

## New BMATS partnership from page 19

just the churches, but the community as a whole," said Dr. Charley Holmes, BMATS president. He said, "We are not only offering life-changing opportunities for individuals, but groundbreaking strategies to improve inter-cultural relationships in the community and leadership in our local churches."

Baptist Missionary Association Theological Seminary has been nurturing students in Christian service and leadership roles, by uncompromised teaching from God's Word and quality education since 1957.

this year, the seminary celebrates its Golden Jubilee and graduated the largest class of students in its history. For more information about the media conference or BMATS, go to WWW>BMATS>EDU or contact Bert Cooper at (903) 586-2501.

## The Hidden Costs of War

By Jesse L. Jackson, Sr.

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War costs. It costs the lives and the limbs of young men and women who are sent into battle. Their families, their loved ones, their communities and their nation lose the potential of some of the best young citizens. For the Iraq war, that total already exceeds 3,300 dead and nearly 25,000 wounded, with tens of thousands more scarred psychologically, often permanently, from the horrors they witnessed.

War costs. It squanders billions on destruction that might be devoted to construction. Best estimates are that the Iraq War — which has already consumed about \$425 billion — will end costing about \$2 trillion when the cost of veterans' health care, disability payments, replacing the weapons and rebuilding the military is counted. That's \$2 trillion — largely debt left to our children to pay — that will not be available to move this nation to energy independence, rebuild our cities, insure that every despair and more violence right here at home. Orleans and the Gulf and to the broader challenge of poverty in America.

That was then. Now, the lights are still off in many poor neighborhoods in New Orleans. Thousands are still dispersed around the country with no progress made on rebuilding their homes. The lethal failure of rescue during Katrina has been made worse by the unforgivable failure of reconstruction after Katrina. Dr. King opposed the Vietnam War in part because he saw that as the war escalated, the war on poverty was abandoned. Without much debate, the nation wasted lives, resources and attention on the folly in Vietnam, and abandoned the struggle which showed great promise against poverty at home.

"A nation," Dr. King warned, "that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death."

# Texas Southern University Ex-Financier Convicted

Houston- Texas Southern University's former chief financial officer was convicted Thursday of misusing nearly \$300,000 to help the school's ex-president lavishly furnish and landscape her home.

Quintin Wiggins faces a punishment range of five years probation to life in prison. "We were very surprised, very saddened, very shocked," L. Mickle Daniels, Wiggins' attorney, said about the verdict. Daniels said he plans to appeal. Prosecutors would not comment about the case until Wiggins is sentenced. Prosecutors said Wiggins diverted \$286,000 of funds at the historically black school into secret accounts that then-president Priscilla Slade used to buy furniture, landscaping and a high-tech security system for her home.

Wiggins violated university and state procurement rules by approving the purchases and by failing to tell TSU's board of regents or other

school officials about them, prosecutors said.

Defense attorneys said Wiggins was a dedicated employee who had done nothing wrong because the university had previously approved similar furniture purchases for Slade. They said he did not try to hide the purchases.

When it was discovered that TSU had mistakenly paid for Slade's landscaping, she gave the money back, Wiggins' attorneys said, adding that their client knew nothing about the security system.

Slade, who was fired last June, is set for trial in August on two charges of criminally misusing university money for private benefit.

The allegations against Wiggins, Slade and others coincided with a series of reports that revealed a pattern of financial mismanagement at the school. Gov. Rick Perry has called for a state takeover.

In his State of the Union address, the president didn't mention Katrina. No questions were asked about it in the first Democratic and Republican debates. Poverty, stagnant incomes, indebted families, unaffordable health care and college — all got passing mention at best in either debate.

The focus? Iraq, of course, and the "war on terror." War has not only squandered American lives and dollars; it understandably has consumed our attention. And in doing so, it simply blinds us to the looming challenges we face right here at home. We know more about Baghdad than about New Orleans, or any of our other cities. child has a healthy start, make our schools the best in the world, keep college affordable, or renovate our collapsing infrastructure in everything from sewers to communications to subways. We face a staggering investment deficit at home that few talk about simply because we are already facing large deficits. And that cost will be measured in a less competitive economy, less well-educated children, more inequality, more poverty, more War costs. One of its great costs was on display in the recent presidential debates. War consumes our attention. Each day the papers are filled with reports from the frontline. The President, House and Senate focus their attention on the war. The presidential candidates and their debates devote most time to the war. Busy Americans devote a large part of the time they have to talk about the war. The failed occupation in Iraq is costing this country lives, resources and security. It consumes our attention. Some will pay with their lives; some already have. The nation will pay for it with our future, with hope deferred and possibility foreclosed. These terrible costs can not be recovered

War — even failed war — feeds on itself. The violence it generates fosters hatred, vengeance and more violence. The Iraq war, our own intelligence services report, has been the best recruiting tool for al Qaeda across the world.

The commitment of the military generates demand for more military. We spend almost as much as the rest of the world combined on the military. The Pentagon now consumes more than half of the US discretionary budget — the budget Congress appropriates each year, about \$3700 per household each year. Yet every major candidate in both parties is committed to spending even more on the military, to expanding it, to giving greater capacity to go places and do things.

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