order to "approve and edit all publications of the seminary" and "read, edit, and approve all news releases during the interim period" even before the firing took place (Pulley); and 4) using the school’s security guards to guard the trustee meeting and serve as bodyguards during the remainder of the trustees’ stay on campus (Morris). Dilday was not allowed to retrieve his personal belongings from his office. Instead, his secretary, Barbara Walters, had to bring them to him (Chism). The breach was technically not the firing; the breach was the manner in which the firing was handled.

The transgression of the norm and, I argue, the breach came sometime between 11:00 a.m. and 12:30 p.m., March 9, when the trustees fired Dilday. According to a strict interpretation of Turner’s definition, the breach did not begin until approximately 12:45 p.m. when Dilday stepped out of the conference room and announced that he had been fired (Druin). Dilday came out of the back door of the room and said that "Southwestern Seminary no longer has a president, and I am no longer welcome on this campus" (Chism). He and his wife, Betty, then got into a car and went back to the presidential home (Dr. Dilday Firing).

The news of the firing travelled through Truett Auditorium and back out into the lobby where a group of "at least three-hundred to four-hundred" (Rhodes) students,
faculty, and friends awaited. The news began to spread immediately. By no later than 1:00 almost everyone on campus had heard. This drama involved a much larger culture that included alumni and friends of SWBTS who live all over the world, though. Even within the larger culture, the news spread quickly. By and large, every active participant in the culture of SWBTS knew by day's end.

This process was aided by a press conference held by Pulley at 2:30 p.m. in front of a large contingent of the student body (Weiner). That the press conference announced the firing to the entire culture and, thus, ended the breach could be argued with some success. I contend, however, that most of the people who held jobs did not find out about the firing until they watched the news that evening or received phone calls from friends. I, as a student at SWBTS at the time of the firing, began receiving calls and fielding questions concerning the incident from friends and family at around 5:00 that night and did so until close to midnight. No decisive point exists, but I place the conclusion of the breach phase of this social drama at the end of the day, approximately midnight, March 9. The significance of this social drama is reinforced by the speed at which the breach evolved. The breach began with the infraction at 12:30 p.m., and eleven and a half hours later, almost the entire culture, bounded ideologically rather than geographically, spread over thousands of miles, had learned of the firing.

When judged according to the general values and standards of the culture, the trustees incited this social drama by acting "unethically" and "immorally" toward another member of their culture ("Student"). Social drama is not concerned with right
and wrong as an ethical stance. Social drama is concerned only with the perceived 
rightness or wrongness of an action when judged by the standards of the culture where
that action transpires. The breach occurred because the trustees’ actions were
perceived as immoral to certain members of the culture. Alumni of SWBTS went as
far as calling the firing "an oppressive act of injustice" ("News Conference"). Lloyd
Elder, past president of the SBC, claimed that the trustees "acted imprudently,
irresponsibly, and unethically" (Elder). Others simply saw it as in "very bad taste. It
was in every sense . . . a hostile takeover" (Tillman).

Crisis

The second stage of the conflict, the crisis, began as soon as the breach did,
even by the refined definition of breach offered with this study. Turner writes that
during "crisis, people take sides, supporting either the rule-breaker or the target of his
action. Factions, coalitions, cabals are formed, heated language is exchanged, and
actual violence may occur" (Turner 108). The split vote of the trustees signals that a
difference of opinion existed even among board members. In that same meeting,
Tolar accepted the chair of the committee that would lead SWBTS until an interim
president was named but "stated that his acceptance of this responsibility should not be
considered as an endorsement of Dilday’s firing or the manner in which it was done"
(Reynolds 191). Obviously, the process of choosing sides began before the incident
was announced to the rest of the culture.

Leaks of information also must be factored into the drama. During the meeting
several reporters gathered outside the back door of the conference room. An
electronic speaker attached to a microphone in the meeting had been set up to report what was happening (Morris). Davis eventually discovered that people were listening, opened the back door, and made sure that the speaker system was turned off (Davis). Apparently, the reporters knew about the firing before it was officially announced and had already taken sides on the issue. When Davis opened the back door, they "ran away like children caught with their hands in the cookie jar" (Davis). Later, the reporters who were listening all wrote articles supporting Dilday (Morris).

By the time Dilday came out of the meeting and made the official announcement, sides were definitely taken. During this time the breach and the crisis ran simultaneously because most of the people present already had decided which party in the conflict to favor. As rumors circulated prior to the firing, people began choosing sides with regard to the issue. Thus, people did not have to make a conscious decision about whom to support once the firing occurred. People simply aligned themselves with parties in the conflict according to decisions made before the breach.

After firing Dilday, the trustees were forced to push their way through the lobby full of angry students. "They had a very difficult time coming through the crowd" (Tillman). McKinney confronted Davis in the lobby with "You are the devil himself," and then, a few steps later, Davis heard the exact same comment from McKinney's wife (Davis). Clearly, the anger and bitterness described by Turner as symptomatic of the crisis stage began prior to the official press conference.
Another indication that sides already had been chosen before the trustees came through the crowd is a conversation exchanged among students and faculty members. A student called one of the trustees a pharisee. At this, another student responded, "Oh, don’t be so hard on them. They’re trying to do the best they know." Then, a professor said to the second student, "Don’t give me that stuff" (Tillman).

