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11 HMB directors sign
'statement of dissent'

By Herb Hollinger

Baptist Press
9/8/94

WICHITA FALLS, Texas (BP)--Eleven directors of the Home Mission Board have signed a "statement of dissent" intended to disassociate themselves from a controversial document dealing with Catholics and evangelicals as well as from recent action by the mission agency's board concerning that document.

According to the group's spokesman, William G. Streich, Wichita Falls, Texas, the statement is in response to a motion passed Aug. 10 by HMB directors which affirmed both a resolution on Southern Baptists and Roman Catholics adopted by the SBC meeting in Orlando and a Resolution of Intent adopted by the HMB executive committee in June.

While the statement of dissent expressed support for the moral concerns addressed in the document, it said "sound doctrine must be protected and guarded beyond all else" and listed six grounds for dissent.

HMB board chairman Bob Curtis told Baptist Press as far as he is concerned the issue is closed. "The board has expressed itself. Those who disagree have now expressed themselves. It's time for us to move on and work together to reach our nation for Christ."

Larry Lewis, HMB president, disagrees with charges in the statement but agrees both sides have had ample opportunity to speak to the issues saying, "I feel it has been adequately dealt with."

The dissent statement charges the Aug. 10 action by HMB directors passed by a vote of 40-28, however, 12 abstentions means "half of the directors declined to support Dr. Lewis'" endorsement of the document.

In addition to Streich, other signers of the dissent included: David L. Carver Sr., Utah-Idaho convention; Carol R. Cearley, North Carolina; D. Walter Collett, Maryland; G. Wyndham Cook Jr., Arkansas; Manuel A. Galindo, Texas; Everett G. Geis Sr., Louisiana; Roger L. Gorby, Virginia; Ed Harrison Jr., Arkansas; M. Randall Jones, South Carolina; and John B. Thompson, Georgia.

The six grounds for dissent cited are:

(1) The document claims evangelicals and Catholics are on the same mission presenting the same gospel. A concept most Southern Baptists would reject.

(2) The document denies "grace alone" is essential for justification. Thereby conflicting with the SBC resolution this year and with the beliefs of most Southern Baptists.

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(3) Th document contains heretical statements admitted to by Dr. Lewis. Thereby prioritizing a socio-political agenda above that of sound doctrine.

(4) The document claims Catholicism is an "evangelically assertive" religion. Thereby conflicting with the stand of the HMB's interfaith witness department.

(5) The document contains confusing and controversial language concerning proselytizing, or "sheep stealing." Thereby creating concern and difficulties in missions at home and abroad.

(6) The document, while pointing out differences, claims Roman Catholicism as a legitimate form of discipleship. Thereby encouraging a born again believer to continue in Mariolatry, sacraments, transubstantiation, etc., in order to grow in Christ.

The dissent concludes by emphasizing "the underlying doctrine behind th Great Commission must remain pure, lest our mission be distorted. A zeal for missions becomes dangerous when doctrine is subordinated to any cause. By subordinating doctrine to cause, this document leads to unacceptable compromise which has been endorsed by the HMB."

Lewis said although the document "declares our agreement on some basics of the faith such as the virgin birth and divinity of Jesus, his sacrificial death and bodily resurrection, and the infallibility of scripture, it was not meant to be a theological or doctrinal accord and clearly says so."

"The document is primarily a statement of our common opposition to abortion, pornography, violence, moral deterioration and an affirmation of religious freedom," Lewis said.

Streich, a Wichita Falls businessman and deacon of First Baptist Church, said his church was also upset at the HMB's affirmation of Lewis' endorsement and was probing possible action the church could take in protest.

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Martin King contributed to this story.

Some Midwestern Seminary trustees
question presidential appointment

By Herb Hollinger

Baptist Press
9/8/94

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--At least 10 trustees at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary called for the removal of a recent faculty appointment by President Milton Ferguson but a trustee executive committee affirmed the appointment.

