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Six Quit at Union
In Protest of Trends

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JACKSON, Tenn. (BP)--About six faculty members, including several department heads and one division head, have resigned at Union University here in protest of trends toward what they called stifling of academic freedom.

The chairman of the board of trustees at the Baptist school, Ed Deusner, of Lexington, Tenn., said that five, maybe six, resignations came this year over "unhappiness and disagreement with the administration," but strongly denied published reports that 14 faculty members had resigned in protest.

"Very frankly," Deusner acknowledged, "we are having some problems down at Union."

The central issue, he said is what direction the Baptist school will take in the future: "a strong emphasis on academics, and a diminished emphasis on religion," or vice versa. Deusner said he hoped the school would emphasize both high academic standards and a "spiritual, Christian atmosphere."

Several of the resigning faculty members, quoted in Tennessee daily newspapers, expressed concern over the direction the school was taking towards de-emphasis of academics.

"The faculty is living under a sense of fear that the academic excellence and spiritual integrity Union has built up over the past 25 years is in danger of breaking down under denominational pressure," said Bob Highfill, an instructor in the physics department who is returning to graduate school.

Highfill added that there is a lack of communication between the faculty, trustees, administration and denomination, and the communication problem is enhancing this fear.

President of the school, Robert Craig, was on vacation and unavailable for comment. Craig, former president of Southwest Baptist College in Bolivar, Mo., became president last year, replacing F. E. Wright, president of the new Jackson Community College here.

Deusner said that several faculty members have disagreed with the new president's conservative stance, that the faculty was not consulted adequately in the selection of a new president, and that the new president "was not their kind of man."

The board chairman pointed out that the board of trustees had given Craig a vote of confidence recently, and added: "the board wants to keep the school true to the historic Baptist faith and main appeal to the churches of West Tennessee, rather than to emphasize academics to the detriment of the spiritual."

He stated that the 33-member board was basically conservative, but denied that it was controlled by ministers, stating that 17 laymen are on the board and only 16 ministers.

Both Deusner and David Q. Byrd, Jackson pastor who heads the eight-man administrative committee, strongly denied published reports that 14 faculty members had resigned in the controversy.

"There were 17 errors of fact in the first news report saying 14 had resigned in protest, which to me represents irresponsible journalism," said Byrd.

Deusner, pastor of First Baptist Church of Lexington, listed each of the 14 and gave their reasons for resigning saying only five or six were "due to unhappiness and disagreement with the administration."

The five Deusner listed as resigning in protest were: A. L. Allen, head of the art department; William Glenn Esslinger, head of the chemistry department; John Hughes, chairman of the fine arts division and head of the music department; Donald R. Ramage, associate professor of biology; and Wayne Johnson, director of the theater.

Deusner offered other explanations for two additional faculty members: Highfill (quoted earlier) who was hired to replace a man who is now returning to Union; and Ralph

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Donnell, chairman of the division of natural sciences and head of the math department, who is taking retirement at age 68, one year before mandatory, and is going to a Florida Baptist school.

He said that none of the other seven or eight resignations had anything to do with the conflict of views, listing the reasons that had been given for each.

Efforts by Baptist Press to secure statements from the resigning professors were unsuccessful. Two did not wish to be quoted, several were unavailable and some had already left the city.

Allen, head of the art department, was quoted by a Memphis newspaper as saying that the character of Union University "is in the process of being changed radically, and I feel this is wrong."

He told a Nashville newspaper that the faculty members "are disappointed and discouraged with the communications between the faculty, administration, trustees and the denomination."

Deusner said that apparently a cleavage has developed among the faculty members, but he felt that the whole controversy would blow over and result "in an even better Union University."

He pointed out that no one was fired, and that every faculty member was offered a new contract except those whose contract was on a one-year basis. "There was no pressure put on anyone to resign."

Deusner added that the trustees decided to operate on a deficit budget this year in order to try to hold their present faculty, although no raises or budget increases could be granted. He said the budget was planned on the basis of an enrollment of about 800 students, while anticipated enrollment next fall probably will be about 650 students.

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55 Boys Make Decisions
At Unique Football School

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MURFREESBORO N. C. (BP)---During a unique football school conducted at Chowan College (Baptist) here, 55 young boys made decisions for Christ after hearing testimonies from several professional football stars.

Preacher for the main service was Bobby Mitchell, flanker for the Washington Redskins. After Mitchell spoke, 15 boys made decisions.

Other decisions followed vesper programs led by Carroll Dale, Green Bay Packers' end; Gary Cuzzo, Minnesota Vikings quarterback; Bob Vogel, Baltimore Colts lineman; and Chuck Walker, St. Louis Cardinals lineman.