During Pulley’s announcement of the firing, more crisis rhetoric surfaced. One professor yelled, "How do we get rid of the Trustees?" (Weiner). Another professor called the group "white-washed tombs," a Biblical reference indicating that the trustees appeared beautiful and pure on the outside but were rotten and corrupt on the inside. When Pulley said that suggestions from the student body would be accepted concerning the new president, the group stood in unison and chanted "Dilday, Dilday, Dilday" (Weiner). Other students yelled "Puppets," "Pharisees," and "You just put the fire out!" (Weiner). On the other hand, Laura Lee Cogswell, a trustee, said, "I can’t believe these people are going to lead churches one day," and Davis added, "That’s why we had to make the change" (Morris). The lines in this conflict were clearly drawn by the time of the official announcement.

Immediately following Pulley’s announcement, Doug Dickens, professor of pastoral care, confronted Marshall with, "I wish you could explain to me how you could pray for a man one minute and fire him the next." Marshall responded that he did not understand the question. To which, Dickens replied, "There is a certain ethic involved here, and if you will lie to God, then you will lie to anyone." (Morris). Crisis rhetoric inundated the school.
The next day, the faculty drafted the following resolution and passed it unanimously.

We, the faculty and administrative staff of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, wish to express that we do not concur with either the action taken by the Board of Trustees with regard to our president, nor the manner in which the action was carried out. (Faculty)

The division between the trustees and the faculty was clear. "I think I could count on one hand the opponents that Russell had [among the faculty]" (Chism).

The students also expressed their displeasure with the actions of the trustees. On March 21, over 500 of the school’s approximately 3000 on-campus students gathered at Gambrell Street Baptist Church and passed a resolution (Dr. Dilday Firing). The resolution expressed concern over the action of the trustees.

We maintain that certain actions of the trustees during their Spring 1994 meetings violated the principles of love for God and love for neighbor . . . . Justice was abandoned by the dismissal of our president without due process according to guidelines set out by the Association of Theological Schools. . . . Honesty and truth were deserted when the trustees fired Dr. Dilday after affirming, in the presence of the student body, the president’s leadership both on Tuesday during his evaluation and on Wednesday during a trustee-led prayer in chapel. . . . We call upon members of the board to repent of their unchristian behaviors, to ask forgiveness of those they have wronged, and to restore the vitality
and academic integrity of the institution by reversing their actions. 

("Student")

This resolution was presented to the media on March 22, and mailed to "all of the faculty, the trustees, and the state Baptist papers" ("Student").

Along with hate rhetoric, during the crisis stage of a social drama, both camps attempt to justify their positions in order to win supporters for their cause (Turner 108). The trustees, feeling perfectly justified in their action, began the justification process. During the week following the firing, the executive committee of the board of trustees mailed a letter addressed to Southern Baptist pastors explaining the reasoning of the trustees. The letter claimed that "irreconcilable philosophical differences" existed between the board and Dilday (Pulley). Pulley listed three: Parks speaking at graduation, training at the School of Church Music, and Dilday's administrative reorganization plan (Pulley to pastor). The letter also enumerated examples of Dilday's unwillingness to cooperate with the board: criticism of denominational leaders, involvement in the SBC controversy, liberal convictions as evidenced by his book, and the confrontational relationship between Dilday and the board (Pulley).

The moderates responded to these charges. Dilday personally addressed Pulley's letter.

All of these concerns would have been legitimate concerns to be raised at every (annual) personal review. But this is the first time I have seen these. Last year's (evaluation by the trustee's) was positive, and this
year's. This is the group that took action precipitously and now they are trying to find reasons for it. There is not one specific evidence [sic] (in their charges). (Hollinger)

McKinney responded specifically to the charges about the School of Church Music:

A summary report of what the School of Church Music has done since 1988 [the trustees' first complaint about the school] to meet trustee concerns is available to anyone who would like a copy. This report is in direct contradiction to such statements as "far behind what is going on in the churches today" or "found the current music school faculty unresponsive to their concerns" [statements made in Pulley's letter]. Perhaps it should be pointed out that these harsh criticisms were made by a person [Davis] who has never served as a full-time minister of music in a church, who has no undergraduate academic preparation in music, who plays the piano in a style that was fashionable in the 1950s, who has limited music reading ability, but who has set himself up as judge and jury on how to train church musicians. (Reynolds 193)

Obviously, the crisis rhetoric was becoming heated.

Reaction from across the nation was harsh as well. Financially, the seminary lost a great deal of support. Kenneth Cooper, one of the founders of the aerobics movement, called the firing "unwarranted, disrespectful, and embarrassing," canceled a $30,000 pledge, and resigned from the school's fund-raising campaign (Cothen 104).

The Tom and Evelyn Linebery Foundation, the Scarborough Foundation, and the
Panhandle Baptist Foundation all canceled their support (Cothen 105). Elder removed SWBTS from his estate trust and will (Elder). Richard Maples, pastor of First Baptist Church of Bryan, Texas, resigned as tri-chair of a newly-launched fund-raising campaign as well as canceling his personal pledge (Maples). In all, the seminary lost "at least $15,000,000" due to the firing (Cothen 106).

