

Baylor should distance itself from the Baptists

By Mac Engel

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WACO

Engraved in the sidewalks on the pathway from the Truett Theological Seminary on Baylor University's campus are passages from the Bible.

"You shall love your neighbor as yourself." *Mark 12:31*.

On Tuesday morning, a group of high schoolers and their parents sat in extended golf carts on tour of the campus in the hope they may attend Baylor. On their tour, they drove over the passage: "Love one another with affection; outdo another in showing honor." *Romans 12:10*.

And just down that same path is: "Do nothing from selfish or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourself." *Philippians 2:3*.

And after walking north over these passages, you will eventually arrive at Highers Athletic Complex. It is appropriate there are no such biblical passages around Baylor's athletic complex. Nor should they be added.

13 ESPN's ranking of Baylor's recruiting class.

ESPN's *Outside the Lines'* [recent report](#) about another round of rape coverup in the Baylor football program is disgusting, and suggests more deliberate negligent behavior on the part of the leadership employed to oversee the well-being of students.

Men such as Baylor President Ken Starr, football coach Art Briles and athletic director Ian McCaw care about the well-being of Baylor students, but the damning evidence against them says the game is bigger than the kid. And everybody at Baylor is too scared to call them out on it.

Baylor is the world's largest Baptist university, but it's a football school. It should at least have the decency to distance itself from the Baptists and the Christian "do unto others" rhetoric.

This is not about just a football team but rather it is about Baylor's soul and why the university was founded.

I spent Tuesday on Baylor's campus and found the place effectively on lockdown. Few would talk on the record about the latest report. This included scores of "Sorry, can't help you" from professors, students and seminary school employees.

"Knowing this school, no one is going to talk to you," one professor told me.

I was normally pointed in the direction of a "media services" professional whose function is to be helpful while not helping and to provide a smile and a well-crafted press release. The one I received was 474 words long and says Baylor is concerned about the safety of its students.

People are scared to talk about this, which is frightening and a clear sign the football program and its head coach have too much power. There is no transparency.

The one university professor who agreed to talk to me did so on the condition of anonymity; he has been at Baylor for more than 30 years, is over 60 and tenured.

"The athletic department is totally divorced from the rest of school," the professor said. "But one of the things the faculty talks about is maintaining the Christian ethos of the school while being a top-tier university."

In recent years, the professor said, the administration has made it a priority to be graded a top-tier academic institution. This requires a shift in philosophy, emphasizing research and publication by its professors rather than simply teaching students.

Baylor wants to be a Top 50 school, as graded by *U.S. News & World Report*. In the last ranking, it was 72nd.

At No. 72, Baylor is the fifth-ranked university in Texas, according to U.S. News & World Report. The top four: No. 18 Rice, No. 52 Texas, No. 61 SMU and No. 70 Texas A&M.

Meanwhile, the school invested hundreds of million dollars into its athletic department to be a Top 25 football team. A Top 25 football team is "free"

publicity. When Starr was hired, he was told by a previous university president, “Win football games.”

Under Briles’ direction, Baylor has created the type of publicity that leads to increased applications and donations.

“All of the on-campus housing is full,” one female senior told me. “Since football started to win, everything is full.”

In the past eight months, the team has created the type of negative publicity that calls into question the priorities and the price of football. Every big-time college football program works on a sliding scale: a little bit of weed, some drunk guys get into a fight, guys barely pass, etc.

To cover up multiple rapes is another matter entirely.

In September 2015, former Baylor defensive end Sam Ukwuachu was convicted of sexually assaulting a former Baylor soccer player. He had been allowed to remain on scholarship and graduated from the school while he was on trial.

This latest ESPN report says Briles and high-ranking members of the athletic department essentially tried to ignore, or sweep under the rug, sexual assault complaints against defensive lineman Tevin Elliott.

“Even before the report came out, I had heard talk that there was something that had happened,” the female senior said. “Was I surprised? Not really. I just think there is a different standard for athletes and not just at Baylor. That’s everywhere.”

That’s true.

Elliott was convicted on sexual assault charges in 2014 and sentenced to 20 years in prison.

The uncovering of these stories and the exposing of how BU’s leadership behaved is in direct contrast to the principles that this religiously affiliated school stands on.

Because Baylor is a private school, it answers to no one. Baylor can hire all the independent investigators it wants. It still doesn't have to reveal the findings.

Baylor can write a check to the victim in the Ukwuachu case and no details have to come out. The victim has not spoken about the case.

Baylor can comply with the ["It's on Us"](#) campaign to raise awareness about sexual assault. It can hire a new director to comply with Title IX and do a better job of investigating sexual-assault claims, which it says it has.

What it cannot do is have it both ways without looking hypocritical.

Over the past 20 years, as TCU has expanded, it has deliberately distanced itself from its relationship with the Disciples of Christ Church.

Baylor should do the same with the Baptists, or quit messing around with these overly enabled idiot football players and clean up its rotten-smelling team.

Don't take my word for it, listen to Jesus Christ when he commanded: "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."

If you can't, just drop the charade with the Baptists.