



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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SAM W. PACE ISSUES CLARIFICATION STATEMENT ON BAPTIST PRESS

The three officers of the Executive Committee and the chairmen of the three subcommittees met with Dr. Harold Bennett on Wednesday, June 13, at 3:00 p.m., in an effort to avoid a very unpleasant confrontation in the plenary session scheduled to begin at 4:00 p.m. Reliable information indicated that the matter of Baptist Press and the two principal personalities employed there was to be brought to the floor of the meeting, and that the services of Dan Martin and Alvin C. Shackleford were going to be requested to be terminated. The officers, anticipating that such an action would pass by a strong majority, felt that the situation and the denomination would be much better served by handling this quietly and graciously through the good offices and regular channels of the President of the Executive Committee. After prayerful and serious discussion, Dr. Bennett agreed to facilitate the suggestions of the officers in the most loving and considerate manner possible. In view of a prospective reorganization of the Executive Committee staff, it was deemed an appropriate time to make these major changes.

The officers of the Executive Committee deeply regret the unfortunate, ill-timed, and inaccurate press release written and released by Alvin C. Shackleford and Dan Martin on their own behalf. They also regret the breakdown of confidentiality agreed upon with Dr. Bennett in the handling of the situation, as well as the lack of objective journalistic ethics demonstrated in the writing of the Baptist Press release of June 26, by the very men about whom it was being written.

The fact is that Dan Martin specifically requested by telephone and, in person, that the chairman of the Executive Committee provide for him an honest appraisal of the opinion of Executive Committee members concerning his continued employment with them at this time. Martin did this two weeks prior to the convention and, again, during the New Orleans meeting.

Following the defeat of a motion to delay the matter of his employment by a 29-29 tie vote, Alvin C. Shackleford was approved by a narrow majority to be vice-president for public relations of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention. He then requested that the Executive Committee give him a year to prove he would be fair, equitable, and balanced with Baptist Press. After more than three years, the ever-increasing perception of the vast majority of Executive Committee members is that the very opposite has proven to be true.

Knowing the strong sentiments of the majority of the Executive Committee members, the six officers sought a course of action that would better serve the cause of peace and fairness for the denomination had that course of action been allowed to take its designed direction.

Bennett stated that, in talking with Shackleford and Martin, he did not use the terms "instructed" or "instructions" in reviewing his conversation with the Executive Committee officers on June 13, 1990. In addition, he did not state that the staff members would be "dealt with harshly" if they did not resign. He told them of the possible six months salary and benefit provision. Bennett also reports that the Executive Committee officers felt they should not penalize either Shackleford or Martin for what other people may say but they hoped the two would not precipitate a conflict.

Accrediting agency
doesn't punish SEBTS

By Erin Kelly

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--An accrediting agency has decided not to place Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary on probation, the school said.

The news from the Association of Theological Schools came as a relief to the seminary at Wake Forest, N.C., which has been under fire from its two accrediting agencies for almost three years.

The Association of Theological Schools has criticized Southeastern for giving too much power to the conservative-dominated trustee board.

At the same time, the national ATS said, the professors were being excluded from important matters, such as the hiring of new faculty members.

Southeastern still is waiting for a ruling from its other accrediting agency, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, which issued an official warning to the seminary in December. That ruling could come this year.

Accreditation is, in effect, a seal of approval for a school. If a school loses its accreditation, its graduates could have trouble finding jobs or being admitted to graduate programs.

The Association of Theological Schools has been monitoring the seminary closely since October 1987 when conservatives gained control of the trustee board. The trustees voted to change the faculty hiring procedure to give themselves more say so and professors less.

Then-president W. Randall Lolley and other key administrators resigned in protest.

Since then:

-- June 1988: The Association of Theological Schools issued a report calling Southeastern "a very troubled campus and divided institution." The report also asked trustees to use "self-imposed reserve" in wielding their power.

-- June 1989: The Association of Theological Schools demanded that the seminary "show cause ... why it should not be placed on probation."

-- March 1990: An arbitrator sent by the accrediting agency helped professors, trustees, and administrators pound out a new procedure for faculty hiring. This helped address one of the major concerns of the Association of Theological Schools.

"I think that was one of the main issues that the accrediting agency had identified," said Richard L. Hester, a professor who helped establish the new faculty hiring procedure. "The faculty had been excluded from the process of selecting new faculty and they felt that was a serious problem."

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Supreme Court strikes down
parental notification law

By Kathy Palen

Baptist Press
6/29/90

WASHINGTON (BP)--The Supreme Court has struck down a Minnesota law requiring minors to notify both parents before obtaining an abortion. But the court also said such laws are constitutional if they include a judicial bypass provision.

The high court split 5-4 on both parts of its June 25 decision in Hodgson v. Minnesota. Justice John Paul Stevens wrote for the majority -- which also included Justices William J. Brennan Jr., Thurgood Marshall, Harry A. Blackmun and Sandra Day O'Connor -- that held the Minnesota statute unconstitutional.

Requiring a pregnant minor to notify both parents is "not reasonably related to legitimate state interests," Stevens said.

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Although part of the majority voting to strike down the abortion restriction, O'Connor joined the court's four other members in upholding the two-parent notification requirement as long as the law gives minors the opportunity to ask a judge to waive that requirement.

O'Connor -- along with Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist and Justices Byron R. White, Antonin Scalia and Anthony M. Kennedy -- held the addition of a judicial bypass option corrects any constitutional problems contained within the two-parent notification requirement.

