



BAPTIST PRESS

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Graham Endorsement
Unclear Signers Say

NEW YORK (BP)--Three Christian leaders who signed a statement defending the "financial integrity and accountability" of the Billy Graham evangelistic association claim the contents of the statement were misrepresented to them before they endorsed it.

David Poling, United Presbyterian minister and syndicated columnist who released the statement, said he had contacted six others by phone and they had agreed on a statement defending the evangelist's fiscal integrity.

Now, Union Theological Seminary professor Robert McAfee Brown, says the statement read to him by Poling did not refer to Graham's enterprises but only related to the evangelist's personal integrity.

Theodore Hesburgh, president of Notre Dame University, had also been listed by Poling in connection with the statement. He expressed a sentiment similar to Brown's--that he did not know enough about the evangelistic association to comment on it.

The statement Poling released said, "Misleading and often false interpretations have been circulated concerning the finances of the Billy Graham organization. These published insinuations of wrong-doing or implied malfeasance cannot go unchallenged. We are familiar with the ministry of Billy Graham and join together to publicly affirm the financial integrity and accountability of Mr. Graham's enterprise."

William Sloane Coffin, pastor of The Riverside Church, New York, and signer of the statement, also objected to some individual comments attributed to him by Poling. Poling acknowledged that he had misquoted Coffin as having said, "Apparently some headline hunters have turned head hunters, with Billy now their prime target."

Asked how the misunderstandings could have come about, Poling said, "All of these were phone conversations; they weren't written out, which was my mistake."

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W. L. Howse Jr. Dies
Of Heart Attack

Baptist Press
12/29/77

CULPEPER, Va. (BP)--W. L. Howse Jr., prominent in Southern Baptist religious education and planning for 45 years, died near here Dec. 27 of a heart attack. He was 72 years old.

Howse, a consultant for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board since 1971, was on his way home to Richmond, Va., after spending the Christmas holidays here with his son, W. L. Howse III.

The funeral was scheduled for Dec. 30, at Abbey Chapel, Restland Memorial Park and Funeral Home, Dallas, Tex. A memorial service was to be held at the Foreign Mission Board, also on Dec. 30.

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Active throughout the Southern Baptist Convention, Howse taught at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary for 22 years and was on the administrative staff of the Baptist Sunday School Board for some 17 years.

Howse was most recently a consultant in administration and planning to the mission support division director of the Foreign Mission Board. Earlier he had been programming consultant for the East Asia area office and a long-range planning consultant for the Middle America and Caribbean area office.

Baker J. Cauthen, executive director of the Foreign Mission Board and friend of Howse for more than 40 years, said, "He was one of the most remarkable Christians I have ever known. Everywhere he served he brought glory to God and blessings to other people. It has been a great joy to have him at the board in recent months." Howse had been at the board's home office in Richmond since February.

Howse was director of the education division of the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville from 1954 to 1971. He had also served as president of the Texas Baptist Training Union, president of the Texas Baptist Sunday School Convention, a member of Children's Hospital board, Fort Worth, president of Southwestern Baptist Religious Education Association, and on the Inter-Agency Council of the Southern Baptist Convention as well as several civic groups.

In addition to contributing heavily to denominational literature, Howse also wrote several books.

Howse, a native of Fayetteville, Tenn., lived there and in several Mississippi towns while growing up. He received a bachelor of arts degree from Union University, Jackson, Tenn.; master of arts degree, magna cum laude, from Baylor University, Waco, Tex.; and master and doctor (cum laude) of religious education degrees, Southwestern Seminary.

He served as minister of religious education at several churches in Dallas, Fort Worth and Waco. At the time of his death, he was a member of Second Baptist Church, Richmond.

He is survived by his wife, Genevieve Morgan Howse of Richmond; a brother, Charles Howse of San Diego, Calif.; his son and two grandchildren.

The family requests memorial tributes be made in the form of contributions to the Foreign Mission Board.

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(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state editors by the Richmond Bureau of Baptist Press.

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Religious News Writers Say
Episcopal Schism Top Story

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HOUSTON (BP)--Reporters who cover religion with the secular media in the United States have voted the schism in the Episcopal Church as the top religious news story of 1977.

The schism in the church began taking shape in late 1976, but by September 1977 was proceeding rapidly. Although it is widely believed that the division results only from the Episcopal Church's decision in 1976 to ordain women, Bishop-elect James O. Mote of the Breakaway Anglican Church in North America, says there were more than a dozen issues that brought about the split.

In their year-end poll, the religion reporters said the drive by homosexuals for understanding and acceptance by churches was the No. 2 story of the year in religion news.

Although the religious controversy over homosexuality took a variety of forms during 1977, key controversies swirled around the ordination to the Episcopal priesthood last January of an avowed lesbian and the anti-gay rights crusade of entertainer Anita Bryant, a Southern Baptist.