The campaign to remove Ronnie Prevost from a faculty appointment amounted to "another round of innuendoes, character assassination and like charges bordering on slander" at the seminary, charged the editor of Missouri Baptists' Word and Way weekly newsjournal.

Morale at the Kansas City seminary, one of six owned by the Southern Baptist Convention, is low, wrote Bob Terry, Word and Way editor in a Sept. 8 editorial.

Prevost was contracted for two years as a religious education professor by Ferguson but Prevost's position favoring the ordination of women deacons apparently caused the trustee upheaval. Prevost, according to trustee chairman Lewis Adkison, assured the executive committee he would not advocate in the classroom or in other places the ordination of women.

However, some other accusations about Prevost's "beliefs or actions were without documentation." They were not identified in a letter from Adkison to other trustees following the executive committee Aug. 16 meeting in Kansas City. Adkison, pastor of Circle Drive Baptist Church, Colorado Springs, Colo., said "nothing which had been brought to our attention would prevent his serving eff ctively"

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The upset trustees, never identified in Adkison's letter but one source said may have included as many as 18 on the board, had called for a formal "called meeting" of the board of trustees. The executive committee unanimously opposed a called meeting, Adkison said.

Acknowledging Ferguson had followed the requirements of a presidential appointment, Adkison nevertheless said the executive committee had "serious concerns" which were expressed to Ferguson about the manner of the Prevost appointment. No elaboration was given but apparently Ferguson promised to be "more sensitive to the concerns of the instruction committee and the entire board of trustees."

A motion was adopted requesting in the future there would be a meeting of the trustee instruction committee "or at least a conference call in order that there might be information shared and input given from the committee as a whole prior to a vote." Adkison said the executive committee did visit with Prevost at the meeting but only to examine the procedure by which he was hired.

The executive committee did emphasize, according to Adkison, it is "greatly concerned about rumors and undocumented accusations against any member of the seminary family. We encouraged one another and would like to encourage all members of the board of trustees to avoid giving credence to and passing on rumors or unfounded accusations."

Adkison asked the rest of the 35-member board of trustees to accept the executive committee's evaluation and "be willing to put those concerns aside ...

Terry said Adkison did not mention in his letter to trustees that Ferguson shared the report of the Association of Theological Schools from an earlier visit which reported concerns relating to "excessive involvement of trustees in the administration of the seminary." The seminary reportedly has 18 months to respond to the concerns with corrective action, Terry wrote in his editorial.

The report by the ATS, one of the seminary's accrediting agencies, may have tempered the executive committee response to actions urged by the upset trustees, Terry said.

"Trying to undo a presidential appointment to the faculty after the president has complied with the procedures and a written contract has been signed certainly seems to be trustee involvement in the administration of the seminary," charged Terry.

Terry also said the years of negative campaigns against Midwestern faculty and administration have come mostly from "the same Kansas City area source," but did not mention the person's name although apparently a trustee.

Terry said he has attended Midwestern trustee meetings for years and "seen the material distributed by this individual to trustees. As in this instance, there is a promise of proof but it never comes; only innuendoes and undocumented charges."

But Terry defended the institution and said "it is a shame that some trustees and others in the Southern Baptist Convention seem ready to believe the worst about Midwestern Seminary. Hundreds of Missouri Baptists have studied there. They know it has been a good place. They know the men and women who serve at Midwestern deserve better than this constant unchristian bombardment."

Terry said Midwestern is at a crucial point in its history, citing: Ferguson's retirement at the end of the 1995-96 school year, the ATS probe, faculty vacancies being filled by appointment, recent failed attempts to secure permanent faculty members, and the resignation of academic dean Vernon Davis.

UPDATE

Hunger funds released
for refuge resettlement

ATLANTA (BP)--Here is an update on Southern Baptist ministry with Cuban and Haitian refugees:

-- The Home Mission Board has released \$20,000 in hunger funds to be distributed through the HMB's refugee resettlement office.

