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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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76-11

'Baptists, Nation
Grew Up Together'

By C. E. Bryant

WASHINGTON (BP)--"Baptists and the American nation have grown up together," with both the church and state having "reciprocal influence" on the other, declared a Baptist church historian here.

Speaking on "The Americanization of Baptists," at the National Baptist Bicentennial Convocation here, W. Morgan Patterson of Louisville, Ky., said, "Baptists might be considered as indigenous to the American scene as any other denominational groups."

The professor of church history at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary said Baptists--now numbering some 28 million in the United States--were in Colonial America as early as the 1640's and that they since have immigrated from more than a dozen national backgrounds.

"Liberty of conscience had been at the center of their (Baptist) witness and doctrine from their beginnings. And the goal of separation of church and state was part of their heritage," Patterson said.

Baptists did, in fact, he said, contribute to the content of what is called Americanism, "through their agitation for religious liberty to be safeguarded by effective constitutional guarantees.

"The fabric of Americanism in its earliest stage was woven in part with the threads of religious conviction, personal determination and courage, a desire to innovate, and freedom from oppressive church authority," Patterson noted.

America's expansion to the western frontier stimulated new efforts and new hopes among Baptists. It served, Patterson said, to accent the Baptist sense of independence and democracy found in their church polity. The churches in turn served as moral courts on the frontier, "seeking to inculcate the ethical conscience in those communities where they were located," he continued

"The frontier was the symbol of American expansion, vitality and growth," he said. "It encouraged new visions, new ventures, and a new optimism. For Baptists, new churches were founded, new converts were made, new associations and societies were established, and new beginnings were launched. This stimulated new efforts and new hopes among Baptists."

Patterson also noted the turmoil brought to Baptists, as well as the nation, on the slavery issue. Baptist attitudes went through several stages of development, with some Baptists on record as opposed to slavery in the 18th Century, with some seeking a position of neutrality in the early 19th Century, and then some seeking to rationalize and defend slavery in the 1830's and 1840's.

The oldest national organization of Baptists established in 1814 split in 1845 over the slavery question. "When the Home Mission Society declined to appoint as a missionary one who was known to be a slaveholder, Baptists in the South decided further cooperation was impossible.

"Thus the division of Baptists foreshadowed the national calamity which occurred 16 years later (Civil War)," Patterson said.

Black Baptists played the dominant role in civil rights in the epochal years of the 1950's and 1960's, Patterson said. It was a Baptist preacher, Martin Luther King Jr., who focused national attention on the need for civil rights legislation.

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"In the campaign for civil rights, Dr. King was ably assisted by numbers of Black Baptist pastors, and meetings and rallies were usually held in Black Baptist churches," Patterson said.

He observed that these rallies in the churches and especially King's address, "I Have A Dream," from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington were highly influential on the national conscience that resulted in enactment of a Civil Rights Law in 1964.

Baptists have made significant contributions to national life also in the realms of urbanization, war and peace, and political action, he said. The rise of the cities in American life brought with it "new masses of people faced with frustration, poverty, crime, and the other vices of city life."

Patterson noted that Baptists sought to develop new strategies to minister to such people, and paid special tribute to the pioneering work of Walter Rauschenbusch, a Baptist pastor on the edge of the notorious Hell's Kitchen in New York City. Rauschenbusch urged, Patterson said, that "the principles of the gospel message be applied to the social problems of the cities."

On war and peace, Patterson noted, "Baptists have usually condemned war in principle and coveted peace for their country and themselves.

However, they have accepted realistically the necessity on occasion to take up arms for "what is deemed right and just . . . Baptists have usually responded favorably to the call of country when it was sounded."

Except for the black Baptist leadership in civil rights, Baptists have generally not participated in lobbying efforts for political action. However, they have, according to Patterson, demonstrated a keen interest in proposed legislation, judicial proceedings and government decisions. Large numbers of Baptist men and women serve in local, state and national political offices, he noted.