Reaction also surfaced in other areas. Editors of state Baptist papers were virtually unanimous in their support of Dilday. The papers in Oklahoma, North Carolina, Alabama, New Mexico, Tennessee, Texas, Louisiana, and Kentucky all ran articles critical of the trustees' action (Cothen 107-109). State conventions in several states also protested (Cothen 109).

Conversely, the leaders of the SBC spoke out in favor of the trustees' action. Pulley said that he received "strong support from SBC leaders" (Cothen 113). Ed Young, the president of the SBC, wrote, "They're trustees; we've entrusted them with the responsibility for these institutions fulfilling the purpose for which they are established" (Cothen 112). Morris Chapman, president of the SBC executive committee called the decision a "trustee responsibility" (Cothen 112) and declined further comment.

In spite of support from the SBC leadership, some of the trustees felt abandoned by their fellow fundamentalists. Ollin Collins addressed this concern in a letter to Bailey Smith, a recognized fundamentalist leader in the SBC.

Why has there been such a strange silence from you men who have been in leadership over the Southern Baptist Convention concerning the
action taken by our board in terminating Dr. Dilday on March 9th? I say strange silence because it just seems strange that when we finally did what you men had been leading us to do, and saying needed to be done for some ten years now, and yet once it was done it was as though we had leprosy and nobody wanted to touch us or be associated with us (Collins to Smith).

Collins' letter, as well as pleading for public support, highlights the trustees' focus. Historically, Baptist trustees look toward the institution itself when deciding what needs to be done. In this case, the trustees seemed to be looking to the leaders of the SBC.

As time wore on, however, an interesting phenomenon occurred. "Truth," from both sides of the fence, became less definite. Moderate students began to give the trustees the benefit of the doubt in hopes that perhaps they indeed had acted in good faith (Rhodes). Fundamentalist leaders within the SBC wrote letters and church bulletin articles pointing out violations of a certain unwritten ethical code by the trustees (Collins to Fellow Trustees) who felt that these leaders should be supporting them (Collins to Smith). Both sides were beginning to see the possibility of some virtue on the other side of the fence. One moderate even accused his fellow moderates of a lack of "moral courage to stay mad long enough to act" (Chafin). However, the crisis stage was still extremely evident in everything from conventions (Jones) to private letters (Collins to Fellow Trustees). The sides stayed divided until the 1994 SBC annual convention.
Redressive Measures

Turner lists the third phase, "redressive machinery," as the time when "those with a strong interest in maintaining the status quo ante" attempt to "'patch up' quarrels, 'mend' broken social ties, 'seal up punctures' in the 'social fabric,' by the juridical means of courts and the judicial process or the ritual means provided by religious institutions" (10). These mechanisms can be formal or informal (Turner 70). In this case, six official agencies/institutions/individuals were in a position to deal with a situation of such magnitude at the seminary.

During the time immediately following the breach informal and unofficial redressive measures were working as well. These battles were fought mainly in the bulletins of local churches. Many pastors spoke out against what they saw as the unjust treatment of Dilday (Harmon). Others applauded the trustees' efforts to place the seminary back on the conservative ground upon which it was founded (Harmon). Although these letters were also signs of crisis, they filled the role of redressive measures because, according to the SBC's priesthood of the believer doctrine, each Christian operates as a free agent and possesses the ability to make up his/her own mind. These documents filled a void of leadership until the annual Convention in June.

Actions taken by Dilday were the first official redressive measure. After walking out of the room and announcing his firing, Dilday told a group of students and faculty, "The best interest of the school is at our heart. . . . I think this faculty will stay in place, and I want all of you to stay in your places. I don't want any kind
of reaction" (Dr. Dilday Firing). When a majority of the vice-presidents were ready to resign immediately in protest, Dilday asked them to stay (Morris). The next day, in an address to the students on the front lawn of the presidential home, Dilday again tried to maintain the culture of the school.

Take confidence that this school, its momentum, are going to be here, survive, and move forward... I’ve asked this faculty, they’ve all been by individually and together, that while they may have inclinations to want to react or do something, or maybe even leave, or have some protest, I’ve said to them, "You must stay. You must stay. This is where you are needed. These students need you. This institution needs you. You must stay." And I believe they will. (Dr. Dilday’s Address)

Dilday’s actions, encouraging the faculty and students to maintain the basic culture of the school on at least two different public occasions, served as the first redressive measure attempting to repair the torn social fabric of the school.

The second group to begin the redressive machinery was the faculty at the seminary. Albert Byrd, a student at SWBTS, says that the faculty, "especially Dr. Tolar," held the school together. Moments after the breach began, Bert Dominy, a systematic theology professor, addressed a small gathering of students in an impromptu meeting.

Let’s pray for our trustees. Really, pray for wisdom. Pray that God will use them in their churches in an effective way, and fill their hearts with love. The one thing, it may be hard, but we just must not become
bitter. Go on about our business and remember that our commitment is to Jesus Christ. . . . Don’t transfer to Midwestern or Southern [other SBC seminaries] right now. Graduate. Graduate. (Dr. Dilday Firing)

During the days after the firing, the professors, many of them former pastors, assumed the role of pastor for many of the students, counseling the students to stay in school and continue to do "what they were called here to do" (Tillman).

