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October 24, 1986

86-158

Breakthrough Near,
Peace Chairman Says

By Dan Martin

N-CD

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--"There is more reason for hope for peace" than at any time in the past 18 months, Southern Baptist Peace Committee Chairman Charles Fuller said.

Fuller made the comment after a three-day prayer retreat of the 22-member Peace Committee, executives of the national SBC agencies and seminary presidents.

During the retreat, at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center near Santa Fe, N.M., the presidents of the six Southern Baptist seminaries made a seven-point series of "commitments" aimed at resolving the theological/political controversy that has occupied the attention of the 14.5-million-member denomination for nearly a decade.

The Peace Committee was appointed during the 1985 annual meeting in Dallas and charged with discovering the sources of the controversy, making findings and proposing solutions.

Early in its deliberations, the committee said theological differences were at the root of the problem, adding the political controversy sprang from that center source.

Both Peace Committee Chairman Fuller and SBC President Adrian Rogers of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn., expressed high hopes after the presidents' proposal. (See separate stories.)

The seven-point commitment series affirmed and promised to enforce seminary confessional statements; promised to "foster" balanced teaching; pledged "respect for the convictions of all Southern Baptists;" committed the presidents to pick teachers and speakers from across the SBC "theological spectrum;" promised to lead seminary communities in spiritual dimensions; pledged to support evangelism and missions while emphasizing doctrine and heritage; and announced three national conferences on biblical inerrancy.

Attached to the list of commitments were three "philosophical statements." They affirmed belief in the supernatural origin and history of Christianity and biblical accounts of miracles; belief in full inspiration of Scripture, including that the "66 books of the Bible are not errant in any area of reality;" and belief that, while the seminaries are "fulfilling the purposes assigned to them," they "are not perfect" and there are "legitimate concerns regarding them which we are addressing."

Rogers said the action was "a significant breakthrough" and called the action of the six presidents "courageous."

Fuller told Baptist Press the presidents' "Glorieta Statement" is "a crucial statement which provides great promise for breaking through the logjam."

The chairman added, "I have too much respect for the integrity and stature of our seminary presidents to believe they would offer a plan which compromised their consciences."

Although the presidents said their plan would be implemented "regardless," the Peace Committee voted 19-0 to affirm the presidents and to accept the plan "at face value."

The committee also voted to end its continuing dialogue with three of the seminaries--Midwestern in Kansas City, Southern in Louisville, Ky., and Southeastern in Wake Forest, N.C.--and to leave lingering questions about theology for the administration and trustees to deal with.

The committee also voted to affirm the SBC Foreign Mission Board and its president, R. Keith Parks. The committee had left open dialogue with the Foreign Mission Board regarding Ruschlikon Seminary in Switzerland.

The action of the seminary presidents and the committee, however, did not meet with universal approval.

Cecil Sherman, pastor of Broadway Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas, and a leader in the moderate/conservative faction, "absented" himself when the vote of affirmation on the seminary plan was taken and later resigned from the committee, saying he could no longer be part of the process and predicting "theological education will wither."

Despite Sherman's resignation, Fuller described the meeting as "refreshing" and said it offered more hope than at any time since the committee was created in 1985.

"The meeting produced the most far-reaching potential of any we have had in the year and a half we have been in existence," Fuller said. "We saw more reason for hope than at any time in the life of the committee."

He said there are five reasons the meeting was "refreshing" and productive.

-- "First was the enormous importance of prayer by people all over the world for this retreat and the large proportion of time given to prayer during the retreat agenda.

-- "Second was the inspiration of this strategic assembly of leadership meeting with a common agenda.

-- "Third is the honest, open contributions made to our sessions by the SBC agency leaders. We heard them.

-- "Fourth is the weariness with the controversy which produced room for movement.

-- "Fifth was the crucial statement of the seminary presidents which provides great promise for a breakthrough."

Fuller commented that in the peace process "peace at no price is as improbable as peace at any price is undesirable."

In addition to the prayer retreat and the president's statement, the Peace Committee also:

-- Voted to ask William Crews to continue as a member, even though he was elected president of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif., during a trustee meeting Oct. 13.