"They have been willing for their views to be known and their influence to be felt on issues of moral and religious significance," he commented.

"There is much in the American experience that Baptists can affirm happily and with integrity, since the national pilgrimage has been one of movement towards maximum personal freedom and securing human rights," Patterson concluded.

"Baptists also share with their country its diversity and pluralistic nature. Baptist variety stems not only from their cultivation of freedom and individual qualities, but from the ethnic quality of the nation.

"No doubt Baptists with their congregational democracies have flourished in part because they were set in the larger political democracy. The democratic values of the nation have often been congruent with the democratic features of Baptist churches."

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Southeastern Seminary
Plans Lolley Inauguration

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WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--William Randall Lolley will be inaugurated by Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary here as its third president on March 11.

Lolley became the third president of Southeastern Seminary on August 1, 1974, succeeding Olin T. Binkley, who had served as president since 1963.

The Thursday morning ceremonies will take place on the campus formerly occupied by Wake Forest College. The seminary is celebrating its twenty-fifth academic year.

Lolley, a native of Samson, Ala., is a graduate of Howard College, now Samford University, Birmingham. He earned bachelor of divinity and master of theology degrees from Southeastern Seminary and the doctor of theology degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth. Before assuming his present position, he was pastor for 11 years of the First Baptist Church in Winston-Salem, N. C.

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WMU Announces Book Club, Price Rise, Conference Expansion

BIRMINGHAM (BP)--A missions book club, magazine price increases, summertime conference expansion and a new staff member were announced here during the meeting of the executive board of Woman's Missionary Union (WMU), auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention.

WMU launched Round Table Book Club, a new plan to get missions books economically into the hands of a wide spectrum of Southern Baptists; announced the first WMU magazine price increases in two years for seven magazines; announced it will hold its first summer time conferences tailor-made for pastors and church staff members; and named Cindy Burns as a news writer in the WMU's office of public relations.

The Round Table Book Club will offer three books a quarter, which members may accept or decline. It is part of a three-year emphasis on teaching missions, according to Adrienne Bonham, editor Baptist Women/ Baptist Young Women materials at WMU.

Books will be purchased by mail through the Book Store division of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, according to Odell Crowe, manager of the Book Store division's operations department. Editors of WMU magazines, "Royal Service" and "Contempo," will select the books and general topics will be selected by the WMU executive board upon acceptance of general curriculum outlines.

Charter membership, available through August 15, will include a free copy of "The Woman I Am: Looking Forward Through The Christian Past." Lists for book selection will be mailed in July and the books will be received in September. Miss Bonham said this schedule will allow Round Table groups in Baptist Women's organizations to study the books in October, but she stressed membership is open to all Baptists who want to know more about missions.

The magazine price increases, largely brought about by postal rate increases, will become effective with the July issues, according to Carolyn Weatherford, WMU executive secretary. Postal increases ranged from eight percent to 11 percent for the WMU magazines.

Magazines increasing from \$3 to \$4 annually are "Royal Service," "Contempo" and "Accent." "Discovery" will increase from \$2 to \$3 and "Dimension," "Aware" and "Start" will increase from \$2.50 to \$3.50.

Miss Weatherford said, "All possible internal adjustments have been made to cut costs, such as trimming size and limiting color in our magazines. "We feel this increase will be sufficient to cover cost of magazine production in the foreseeable future."

For the first time WMU will offer special conferences for pastors and church staffers at its summertime programs at Ridgecrest (N.C.) and Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Centers. Sessions will also be available for pastors' wives.

A pastor and top national WMU leaders will lead daily sessions, majoring on administering churchwide projects in mission study, support and action. Pastors' wives at the conference will be invited to two afternoon sessions designed to help multi-role women make the most of their opportunities.

The Glorieta WMU Conference is July 10-16, and the Ridgecrest Conference is August 7-13.