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The survey of the top 10 religion stories of 1977 was conducted by the Religion Newswriters Association (RNA), the professional organization for religion writers and editors for secular newspapers, news magazines and news services in the United States and Canada. One hundred ballots were mailed and 48 were returned. Each participating RNA member listed his or her top 10 choices.

Results of the survey were released in Houston by Louis Moore, religion editor of the Houston Chronicle, who handled the year-end project for the professional organization.

The No. 3 story of 1977, according to the RNA poll, was the boom of the evangelical born-again movement in this country. Some reporters cited the influence President Jimmy Carter, a Southern Baptist, has had on the boom.

The controversy surrounding the so-called religious cults active in the United States today was voted the No. 4 story of the year. The cult issue includes the disputes that swirl around the Rev. Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church and the deprogrammers.

The other six top stories in order were:

5. The controversy surrounding French Roman Catholic Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre's dispute with the Vatican over changes in the Catholic Mass. Lefebvre advocates a return to the old Tridentine Mass which has been replaced by a new mass in a language of each country.

6. The continuing spread of the charismatic (neo-pentecostal) movement and the controversy which surrounds the movement. Many reporters cited the significance of the July meeting in Kansas City of charismatics as a factor in their decision.

7. The controversy surrounding the publication of a new book on human sexuality by a team of Roman Catholic theologians.

8. The decision by numerous church groups during 1977 to confront the television industry over programming.

9. Now that divorce is more accepted by churches today, remarriage is becoming the next major issue churches must handle. Among 1977 news stories that focused on this issue was the decision in November by Pope Paul VI to grant, retroactively, the automatic ex-communication of divorced and remarried Catholics in this country. Earlier in the year the U. S. Catholic bishops had asked the Pope to take such action.

10. The controversy that surrounded the December 1976 Memphis, Tenn., services of reconciliation in which general absolution was granted to Roman Catholics who attended. The services were sanctioned by Bishop Harold T. Dozier of Memphis, who early in 1977 endured some cold shoulders from his fellow bishops over his stand.

Other religion stories that occurred in 1977 and which narrowly missed the top 10 list were the controversies over allegations by three Southern California researchers that Joseph Smith used a stolen novel in his compilation of the Book of Mormon, and the allegations (later shown to be false) that evangelist Billy Graham kept secret a \$23 million fund.

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Alley Transferred From
UR Religion Department

Baptist Press
12/29/77

RICHMOND(BP)--Robert S. Alley, chairman of the religion department at the University of Richmond who recently told an atheist group that Jesus "never claimed he was God," has been transferred out of the religion department.

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A statement released by the University of Richmond board of trustees said that Alley requested a move "to an area within the university where he might be more effective under the circumstances." Reassignment to a "position of appropriate responsibility" will be forthcoming after consultation with the new provost, Melvin L. Vulgamore, who will assume his post early in January.

Alley was reported by the Richmond News Leader to have told a group of atheists at First Unitarian Church that "For the last 1,800 years, the Christian church has been preaching something about Jesus that he probably didn't say about himself."

"I see Jesus as really a Jew," Alley was reported to have said. "I don't imagine for a minute that He would have had the audacity to claim the diety for Himself. I think the (Bible) passages where He talks about the Son of God are later additions--what the church said about Him."

Those statements brought a howl of protests from the Richmond area pastors, about 60 of which met with university president E. Bruce Heilman. Heilman apologized to them for Alley's remarks.

The board of trustees, which reiterated the university's commitment to the Christian faith and to "free expression by responsible individuals in their educational endeavors," said that it regretted the impressions projected by Alley's speech and that "certain statements attributed to Dr. Alley in no way represent their (the trustees') historic, current or projected position."

Although his new post has not yet been determined, Alley said it would be on "a less emotional perch" and was a lateral move, "neither a demotion nor a promotion." He said in a prepared statement that "the move reflects my commitment to freedom and my concern for the best interest of the university."

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Graham Refutes
Parts of Interview

Baptist Press
12/29/77

MINNEAPOLIS (BP)--Evangelist Billy Graham has responded to an interview in the January issue of McCall's magazine that he says may convey the idea he no longer believes all non-Christians are lost.

"The article correctly and clearly states what I intended when it says, 'Graham's essential message has not changed; He still preaches that all men are sinners and in need of conversion to Christ,'" Graham said in a statement released from Minneapolis. "Contrary to what the article later suggests, I do believe that non-Christians are lost--whether they live in far off countries, or in America. My statement that Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation pertains to the whole human race."

Graham was quoted in the article by writer James Michael Beam as saying, "I used to believe that pagans in far-off countries were lost--were going to hell--if they did not have the gospel of Jesus Christ preached to them. I no longer believe that. I believe that there are other ways of recognizing the existence of God--through nature for instance--and plenty of other opportunities, therefore, of saying 'yes' to God."

Graham also said in the interview that because of his contacts with other denominational leaders he is "far more tolerant of other kinds of Christians" than he once was.

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