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-- BAPTIST PRESS

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February 18, 1993

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EDITORS' NOTE: The following update replaces a story with the same headline in (BP) dated 2/17/93.

Agee withdraws candidacy
for Southern Seminary post

By Herb Hollinger

Baptist Press
2/18/93

SHAWNEE, Okla. (BP)--Saying the interview process had been compromised and voicing a strong personal conviction he should remain at Oklahoma Baptist University, President Bob R. Agee withdrew his name from consideration for the presidency of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

Agee was one of four men on the "short list" of candidates, according to an Associated Baptist Press Feb. 11 story, to replace Roy Honeycutt, who is retiring. The others are Timothy George, dean of Samford University's Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Ala.; Richard Land, executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission in Nashville; and R. Albert Mohler Jr., editor of the Georgia Baptist newsjournal The Christian Index.

But both Agee and Wayne Allen, chairman of Southern's board of trustees, were sharply critical of the ABP article which acknowledged the search committee did not publicly divulge the names but said "the names have been circulated widely on the Louisville, Ky., campus and beyond in recent weeks."

In his letter of withdrawal, Agee said "the action by ABP has compromised the interview process and creates a very difficult atmosphere which can be potentially harmful to the current places of service of the candidates."

"The decision of ABP to run the story the week of the interviews and to report the story with the tone used, in my opinion, has compromised the process and has the potential to be harmful or hurtful to the OBU family as well as to the candidate chosen for the post," Agee said.

Allen, a pastor in suburban Memphis, Tenn., told Baptist Press he was "very, very angry at ABP."

"It is regrettable that the unChristian, inappropriate, inconsiderate and unprofessional account of Mark Wingfield (the writer of the story) and ABP has caused harm to the presidential search process and has potentially harmed one of our finest university presidents -- Bob Agee -- and one of our great Baptist universities, OBU," Allen said.

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"In my opinion, no responsible journalist, nor ethical news media would publish unconfirmed rumors. ABP has proven itself to be nothing more than a rumor mill," Allen said.

In a statement to Baptist Press, Greg Warner, executive editor of ABP, based in Jacksonville, Fla., said ABP "sympathizes with Dr. Agee for any discomfort he or his institution suffered because his candidacy became public knowledge. Hopefully the committee members would not have included him on a list of finalists, and he would not have agreed to an interview, if he was not a serious candidate. And hopefully, Dr. Agee and the search committee will not let public knowledge of his candidacy divert them from following God's will as they determine it to be.

"But Mark Wingfield and ABP have not breached any confidences, compromised the search process or printed unconfirmed rumors, as alleged by Dr. Agee and chairman Allen," Warner said. "Despite the candidates' preference for confidentiality, the identity of the four finalists was well known within the seminary community. ABP could not have printed the list if it had not already been divulged by seminary trustees, staff, alumni and some of the candidates themselves."

Wingfield, in a statement to Baptist Press, added, "Since Dr. Agee's withdrawal, some trustees have assigned blame for the disclosure to seminary faculty and staff, interpreting my use of 'seminary sources' to mean only faculty and staff. That is not the case. 'Seminary sources' as used in this story encompasses a broad range of people both under the employment of the seminary and not employed by the seminary."

Agee complimented the search committee, saying it "acted in a very responsible and professional manner and I deeply appreciate the courtesies it has extended to the candidates." One of those, he said, was a promise of confidentiality in the early process. ABP's premature release of the names forced him to resolve the issue earlier than he wanted to, for the sake of OBU, Agee said.

Agee voiced concern that premature news releases about the "short list" might be disruptive to the OBU campus. He learned of the ABP story when a friend in Nashville faxed him the story shortly after it was released. Agee faxed a letter of withdrawal to Allen Feb. 16.

"I was never contacted by ABP, no one ever called to verify anything," Agee said.

Warner defended the news service's disclosure, saying "in this day and time, denominational search committees seldom enjoy the luxury of full confidentiality. Southern Baptists are keenly interested in those being chosen to lead their agencies. The only question is, who has a right to know that information?

"Should it be controlled by a privileged inner circle, as chairman Allen seems to suggest? Or do Baptists in general, who under Baptist polity ultimately govern denominational affairs, have a right to know the important business of their agencies before they become accomplished facts?