Crews, who has been on the committee since its inception and was chairman of the visitation subcommittee which visited Southern and New Orleans seminaries, had expressed a willingness to resign if the chairman and committee felt it was appropriate.

-- Encouraged Southern Baptists to abide by the Peace Committee request to declare a year-long moratorium on political activities.

-- Passed a motion affirming the leadership of all Southern Baptist agencies.

-- Set its next meeting for Dec. 1-2 in Atlanta.

-- Affirmed its previous decision to make a preliminary report at the February meeting of the SBC Executive Committee and to have a final draft ready for release in early April.

Six Seminary Presidents
Make Reconciliation Try

By Dan Martin

N-CO

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)—Presidents of the six Southern Baptist theological seminaries have announced a seven-point plan aimed at bringing reconciliation to the troubled Southern Baptist Convention.

The plan, called the Glorieta Statement, was announced during a prayer retreat at the Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center, attended by seminary presidents, SBC agency executives and members of the convention's Peace Committee.

"We, the presidents of the six SBC seminaries, through prayerful and careful reflection and dialogue, have unanimously agreed to declare these commitments regarding our lives and our work with Southern Baptists," the statement says.

The six SBC seminaries have been at the heart of a seven-year theological/political controversy in the nation's largest non-Catholic denomination. Critics have charged the denomination is drifting toward liberalism.

"We are aware that we are perceived to be at the heart of the controversy in our SBC fellowship," said the spokesman for the seminary presidents, Milton Ferguson, president of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., at a presentation to the SBC Executive Committee in September.

In the Glorieta Statement, the presidents said they commit themselves "to the resolution of problems which beset our beloved denomination. We are ready and eager to be partners in the peace process."

Although the presidents specified the "commitments" were done "at our own initiative" and are "unilateral," the Peace Committee later voted to "affirm the Glorieta Statement of the seminary presidents on its face value and express our appreciation to them for their effort at reconciliation."

Landrum Leavell, president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, said: "These are things we (the seminaries) are going to do, regardless. We are being accused, and criticism is being directed at us. These are things we feel we can do something about."

Ferguson told Baptist Press the Glorieta Statement grew out of a prayer meeting among the seminary presidents in early September. "There was a sharing of our commitments in that prayer meeting," he said. "It was an effort to bring reconciliation in our convention."

Ferguson noted the "presidents are not all exactly alike, but we were in common in our commitment to work to bring reconciliation to our denomination. We adopted this statement unanimously."

Russell Dilday, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, said the statement is from the presidents. "It has not been approved by our trustees or by our faculties. It grew out of the concerns and the convictions of the presidents. We said that rather than being divisive, we want to be part of the reconciliation process in the Southern Baptist Convention."

The statement was honed following a meeting in mid-September between the presidents and a subcommittee of the Peace Committee and completed during a meeting in Albuquerque, N.M., immediately before the Oct. 20-21 prayer retreat.

Roy Lee Honeycutt, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., pointed out the statement "was made at our own initiative and was not done under any kind of duress."

The statement begins with three philosophical statements and concludes with seven specific commitments.

The philosophical statements are:

-- "We believe that Christianity is supernatural in its origin and history. We repudiate every theory of religion which denies the supernatural elements in our faith. The miracles of the Old and New Testaments are historical evidence of God's judgment, love and redemption.

-- "We believe that the Bible is fully inspired; it is 'God-breathed' (I Tim. 3:16), utterly unique. No other book or collection of books can justify that claim. The 66 books of the Bible are not errant in any area of reality. We hold to their infallible power and binding authority.

-- "We believe that our six seminaries are fulfilling the purposes assigned to them by the Southern Baptist Convention. Nevertheless, we acknowledge that they are not perfect institutions. We recognize that there are legitimate concerns regarding them which we are addressing."

The seven specific commitments are:

-- "We reaffirm our seminary confessional statements, and we will enforce compliance by the persons signing them.

