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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #7
Nashville, Tennessee 372
(615) 244-23
Herb Hollinger, Vice President
Fax (615) 742-86
CompuServe ID# 70420

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Martin King, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 898-7522
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 333 N. Washington, Dallas, Texas 75246-1798, Telephone (214) 828-5232
NASHVILLE 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va., 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON Tom Strode, Chief, 400 North Capitol St., #594, Washington, D.C. 20001, Telephone (202) 638-3223

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EDITORS' NOTE: The Dallas Morning News has granted Baptist Press permission to reprint the following article, stipulating that the article appear in Baptist Press as it appeared in the newspaper.

Conservative leader questions
trustees over Dilday firing

By Daniel Cattau

Baptist Press
3/24/94

DALLAS (BP)--Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's fundamentalist-dominated board of trustees drew flak March 23 from a prominent fellow conservative, who said the school's president was fired with "little, if any, compassion."

The way Russell H. Dilday was dismissed recently only fuels the belief that conservatives are "unloving and mean-spirited," said Jack Graham, a Southwestern graduate and now senior pastor of the 12,000-member Prestonwood Baptist Church in far North Dallas.

Graham, 43, called for "clear biblical thinking" in the strife-torn Southern Baptist Convention. To that end, he said he would begin meeting with other younger pastors to develop fresh approaches for the denomination.

"I don't want to be disruptive," he said. "I'm trying to bring some peace in the middle of the storm."

T. Bob Davis, secretary of the seminary board and a Prestonwood member, rejected Graham's criticism.

"I'm disappointed in his taking a political stance when the board has acted in good judgment," the Dallas dentist said.

Trustees and Dilday were "stalemated" over the direction of the seminary, Davis said, and the president chose "removal for himself" when he refused their request to retire.

In a statement released to The Dallas Morning News, Graham painted a different picture.

The seminary's board of trustees, he said, "showed very little, if any, compassion" when it ended Dilday's tenure of nearly 16 years March 9. He said Dilday had served Southwestern "with distinction."

Wayne L. Allen, a conservative trustee and Carrollton pastor who voted against firing Dilday, praised Graham's statement. It shows that not all fundamentalists agree with the board's behavior, he said.

"I think it's helping them see that there have been actions taken that aren't Christian," Allen said.

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He said he is going to ask the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee to investigate the board's actions.

Allen, who had fundamentalist backing as the losing candidate last year for the presidency of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, was the first leading conservative to break ranks with the trustees.

Dilday's firing has created an uproar throughout the 15.4-million-member convention and has been condemned by many of the seminary's 3,300 students and in unanimous faculty resolutions.

At first trustees refused to give any reasons for the surprise termination, and they changed the locks of Dilday's office immediately after the ouster. This week, the trustees accused Dilday of mismanagement -- an accusation he denied.

Dilday welcomed Graham's support.

"It's an expression of genuine courage and a reflection of integrity and character that I'm not surprised has come from Jack Graham," he said.

Davis, however, said Graham's statement may have been motivated by a personal friendship with Dilday.

Trustees also have cited friendship with Dilday as a factor in the recent resignation of Kenneth H. Cooper from the seminary's lay advisory and fund-raising agency. Cooper, the founder of aerobics, is also a member of Prestonwood.

In other developments March 23, Jeanne Grubbs, personnel manager of Grubbs Enterprise Inc., a Dallas-Fort Worth car dealership, announced her resignation from the advisory council. She also withdrew a pledge to the seminary.

"I understand Dr. Dilday was at first given no reason and only later accused of mismanagement and insubordination," she said. "This raises in my mind serious issues, both legal and ethical."

Late March 22, the seminary's theology faculty praised Dilday's administration as "highly effective." Earlier, the faculty of more than 100 issued a statement criticizing the dismissal and the "manner in which the action was carried out."

In his statement, Graham echoed those concerns.

"As a conservative pastor, and one who is highly identified with the conservative movement ... I feel this move does not serve the best interest in the cause of Christ, nor of the reputation of Bible-believing Christians."

He also said "the conservative movement in the SBC is ready for a new positioning of itself in terms of its mission and purpose."

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SWBTS faculty organizations
respond to Dilday firing

By Herb Hollinger

Baptist Press
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FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Faculty members at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary expressed resentment to the March 9 firing of President Russell H. Dilday Jr. and a trustee has appealed for an emergency session of the board of trustees to discuss the controversial action.