-- The Transit Center in Key West, Fla., the subject of a story released by Baptist Press Aug. 22, is no longer receiving refugees due to the change in government policy. Tomas Diaz, home missionary and director of that center, has been given permission to visit refugees detained at the Key West Naval Base.

-- Refugee kits are being collected by the Miami Baptist Association. Kits should include towel, washcloth, deodorant, bar of soap, comb, toothpaste, toothbrush, shampoo and Band-Aids. Send kits to the Miami Baptist Association, 3520 SW 97th Ave., Miami, FL 33165. Spanish and Creole Bibles are also needed.

-- The HMB refugee resettlement office is looking for churches to sponsor Cuban and Haitian refugee families. For information, call the office at (404) 898-7395.

-- Ten Southern Baptist chaplains are among the 39 military chaplains serving in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where thousands of Haitian and Cuban refugees are being held.

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T.W. Hunt kicks off Prayer
Focus Week at Southwestern

Baptist Press
9/8/94

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--With Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's fall revival set for the following week, prayer specialist T.W. Hunt kicked off Prayer Focus Week at the seminary Sept. 6 with his first of four chapel messages urging students and faculty to "pray bigger" than ever.

A former Southwestern professor and current staff member in the discipleship and family development division at the Baptist Sunday School Board, Hunt reminded Southwesterners "God himself takes the initiative in prayer. It is he who comes to us. He reveals himself expecting some kind of response from us."

Hunt based much of his prayer lesson on his discoveries from transcribing every prayer found in the Bible.

"I found that some of the things I had been teaching were wrong," he told his standing-room-only audience in Southwestern's Truett Auditorium. "One of the things I was doing wrong was saying that worship and praise are the most important kinds of prayer." He discovered there are far more prayers of petition and intercession ("asking prayers") than prayers of praise and worship.

"The one person who taught the most on asking was the Lord Jesus," he declared before giving a brief synopsis of what he considered to be the six types of prayers found in the Bible: confession, worship, praise, thanksgiving, petition, and intercession.

"Ephesians 3:20 says that we should thank God for everything. So I set aside one day to thank God for everything," Hunt recalled. "I was brushing my teeth when it dawned on me that I had never thanked the Lord for toothpaste ... or my toothbrush ..." He went on to make the point that thanksgiving is not an event -- it's an attitude.

In the Bible, every time God wants to do some big work on earth, He raises up an intercessor, Hunt noted. He described intercession as the vehicle that allows Christians to join God where he is already at work.

When a Christian becomes an intercessor, he "links hands with" the heavenly intercessor, Jesus, and the earthly intercessor, the Holy Spirit, forming a three-fold strand, Hunt said. "Ecclesiastes 4:12 tells us that a three-fold strand is not quickly broken.

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"If we believe the Bible and the evidence that God has given us (in Ecclesiastes 4:12), then revival on this campus is not going to depend on (featured revival speaker) Calvin Miller, President Ken Hemphill, T.W. Hunt or anybody else," he said. "It's going to depend on you."

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Hunt: effective prayer
meditates on a personal God

Baptist Press
9/8/94

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--In the opening remarks of his second message of Prayer Focus Week at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, T.W. Hunt revealed his criterion for an effective prayer: "Would you like to have answered prayer? Give God a reason."

Hunt is a prayer specialist in the discipleship and family development division of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board. He joined the board in 1987, having previously served on the Southwestern faculty as professor of music for 24 years.

Drawing on a wealth of experience and sharing details of several personal methods and practices, Hunt said effective prayer must acknowledge God's qualities, be supported by the intercession of Christ and the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and come from one who is related to God and Christ.

One key for Hunt is to meditate on a personal God when beginning to pray. "I never want to rush into his presence, demanding or asking." He said this practice enables him to "proceed with a prayer time that always proves productive."

