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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BAPTIST/ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOLARS  
ISSUE AN AGREED UPON STATEMENT

WASHINGTON—Despite different vocabularies used in explaining beliefs, and despite very real differences which remain, Roman Catholic and Southern Baptist scholars share a basic understanding of what it means to be "a follower of Jesus Christ by the grace of God."

This conclusion is reached in An Agreed Statement from the Southern Baptist/Roman Catholic Scholars' Conversations, a summary statement of discussions occurring over the past two decades whose purpose was "to make one another better aware of what each believed."

Unlike other ecumenical dialogues, the Agreed Statement is not considered an official conclusion referred to church leadership, but the results of scholars' findings. Aware that, at the local level, much of what is said would probably be a surprise and in some cases contradicted, the twenty five scholars have made the statement the centerpiece of a book that examines the main points of the statement in greater detail.

The book was published this week as a special number of The Theological Educator, the journal of the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, and as a separate book by Paulist Press, a Catholic-owned publishing house, under the title To Understand Each Other. The book contains study guides, suggestions for local conversations, and a glossary of Baptist and Roman Catholic terms.

Topics treated in the Agreed Statement include Scripture, salvation, spirituality, church and ministry, grace, mission, and eschatology.

Bishop James D. Niedergeses of Nashville led the Roman Catholic team in the dialogue. Father Thaddeus Horgan, SA, of the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, served as a staff person.

A new set of conversations is planned to begin next March.

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