"Baptist journalists are one of the few advocates of the Baptist right to know. It is not an unChristian role we serve, but a high calling which we accept without apology."

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Draper urging cautious reaction
by SBC leaders to WMU changes

By Art Toalston

Baptist Press
2/18/93

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptist leaders should be "very careful how we react" to the recent Woman's Missionary Union decision to broaden its work beyond Southern Baptist Convention entities, James T. Draper Jr. is advising fellow SBC leaders.

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Draper, president of the Sunday School Board, confirmed in a Feb. 17 interview with Baptist Press that he voiced his caution to the Inter-Agency Council of chief executives of the SBC's 19 entities and in a Jan. 21 letter to Don Kammerdiener, interim president of the Foreign Mission Board.

Draper released a copy of the letter to Baptist Press during the interview.

WMU's executive board, in an unprecedented vote Jan. 10 in Alabama, adopted a vision statement, eight "core values" and six action statements, or "recommendations," the latter including a commitment to provide prayer support and resources for any Southern Baptist group involved in missions "at their request."

Draper, in his letter, noted two contrasting images that emerged from WMU's deliberations:

-- "In the original statement released by the WMU (the vision statement, core values and recommendations), it appeared that they were going to promote aggressively the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship mission offerings as well as other potential mission opportunities." The CBF, which was not specifically mentioned in the WMU documents, is a two-year-old organization founded by Baptist moderates as an alternative to the conservative-led SBC.

-- "However, in subsequent statements (WMU Executive Director) Dellanna O'Brien has carefully disavowed the report in Associated Baptist Press" of an emerging tie between WMU and the CBF. And WMU has stated it will not be promoting Cooperative Baptist Fellowship offerings or providing funding to the organization, he said in the interview with Baptist Press.

Draper then stated his counsel to FMB leaders:

"I believe we have to take everything in context at this time and be very careful how we react. It is my judgment that we need to wait and see how things are really fleshed out in the implementing of what they have said before judgment is passed. I hope that none of our agencies or institutions will have a knee-jerk reaction to this situation. My own attitude is going to be one of wait and see what they actually do. Should they make a decision to disassociate in some way with the Southern Baptist Convention and embrace other groups more specifically, then we may have further decisions to make."

Draper continued in the letter, "I guess what I am saying is that we need to look at the whole thing in context and allow time to see what develops before we take action that would precipitate a crisis."

In the interview with Baptist Press, Draper added he believes SBC agencies should "ask WMU to continue to promote Southern Baptist missions opportunities with the same vigor and enthusiasm they always have, and then see if they respond positively to do what they've always done."

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Indian judge dismisses charges
against medical missionary

By Donald D. Martin

Baptist Press
2/18/93

BANGALORE, India (BP)--A judge in the southern Indian state of Karnataka has cleared a Southern Baptist medical missionary at Bangalore Baptist Hospital of criminal charges alleging she violated the state's factory labor laws.

In 1988, union workers, angered over personnel cuts at the hospital, filed a criminal complaint against missionary Rebekah Naylor, who was the hospital's medical director at that time.

The complaint said Naylor, a surgeon from Forth Worth, Texas, broke a law that protects factory workers when she laid off 39 hospital employees in 1988. The prosecuting attorney claimed the hospital was subject to the same laws which govern India's factories and the handling of their labor forces.

For the past four years, as the case moved through India's court system, Naylor faced the possibility of a prison sentence.

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But when the case reached Karnataka's high court, a judge ruled the prosecution had no basis for its complaint. He said it was "ridiculous for anyone to ever think that a hospital was a factory," reported missionary Clyde Meador, associate to the area director for southern Asia.

The judge strongly disagreed with "the idea that such a prosecution should ever have been pursued, and he categorically declared Dr. Naylor innocent," Meador said. "We're thankful that she and the hospital have been vindicated."

In the late 1980s Naylor turned the medical directorship over to Stanley Macaden, an Indian Christian. In 1989 the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board transferred hospital management to Christian Medical College in Vellore. Southern Baptists still own the property, but their financial support is phasing out.

Naylor, who has worked at the hospital more than 19 years, is the only remaining missionary working at the hospital, which opened in 1973. She is now a senior surgeon at the 123-bed facility.