Catherine Allen, assistant to the executive secretary and director of public relations, announced that Cindy Burns joined the WMU staff as a news writer, Jan. 2. A native Mississippian, Miss Burns is a recent graduate of Mississippi State University.

Scales Criticizes Supreme
Court Prayer Decisions

By Stan L. Haste

WASHINGTON (BP)--The president of Wake Forest University said here that the U.S. Supreme Court went too far in its landmark 1962 and 1963 decisions forbidding required prayer and Bible reading in the public schools.

James Ralph Scales, head of one of Baptists' most prestigious universities, told a plenary session at the National Baptist Bicentennial Convocation that in his view the decisions went "beyond the intentions of the founding fathers and enshrine secularism in the name of protecting religion from the State."

Responding to a question following his address, Scales said the high court could have decided the issue in another way. He did not, however, say how.

He went on to say that he "would not give aid and comfort to the mindless critics of the Supreme Court" who have exploited the subject.

Scales said further that "one negative aspect of constitutional separation (of church and state) may be illustrated by our inability to do the kind of thing I saw in British elementary schools: young children storing up the great truths of religious literature . . ."

Speaking to the subject, "Religious Liberty and Public Policy," Scales also said that there is "an urgency to put our own welfare in jeopardy for the sake of those who have no advocates." American history is filled with examples of groups of citizens who have been and are being denied the right to absolute liberty Baptists have claimed for all.

"It is the minorities, the nonconformists, the extremists in belief and practice," he said, "who need the protection of the Bill of Rights."

Scales, a political scientist, said further that the urgent needs of present-day American society require the involvement in politics of churchmen. While acknowledging what he called the "menace of big government," Scales went on to declare that "much of the criticism of government is truly absurd." He warned that unwarranted criticism as such "may generate such hatred of government" as to result in violence.

"It may be that the course of morality is to defend institutions from mindless attack," he declared.

Scales also was critical of the non-involvement in politics of "religious mystics," including charismatics. He said that while he would "defend any man's right to his own seance," he has "never heard voices."

Instead, he said, "God speaks to me in the conditions I see and hear and the events, the crises, the analyses, and the prophecies" of those who are aware of "stubborn and scabrous social problems."

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Pinson Decries Decline
In Christian Allegiance

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By Stan L. Haste

WASHINGTON (BP)--A Southern Baptist pastor who formerly taught Christian ethics said here that nationalism is a stronger force in the United States than Christian allegiance.

William M. Pinson Jr., pastor of the First Baptist Church, Wichita Falls, Tex., told a seminar at the National Baptist Bicentennial Convocation that some form of civil religion in this country is unavoidable but that the Christian's primary allegiance must be to Christ and not the state.

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The seminar, sponsored by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, heard Pinson define nationalism as a view which "exalts one nation over all others." Nationalism in its "extreme form," he said, "calls on citizens to advance the cause of the nation at personal sacrifice, renouncing primary loyalty to any other person or group."

The danger of such extreme nationalism is that "the nation assumes an exalted position, sometimes approaching deity," declared the former professor of Christian ethics at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth.

American civil religion, Pinson said, has doctrines, symbols, shrines, sacred writings, saints, and rituals which have been institutionalized in the life of the nation. Any individual or group which ignores or opposes these "is treated as a heretic, a dangerous person to be scorned and isolated, perhaps even imprisoned," he said.

Standing over against extreme nationalism, Pinson continued, is the demand that Christians "acknowledge Christ as Lord, not the state."

Such a posture is difficult in America, particularly for Baptists, he said. Baptists have historically been loyal to the nation, particularly during wartime.

Pinson listed three options for Baptists in seeking a solution to the paradox of nationalism and Christian allegiance.

First, they can "identify Christian allegiance with American nationalism," a view which sees the United States as "God's agent in the world." Second, they can "maintain that nationalism and Christian allegiance are two distinct entities, each with a right to exist." Or finally, Baptists can "consider nationalism a challenge to Christian allegiance and oppose it."