In the week following the firing, the theology faculty called a meeting. During that meeting the plea was made: "Commit for a year" (Tillman). The faculty realized that the seminary was going through one of the largest transition periods in its history, and as the liaisons between the administration/trustees and the students, the responsibility for bringing the seminary through the crisis intact fell largely upon the faculty. For the most part, this plea worked. Only about a dozen faculty, administrators or staff members left the school in the first year after the firing, and some of those were retirements (Morris).

The third and fourth measures of redress require a slight alteration to Turner’s concept of this third phase of social drama. For Turner the redressive measures used to hold a culture together are internal (Turner 45). In some circumstances, however, cultures are held accountable and are under the leadership of legislatures, boards, directors, or even cultures, that are outside of their own culture. For instance, government regulations affect the operation of many cultures within society. Yet, in most cases the law-makers and enforcers are not members of those cultures. Such is the case in this social drama.
The third authority to deal with the crisis situation at SWBTS was the SBC meeting in conference. Although many of the members of the SBC culture also belonged to the SWBTS culture, many did not. The two cultures are separate and distinct, even though they overlap. The Convention addressed the issue on June 15, 1994, when it voted down a motion to form a committee to study the event; the moderator then ruled a motion to fire the trustees out of order (Toalston). A third motion offering a commendation to the trustees was ruled out of order, also (Wilkey). "The Convention refused to deal with the Dilday firing or with any of what I call the immorality or unethical things that took place as a part of his firing. The leadership, and the people in control, and the masses were not willing to deal with the subject" (Chism). By failing to rule either way on the issue, the Convention gave tacit approval to the actions of the trustees.

The hope of most of the moderates going into the annual convention was not for a reversal of the trustees' action. Moderates realized that the trustees had the authority to do what they did. Most of the moderates simply wanted the Convention to acknowledge that the way in which the matter was handled was inappropriate for a Baptist institution (Dickens). Moderates also wanted the Convention to recognize and honor Dilday for all of his contributions to the SBC (Chism). At their annual meeting, Southwestern Alumni presented Dilday an award in absentia, but the main body of the Convention ignored the subject altogether (Chism).

The Convention's non-ruling served as a redressive mechanism for the seminary by validating and finalizing the trustees' action. Both parties in the
controversy realized the finality of the firing and could then begin moving forward. The Convention marked the beginning of the re-establishment of equilibrium at the seminary.

The fourth measure of redress was outside of the SWBTS culture altogether. SWBTS is accredited as a seminary by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). Two weeks after the firing, ATS sent SWBTS a letter of censure.

We view with utmost seriousness the dismissal of Russell Dilday. Such precipitous action on the part of any board of trustees is a clear violation of accepted governance practices and places in jeopardy the vitality and basic integrity of the institution. (Cothen 106)

In February of 1995, the ATS put the school on probation for two years (Cothen 107). The ATS listed three failures on the part of the trustees as reasons for the probation.

. . . [failure] to provide for the regular and ongoing evaluation of the president, to ensure that faculty appointment, promotion and tenure decisions carefully correspond to published policies and criteria, and to attend sensitively to the several constituencies and publics of the seminary, and to discharge its responsibility for the establishment, maintenance and exercise of the institution's integrity and freedom from inappropriate external and internal pressures and destructive interferences or restraints. ("ATS")
As part of the probation, the ATS established an ombudsmen committee made up of faculty members (Tillman). This committee reports directly to the ATS. Any directives to the faculty by the trustees, any undue questioning by the trustees, and essentially anything out of the ordinary is grounds for a report. The faculty takes this responsibility extremely seriously. They are pleased to have input, at least temporarily, into the school’s decision-making process (Tillman).

The ATS served as a redressive measure because it validated the opinions/emotions of the moderates. This validation reminded the trustees that the operation of the seminary was a joint venture, and despite the board’s unquestioned position of authority, certain regulations and guidelines must be followed.

The fifth redressive mechanism to take place occurred several months after the breach. Ken Hemphill was chosen as the seminary’s new president on July 12, 1994 (Cothen 107). Hemphill is viewed as a strong leader by members of both sides of the conflict (Davis and Tillman). The trustees chose him; so, their position is clear. The faculty and students also recognize his leadership. Byrd claims that Hemphill helped ease tension by “coming in here (to SWBTS) as a leader and not as a puppet (of the trustees)” (Byrd). Despite the new president’s arrival at such a difficult time for the school, Dickens believes that Hemphill has the potential to be a strong seminary president (Dickens).

The final redressive mechanism to operate in this social drama was an action taken by Hemphill shortly after his arrival at SWBTS. In August 1994, Hemphill organized a prayer retreat for the faculty and the trustees (Morris). The retreat was
completely voluntary but was well attended (Dickens). Each trustee was assigned two faculty members as prayer partners. One principle taught in the Bible is that people who have problems with each other should not pray together until they solve their problems. Applying this theology, many professors and trustees used the prayer retreat as a period of healing for themselves and the institution (Dickens). Both groups discussed their frustrations with members of the other camp, and the time was valuable for restoration of peace at SWBTS (Dickens).