These are the latest developments in the wake of the Dilday firing which has created a growing controversy over why he was fired and the method used by the trustees.

In action taken the day after the firing, SWBTS general faculty members unanimously approved a letter to trustees which said "we do not concur with either the action taken by the (board) with regard to our president, nor the manner in which the action was carried out."

The statement was sent directly to each trustee, a faculty spokesman said, and it was believed it was being made generally available to other interested parties.

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"Regrettably, this was not carried out," the spokesman said in a release to news media. "Because of the spring break, members of the faculty did not realize that this information had not been made generally available until we returned to classes on March 21."

In a related matter, the faculty of the seminary's school of theology released a statement to news media March 23 affirming Dilday as an "excellent administrator who managed the seminary in a highly effective and successful manner."

The faculty statement also said Dilday's doctrinal stance was "completely consistent with the Baptist Faith and Message statement, which is the seminary's article of faith." The Baptist Faith and Message was adopted by the SBC in 1963.

"The theology faculty affirms (Dilday) for leading the seminary with a spirit of Christlikeness and a desire to be inclusive with regard to the finest theological and biblical perspectives represented in the SBC. We deeply regret his firing as president of the seminary."

Also, the Fort Worth Star-Telegram reported in its March 23 edition that Wayne Allen, seminary trustee and pastor of the First Baptist Church of Carrollton, Texas, sent a letter to other trustees calling for an emergency meeting to discuss Dilday's firing.

Allen asked Ralph W. Pulley Jr, board chairman and attorney from Dallas, to call the meeting so "we can sit as Christians and discuss the issues."

Allen also asked to have Dilday come to the meeting and to consider reinstating him as president until he chooses to retire.

Pulley was not immediately available for comment.

Allen was one of seven trustees who voted against the firing and disagreed strongly with the March 21 statement released by board members accusing Dilday of insubordination and mismanagement.

"It was absolutely absurd," Allen told the Fort Worth paper. "In my nine years on the board, that's the first time I've heard the word 'mismanagement' used in referring to Dr. Dilday.

"Let's be honest. The action taken against Dilday was because of the (conservative-moderate) denominational issue. It wasn't because he had not been a good administrator nor because of any far-out, liberalism that was going to taint the students," Allen said.

"Sure, there has been conflict because he didn't always choose to do what some of us might have wanted done, but you must admit he stayed within the policy."

Allen said he didn't think the uproar would blow over in a week or two, as some trustees think.

"There's no doubt in my mind that it's going to cost the seminary millions of dollars," Allen said.

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WMU board accepts gift,
reaffirms 1993 board action

By Susan Doyle

Baptist Press
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BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union executive board unanimously has reaffirmed its January 1993 decision to accept contributions to be used for WMU and related missions needs and has accepted a one-time gift of \$100,000 from the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

The coordinating council of the Baptist moderates' CBF approved the no-strings-attached gift at its February meeting in appreciation for WMU's contribution to world evangelization. WMU did not request and was not aware of the donation prior to the decision.

Although some SBC leaders, including Foreign Mission Board President Jerry Rankin, have suggested WMU not accept the gift, WMU joins the ranks of other Southern Baptist entities to receive money through CBF channels.

Rankin was traveling March 24 and could not be reached for comment.

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In the last three years, more than \$8.5 million has been given by Southern Baptists through the CBF to agencies of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The board's vote reaffirmed its January 1993 decision to accept contributions to be used for WMU and related missions needs. While WMU has always accepted gifts, the 1993 decision allows WMU to plan for and use gifts from those who want to express their support of WMU and WMU-related missions causes.

According to WMU board policy, the finance committee of the WMU executive board has the authority to receive any undesignated gifts on behalf of the board. However, since several board members have been elected to their positions since January 1993, the committee felt the entire board should be included in the decision.

"Despite our varying backgrounds and viewpoints, the WMU executive board has unusual unity," said Janet Hoffman, board member from Louisiana and chairman of the finance committee. "To us it is important to maintain that unity in order to keep missions as our primary focus.

"Given the significance and amount of the gift, we felt that new board members should have an explanation of the January 1993 board action," Hoffman said, "and that all board members should have the opportunity to discuss the matter."

Small group discussions were held by telephone conference calls prior to the vote. The 36-member board then voted by mail ballot to accept the gift and contribute it to the WMU VISION Fund. According to board policy, undesignated gifts are contributed to the VISION Fund, which was established in 1993 for WMU missions activities and projects not funded through other channels.

