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EDITOR'S NOTE: C. B. Hastings, assistant secretary of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's department of interfaith witness, is in Rome attending the Roman Catholic Synod of Bishops as a special correspondent for Baptist Press and an official observer. This is his second report.

**Catholic Bishops Divided
On Many Synod Issues**

By C. B. Hastings
Written for the Baptist Press

ROME (BP)--Hooray for the Canadians! They have done their homework. They get to the heart of the issues facing the Third Synod of Roman Catholic Bishops meeting here.

Most observers agree that the Canadians are more progressive and serious in their debates on the issues of the priesthood, and world peace and justice, than any other group.

Their honesty is refreshing. Consider the statement on social justice and world peace by Archbishop Plourde of Ottawa, president of the Canadian Catholic Conference of Bishops:

Pointing out that justice must begin at home, Archbishop Plourde said: "The Church must refuse to simply use the model of big business. Its (the Church's) financial openness, its re-assessment of investments, the inventory of its resources, must be done in harmony with the gospel.

"Its moral teaching," he continued, "must at all cost stop giving privileged treatment to private ethics, wherein sin is seen primarily as a private matter, rarely as association, consciously or not, with the forces of oppression, alienation and physical violence."

After three weeks of seemingly endless debate on the priesthood, the Synod committed their tens of thousands of words to a small commission to draw up a document they could agree to send on to Pope Paul.

In a press conference, Bernard Haring, outstanding ethical theologian from Germany, linked the two main issues facing the synod in a well-arched bridge.

He pointed out that if the bishops were really concerned about justice they might start with giving a just hearing to their own priests, who have petitioned in many ways for ordaining married men and eventually for optional celibacy.

Several theologians have noted the changed attitude being expressed by the Superiors General of the religious orders following a movement to democratize their societies.

These observers feel that when and if the hierarchy allows any significant choice in the selection of bishops by their priests and laity, the bishops will also show a marked change to a more progressive outlook.

At this halfway mark in the synod, it is tempting to look for the exciting.

For example, the first woman ever to address a synod or council in the history of the Roman Catholic Church made a strong and effective plea for practical results to follow the debate on social justice. The plea came from Barbara Ward, Lady Jackson of England, one of two women named by the pope as "auditors" and "special assistants" to the secretary on justice in the world.

Another item: Cardinal Danielou of France, in an article in the Paris press, called for the excommunication of a theological opponent, Cardinal Suenens of Belgium. The French cardinal urged the Belgian cardinal's excommunication for "supposing the church could harbor more than one theology."

Cardinal Danielou took issue with Cardinal Suenens' statements to the synod that "the key to the divergent opinions is in the supernatural order, namely the Holy Spirit. There are two theologies: 'classical'--preoccupied with clear definitions; and 'oriental' theology--ancient, concerned about the Holy Spirit, living and real, and closer to the actual life of men."

Another example: Bishop Lecuyer, Superior General of the Order of the Holy Spirit, was the last to speak on the priesthood. He asked, perhaps with tongue in cheek, why it was that so many bishops in their language groups voted not to allow the pope the privilege of making exceptions to the rule of celibacy so as to ordain married men in areas of extreme need. Bishop Lecuyer was under the impression the pope had always exercised the right to make exceptions to any Canon rule!

There was serious business at hand, though, in the consideration of the working paper on "Justice in the World" offered the synod by the Papal Commission on Justice and Peace that had been at work for some two years.

Most agreed that the paper covered all of the major areas of injustice in the world: economic domination of the rich nations over the poor, poverty, unemployment, overpopulation, the plight of refugees, war, racial discrimination, women's rights, pollution, drug abuse, exploitation of sex, etc.

Identified in the paper as the two most crucial problems of the hour were (1) the recent manipulation of trade and money in the international crisis, and (2) the crisis in East Pakistan.

There were some unexpected voices. Archbishop Senshyn, Metropolitan of Philadelphia for the Ukrainians, chided the synod for ignoring the long persecution of his brethren in the Northern Ukraine.

"Some ecclesiastical groups connive in this; much of the Catholic world receives no information, and public opinion in the world receives no timely news," he said.