Schism

The final stage of Turner’s social drama comes with the "reintegration of the disturbed social group or the social recognition of irreparable breach between the contesting parties, sometimes leading to their spatial separation" (Turner 71). According to Turner’s concept, a reintegration of the two conflicting parties in the culture of SWBTS has occurred. Social drama applies to the status of the culture as a whole, not individuals within that culture. In this case the majority of the culture stayed together. The destruction of Southwestern did not occur as many conjectured it would. "Apparently, a few students did leave, but there was not a mass exodus" (Chism). Also, in the year following the firing only approximately a dozen administrators or faculty left (Morris). The people in the majority of the most significant leadership positions at SWBTS remained the same. For the present SWBTS, as a whole, has maintained the unity and uniqueness that define it as a culture.
An alternative view, however, yields useful insights. The cosmetic reintegation that has taken place at SWBTS masks many schismatic factors. The analysis of the Dilday social drama as a case of schism also can help adapt Turner's idea of schism/reintegration for use in analyzing a post-industrial culture.

Turner did the majority of his research in pre-industrial societies where the immediate spatial separation of contesting parties within a culture was a logistical possibility. In tribal societies, one contesting party can simply move over the hill to the next source of water if the culture decides a split is necessary. A split in a post-industrial culture is not as easy.

The many complexities of post-industrial cultures make the immediate spatial separation of factions in conflict less viable. Cultures can no longer be considered simply families, tribes, neighborhoods, countries, or regions. Cultures may include small groups such as social clubs, charity organizations, and athletic teams who meet regularly, but they also include groups bounded only by ideology, like a religious denomination. In modern societies where cultures intersect and overlap, individuals cannot simply relocate because of a conflict in one of their cultures. Many of the faculty members and students at SWBTS find themselves in this position.

Because of differences in pre- and post-industrial societies, a modern-day schism often takes longer and is not necessarily spatial. In contemporary cultures, the parties in conflict must be allowed the time necessary to relocate; the spatial separation characteristic of schism in pre-industrial cultures manifests itself over a longer period of time. Space, in a post-industrial schism, often becomes irrelevant
because it is not a binding factor in the first place. The Dilday social drama, analyzed as a case of post-industrial schism, can be used to highlight these eventualities. This analysis is predicated on four factors, the first two involving time, and the second two involving space.

First, for people to leave SWBTS meant, in essence, that they were leaving their religion/denomination. The trustees represented the new controlling faction of the SBC. Davis claims that the people in support of Dilday were not Southern Baptists and did not belong in the SBC (Davis). Davis' statement is accurate in that several of the professors who left SWBTS (Dilday, Corley, and Chism) are now working for Truett Seminary in Waco, Texas, which receives a great deal of financial support from the CBF, which has all of the earmarks of a new denomination (Tillman). Thus, leaving SWBTS can be equated with dropping out of the SBC. Leaving the SBC would not be an easy decision for professors at SWBTS, many of whom have dedicated their lives to it. A great deal of time would be required to arrive at this type of major decision. That time has not yet elapsed. Therefore, ruling this social drama a case of reintegration would be premature.

Second, employment opportunities have been a primary factor for many individuals in this conflict. When the call went out to commit for a year at the theology faculty meeting, "there was a lot of skepticism around the room." One professor said, "Yeah, I can say a year. If something else comes along, I'm gone." (Tillman). One source even said that a majority of the faculty at SWBTS would leave if positions were available elsewhere (anonymous).
In a tribal society, work is to be found wherever there is land and water. Employment is not as plentiful and readily available in a post-industrial society where work is based on a specialized education. SWBTS students and faculty alike had to consider such things as salary, retirement, and benefits. For many, leaving simply was not an economic possibility. Only one moderate seminary was in operation at the time of the controversy (Shurden xviii), and it was in Richmond, Virginia. It would have been extremely inconvenient for most students and faculty to relocate. Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond was still relatively small and could not have handled a major influx of students or professors. "I do know that many, many faculty are trying to leave aggressively and there's just not that many openings" (anonymous). When faced with this type of economic reality, a researcher needs to consider desires, and according to one source, a large number of people who remain at SWBTS want to leave (anonymous).

The time factor differs significantly from a pre-industrial to a post-industrial culture. Presently, at SWBTS a case of cosmetic reintegration masks a great number of schismatic factors. Both factions in this controversy agree that SWBTS will change significantly in the immediate future. Moderates mark the firing as the "shot heard 'round the world" which signalled to all liberals/non-inerrantists that they need to leave the SWBTS culture (Davis). Moderates think that the firing killed the true "spirit of Southwestern," academic freedom (Maples). Both parties agree that March 9, 1994, was a watershed moment for SWBTS. Sufficient time simply has not yet elapsed for all of the results of this controversy to surface.
The final two refinements of the schism phase needed to analyze post-industrial schisms consider space as the determining factor. The third principle is that a small portion of the school did divide. In Turner's theory, though, the branch of the culture that is leaving has to stay together and form their own separate culture in order for the social drama to be a schism (Turner 71). The people who left SWBTS did not establish their own separate culture. The difficulties of a group in a modern-day culture establishing their own separate culture are immense. Economics alone precludes this possibility in most cases. For that reason, this requirement for schism cannot be adopted for application to post-industrial cultures.