-- "We will foster in our classrooms a balanced, scholarly frame of reference for presenting fairly the entire spectrum of scriptural interpretations represented by our constituency. We perceive this to be both good education and good cooperation.

-- "We respect the convictions of all Southern Baptists, and we repudiate the caricature and intimidation of persons for their theological beliefs.

-- "We commit ourselves to fairness in selecting faculty, lecturers and chapel speakers across the theological spectrum of our Baptist constituency.

-- "We will lead our seminary communities in spiritual revival, personal discipleship, Christian lifestyle and active churchmanship.

-- "We will deepen and strengthen the spirit of evangelism and missions on our campuses while emphasizing afresh the distinctive doctrines of our Baptist heritage."

-- The statement also announced a series of three national conferences on biblical inerrancy.

The first, scheduled May 4-7, 1987, at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center, will deal with biblical inerrancy. The second, to be held in 1988, will concentrate on biblical interpretation, and the third, set for 1989, will concern biblical imperatives.

Ferguson said the purpose of the conference on biblical inerrancy "is not to debate, argue or criticize. We plan to bring in the best evangelical scholarship and study what it means when the term 'inerrancy' is used. "We are not trying to make everybody believe alike, but we have come to the conclusion that we have not given that scholarship (on inerrancy) a fair shake. Good education demands that we do that."

Ferguson said the six presidents have scheduled J.I. Packer, professor at Regents College in Toronto, Canada, to lead the conference.

Packer, he said, is a noted scholar in the field of inerrancy and was the principal writer of the 1983 Chicago Statement on Inerrancy, drafted by the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy.

Ferguson said he hopes from 500 to 1,000 Southern Baptist pastors, teachers and others will attend the conference.

In addition to Ferguson, Dilday, Leavell and Honeycutt, other seminary presidents participating in the Glorieta Statement are Randall Lolley, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.; and Harold Graves, interim president of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif.

William Crews, elected president of the California seminary Oct. 13, said that while he did not participate in drafting the Glorieta Statement, he "likes it."

"It will provide a vehicle the Peace Committee can use in addressing the controversy in the convention. It helps get us off dead center and on down the road," said Crews, who has been a member of the SBC's 22-member committee charged with finding the sources of the controversy in the SBC and recommending ways to solve them.

The Peace Committee is scheduled to make its final report to the 1987 annual meeting of the SBC in St. Louis June 16-18.

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Sherman Resigns
Peace Committee

N-CO

Baptist Press
10/24/86

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)—Saying he cannot be part of the current process, Cecil Sherman has resigned from the Southern Baptist Convention Peace Committee.

Sherman, pastor of Broadway Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas, made his surprise resignation at the end of a three-day prayer retreat during which presidents of the six Southern Baptist seminaries issued a seven-point "commitment" aimed at resolving theological problems in the 14.5-million-member SBC. (See related stories.)

Although he said the resignation was not up for discussion, the Peace Committee accepted it, thanking him in their motion for faithful service during the 18 months the group has been meeting.

Sherman told Baptist Press he "absented" himself when the Peace Committee voted 19-0 to "affirm the seminary presidents" and to "express our appreciation to them for their effort at reconciliation."

Sherman resigned during the committee's executive session but gave a written statement to Baptist Press afterwards.

"The Peace Committee has begun to 'make progress,'" he said. "Most of my friends in the Peace Committee are elated at the 'progress' we have made in the Glorieta meeting. I do not share their euphoria.

"The statement made by the six seminary presidents sets a course for theological education in the Southern Baptist Convention for years to come. What Fundamentalists have wanted, the Peace Committee has helped them get," he said.

Sherman added: "Fundamentalists began with the premise theological education was 'drifting into/towards liberalism.' The Peace Committee bought this premise and became one agent to bring pressure to bear on our seminaries.

"I started from a different place. Our six SBC seminaries are conservative by any normal use of the word, and they have been responsive to the constituency. Some of us on the Peace Committee have consistently made this case.

"Now the majority on the Peace Committee is of the opinion the way to make peace is to help Fundamentalists toward their ends.

"I cannot be a part of this process."