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CLC, others write Clinton against
Vatican tie; BJC refuses to sign on

Baptist Press
2/18/93

By Tom Strode

WASHINGTON (BP)--The Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission and the National Association of Evangelicals, joined by three denominations, have reiterated their call for an end to diplomatic relations with the Vatican in a letter to President Bill Clinton.

The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, as well as several other organizations which publicly opposed President Ronald Reagan's appointment of an ambassador to the Vatican in 1984, chose not to sign onto the letter.

The joint letter asked Clinton not to "perpetuate the Reagan-Bush policy" of appointing a Vatican ambassador.

"Such appointments, which establish formal ties between the state and one particular church, violate the time-honored constitutional principle of church-state separation," the letter said. "The Vatican, though in form a civil state, is in substance the Holy See of the Roman Catholic Church, an ecclesiastical entity."

The CLC and NAE were joined on the Feb. 15 letter by the Church of the Brethren, Presbyterian Church of the USA and the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Eight other groups were invited to sign onto the letter. The invitation was issued in a Dec. 23 letter from Richard Land, the CLC's executive director, and Robert Dugan, director of the NAE's office of public affairs.

In a Dec. 2 letter, the CLC had asked Clinton, who is a member of a Southern Baptist church, to rescind diplomatic relations with the Vatican. The NAE mailed a similar request to the president Dec. 23.

The Baptist Joint Committee, National Council of Churches and Americans United for Separation of Church and State said they would not join on the letter. AU informed NAE it would not sign on because it already had sent a similar letter to Clinton. The AU letter was mailed several days after the CLC's.

In a Jan. 4 letter, BJC Executive Director James Dunn informed Land and Dugan his organization would not join the letter effort though his organization agreed with them "110 percent that such an appointment violates the core principles of the establishment clause."

"We are considering various options for communicating our concerns to the Clinton Administration at the appropriate time," Dunn said in his letter. "We have not yet decided which approach is most likely to be successful."

The BJC will make sure its efforts complement those of the CLC and NAE, Dunn wrote.

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Attempts by Baptist Press to learn if the BJC has expressed its concerns to Clinton were unsuccessful. Dunn is handling the issue, BJC associate general counsel Brent Walker said Feb. 18, but Dunn was out of town for the remainder of the week and unavailable for comment.

"We are pleased to join with the National Association of Evangelicals and these other organizations in calling on President Clinton" to refuse to appoint an ambassador to the Vatican, the CLC's Land said. "I am saddened that the Baptist Joint Committee, among others, would not join in this effort.

"I wonder when the 'appropriate time' will be? Further, why was it appropriate to act publicly against President Reagan's appointment in 1984 but not against President Clinton's impending appointment in 1993? The only difference is that in 1984 there was a non-Southern Baptist, Republican president and in 1993 there is a Southern Baptist, Democratic president.

"Surely, standing watch at the wall of separation is just as important today as it was in 1984. We believe it is always the 'appropriate time' to defend church-state separation," Land said.

"There are some groups who have been with us in the past -- and still agree with us in principle -- but don't want to be perceived as ganging up on Clinton," the NAE's Dugan said. "It's too bad they perceive it this way, because our motivation is rooted in principle, not politics."

In 1984, the BJC joined nearly every Protestant group in the United States in opposing Reagan's appointment of William Wilson as the first ambassador to the Vatican. Dunn, Dugan, then-Southern Baptist Convention President Jimmy Draper and representatives from the NCC, AU, Seventh-day Adventists, Church of Christ and American Civil Liberties Union testified against the proposal at Wilson's Senate confirmation hearing.

Five organizations did not respond to the invitation, a NAE spokesman said. They are the American Baptist Churches in the USA; National Baptist Convention of America; National Baptist Convention, USA; Progressive National Baptist Convention and Unitarian Universalist Association. The four Baptist denominations are members of the Baptist Joint Committee.

In the joint letter, the five groups asked the president to take a position similar to that of President Kennedy, who as a candidate in 1960 said it would be unconstitutional to appoint an ambassador to the Vatican and would not benefit either political party. "We concur with our first Roman Catholic president," the letter said.

The SBC Inter-Agency Council, which consists of heads of the denomination's agencies, passed a resolution in January opposing continued diplomatic relations with the Vatican.

Messengers to the annual Southern Baptist Convention meeting have opposed United States-Vatican ties for more than 50 years. They passed such resolutions in 1939, 1940, 1942, 1969, 1984 and 1986.