Another important element of prayer for Hunt is memorizing and quoting John 17, a passage he calls "the greatest prayer in the Bible." He says realizing the truth of this passage is crucial to praying with "the mind of Christ," a theme he continued from his first Prayer Focus Week message.

Hunt emphasized numerous modes of communication can be utilized both in life and in prayer. Sitting at the piano, he played the hymn "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" in several styles to illustrate Jesus as the Rock, as a tender friend, and as the giver of peace. The greatest level of communication, he said, is found in Romans 8:26: "the Spirit intercedes for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." This is "some kind of communication that is beyond us," he reported.

Hunt told the story of a Baptist pastor from America preaching in Spain. Hunt said the sermon he gave was a poor one, but the Spanish interpreter embellished it and made it much better in translation. "The Spirit is doing that for us all the time," Hunt said.

Another crucial element of a personal prayer life is relationship, according to Hunt. Reflecting on the many names for God in the Bible, he challenged students to address God in prayer in a variety of ways, thus reflecting a deeper intimacy. He mentioned his personal method of keeping a notebook of biblical names for Jesus to utilize them in his prayer time.

Hunt closed with two personal guidelines for entering into prayer: knowing who God is and knowing who oneself is. No two Bible figures prayed alike, he noted. God expects personal prayer; he "doesn't want me to pray like David."

As a final challenge, Hunt suggested an exercise that has proven effective for him: rewriting Psalm 23. He read his own version, starting with "The Lord is my professor," and challenged students and faculty likewise to personalize the passage.

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Southwestern Seminary houses
Charles Spurgeon's manuscripts By Bob Murdaugh

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Within the next few months, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary will house the original manuscripts of over 500 sermons by British Baptist preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Theology students at Southwestern will gain rare insight into the preaching techniques of one of the greatest pulpiteers of all times.

In addition to holding the documents, Southwestern will record all of them. Eventually, the originals will be sold, and the only two sets of copies in the world will be housed at the Fort Worth seminary and at Spurgeon's College in London.

Spurgeon's principal, Michael Quicke, was in Fort Worth on Wednesday to deliver the original manuscripts for 150 of Spurgeon's sermons. He also presented a first edition book of Spurgeon's sermons to Southwestern's new president, Ken S. Hemphill. The hardbound book was published over 100 years ago and contains some of the British Baptist preacher's revival messages.

After describing Spurgeon as the "prince of preachers," Hemphill said, "We (Southwestern) are grateful for Spurgeon's College allowing us to play such a major part in the furtherance of our rich Baptist heritage. We are privileged that young pastors now will have the opportunity to look at manuscripts which will be challenges to their ministries as pastors."

Spurgeon's College chose Southwestern to hold the original manuscripts of Spurgeon's sermons "because of its leadership in the tradition of care for Baptist history and homiletics," Quicke said. "Southwestern's library and archives are the best among Baptist institutions in the world."

Spurgeon's association with Southwestern has grown from the close friendships Quicke developed in Cambridge, England, with various Southwestern professors who worshipped at his church during their sabbaticals. One of those Southwestern faculty members is James Heflin, professor of preaching, who said he expects Southwestern's new friendship with Spurgeon's to "grow into a partnership that will enrich the seminary's heritage of training biblically based, young preachers."

About two years ago, a Spurgeon's student discovered the manuscripts while clearing a storage room at the college. They had been undisturbed for 100 years."

Quicke said the historic discovery "means that we (Spurgeon's and Southwestern) now possess the verbatim sermons which have never been seen or published before. The accompanying alterations will testify to the phenomenal gifting and meticulous care of this remarkable man of God."

The collection of manuscripts includes longhand scripts of Spurgeon's sermons; edited versions with his handwriting in the margins, sometimes changing as much as half of the original; and galley proofs with further handwritten corrections by the preacher.

"Spurgeon's prodigious and meticulous efforts often took between Sunday and Thursday every week," Quicke reported.