Dilday and many of his supporters did separate from the rest of school. Although Dilday still resides in Fort Worth, he is now employed at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, as a distinguished professor of homiletics at Truett Theological Seminary and as a special assistant to the president (Cothen 118). In the year following Dilday's firing some of the faculty and administrators also left. Bruce Corley, dean of the School of Theology, left for Truett Seminary. Jack Coldiron, distinguished professor of voice, retired in March (Reynolds 193) saying that with the firing, "the last vestige of trust [in the SBC] was ripped apart, and I have decided that it is impossible for me to work with you [trustees] any longer" (Cothen 104). Others left or are leaving as well, some taking retirement (Tom Chism and James McKinney) and others simply leaving (Lynda Poston-Smith, Carl Wrotenbery, Terry Smith-Morgan, Michael Morgan, David Lewis, Terry Bratton, and Scott Collins) (Morris).
Some of the student body left, too. "I do think . . . that many students dropped out who were disillusioned and hurt over this" (Chism). Many transferred to other schools (University of North Texas, Southern Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, and Brite Divinity School at Texas Christian University), and some students dropped out of school entirely and are still uncertain about their futures (Chism). No way exists to know for certain how many students left the school over this issue. The significance of this point for social drama is two-fold. First, eliminating the necessity of the new group forming a new separate culture is necessary if any conflict in a modern-day culture is ever to be ruled a schism. Second, determining the percentage of the culture that has to leave before a schism is affected is often rather arbitrary. Delineating a schism as any time any group within the culture, not simply an individual, breaks away, would prepare the way for easier analysis in the future.

The final principle for the adaptation of social drama to post-industrial cultures, also involving space, is that factors that constitute culture other than geographic location should be considered in the schism/reintegration phase. As a result of the Dilday controversy, people all over the world have stopped giving money to SWBTS (Maples). In essence, these people have dropped out of the SWBTS culture. Others have resigned positions, both honorary and actual, that brought them to the school only once or twice a year but kept them involved (Maples and Cothen 104). Under Turner's spatially oriented version of social drama, these people are not considered. Post-industrial cultures often involve people that are ideologically bound to, yet living great distances from the geographic locus of the culture. When these people drop out
of the culture, ruling the social drama a schism should be in order. Such is the case with the Dilday social drama.

The Dilday controversy is a case of post-industrial schism. A certain percentage of the members of the culture already have left SWBTS. Another larger segment has decided to leave but are forced by economic considerations to remain for a time. Because of the complexities of post-industrial cultures, several years will have to pass before all of the results of Dilday's firing on the school's culture are readily apparent. People must be allowed the time necessary to weigh the consequences of the Dilday controversy with their desire to remain a member of the larger culture, the SBC. People must be allowed time to seek new employment. The portion of the SWBTS culture that did leave needs to be considered. Finally, those members of the culture not living in the same geographic location who dropped out of the culture should be considered. Until the necessary time for all of these factors to take place has elapsed, the split will remain ideological. At this juncture, though, enough is known to look past the simplistic arguments for a reintegration in this case and argue that the state of affairs at SWBTS is an example of a schism in a post-industrial culture.

The social drama that began on the campus of Southwestern Seminary on March 9, and ended shortly after the appointment of Hemphill as the seminary's new president, affected millions of lives. Jobs have been lost, students have transferred, churches have changed denominational affiliations, and people have been awakened to the larger controversy. This social drama will cause repercussions for years to come.
and affect many more lives. During this time, though, the SBC's focus will move back to the major conflict between the fundamentalists and the moderates. So, the actual social drama of the firing of Russell Dilday has closed to a point necessary for adequate description and analysis.
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Chapter five presents the findings resulting from the application of social drama to the Dilday controversy. First, I will discuss the implications of this study for the future use of social drama as a method for analyzing conflict situations in post-industrial cultures. Second, I will discuss the implications of this study for Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (SWBTS) or like cultures which may experience similar difficulties.

Social Drama

The present study has several implications for using social drama as a method of analysis. Although many studies have used social drama to describe and analyze intracultural conflicts in post-industrial societies, many questions about the validity of this practice need to be raised. Although social drama is suited for analyzing post-industrial societies, the questions surrounding social drama's move from pre-industrial cultures to post-industrial cultures are still germane. Previous studies that applied social drama to post-industrial cultures focused primarily on the event analyzed and not the suitability of the method. With the exception of Thomas Farrell's study, which argued for the addition of an anticipation stage to the structure of the drama, social drama analyses have been remarkably unreflective about the method itself.
Furthermore, Farrell simply adds an anticipation stage without making a critical argument for it.

First, should the anticipation stage as defined by Farrell be added to the social drama methodology? Considering Turner's emphasis on "communitas" and the continuity of culture, adding the anticipation stage to social drama seems appropriate. No incident in a culture occurs in a vacuum. Using the anticipation phase to better illustrate how the culture arrived at the point of the breach adds a vital step to the method. The primary benefit of the anticipation phase is the contextualization of the social drama.

Adding the anticipation phase, however, presents the problem of defining and delineating it. Farrell does not offer a definition of the anticipation phase. Based on Farrell's analysis and the analysis in this study, I offer the following definition. The anticipation phase is that period of time or set of events which, when observed retrospectively, can be seen as leading directly or indirectly to a breach. This definition allows the critic flexibility when defining the anticipation period for a particular social drama. Defining the anticipation phase as a period of time or a set of events allows the analyst to identify a limited temporal frame that contains significant activity or to span a broad period of time in search of key events in a chain that leads to the breach. Cultures evolve over years, even decades. This definition allows the critic to take a wholistic approach in describing where a social drama fits into the history of the culture.
One drawback in adding the extra phase is that the anticipation phase would, by definition, stand apart from the rest of the drama. As evidenced by this study, the four phases defined by Turner often overlap. Except in extremely rare circumstances, the anticipation phase would stand alone. Still, I do not feel that this drawback alone is enough to outweigh the benefits gained from the contextualization of the social drama.