The SBC expressed its opposition to Reagan's 1984 appointment through the BJC's efforts as well as resolutions of opposition passed by the Executive Committee, Foreign Mission Board and its agency heads.

The SBC, a member of the BJC since its inception in the 1940s, severed official ties to the religious liberty organization in 1992. The SBC added religious liberty to the CLC's ethics assignment in 1990.

Denominational and religious liberty organizations filed suit challenging the 1984 appointment. A federal court ruled in May 1985 those bringing the suit did not have legal standing. A court of appeals affirmed the decision and the Supreme Court refused to accept the case.

Volunteerism up at
Home Mission Board

By David Winfrey

ATLANTA (BP)--More than 71,700 Southern Baptist adults, college students and youth group members volunteered their time in 1992 to assist Home Mission Board-related mission work, according to an HMB report.

The figure represents a 3 percent increase compared to 1991, when 69,633 volunteers served in Christian ministry, evangelism and church growth efforts through HMB connections and state partnerships.

Volunteers' work in 1992 resulted in at least 11,432 professions of faith and 779 decisions to be involved in church-related work, said the report, prepared by the board's volunteer division.

The increase in workers shows volunteer coordinators and consultants are communicating the needs of missionaries and other field staff, said Don Hammonds, HMB volunteer division director.

"Even so, there are 40 percent-plus of our needs that aren't being filled," he said. The department averages more than 1,600 requests for adult volunteers who will serve at least a year in roles ranging from missionary assistant to mission church music director, he said.

The number of Mission Service Corps volunteers, adults serving more than one year, increased 13 percent from 1,428 to 1,611, the report said. The number of summer college missionaries also grew, from 1,285 to 1,455, according to the report.

Meanwhile, the number of mission youth group workers also increased from 30,509 to 31,626.

Of the 71,740 volunteers in 1992, 82 percent, or 58,673, were short-term volunteers for less than a year.

People interested in volunteer opportunities can call their Baptist association, their state Baptist convention's volunteer director or the Home Mission Board's volunteer division at 1 (800) HMB-VOLS.

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Clintons attend First Baptist
for first time since inauguration By Tom Strode

Baptist Press
2/18/93

WASHINGTON (BP)--President and Mrs. Clinton attended First Baptist Church of Washington for morning worship Feb. 14 for the first time since his inauguration.

Both the president and his wife, Hillary, were present, although their daughter, Chelsea, was not, said Everett Goodwin, pastor of First Baptist Church. He was not informed of the reason for her absence, Goodwin said.

The president is a member of Immanuel Baptist Church in Little Rock, Ark., while his wife and daughter are members of First United Methodist Church in the same city. First Baptist is dually aligned with the Southern Baptist Convention and American Baptist Churches in the USA.

Goodwin said he was aware the Clintons might be at First Baptist Feb. 14, but their attendance was not confirmed until about 8:30 that morning.

While he recognized the Clintons' presence during the normal time of welcome in the service, First Baptist normally seeks with high government office holders to "not make them feel like they stand out," the pastor said.

"We feel that the reason such a person comes to church" is the same reason any other person does, Goodwin said. They are "seeking spiritual strength and guidance, to be with other Christians. ... "

The Clinton family, as well as the family of Vice President Al Gore, attended an inaugural eve prayer service in the church's sanctuary Jan. 19. The service was arranged by the church and the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

The Clintons attended St. John's Episcopal Church Feb. 7. St. John's is only a block from the White House.

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President and Mrs. Carter were members of First Baptist during his 1977-81 term in the White House. Goodwin became pastor of the church in the fall of 1981, several months after Carter left office.

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Crucifixion central in life
and message of T.W. Hunt

By Ferrell Foster

Baptist Press
2/18/93

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (BP)--T.W. Hunt painted a picture with words, presenting the ghastly details of the crucifixion of Christ. Then he crafted the amazing story of Christ's resurrection and appearances to his followers. The Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's prayer consultant told the stories during a two-day conference in Illinois on "The Mind of Christ," based on Philippians 2:5-11.

Hunt, 63, produced the material out of his own 33-year pilgrimage with Christ, originally not intending to share it with others. But in 1975 he did and was "besieged by invitations."

Since then, Hunt said, "God has really magnified the message," as he has presented the material across the country.

The crucifixion is central, both in Hunt's life and in the "Mind of Christ" material.