Archbishop Hermaniuk, of the Ukrainian Rite of Canada, went further to name the source of "this bitterness." He said that "in 1946 the Orthodox Patriarch, Alexis, welcomed all this destruction [the law banning their church], and his successor, Patriarch Pimen, has made similar remarks this year."

Hermaniuk is the only one who has spoken of the plight of the Jews in Russia today. He said, "Religious persecution should be first on the list of injustices in the world studied by the Synod. . . . In the ecumenical dialogue with other churches and communities, the question of securing liberty for the Catholic Church should be given priority."

The usual hangups in debates familiar to Protestants were in evidence: how effective are synod statements, papal encyclicals and council decrees anyway?

Even with all their authority, Catholic officials complain and argue fiercely over the resolutions and soon go home to forget them. They sound often like antagonists debating at the Southern Baptist Convention.

Still other questions are raised: what is the fine line that divides moral and social concerns from partisan politics? Can you follow democratic procedures for securing social change without getting involved in politics? If not, is violence ever justified in face of flagrant oppression and injustice that will not yield to reason? How can 17 nations continue to give uncoordinated aid to 100 nations and still not relieve many areas of injustice and woe?

Thusfar, the war in Southeast Asia, racial discrimination, and environmental problems have only been noted. It is expected that some statements, perhaps the strongest the Roman Church has ever made, will eventually come out of the synod on these issues. It is hardly likely that they will do more than justify conscientious objectors, stopping short of condoning such as the Berrigan brothers.

There are some parallels between Southern Baptists and the synod regarding the debates, even though these parallels are often remote. But with reference to the priesthood, a parallel is well-nigh impossible.

Can you imagine the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention calling together a small group of leading pastors chosen out of each state convention for a month-long conference on how to treat their associate pastors, and whether or not to allow their ministers of youth to marry? No, as the kids say, it won't wash.

But on the second agenda item of justice and peace, the synod sounds strangely like some Southern Baptist seminars we have attended.

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Radio-TV Commission Withdraws
Request to Work in Print Media

10/29/71

FORT WORTH (BP)--The executive director of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission here has withdrawn the commission's request to the SBC Executive Committee for permission to operate in the "print media" area as well as with "broadcast media."

Paul M. Stevens, executive director of the commission, asked that the commission's request to change its program statement, a proposal pending before the SBC Executive Committee, be withdrawn.

Stevens said that the commission, meeting here Oct. 18-20, voted to give the executive director "discretionary power" concerning the petitions before the Executive Committee, and that he had decided a week later to withdraw the request.

Also withdrawn was a request to change the commission's Articles of Incorporation concerning election of trustees and the composition of the trustees for the commission.

Stevens said that he made the decision in the light of proposals concerning possible reorganization of the commission's work and program assignments which might come next February before the Executive Committee from its "Committee of Fifteen" which is assigned to study the total organization structure of the SBC.

The commission made the request to operate in the "print media" area after the SBC Executive Committee passed a motion in February, 1971, stating that "TimeRite," a subsidiary advertising agency operated by the commission, was violating the convention-approved program statement by doing work in the "print media" area unrelated to broadcasting. The program statement limits the commission to operations in the "broadcast media."

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Texas Baptists Reject Federal
Aid; Release Two Institutions

10/29/71

HOUSTON (BP)--The Baptist General Convention of Texas here rejected federal aid for its hospitals by a two-to-one margin, severed ties with two of its institutions, and voiced opposition to the so-called "prayer amendment," use of drugs, and environmental pollution.

The convention, in a three-day meeting, also defeated an attempt to make church fellowship in local Baptist associations a test for membership on the convention's Executive Board.

In the hottest action, the convention voted to turn down a request for federal loans and grants for Baptist hospitals by a margin of 1,466 to 724. It was about the same margin as action two years ago in San Antonio on a request for federal loans for Baptist schools in Texas.

The heart of the hospital aid request centered around a difference of interpretation about whether government aid for hospitals is reimbursement for services incurred by federal programs such as Medicare, or whether it involves assistance that would violate separation of church and state.

Dr. John Bagwell, Dallas physician and chairman of the special hospital study committee which requested the loans and grants, told messengers that "a vote against the recommendation

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is a vote to cast aside our hospital ministries permanently." In another year or two, he said, "we may see all of our hospitals affected."