Much like the reintegration/schism phase, the anticipation phase can span a number of years. In the SWBTS drama, the anticipation phase included events that spanned fifteen years. Indirectly, it could be argued, the phase began when Baptists began trying to balance unity and individuality in 1612. After careful examination of the events in question, critics must decide which specific events anticipate the breach. As with all of the other phases of social drama, that decision can appear rather arbitrary. One of the benefits, not detriments, of social drama, however, is the flexibility it allows in interpretation. This flexibility in the phases of social drama allows for varying interpretations of the same event and thus adds to the body of knowledge about that event and the method. In order to properly place the drama in its socio-historical setting, I feel that the anticipation stage is a necessary refinement.

The second major question for social drama involves the definition, delineation, and application of the breach in a vast culture whose channels of communication are largely electronic and media-based. In Turner’s pre-industrial applications, the breach was easily definable because the tribe could view the breach or, in the case of a private act, a simple announcement instantly informed the entire culture. Such is not
the case in post-industrial cultures where members are separated by thousands of miles and held together by ideological views, rather than familial, tribal, or regional loyalties.

In order to accommodate the differences between pre-industrial and post-industrial cultures, the breach phase needs to be refined. Beginning the analysis of the breach with the transgression of the norm and then discussing the evolution of the breach makes the drama easier to understand. In this social drama, for instance, many different points existed when various members of the culture found out about the firing. Identifying any one of those points as the breach would diminish the importance of some members of the culture. Also, identifying the breach with any moment other than the transgression forces the critic to define the term public in regard to the culture studied. As with this study, that definition would involve several different groups. Identifying the breach with the moment of transgression allows the critic to examine the manner in which the information is made public and its effects rather than choosing one point from among several and arguing for its priority. The primary difference in the evolution of a social drama in the two types of cultures is how and when people receive information. Moving the breach forward to the point of the transgression accounts for this difference. No further refinement of the phase appears necessary.

Third, the reconciliation/schism phase needs certain refinements in cases where an immediate spatial separation is not feasible. Time is a more important factor in a post-industrial culture. The decision about the reintegration or schism of the culture
should be based on characteristics of cultural cohesiveness rather than geographical proximity. Therefore, a careful examination of various cultural markers is necessitated. Business dealings, social interaction, communication between the two competing factions, and ideological differences need to be considered when the culture is prohibited from a spatial separation by economic or other post-industrial factors. A critic must account for these factors in order to determine whether a post-industrial culture has re-integrated or affected a schism.

In this study, for instance, the schism at SWBTS is masked as a re-integration that is, at best, a cosmetic necessity. Calling this social drama a post-industrial schism is based on the existence of an ideological schism, a partial spatial separation, and the probability of complete spatial separation in the future. The culture of SWBTS is split ideologically. Many of the students who remain hold strong moderate beliefs but chose to stay because their degree would be completed before the disintegration of the moderate faculty assembled during Dilday's presidency (Rhodes). Many of the faculty strongly oppose the trustees' fundamentalist mindset and express such concerns in their classrooms (Davis). The trustees, on the other hand, have announced their intention to place the school on extremely conservative doctrinal footing (Davis). Although the two groups continue to operate under one roof, SWBTS is a house divided.

Next, a partial spatial separation already has taken place. Dilday is gone. Approximately a dozen faculty members, administrators, and staff have left (Morris). As many as two-hundred students departed because of the controversy (Chism).
People across the country and around the world actively involved in SWBTS before the firing have separated themselves from the culture (Maples). The makeup of the cultural constituency at SWBTS has changed considerably.

The probability also exists that the two parties will complete spatial separation in the future. Many professors are actively seeking employment elsewhere (anonymous). Others are approaching retirement (Davis). The last of the Dilday-loyal, moderate students will graduate within the next two years. Over the next several years, through the influence exerted by the board of trustees over matters of hiring, the culture at SWBTS will be completely largely under the control of individuals with a fundamentalist mindset. The complete spatial separation of the conflicting parties in this social drama is forthcoming.

The fourth overall question regarding the use of social drama as a method is that social drama needs some mechanism to discuss cases where one social drama is a part of a larger social drama. The social drama methodology was designed to isolate and delineate cultural conflict. To properly understand certain conflicts, though, contextualization must take place. Using the anticipation phase as a part of the analysis may help place the drama in its proper context. Some difficulty also may exist in determining the results of the drama when compared with those of the over-arching conflict. Such is the case in this study when trying to decide which results stem from the Dilday controversy as opposed to the over-arching SBC conflict. In some cases, explaining the larger controversy allows the critic to extrapolate from one drama to the other. Determining which drama caused the results may become
irrelevant. The relationship between the two dramas is exposed. The critic realizes
the complexity of the culture studied, and both dramas are acknowledged and
analyzed.