There is a price to pay for following Christ, Hunt said in an interview. "That's why God took me to the cross so early," he added, referring to the initial stages of his spiritual pilgrimage.

"When I knew what Jesus paid, I knew that nothing I could pay would equal the price he paid," Hunt stated. "This is why I want to share the crucifixion."

Most people today do not know what the crucifixion was like, Hunt added.

Therefore, in his presentation, he told that story in graphic detail, using modern scientific information to describe why such a death was so painful.

Hunt said the greatest need he sees in the church today is a "consciousness that Christ is the bridegroom" of the church, and that involves his Lordship. "I think we've lost track of the center," he said. And the center is Christ.

"We consciously need to turn to him."

"Our pastors get deflected onto side issues," said Hunt, who described himself as an ordinary layman. The side issues, as he sees it, are methods.

"We have to follow God's method of self-revelation, and his method of self-revelation is Christ," Hunt stated.

Christians get off course because "we don't want to trust the unseen," Hunt said. "It's a lot easier to trust self."

Focusing on Christ is important because Christ's second coming to earth is drawing closer. "Therefore every Christian needs to examine his life," Hunt said, to make sure his or her entire life is under the Lordship of Christ.

"I think the Lord is going to raise up an army of prophets to call for the Lordship of Christ" as the second coming approaches, he said.

When Hunt developed "The Mind of Christ" material, he said he never expected to share it publicly. That changed in the mid-1970s when he shared it with one group, then other churches began to ask that he present it to them as well.

Now Hunt is preparing the material in book form. Broadman Press will publish it in July 1994. And the Sunday School Board is working on a video and study course to accompany the book.

"As I have been writing the book I've spent many, many long hours in prayer," Hunt said. "I have felt God wants to use this to prepare the bride of Christ for the wedding of Christ," in other words, his return.

God "wants the church to look to the Lord Jesus. He wants to use the message of the book to point the church back to her bridegroom."

Hunt has felt called to this purpose, even though he has "always felt" the job was too big. "Why did God choose me? I have no earthly idea."

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Sermons should relay more
than information, prof says

By Pat Cole

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Transformation -- not merely sharing information -- should be the goal of preaching, according to a Southern Baptist preaching professor.

"To know about something is not always to know something," said Charles B. Bugg, Carl E. Bates professor of Christian preaching at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Many preachers work hard to develop extensive points and subpoints and encourage listeners to take notes, said Bugg in a faculty address at the Louisville, Ky., school.

However, Bugg noted "to write the message of a sermon on a sheet of paper is infinitely easier than to write it into the depths of our lives and to live out of its reality for us."

Sermons that impart voluminous amounts of information have value as teaching methods, particularly in an age of increasing biblical illiteracy, Bugg said. Yet he emphasized there must be an additional element present in order for lives to be transformed: "We are dealing here with the mystery, the divine dimension, the work of the Holy Spirit of God. One day we are listening to the words of some preacher and suddenly transforming insight comes and the words become the word for the living of our days and nights."

Bugg, a pastor for 22 years prior to joining the seminary faculty in 1989, urged preachers to study how Jesus used images in his parables as a means to "trigger transformation" in his hearers: "These images do something that information alone may not do. It gives people a new picture to hang in the gallery of their minds. It allows them to see something as well as to hear something, to behold God with eyes as well as ears, to experience the God who gives new perspective both to the events and to the emotions of our lives."

Expository preaching today often fails to "communicate the experience" of Scripture, Bugg said. "To call the Bible a book is to do it a profound disservice. In one sense it is an anthology -- it sings, shouts, it laments, it warns, it comforts. It is prose and poetry, history and harbinger of things yet to be, clear and cryptic. The word of God both says something and does something, and sensitive preachers pay attention to both event and experience."

To "expose" a biblical text is the "heart and soul of the preaching event," Bugg said. He suggested preachers keep three interrelated questions in mind when examining a passage of Scripture:

-- What does the text say? To answer this question, preachers should use all the linguistic and critical tools at their disposal, he advised.

-- What does the text say to me? Preachers, Bugg stressed, must approach the Bible not just to prepare a sermon but to see what a passage says to their own lives.

-- What does the biblical text say through me as preacher to the lives of the listeners? Preachers have to consider the needs, longings, loves, hatreds, fears and hopes of their congregations, Bugg said.

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