Pinson said that his "most disturbing conclusion" is that "Christian allegiance for most professing Christians takes a back seat to nationalism and civil religion."

Finally, he alerted the seminar that the "biggest challenge" facing Baptists at the beginning of the nation's third century may be to decide whether nationalism or Christian allegiance demands their primary commitment.

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Wrapup

Baptists Take Hard Look
At Their Own History

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By W. Barry Garrett

WASHINGTON (BP)--More than 200 representatives of nine major Baptist bodies in the United States took a hard, honest look at themselves and their role in the American experience during the National Baptist Bicentennial Convocation here, Jan. 12-15.

There was unanimous recognition that Baptists were significantly influential in the formation of the national policy of religious liberty during the 30 year period, 1770 to 1800.

However, since that time, speaker after speaker asserted, Baptists did not uniformly follow through in their insistence on religious liberty for all groups.

Also, many expressed a strong feeling that the concept of freedom in the United States should be expanded beyond the traditional emphasis on "separation of church and state" to include the entire gamut of human rights, justice for all groups, and equality for all races.

The convocation, the only national all-Baptist event planned for the Bicentennial year, was planned and coordinated by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs in Washington at the request of the North American Baptist Fellowship.

"We are here because we believe that the observance of the Bicentennial has profound implications for the community of faith as well as the nation as a whole. Furthermore, we believe the Bicentennial is far more than a celebration of 200 years of America's nationhood," declared James E. Wood Jr., the Joint Committee's executive director.

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"We perceive that the Bicentennial must mean a call to a deeper self-awareness of the American experience and the real meaning for today of the American Revolution and the basic truths embodied in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, especially the Bill of Rights," he continued.

During the convocation, the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration honored the Baptist Joint Committee for its contribution toward a meaningful observance of the nation's 200th birthday.

A special worship service, attended by 600 persons at the National Baptist Memorial Church, and the unveiling of a portrait of C. Emanuel Carlson, former executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee, also highlighted the convocation.

The National Baptist Memorial Church was built in Washington with the joint help of the Southern Baptist Convention and the American Baptist Churches in the USA as a memorial to religious liberty.

Clarence Cranford, pastor emeritus of the Calvary Baptist Church, Washington, told the worship service participants that the "magnificent obsession" of Baptists should be the cause of religious liberty. This should result in a life of love and service to all groups rather than just a demand for freedom for Baptists, he said.

Highlight of the worship service was a presentation of the musical, "Let Christ's Freedom Ring," composed and conducted by Phillip Landgrave, professor of church music at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. The musical was commissioned jointly by the Historical and Christian Life Commissions of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and the Baptist Joint Committee as part of the 1976 SBC denominational emphasis, "We Hold These Truths."

The Baptist Joint Committee unveiled a portrait of Carlson, who retired in 1971 after 17 years as executive director. The picture will hang in the offices of the committee, along with that of the late J. M. Dawson, the first executive director. Dr. and Mrs. Carlson are living in Dundee, Fla.

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Former Ky. Congressman Gives
\$50,000 to Southern Seminary

Baptist Press
1/16/76

LOUISVILLE (BP)--B. M. Vincent, a Baptist and former Kentucky congressman and state attorney general, has donated a \$50,000 annuity trust to the endowment fund of the Gaines S. Dobbins Chair of Church Administration at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary here.

The gift brings the Dobbins Chair endowment fund near to completion of its \$350,000 goal, a seminary spokesman said.

Vincent, a lawyer for 60 years, served in the Kentucky state senate for four years before his election as state attorney general. The Brownsville, Ky., resident served the second congressional district of Kentucky in the U. S. House of Representatives from 1937-45.

Among other accomplishments, Vincent led in the establishment of Mammoth Cave National Park and Cumberland Falls State Park, both in Kentucky.

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