

# WHY ARE THE MISSIONARIES THE NEWEST POLITICAL PAWNS?

The Bible consistently tells us to love one another. The International Mission Board has complicated that message by demanding those who want to serve Christ as a missionary may only do so by affirming the 2000 Baptist Faith & Message. As you will see in the following "Open Declaration to Texas Baptists," this type of creedalism goes against our Baptist roots and does not have a place in Baptist life.

## CONCERNED TEXAS BAPTISTS

A statement presented to the BGCT Executive Board February 26, 2002 • Dallas, Texas

The individuals you see standing before you have come to this meeting to indicate our strong support for the recommendation brought to you today to aid our missionaries that decide, as an act of personal integrity, that they cannot sign a creed. And we especially want to express our profound respect for any missionary who, with great courage and complete conviction, refuses to abdicate his or her commitment to serve under the Bible rather than serving under a creed developed by a small group of people—and now enforced in all segments of Southern Baptist life. These people, and others who have already left the mission field because of the authoritarian rule of the International Mission Board, are acting in accord with the beliefs that true Baptists have held for centuries.

It is clear that the International Mission Board leaders' mandate that all missionaries sign a document indicating they support the latest version of the Baptist Faith & Message puts our missionaries in a terrible dilemma. They feel that they must sign, whether they agree or not, or almost certainly lose their opportunity to serve as a missionary. Because we believe profoundly in the priesthood of every believer, we must respect every missionary's decision.

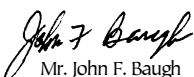




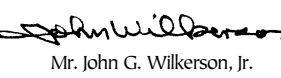
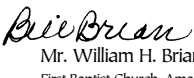
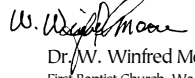
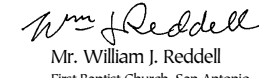


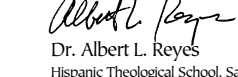
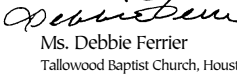
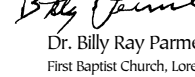
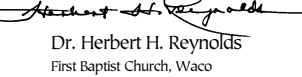

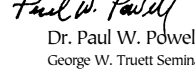

George W. Truett, arguably the greatest Baptist statesman of the 20th century and always a forceful advocate of religious freedom, stated in the 1920s: "Baptists have one consistent record concerning religious liberty throughout their long and eventful history. They have never been a party to oppression of conscience. They have forever been the unwavering champions of liberty, both religious and civil." Truett went on to say: "Ideas rule the world. A denomination is molded by its ruling principles, just as a nation is thus molded. Our essential principles have made our Baptist people, of all ages and all countries, to be the unyielding protagonists of religious liberty ... and the student of history cannot fail to observe that ... two ideas have been in endless antagonism: the idea of autocracy and the idea of democracy. The idea of autocracy is that supreme power is vested in a few who, in turn, delegate this power to the many. That was the dominant idea of the Roman Empire, and upon that idea the Caesars built their throne. Until the principle of democracy, rather than the principle of autocracy, becomes the ruling practice in the realm of religion, our mission shall be ... unending. (Therefore) let us today and forever be highly resolved that the principle of religious liberty, please God, be preserved inviolate through all our days and the days of those who come after us."

Until the 1960s, Truett's words served as a cornerstone in Baptist life. Then in 1979, at an annual meeting in Houston, Truett's admonitions were thrown to the wind and a highly organized, politico-religious group of fundamentalists within the Southern Baptist Convention launched what is now a 23-year agenda to control every aspect of Baptist life. In the 1979 convention, the Bible took on the role of a club in the hands of the fundamentalist leadership, and the term "liberal" was and has since been applied to anyone who disagreed with their destructive tactics. Experienced propagandists have long known that any lie, frequently repeated, will gradually gain acceptance. From the beginning of the fundamentalist movement, the term "liberal" has been pinned on anyone who disagreed with the SBC agenda. This word became the Big Lie which, frequently repeated, was and is believed by fundamentalists' followers.

In 1985-87, when Dr. Paul Powell was president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, he challenged Dr. Paige Patterson to allow him to review the "Heresy File," to which Patterson referred constantly. Powell found a list of eight men in the "Heresy File." Three were retired, leaving only five active in their work. And Powell said, "I'm not saying that there were five liberals in the SBC; I'm saying that they were on Patterson's Heresy File list. They have spent 10 years getting information, and I am assuming Patterson gave me his best. All of the so-called liberals could fit into a Volkswagen!"

Our people throughout Baptist life have been deceived for 23 years, and now the day has come that the president of the International Mission Board is requiring missionaries to sign an affirmation of the 2000 Baptist Faith & Message, which is labeled as an "instrument of doctrinal accountability." Missionaries must sign not as confession of what one believes but what one must believe. One must believe what SBC leaders say about the Bible, not what one believes about the teachings of Jesus, whom the SBC has removed as the basic criterion for interpreting the Bible.

So this is, indeed, a defining moment in the history of our Baptist missionary endeavors. For those brave missionaries who choose to reject this creedalism in Baptist life, we pledge our prayers and our best efforts to promote financial support through the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

 Mr. John F. Baugh Tallowood Baptist Church, Houston	 Dr. Charles R. Hurst First Baptist Church, Tyler	 Mr. W. Dewey Presley Park Cities Baptist Church, Dallas
 Dr. Michael A. Bell Greater St. Stephen Baptist Church, Fort Worth	 Mr. Dan Malone First Baptist Church, El Paso	 Mr. John G. Wilkerson, Jr. First Baptist Church, Lubbock
 Mr. William H. Brian First Baptist Church, Amarillo	 Dr. W. Winfred Moore First Baptist Church, Waco	 Mr. William J. Reddell First Baptist Church, San Antonio
 Mr. Rudy Camacho Hispanic Baptist Convention, Fort Worth	 Mr. Fred Norton First Baptist Church, Texarkana	 Dr. Albert L. Reyes Hispanic Theological School, San Antonio
 Ms. Debbie Ferrier Tallowood Baptist Church, Houston	 Dr. Billy Ray Parmer First Baptist Church, Lorenzo	 Dr. Herbert H. Reynolds First Baptist Church, Waco
 Mrs. Ophelia Humphrey First Baptist Church, Amarillo	 Dr. Paul W. Powell George W. Truett Seminary, Waco	

Responses to this ad may be sent to the Baptist Standard. These responses will be forwarded to Concerned Texas Baptists.