Board members also were united in their desire to reaffirm their earlier decision to take a stand for the cause of missions, not a political side within the convention.

"Missions has been and always will be WMU's only purpose for existence," said Dellanna O'Brien, national WMU executive director.

Throughout WMU's 106-year history, the 1.2-million member women's organization has promoted missions education and support in Southern Baptist churches. Since its beginning, the group has led Southern Baptists to raise more than \$2 billion to support Southern Baptist missions causes.

"It is significant to us that the money which has been given to WMU has come from Southern Baptists," said Carolyn Miller, national WMU president.

"WMU does not receive money from Southern Baptists through the Cooperative Program as do Southern Baptist Convention agencies. However, WMU does receive annual gifts of appreciation from the Home and Foreign Mission boards. Anytime we receive a gift in appreciation for our contribution in missions it is especially meaningful."

"We appreciate the gift and the fact that it has no strings attached," O'Brien said. "We appreciate the recognition of the value of missions education programs and materials we offer to Southern Baptists and even other evangelical Christians."

In its January 1993 action, the WMU executive board voted to follow the example of other Southern Baptist entities and work with other evangelical Christian groups by providing them missions education materials.

"The gift will enable us to fund several WMU-initiated projects which we believe will make a difference in God's kingdom," O'Brien said.

The money will be used for projects such as:

- funding WMU hunger-related projects which are planned through 1995.
- initiating a Christian women's job corps program which will help women who are caught in poverty to acquire marketable job skills so they can then lead productive lives.
- implementing women's work in developing countries.

Although not available for comment March 24, Rankin previously had told Baptist Press, "We are still partners with them" regardless of the decision WMU makes. "We still appreciate all that they do in missions education and promotion and prayer support. It would be unthinkable for us to sever that relationship regardless of what they do. We are very dependent on their partnership."

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Rankin recounted in the previous interview, "I asked them to consider not accepting the funds and thereby send an unequivocal message to Southern Baptists of their commitment to the Foreign Mission Board and the Home Mission Board."

Trustee chairman John Jackson, a pastor in California, told Baptist Press March 24, "I believe Dr. Rankin has stated the Foreign Mission Board position well. I'll stand by that."

FMB trustee second vice chairman Leroy "Skip" Smith, associate pastor of spiritual development at Sagemont Baptist Church in Houston, said March 18, "Individual board members, perhaps, have stated individual opinions on this subject. But, in discussions I've had with other trustees, the feeling is that we should wait for our president to evaluate the situation and make a recommendation and that, additionally, we should take no action until the Executive Committee completes its study on the question of gifts from CBF."

The SBC Executive Committee approved a motion at its February meeting for its officers and staff to study the impact of CBF funds received by SBC entities and recommend "the acceptance or rejection of said funds" at the Executive Committee's June meeting just prior to the annual SBC meeting in Orlando.

Smith added, "Of course, we would have to discuss any motion made by a trustee at a board meeting (of the FMB trustees). But I feel we shouldn't address this until we know all the facts and the ramifications. We don't want simplistic answers."

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Art Toalston contributed to this story.

Harry Piland to join
staff of First, Dallas

Baptist Press
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NASHVILLE (BP)--Harry Piland, director of the Baptist Sunday School Board's Bible teaching-reaching division, will become associate pastor/minister of education at the 25,000-member First Baptist Church of Dallas beginning May 29.

Piland, 65, will conclude his duties as division director April 30. He said he began almost a year ago to consider returning to a church staff position, reducing travel and having more time with his family.

"The word 'retire' is not in my vocabulary," Piland said. "I will continue to serve the Lord as long as I am physically, mentally and emotionally capable. My sadness in leaving my position is tempered by the excitement and anticipation of serving Christ in a capacity I deeply love.

"I will continue to be the biggest supporter of the Baptist Sunday School Board, its literature and its ministries," Piland continued. "I welcome the opportunity to maintain a close and warm relationship with the board."

BSSB President James T. Draper Jr. said Piland "has been 'Mr. Sunday School' for Southern Baptists. His contribution to the BSSB and to Southern Baptists is incalculable and incomparable. We are deeply indebted to him for his dedicated and visionary leadership over these 16 years and are excited about the future as we build upon the foundation he led us to lay.