Southwestern's archivist Alan Lefever said before the manuscripts came in Southwestern and Spurgeon's possessions, little was known about Spurgeon's preaching style.

"These manuscripts confirm that he frequently used stories and really took scripture apart and examined it," Lefever said. "He asked a lot of questions of his listeners and often called them to action. A lot of preachers today want to emulate that kind of ministry that made Spurgeon instrumental in growing a church with new converts and not just new members."

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(BP) photo available upon request from the Southwestern public relations office.

**Stacker to retire
from BSSB post**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Joe R. Stacker, director of the Baptist Sunday School Board's pastor-staff leadership department (formerly church administration department) has announced his plan to retire from that position Feb. 28, 1995, when he will be 62.

Stacker said he has chosen early retirement to allow time for a new director to be selected for a smooth transition and to give himself opportunity to explore other areas of service, which he has wanted to plan for the remainder of his ministry.

Mike Miller, director of the board's church leadership services division, said Stacker's departure will require the selection of new leadership with an equally strong focus for pastoral and church staff needs and concerns.

"My hope is to have a successor selected later this fall to fulfill Joe's desire for a transition that best benefits the department and the persons who use its services and products," Miller said. "While we knew Joe would seek retirement in the next few years, his early announcement and interest in a smooth change model the leadership spirit he and his staff have promoted to church staff persons."

He said Stacker's decision will help build on the foundation established last year when a plan of succession was implemented for leadership of the board's church architecture services prior to the retirement of then director Gwenn McCormick.

A native of Greenbrier, Tenn., Stacker came to the Sunday School Board in 1981 after having been pastor of First Baptist Church, Concord, Tenn., for 13 years. Earlier, he was pastor of Milton (Tenn.) Baptist Church; Grace Baptist Church in Alexandria, Va.; and Greeneville (Tenn.) Baptist Church.

A graduate of Carson-Newman College of Jefferson City, Tenn., he earned the M.Div. and D.Min. degrees at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

He has been president of the Tennessee Baptist Pastors Conference, a member of the executive board of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, president of the Green County Ministerial Association and moderator of the Knox County Association of Baptists. He also has been a trustee for Harrison-Chilhowee Academy, East Tennessee Baptist Hospital and the Sunday School Board.

While working at the board, Stacker has been interim pastor for several middle Tennessee Southern Baptist churches, most recently at First Baptist churches of Murfreesboro and Lebanon.

He and his wife, Ann, are the parents of two adult daughters.

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**While not sinful, debt
violates biblical teachings**

By Terri Lackey

**Baptist Press
9/8/94**

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Being up to your ears in debt "is not necessarily a sin," but it is a violation of biblical teaching, a financial planner told a group of single adults.

"The Bible says that a person who pledges to pay for something in the future is a man lacking in sense," Terry Hendrixson said during the Labor Day Single Adult Weekend Getaway at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center, Sept. 2-5.

"God admonishes us not to get in debt just as a mother would lovingly advise her child not to play in the street or touch a hot stove," said Hendrixson, a certified financial planner and public accountant who works with Blankenship, Weaver and Associates, P.C., in Brentwood, Tenn.

"Two-thirds of the parables in the gospels talk about money," he said during the seminar he led, "Finances with an Attitude."

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Being in debt "is not necessarily a sin. I mean, it's not the type of thing that causes eternal damnation of your soul, but it sure can make your life miserable," he said.

Hendrixson said he believes a person could probably live debt free with the exception of buying a home, if financial affairs were managed properly.

A Gallup poll of Christian families, including single adults, indicated 40 percent of church families overspend every month, Hendrixson said.

"That means they systematically spend more than they bring in. They either deplete their savings or increase their debt. And those are the 40 percent who admitted it," he said.

"I suggest that 40 percent more either lied or just don't know whether they overspend their budget," Hendrixson said. He demonstrated his point by getting little response when he asked the group to raise their hands if they knew the exact amount they spent on food, clothing or vacations last year.