The Fort Worth pastor noted the seminaries and some of the professors have been under heavy fire from critics within the denomination, and he said the visits of the Peace Committee subcommittees "pressured" the institutions into the statement.

"The seminaries have taken a long step toward their critics. They are trying to service us. What they have done will satisfy for a season, but Fundamentalists will ask for more concessions from our educators. In the end, serious theological education will wither."

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In his resignation statement, Sherman noted "some of us have offered the Peace Committee several ways to reduce tension and move down the long road to peace."

He said some of the suggestions are:

-- "A restructuring of the Pastors' Conference, making it representative of all Southern Baptist pastors. In exchange, the Forum would be abandoned.

-- "A division of both theological education and (Southern Baptist) Sunday School Board literature, with one track for moderates and another for Fundamentalists.

-- "Some serious, measureable way to make appointments in Southern Baptist life. Both sides would be represented to the strength of their vote in the last presidential election.

-- "Design a better way to register and vote at the Southern Baptist Convention so the hint of irregularities could be reduced."

Sherman added: "To date, none of these proposals has much life in the Peace Committee. It seems to me a military model is at work. Peace will come not from reconciliation and mutual acceptance, but peace will come when one group defeats the other and drives it from the field."

He told Baptist Press he realizes the resignation "will appear to be 'sour grapes' and a sore loser. That may be."

"But," he added, "a few months from now I see a Peace Committee report coming that I cannot sign and hold a good conscience. At that point, I could be a part of a minority report should others hold my views.

"It seems to me it would be ironic to divide the St. Louis convention over the report of the Peace Committee.

"Resignation seems the better course to take."

He ended his written statement by asking Southern Baptists "to give a prayer for the few moderates on the Peace Committee. To this point, they are powerless."

Sherman has been a leading spokesman for the moderate/conservative political faction in the SBC, although he resigned from all responsibilities when he was named to the 22-member Peace Committee at the 1985 annual meeting of the SBC in Dallas.

Sherman was one of the organizers of a meeting in Gatlinburg, Tenn., in 1980, which was the first meeting of political moderates in the seven-year battle over the future of the denomination. One of the main efforts of the moderate/conservatives has been preservation of the seminaries as they are.

Peace Committee Chairman Charles Fuller told Baptist Press: "We regret Cecil's departure from the committee. He has been a vital part of our work from the beginning. He is a man of consistency and principle. He has kept before the committee an outspoken and earnest viewpoint to which he is deeply committed. I respect his integrity and commitment as a valuable part of our Southern Baptist family."

Fuller noted the action of the 1985 convention that created the Peace Committee "provides for the replacement of any vacancy by the action of the SBC Executive Committee."

"I will request them to take action quickly. If they choose to replace Cecil, the choice must be one who represents the moderate position," he said.

Sherman's departure comes at a point when the committee is nearing completion of its work. Fuller said the group plans to present a preliminary report to the Executive Committee at its February 1987 meeting and is aiming toward making public a final report in early April.

By convention action, the committee must make its final report at the St. Louis convention.
--DAN MARTIN

President Lauds
Seminaries' Action

N-10

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)—Southern Baptist Convention President Adrian Rogers has called a plan by SBC seminaries to work toward reconciliation "a courageous action."

Rogers, who was elected president of the 14.5-million-member denomination during the annual meeting in June, made a statement to Baptist Press following a three-day prayer retreat at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center in the mountains northeast of Santa Fe, N.M.

The retreat involved a two-day meeting with the seminary presidents, agency executives and Peace Committee members. It featured testimonies, group discussion and prayer times.

During the meeting, the presidents of the six SBC seminaries presented a seven-point plan which commits the seminaries "to the resolution of the problems which beset our beloved denomination."

The plan, which includes a Conference on Biblical Inerrancy in May of 1987, begins with a statement the six presidents believe the "66 books of the Bible are not errant in any area of reality." Rogers has said "95 percent of Southern Baptists" hold the view the Bible is "truth without any mixture of error" in all matters.

Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn., also is a member of the SBC Peace Committee, a group charged with finding the sources of the controversy in the SBC and making recommendations for their solution.

