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NEWS RELEASE

Baylor University Press

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New book displays 400 years of Baptist interpretive tradition

Houston donor provides free copies to be given away at 2009 BWA annual gathering

WACO, Texas –Baylor University Press announces the publication of “The Acts of the Apostles: Four Centuries of Baptist Interpretation,” released this summer as part of a global and Baylor University celebration of 400 years of the Baptist tradition. Complimentary copies of the book will be distributed at the Baptist World Alliance annual gathering this week in Ede, Netherlands.

The Baptist tradition is unique in that its beliefs and practices are not based upon those of a single theologian or creed but upon the way the Bible is interpreted freely by a community of faith. “The Acts of the Apostles” illustrates the diversity of Baptists wrestling with the scripture.

Also referred to as “The Baptists’ Bible,” the book contains examples of specific ways in which Baptists have used Acts in their commentaries, sermons, confessions of faith, scholarly essays, doctrinal debates and devotional literature from 1609 to 2009. The volume also includes a 1924 translation of the biblical text by Baptist Helen Barrett Montgomery—one of the first English versions of the New Testament by a woman. Recovering voices of the past, like Thomas Helwys, William Carey, and Lottie Moon, and joining them with contemporary Baptists, including Billy Graham, Charles Deweese and Rick Warren, “The Acts of the Apostles” displays the richness of Baptist biblical interpretation and Baptist identity.

“This book demonstrates that the Baptist interpretation of the Bible is as deep as it is wide,” commented Carey Newman, director of Baylor University Press. “It thwarts the criticism that Baptists are shallow. Being Baptist means wrestling with the text and with real issues. It’s about belonging to a community of people willing to listen to one another through the ages.”

Mikeal Parsons, one of the book’s four editors, noted that “lots of time and energy are spent on how to understand the world that produced the Bible. This book is an exploration of the world produced by the Bible.” The other editors are Bill J. Leonard, C. Douglas Weaver, and Beth Allison Barr.

Due to the generosity of Charles DeLancey, a member of Tallowood Baptist Church in Houston, copies of the book will be available at no charge at the BWA gathering at the conclusion of a session on Friday afternoon.

“We are grateful to Charles DeLancey for his gift. His generosity has made it possible to put this book into the hands of those who need it most but may not afford it,” said Newman.

Established in 1897, Baylor University Press serves the academic community by publishing works that integrate faith and understanding. The press features publications in the areas of religion and public life, religion and higher education, religion and rhetoric, Christianity and literature, Judaism and Christianity, and the philosophy of religion.

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“The Acts of the Apostles: Four Centuries of Baptist Interpretation”

Including biblical text as translated by Helen Barrett Montgomery

Editors:

Beth Allison Barr is assistant professor of European women’s history at Baylor University.

Bill J. Leonard is dean of the school of divinity and professor of church history at Wake Forest University.

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Douglas Weaver is director of undergraduate studies and associate professor in the department of religion at Baylor University.

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