Dual purpose of Chowan's football schools is "to give instructions in football fundamentals to boys who have the desire to improve their abilities and gain knowledge of the game," and to "give young boys a chance to hear testimonies from outstanding Christians."

About 155 boys attended the football school, which was led by members of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes plus college football coaches and other gridiron standouts. Christian testimonies were a part of each day's activities.

Bill Wall, executive director of the sponsoring Youth Camps, Inc., said, "There is something different about these camps....These men have deep religious convictions and saw an opportunity to witness to youths by their actions and at vesper services each night."

Attendance at the vespers is voluntary, but almost all of the young people are enthusiastic supporters of the services, Wall said.

In addition to the one-week football school, the Baptist college also hosts two schools for cheerleaders, for band majorettes, and for others, with about 2,000 youths participating each summer.

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SOUTHERN BAPTISTS AND THE RACE PROBLEM
(Seventh and Last in a Series)

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Building a Bridge of Understanding

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By Edward A. McDowell
Professor Emeritus, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

As I bring this series of articles to a conclusion I am aware that I have left some things unsaid that should have been said. Doubtless, too, I have raised some questions in readers' minds. In the light of these possibilities I plead for a Christian spirit on the part of those who have disagreed with me, and indulgence on the part of those who think I have left certain questions unanswered.

Above everything I pray that my Baptist brothers and sisters in Christ will open their hearts and minds to the great challenge our denomination faces to lead the white people of the South in working out a Christian solution of the race problem.

Let us get hold of the idea that the South is the place where the race problem should be solved, and let us resolve that Southern Baptists will take the lead in demonstrating to the world that the problem can be solved in the South.

In the solution of the race problem it is essential that we shall build a bridge of understanding between the races. Great strides have been made in recent years in securing greater justice for the Negro. This has been accomplished through Supreme Court decisions and the passage of civil rights legislation.

But we know that prejudice against Negroes is still widespread and that a new bitterness has developed among many white people because of the new freedom Negroes have gained. Also it is a fact that there is little or no genuine understanding or Christian fellowship between our two groups. For these reasons we must build between the two groups a bridge of understanding.

The minister, white and Negro, is the key man in building this bridge. Why is this true? It is true because the race problem, as I have previously said, is essentially a religious and moral problem. Also it is true because ministers, white and Negro, in the South, still exercise great influence in their communities, whatever may be said to the contrary. Again, the minister is the key man in race relations and in building this bridge because he is a physician of souls.

Race prejudice is soul sickness and a whole community, and even a church, can be afflicted with this sickness. The minister is the physician who can prescribe the remedy: the love our Lord Jesus Christ taught us to have for all men.

The white minister who begins work on this bridge will need courage, love, persistence and patience. He need not preach every other Sunday on the race question. He may better quietly teach his people the meaning of Christian love. Let him deal patiently with the immature and prejudiced members of his congregation, but he should demonstrate by precept and example to his congregation that he is on the side of justice for the Negro. He should lead his church step by step to a policy of opening the doors of the church to worshippers of all races, and ultimately to a policy of receiving into membership people of all races. All of this will be a demonstration of sincerity when he goes to his Negro brother pastor and requests that he join him in helping build the bridge of understanding between the races.

For what it is worth I mention what we have tried to do in Atlanta toward building the bridge. We began a seminar in Bible study for ministers at the First Baptist Church. Negro ministers were invited to the seminar and a good number of them attended. It was a happy experience for us all. We centered our attention on study of the word of God and said little about the race question, although the question was not barred. But we became conscious of the fact that we were brothers in Christ engaged in the common objective of learning more about the Bible. After our study was over we sat down and ate lunch together in the dining room of the First Baptist Church. Each man paid for his own meal.

Out of this seminar grew a movement to bring together the Atlanta Baptist Ministers' Conference and the Negro Baptist Ministers' Union in monthly joint meetings. Now we meet once a month with the Negro brethren, and they meet once a month with us. Thus we have begun to build the bridge in Atlanta. We believe that progress is being made. We are having joyous experiences coming to know each other!

Other things may be done in building the bridge. White and Negro pastors, may exchange pulpits. White groups may visit Negro churches and vice versa. Books on Negro history and biographies of famous Negroes may be added to church libraries. Groups may be organized in white churches to study conditions in Negro slums and ghettos and report back to their churches. Financial help may be extended to struggling Negro churches.

Let one thing be remembered without fail in the building of the bridge of understanding: the Negro is now our equal and fellow worker in building the bridge; the old era of paternalism is over; we must accept the fact that the Negro Christian is indeed our brother in Christ, and that all law abiding Negroes are our fellow citizens in building a greater America.