Fifth, redressive measures are sometimes forced on a culture and not created by
it. In Turner's schemata, redressive measures are an internal responsibility of the
culture. In certain contemporary cultures, however, including SWBTS, authorities
from an over-arching, encompassing culture have power over the culture being
analyzed. In this case, the culture's ultimate authority, the SBC, approved the
trustees' action. Yet, many members of the SBC culture are not also members of the
seminary culture. Thus, the people in only the SBC culture had less at stake in the
decision. The same also could be said for the Association of Theological Schools
(ATS), which stood completely outside of the culture of SWBTS and yet held a
certain degree of power over it. Social drama needs to have a conceptual vocabulary
for discussing the problem of cultures affected by external influences. In examining
post-industrial cultures, external cultures may be capable of invoking redressive
measures for subordinate cultures. The overlapping of cultures in post-industrial
societies presents the problem of authority and the invocation of redressive
mechanisms. As a methodology for application in post-industrial societies, social
drama must be flexible enough to account for these complexities.

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Several insights into SWBTS are gained by this study as well. First, an
obvious lack of productive communication exists among the various levels within the
SWBTS governing hierarchy, particularly between the trustees and the rest of the school. The breach in this conflict was caused by what some of Dilday’s supporters called a "lack of integrity" (Dickens). On the other hand, the trustees were wary of dealing with angry students and faculty after making their decision public. Improved communication among the various levels within the hierarchy of the institution might have prevented this social drama.

Evidently, Ken Hemphill agrees. One of his first moves as the new president of SWBTS was to hold a volunteer prayer retreat for faculty and trustee members. This move is in stark contrast to Dilday, who served as a gatekeeper between the faculty and trustees and was very suspicious of all communication between members of the two groups (Davis). The school could benefit by establishing a permanent forum to provide for frank discussion between all three of the relevant groups: trustees, faculty, and students. Perhaps if the groups knew one another individually and personally, suspicion and fear would be minimized. Presently, all that the students know of the trustees is their reputation (Byrd). The faculty members tend to know one or two of the board members individually, but not a majority (Dickens and Tillman). For the school to operate as a cohesive unit, the relationships between the groups need to deepen and strengthen.

The second implication of this study for SWBTS is the need for closure. Turner discusses the need for a ritualized ceremony to end a social drama (Turner 53). Such an event never occurred at SWBTS. The atmosphere at the seminary at times has been described as being somewhat akin to a funeral without the body (Dickens
and Tillman). During Hemphill’s inauguration, Dilday’s name was omitted from two different lists of former presidents named during the ceremony (Dickens). Evidently, the institution has not found peace with its recent history.

At one time, SWBTS might have benefitted from a ritual closure of this social drama. Perhaps honoring Dilday for his years of service to the school would have been in order. The time for ritualized closure of this social drama probably has passed, though. According to Albert Byrd, a student at SWBTS, a ceremony now probably would open old wounds rather than providing closure and healing. Through careful examination of its recent past, SWBTS could learn from its mistakes. If faced with similar circumstances in the future, one measure SWBTS could take is to provide the members of its culture with a ritual in order to grieve, heal, and in a ritualistic fashion bring the drama to a close.

The third implication of this study for SWBTS is the recognition of the new direction of the seminary by all of those involved. Both parties in this drama have acknowledged that Dilday’s firing was a turning point for the school. Now, those who have remained at SWBTS, either by choice or necessity, need to put this social drama behind them and decide where to go from here.

Both sides of this drama recognize the arrival of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) as a new denomination (Davis, Tillman, and Maples). The CBF now has two seminaries, Baptist Theological Seminary in Richmond, Virginia, and Truett Theological Seminary in Waco, Texas. The trustees have decided to have nothing to do with the CBF, including accepting funding, sharing churches, or hiring
faculty who go to CBF churches. The faculty and students at SWBTS who have CBF
tendencies would do well to acknowledge their preferences and seek employment or
education elsewhere. As stated in the previous chapter, societal factors prevent the
sudden leaving of a job or culture. For the sake of the culture at SWBTS and the
integrity of the individuals involved, though, the faculty and students who want to be
elsewhere probably should make the effort to move to a new culture.

Finally, in the structure of SWBTS no official redressive measure exists to deal
with conflict between the trustees and the rest of the school. The trustees are the
ultimate authority. When they become a party to conflict, no one can regulate them.
One of the concerns expressed by many students and faculty at SWBTS is that the
same trustees who fired Dilday are still in power and that power remains unchecked
(anonymous). What happened to Dilday could happen to any faculty member at the
school, thus repeating the cycle of social drama. Once again, establishing some type
of permanent forum within the power structure of the school where all of the parties
involved in a conflict could come together and work out their difficulties could be a
viable solution. In order to avoid a reoccurrence of this social drama the faculty and
students at SWBTS need some permanent voice in the operation of the school.

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary will survive this controversy. The
culture of SWBTS will never be the same, however. Already, much change has taken
place in the school, and as more moderate influences leave, the school’s culture will
continue to evolve. Hopefully, the school will learn from its difficulties and
reexamine its power structure because of this social drama. The institution has a long
and storied history. This social drama has become another chapter in that history. As SWBTS, and the entire SBC, continues to attempt the delicate balance between free will and doctrinal uniformity, the school will evolve, adapt, and move forward "into the 21st century" (Davis).
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