Rogers said following the meeting:

"My heart is rejoicing in what I feel was a significant breakthrough at the prayer retreat at Glorieta. In the place where thousands have been blessed and challenged in years gone by, God came down again.

"The testimonies of some of our agency leadership and seminary presidents, their spiritual pilgrimage, was used of God to remind us again of our common roots and our oneness in Christ. It was a joy to reaffirm one another in genuine love.

"Many exciting and significant things came from our meeting together. One of the most significant was the courageous action of the six seminary presidents when they made in unison a statement of theological intention around which we all ought to rally.

"This was a genuine overture on their part and was done in a warm and sincere spirit. I call upon all of us (Southern Baptists) to respond positively and to give peace a chance."

In his written statement, Rogers made seven suggestions for Southern Baptists as they seek peace and reconciliation.

"The road to peace is a two-way road. None of us need forsake convictions, but I want to suggest some things that we all ought to do together," he said.

-- "First, we can intensify our prayer effort as we see how much is at stake.

-- "Second, we can renew our commitment to Bold Mission Thrust.

-- "Third, we can prayerfully, intelligently and enthusiastically come along side our agency heads and seminary presidents to help them be all they can be for Christ and his kingdom.

-- "Fourth, we can increase significantly our Cooperative Program giving to show love and good faith in this movement toward solid biblical faith and world evangelism.

-- "Fifth, we can pray and work for fairness in all appointments so that we have the best Baptists cooperatively and theologically to represent us.

--more--

-- "Six, we still have a way to go, so it will behoove all of us to guard our rhetoric and cease divisive actions.

-- "Seventh, please pray for me that I can have the touch of God upon my life to be to all Southern Baptists what God would have me to be." -- DAN MARTIN

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NOTE TO STATE PAPER EDITORS: Please replace the outline titled "Discussion" that was sent with Peace Committee photos with the following:

DISCUSSION—Cecil Sherman, pastor of Broadway Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas, who recently resigned from the Southern Baptist Convention Peace Committee, discusses ways to bring reconciliation to the convention during the committee's prayer retreat in Glorieta, N.M., Oct. 20-21. Also participating are Jimmy Allen, (left) president of the SBC Radio and Television Commission, and Herschel Hobbs, former SBC president and Peace Committee member. (BP) Photo by Jim Veneman

Thanks,
Baptist Press

Samford University To Benefit
From \$150 Million Development

N - Sanford

Baptist Press
10/24/86

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)—Samford University's endowment fund will benefit from the \$150 million development of 200 wooded acres the Baptist school owns adjacent to its suburban campus in Birmingham, Ala., officials have confirmed.

Southern Progress Corporation, publisher of Southern Living, Southern Accents and Progressive Farmer magazines, will acquire a tract east of Samford's Beeson Woods student residential area for a new 27-acre headquarters. The firm, a subsidiary of TIME, Inc., is the largest regional magazine and book publishing company in the United States.

Simultaneously, Samford has signed a joint venture agreement with Trammell Crow Company of Dallas, the nation's largest real estate developer, to construct office, residential, hotel and retail space on a 180-acre site directly opposite the university's main gate.

The Crow project will extend 1.6 miles along Lakeshore Drive and be served by a new interchange of Interstate 65. It will feature waterways, jogging trails and recreational facilities to complement the natural scenery of the tract, which contains a forest in a former lakebed.

Samford President Thomas E. Corts said the coordinated development of the two parcels of land will not only create a distinctive environment for the campus and generate nearby housing and retail services of high quality, but also contribute substantial financial support for the university's academic program.

Samford trustees had held the land for such future development and will invest the revenue from the two projects in the school's educational endowment, now more than \$16 million.

"This has the potential for more than doubling the endowment, and far beyond," Corts said, noting, Samford will convey the 180 acres to Trammell Crow over a period of seven to 10 years, retaining part ownership in all buildings erected on the site. These may later be sold or kept for annual income.

Engineering and architectural studies have been underway for more than a year, Corts said, and construction on the first phase could begin by spring.