"Now that he has reached age 65 and sees the need for fewer travel demands in his schedule and more time with his family, he is moving into a new assignment. Carol Ann and I are praying for Harry and Pat as they begin this new era of their lives serving with the great First Baptist Church of Dallas, Texas. He will continue to be available to the BSSB to lead conferences and promote this ministry," Draper said.

Gene Mims, vice president for the church growth group, said when Piland approached him several months ago about returning to a church staff, they agreed he should stay long enough to guide a division reorganization and a process for continuous improvement of Sunday school literature.

Mims described Piland as "one of God's most loving and gracious servants. He has been one of the strongest influences in my own life as a mentor, friend and colleague.

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Before searching for a new division director, Mims said "we will look at the Bible teaching-reaching division with its leadership as soon as possible and chart the course and direction of its work. Then we will look for a division director."

Piland joined the board in 1978 after serving five years as minister of education at First Baptist Church of Houston. Earlier, he held similar positions at University and James Avenue Baptist churches in Fort Worth, Texas, and Hyde Park Baptist Church in Austin, Texas. He returned briefly to First Baptist in Houston in 1983 before rejoining the board several months later.

During Piland's tenure as leader of the Bible teaching program, enrollment in Southern Baptist Sunday schools has increased by more than 900,000, from 7.3 million to 8.2 million.

"At this time in my life and ministry, God is calling me back to the local church, my first love," Piland told the staff of the Bible teaching-reaching division March 23.

"I will miss working with the incredibly gifted Bible teaching-reaching division and the church growth group staffs more than I can adequately express. I will greatly miss serving in ministry with the more than 38,000 Southern Baptist Convention churches, each of which I profoundly respect and deeply love."

O.S. Hawkins, pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas, said: "As Dr. Piland led the fastest growing Sunday school in the nation in the 1970s in Houston, we look forward to his leading us to new heights and a new beginning here in Dallas. Through his years of service with our Sunday School Board he has been a denominational servant in the truest and most noble sense of the word. His name is synonymous with character and integrity."

Piland noted his daughter, son-in-law and three grandsons attend First Baptist in Dallas.

A Texas native, Piland holds the B.A. degree from the University of Texas at Austin and master and doctor of religious education degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth. He and his wife, Pat, are the parents of one son, David, and a daughter, Vicki Wilson.

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The text of Piland's March 23 statement to the BSSB Bible teaching-reaching division is available in the SBCNet News Room.

**Adult children can conquer
cyclical family dysfunctions**

By Terri Lackey

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3/24/94

EULESS, Texas (BP)--The cyclical nature of dysfunctions can be an unwitting contributor to a life of poor relationships, a leader in the field of support group materials said.

Adult children commonly pass on to their families and relationships what they learn from their parents, Kay Moore, design editor for Sunday School Board support group materials, told participants in the national conference of Recovery and Spiritual Awakening in Euless, Texas.

That can be good if they learn love, support and praise, she said. But what if they learn criticism, distrust and insecurity?

"Children learn what they live. Our family of origins affects us in every relationship that we have. Parental modeling is very strong," she said while teaching the LIFE Support Group Series course, "Breaking the Cycle of Hurtful Family Experiences."

Parents are essentially modeling the characteristics of God in the ways they treat their children, Moore said. "That is what children are learning from us."

And, what they learn can affect them in every area of their lives, she said, giving as two fictitious examples, Chris and Joe.

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Chris was raised with much love, affirmation, security, praise and support. He was disciplined consistently. In his adult life, he was not afraid to take risks or propose new projects at work. When he was promoted to manager, he was very affirming and fair.

Joe was constantly berated and criticized by his parents. They always compared him to his other siblings who were better than he was in school work and athletics. Joe grew up with an innate sense that something was wrong with him. At work, Joe was insecure with and critical of his employees. At home, he was competitive and controlling. He rarely affirmed his wife or spoke to her affectionately.

"His actions were not intentional in any way; he just learned what he was taught," Moore said.

"We have a strong tendency to emulate our parents, good or bad. We relate to people like our parents related to us," she said.

"This course is not about parent bashing or blaming our parents. It's about learning to understand what happened, and breaking the cycle so that you don't pass on the negatives to your children or in your relationships," Moore said.

Moore said in all the support and discovery group workshops she has led in her church, First Baptist in Nashville, she has never "seen a relationship with a parent that did not improve in some way."

In one recent instance, a mother and daughter had not had civil communication for five years, Moore said. "After the daughter went through 'Making Peace (with Your Past)', they went on a pleasure trip together. Everything wasn't solved, but it got to the point where they could relate in a positive, healthy way and really have a good time together."