Hendrixson said the Gallup poll also indicated 20 percent of the married couples answering the survey acknowledged they were on the verge of divorce; 50 percent had already been through a divorce; and 90 percent of those divorced or thinking about it said the reason was financial difficulties.

"Ninety percent of divorces occurring in American churches today point toward financial difficulties. Now that was sobering to me. Very frightening. And that's the main reason I do what I do," he said. Hendrixson said the Gallup poll also indicated 40 percent of the Christian families surveyed pay an average of \$2,000 in interest, "not including their mortgage. In other words, this was credit cards, automobile loan interest or whatever.

"I would daresay that figure has doubled since this survey was conducted in 1988."

Hendrixson said he understands what financial debt can do to a person.

"I almost had a nervous breakdown at age 28. I had bought a home. I had started a business of my own when I was 25. And by the time I was 28 years old, I was so incredibly, miserably in debt that I was literally ready to commit suicide," he said.

"It just about ruined my marriage and my walk with the Lord. So this debt business is serious, serious stuff."

If being in debt is so detrimental to marriage, peace of mind, and spiritual stability, why do people continue to plunge themselves deeper into its rut, Hendrixson asked.

"Because it is the American way. We just follow the example of our leaders," he said.

Hendrixson said Christians should be able to alter their destructive financial habits by changing their attitudes about accruing debt.

"The first attitude we must understand is debt is a form of slavery or bondage. And it was even a curse that God promised he would send on the nation of Israel if they disobeyed his commandments."

Many people associate accruing material items with wealth. They see ownership as having control, he said.

"As Christians, wealth should be more than money. It should be salvation. Seventy-five years from now, what are you going to be able to take with you? The most you can hope to take is your soul and the souls of your family and children," he said.

Christians must strive to act as stewards of their financial stockpiles, not owners, Hendrixson said.

He listed characteristics of an owner and steward.

"An owner puts himself first, he owns the possession, he is accountable to himself, he does what he or she pleases, he depends on himself, makes independent decisions, and is oftentimes anxious about his or her life.

"A steward puts God first, manages possessions for God. He is accountable to God for how he spends that money. He follows God's word on making the decisions about how to spend that money. He waits on the Lord in the decision-making procession," he said.

"The owner emphasizes himself. The steward emphasizes God. I believe the sooner you develop the attitude you are a steward of all your money, the quicker you are going to find financial freedom," Hendrixson said.

"Financial freedom is not a condition of being debt free or having an abundance. It is a heart attitude resulting in true contentment."

Hendrixson listed several ways to achieve financial freedom. They include:

-- Study God's word. "There is a wealth of information there."

-- Transfer ownership. "In your mind transfer ownership to God and get away from the American attitude that everything is mine."

-- Prayer is essential. "Sounds cliché, but it is essential. You cannot spend your money God's way if you're not talking to him and he's not talking back to you."

-- Obey God's direction. "Trying to be discerning of God's will."

-- Have a clear conscience in your personal dealings and your business dealings.

-- Avoid indulgences.

-- Accept God's provisions. "Learn to be content in all things, rich or poor."

Hendrixson led a four-part track on "Making and Managing Money" at the Single Adult Labor Day Weekend Getaway. The other seminars he taught included: "Debt-free Living -- Get Real," "Investing 101" and "Home, Education and Retirement."

People interested in straightening out their personal finances may visit Baptist and Life Way Christian Book Stores for the materials: "Master Your Money" by Ron Blue or for financial books ("Debt-Free Living," "How to Manage Your Money," and "Your Finances in Changing Times") written by Larry Burkett, founder and director of Christian Financial Concepts based in Gainesville, Ga.

Labor Day weekends are sponsored by the Sunday School Board's discipleship and family development division. Other Labor Day events were held simultaneously at: Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center; Arrowhead Springs, Calif.; Destin, Fla.; Galveston, Texas; and Branson, Mo. A total of about 7,000 single adults attended the events.

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