Samford has occupied its present Georgian Colonial campus for 30 years. Care was taken in the selection of a developer, university officials noted, to assure excellence in design and sensitivity to the campus and the surrounding residential neighborhood.

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Wanjes 'Hapi' To Be In
Southern Baptist Family

By Scott Collins

F-SWBTS

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—If not for the efforts of a Southern Baptist missionary, Hapi Wanje says he might have been named Mohammed.

But thanks to James Hampton, Hapi and his brother, Elijah, became Christians rather than Muslims. Now the two Wanjes are students at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, where Hampton trained for ministry.

The Wanjes' father, Morris, was "one of the first converts in Kenya" under Southern Baptist missionaries. The father chose Christianity over Islam through the witness of Hampton, a missionary to Kenya.

The elder Wanje was forced to leave his father's home because he would not accept the traditional African worship. While working in British customs during colonial days, he met Hampton.

Hampton came looking for help with the Swahili language. Morris became his translator.

Wanje eventually resigned his job to become a pastor. "His friends told him he was crazy," Hapi says of his father. Wanje was the only black man to have worked in the customs department.

But by translating sermons for Hampton, Wanje heard the gospel. He accepted Christ and soon organized a church in Kisauni. The church began in a building owned by the village chief, who was a Muslim.

Since that time, Hampton says, Baptist work in Kenya has grown to more than 600 churches and 50,000 members. And Morris Wanje has been a primary leader.

When the two brothers return to Kenya after completing studies at Southwestern, they also will assume leadership roles.

Elijah intends to return to Baptist High School in Mombasa, where he was assistant headmaster before coming to seminary. He returned to the United States to study because he saw a need for Christian education in Kenya.

Lack of education is causing ineffectiveness among Christians there, he says. He hopes his education at Southwestern will prepare him to become headmaster when he returns.

Hapi is studying in Southwestern's communications program. He wants to work with the Baptist communications studio in Kenya when he returns.

Both Hapi and Elijah are graduates of Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Ark.

Like their father, Hapi and Elijah say they have answered the call to ministry because "we have seen the needs of our people."

"We both came to a bridge where we knelt down. We have seen our people back home and we are compelled by the Lord to do something," Elijah says.

"We are seeds of a seed," Hapi adds.

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F-BSSB

Ministers' Marriages Need
Special Love, Care To Work

By Terri Lackey

Baptist Press
10/24/86

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)—Occupational hazards of being a minister can lead to strained marriages in which differences need to be aired, a seminary professor said during a Fall Festival of Marriage weekend at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

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Ministers have occupational symptoms that cannot be overlooked, said Macklyn Hubbell, associate professor of psychology and counseling at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Because of these symptoms, Hubbell said, pastors and church staff ministers and their spouses must work extra hard at their marriages.

The weekend conference was one of five being held at three locations this fall by the family ministry department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Hubbell, with his own unique names for symptoms indigenous to a minister's family, said the "Junior Chamber of Commerce Syndrome" is one of the most damaging to the family environment.

"Ministers are always busy, busy, busy, busy," Hubbell said. "That may do a community a lot of good, but I don't know how good it is for their families." He noted ministers feel they must maintain a certain pace, "but schedules can be radically reduced. It is more important that the minister be with his wife and children. People watch the way ministers treat their husbands or wives."

Hubbell said the "Seam Allowance Syndrome" is another problem unique to a minister's family.

"This is a man who can talk about many spiritual things when he's out in public, but when he gets home and takes off his spiritual robes, he becomes a monster and just gobbles up his family," he explained, insisting a minister's family deserves the best, "but they usually get the worst. All the thoughtful words and gestures go to the other people."

Ministers also often fall into the "Pharaoh Syndrome" or the "No, I won't let my people go," syndrome, he said. Because a community expects the best out of a minister's family, "the minister thinks his family must live a certain way to reflect justly on him."

A minister's marriage needs a lot of forgiveness, basic respect and creativity to work, Hubbell advised. He also said keeping feelings current, listening to each other, allowing for anger and having a sense of humor create a healthy marriage.