Because they are modeling the characteristics of God, parents should be particularly aware of how they relate to their children, Moore said.

An adult's relationship to God is usually similar to the relationship he or she had with parents, Moore said.

Consequently, if parents are verbally abusive, God is seen as difficult to please and angry. If parents are unaffectionate, emotionally distant or inactive, God seems unreachable, uncomfortable, distant and uninvolved. If parents are perfectionists, the adult child may feel he can't do enough to please God.

However, if parents are supportive and accepting, God is viewed as being positive and consistent.

"We can resolve to be the generation that stops the further passage of these negative patterns," Moore said. "We can be the generation that breaks the cycle."

Moore said breaking the cycle takes courage, understanding of the problem and willingness to take the appropriate steps to fix it.

"First, we need to forgive. This is absolutely core. To extend true forgiveness we have to be honest and objective."

Secondly, adults who want to break the cycle also must "learn healthy ways to respond to parents."

That includes seeing parents as people, not villains; seeing one's self as a conqueror, not a victim; developing a healthy sense of independence; and making godly choices, such as choosing to love and forgive.

The LIFE Support Group Series course, "Breaking the Cycle of Hurtful Family Experiences," is due for release in July 1994 and can be used as an entry-level course to beginning a support group ministry. It will be available in Baptist and Lifeway Christian stores or by calling the Board's toll-free customer service number at 1-800-458-2772.

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BSSB continuing research
to improve SS literature

By Chip Alford

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NASHVILLE (BP)--Committed to a new philosophy of "continuous improvement" in all its products and services, the Baptist Sunday School Board is continuing to research the types of changes and enhancements needed in its Sunday school literature.

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The latest project involved the field testing of newly designed youth Sunday school literature in 120 churches across the United States on March 13 and 20. According to Dick Gillespie, senior manager of the product management section in the BSSB's Bible teaching-reaching division, approximately 8,000 prototypes of improved Life and

Work curriculum materials for youth (teacher and member pieces) were sent along with questionnaires to churches representing both BSSB customers and non-users.

Sunday school teachers, department directors and students filled out questionnaires after using the new materials in their Sunday school classes. Information gained from the research will be used to further improve the materials.

"We wanted to see if we are on the right track with the changes we are making," Gillespie said. "It isn't enough to make changes or introduce new products every five or 10 years. We must constantly refine our products to make sure they are the best on the market."

The revamped Life and Work youth materials were developed earlier this year in response to information gained from a year of research conducted on the board's behalf by an independent Nashville firm.

More than 13,000 Southern Baptists were surveyed about their views on the strengths and weaknesses of BSSB literature and the types of changes and improvements needed. Data from that research was combined with information gained from 27 focus groups in Atlanta, Dallas and Charlotte in December which involved approximately 300 Sunday school teachers and class members.

The changes in the youth materials were designed to make them easier to use, more relevant and more focused on life application. If the reaction of several Sunday school teachers at First Baptist Church of Arlington, Texas -- one of the churches participating in the field testing -- is any indication, the improvements made in the youth Life and Work materials are a definite step in the right direction.

"The materials are more contemporary looking and they seem to be more related to the needs of youth," said Nancy Allmon, who teaches a 10th grade Sunday school class at the church.

Bob Fancher, another 10th grade teacher, agreed.

"The materials are easier to study and read and I like the additional use of color. The content has been weak in the past but it seems to be better in these materials. I like the way the application is woven into the lesson instead of just being added on at the end," he said.

Curt Grice, youth minister at the Arlington church, said several of his Sunday school department directors and teachers expressed appreciation for the improved materials and the opportunity for input in making them even better.

"I applaud the Sunday School Board for doing this research," he said, adding he won't buy literature from the BSSB simply because it is produced by a Southern Baptist publishing house.

"But if the Sunday School Board continues to provide materials that meet our needs, then I definitely want to give it first shot when it comes to buying our Sunday school literature," he said.

The youth Life and Work curriculum are not the only materials being improved by the Sunday School Board. Enhancements also are being made in the other two youth curriculum series (Bible Book and Convention Uniform) and in preschool, children's and adult Sunday school materials.

Revisions being made to children's Life and Work teachers books are being tested this month by Sunday school teachers participating in focus groups in Dallas, Atlanta and Charlotte, Gillespie said. Changes in adult Life and Work Sunday school literature will be field tested in churches in early June.

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