A Christian ethics professor at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, William Pinson, countered that a vote to accept the aid would not save the hospitals. "We will weaken our church-state position and lose our hospitals anyway" if the convention approves the report, said Pinson.

W. A. Criswell of Dallas, immediate past president of the Southern Baptist Convention, predicted that Texas Baptists would become a "dying sect" if the institutions are lost through lack of support. He urged acceptance of federal funds.

In another key action, the messengers voted 907 to 352 to turn loose Houston's Memorial Baptist Hospital system. The hospital system's board of trustees requested that it become a private institution, saying it needed broader-based community support to finance \$40 million in expansion programs.

Under convention policy, non-Baptists are not allowed to serve on boards of trustees of Baptist institutions. Houston hospital trustees feel such community involvement is necessary for the hospital's growth and maintenance of standards.

The University of Corpus Christi, one of 10 schools operated by the Baptist General Convention of Texas, was released by nearly unanimous vote of the convention.

Final separation will come "not later than December 31, 1972," and the school will assume all responsibility for its financial obligations.

The financially plagued school is expected to become an upper-level state institution for the Corpus Christi area. The messengers authorized the transfer of "at least 200 acres" to the new institution and will retain "not less than 10 acres of land" for the convention to use for a student religious center.

Last year in Austin, the Texas convention instructed the school to repay a Small Business Administration loan accepted after the school was devastated by Hurricane Celia. The school, however, elected to seek release from the convention.

In a sparsely-attended afternoon session, 567 messengers found themselves faced with an unexpected challenge during the usually routine election of members to the convention's Executive Board.

Othal Brand, a layman from McAllen, Tex., moved deletion of the name of Hardy Clemmons, pastor of Second Baptist Church, Lubbock, Tex., from the list of nominees because his church is "out of fellowship" with the Lubbock Baptist Association because the church accepts members who have been immersed by non-Baptist churches.

The convention approved by a margin of 288 to 279 a motion to vote on Clemmons' election separately, but finally approved, after lengthy debate, his nomination with only a handful opposing.

In the debate, several speakers emphasized that making fellowship with a Baptist association a "test" of convention fellowship and service would subvert Baptist congregational church government.

"We have neither an Episcopal nor Presbyterian form of government," said one pastor. "We must not become a creedal body with a connectional setup between church, association, state and national levels," said another.

In other actions, the convention adopted a sweeping series of statements on social concerns from its Christian Life Commission, on the subjects of the prayer amendment, parochialism, prison reform, legislative reform, school desegregation, sex education, health care and gambling.

Calling for defeat of House Joint Resolution 191 in Congress, the convention adopted two statements opposing a so-called prayer amendment to the U. S. Constitution.

A statement submitted by the Christian Life Commission said the proposal should be rejected because it "opens the door for government to determine what is acceptable prayer." It called the amendment a "version of state-sponsored religion" that "will not improve the country's moral climate."

A resolution submitted by the convention's resolution committee called on Baptists to inform their Congressmen of opposition to any change in the First Amendment to the Constitution.

On public school desegregation, the convention-approved statement said that "the urban phenomenon of 'white-black' is unChristian and unrealistic." The statement called on Christians to avoid making irrational, illogical and unChristian statements and threats, and decried racial injustices of discrimination in housing and the inequitable distribution of educational resources by school boards.

A "parochial" statement called on Baptists to support the expenditure of public funds only for public schools through public channels. It charged that tax funds should not support church-related elementary and secondary schools because such is a violation of religious liberty and separation of church and state.

Elected president of the convention was Landrum P. Leavell, pastor of First Baptist Church, Wichita Falls, Tex., in a close vote over James G. Harris, pastor of University Baptist Church, Fort Worth. Harris was later elected first vice president.

Other major actions included adoption of a record \$15.2 million budget and approval of a vast urban strategy plan for Texas Baptists.

The plan for expanding mission ministries in population centers of the state calls for a 17-member Urban Strategy Council, a Christian Service Corps, and a \$1 million land purchase fund for securing and holding church sites in urban centers.