In an effort to show how divided the court is over abortion-related issues, Scalia outlined an analysis of the justices' opinions in the Minnesota case, as well as in a related Ohio case. He said those opinions show:

- One justice holds two-parent notification is unconstitutional without judicial bypass, but constitutional with bypass.
- Four justices hold two-parent notification is constitutional with or without bypass.
- Four justices hold two-parent notification is unconstitutional with or without bypass, although they apply two different standards.
- Six justices hold one-parent notification with bypass is constitutional, although for two different sets of reasons.
- Three justices hold one-parent notification with bypass is unconstitutional.

In the Ohio case -- Ohio v. Akron Center for Reproductive Health -- a 6-3 court upheld a state law that requires physicians to notify one of a minor's parents before performing an abortion on that minor.

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WMU is 'conscience' of church
and convention, HMB leader says

By Susan Todd

Baptist Press
6/29/90

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Women and girls in Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union are in many ways "the conscience of our convention," a Southern Baptist Home Mission Board vice president said.

Margrette Stevenson, vice president of services, spoke to more than 1,600 women attending WMU conferences at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center June 24.

The women should create "spheres of influence" within their churches and then use that influence to take the message of missions to the very heart of the church, she said.

"In many ways, you are the conscience of our convention. You draw us to where we ought to be," Stevenson said.

WMU "should not be an appendix to the church," she said. "It should not be an addendum or even an auxiliary to the church. It must be the heart and conscience of the church.

"I'm afraid far too long we have stood outside the building, and we have surfaced about three or four times a year," she said.

"It is as if we stand outside and wrap a message around a stone and throw it inside hoping someone will see it and do something about missions. But I'm here to tell you ladies, that's not the way we get things done in the church. We get the message to the center of the church, but we get it there because we carry it in our hearts and go to the center of the church."

Stevenson encouraged the conference participants to take initiative in the cause of missions.

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"Don't wait to be discovered. That's Hollywood," she said. "Volunteer! I'm talking service. I'm not talking about ordination. I'm not talking about deacons. I'm not talking about pastoral ministries. I'm talking about getting missions where it will be effective and a systemic part of the church."

Despite varied opinions on the role of women in the church, there should be no limits or restrictions that would keep a woman from carrying the missions message to the heart of the church, Stevenson said.

She encouraged the women to not let others' opinions keep them from doing the jobs they know they can do.

"We fail to soar and reach the heights of what we can do because we take an opinion -- one direction," said Stevenson. "We give up and decide (others are) right."

Stevenson related the story of an eaglet raised as a chicken. When the eaglet grew and first saw another eagle, the eaglet longed to fly. But the chickens surrounding him told him it was impossible, because he was a chicken.

"He lived and died as a chicken," she said.

"The story may be humorous, but I'm afraid it's far too familiar and intimate to far too many women," Stevenson said. Too many women have the attitude of "I'm just a little chicken," she said.

"It could be the story of your life and mine, if we let it."

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Canadian Southern Baptists
appoint first missionaries

By Donald D. Martin

Baptist Press
6/29/90

EDMONTON, Alberta (BP)--The Canadian Convention of Southern Baptists appointed its first foreign missionaries June 21 to work in Nigeria as members of the Southern Baptist missionary force.

Morris and Nancy Tenkink, of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, will work as agricultural specialists in the Nigerian state of Gongola as career missionaries with the U.S.-based Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

"The appointment service was a highlight for me," said Mark Harvey, a missionary candidate consultant for the Foreign Mission Board. "Many compared this to the first missionaries sent out by the early Baptists and the Southern Baptists in the 1800s."

Harvey said he could feel a charge of excitement as Canadian Southern Baptists met for their annual convention and the appointment service.

"Everyone was so up, even at a time when each news broadcast brought more discouraging reports of Quebec's threat to secede from Canada," he said.

Allen Schmidt, executive director of Canadian Southern Baptists, stressed during his speech at the appointment service that the threat of the country's breakup should not distract Canadian Southern Baptists from their global perspective of missions. Polls show nearly 60 percent of Quebec's citizens would vote for political sovereignty.

Already 11 more Canadian Southern Baptists have submitted applications to the Foreign Mission Board to become missionaries, Harvey said.

The relationship between Canadian Southern Baptists and the Foreign Mission Board is one of a kind, said Don Kammerdiener, executive vice president of the board, who helped write the mission agreement.

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Basically, Canadian Southern Baptists will name and then support their foreign missionaries by providing salaries, pensions and some expenses. Foreign Mission Board support will include housing on the mission field, medical and life insurance and travel costs to and from the field.

Canadian missionary applications are first reviewed by Canadian Southern Baptists. Those approved are sent to the Foreign Mission Board's personnel department. The personnel department then brings its recommendations to the executive board of the Canadian convention for appointment or rejection of missionary candidates. If a candidate is turned down by the Foreign Mission Board, the Canadian convention may request a review.

Once through the appointment process, Canadian missionaries will be supervised like all foreign missionaries of the Southern Baptist Convention. They will attend orientation at the board's Missionary Learning Center in Rockville, Va., study in missionary language school and be assigned to overseas Southern Baptist mission organizations.

The mission agreement also opens other Foreign Mission Board programs to Canadian Southern Baptists, such as the International Service Corps program.

The Foreign Mission Board and Canadian Southern Baptists entered the partnership to help the Canadian convention eventually develop its own independent foreign mission force, said Kammerdiener. At five-year intervals, the two groups will review the progress of the agreement.

The Canadian Convention of Southern Baptists counts more than 5,000 members in 105 churches.

HOUSE MAIL

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