

Christ's Patrol Evangelizes
'Outlaw Bikers' to Christ

By Laura Deni

ONTARIO, Calif. (BP)--Members of the national Christ Patrol motorcycle group used to ride with gangs like the Chosen Few, Devil's Own, Hell's Angels, Coffin Cheaters, Misfits, Hangmen and Highwaymen.

They answer to names like Pig Pen, Meatman, Black Jesus, Deacon, Vulture, Big Daddy and Blade.

But now the leather-jacketed bikers--most of them ex-roisterers and chain swingers--fly a red-and-gold cross and crown that distinguishes them as members of Christ's Patrol.

Philip (Blade) Smith, who belongs to First Baptist Church, Rubidoux, Calif., and national president of the motorcycle group, says Jesus Christ "would probably be a biker today. He was something of a rebel and religious leaders couldn't understand why. He associated with sinners," said Smith, 39, "That's what our group is doing."

The Patrol tries to persuade "outlaw bikers" to turn from boozing, drugs and violence to Jesus Christ, "in order to become better human beings and to be more responsive to other people in society," said the Patrol's founder (Cleveland, Ohio, 1964).

Headquarters for the national organization is in Ontario. Smith believes the Patrol is the only national Christian "chopper" club and boasts chapters or representatives in at least 40 U.S. cities, with a membership of about 500 "heads."

Mission-minded Patrol members aid stranded motorists, then hand them a card that notes, "You have just been assisted by a Christ's Patrol M.C. member...Christ is your answer."

One of the Patrol's more recent projects was to help a Claremont, Calif., girl who was stricken with a rare, crippling brain disorder to raise \$10,000 so she could be flown to New York for surgery.

Smith's life wasn't always love and Christianity. He early earned the nickname "Blade" for his dexterity in street fighting with a switchblade, as a teen-aged tough on the streets of Dayton, Ohio.

At 20, he worked in a factory loading 120-pound iron casings to get his mind off boozing and to build his muscles for street fighting. Working next to him was a Bible student.

"I told him if he mentioned Christ once more, I'd put his lights out," Smith recalled. "He did, and I went to swing on him, but I was paralyzed and couldn't do it. I ended up shaking hands with him."

Smith was convinced he had experienced a miracle. He enrolled in a Bible college and did mission work in five foreign countries. Work as a traditional Christian evangelist, straight clothes and serving on various church staffs were warmups for his real calling. Then Smith, a bachelor, felt called to win bikers to Christ.

Christ's Patrol was born in Adele's Lounge Bar in Cleveland, Ohio. The Hell's Angels, originating in the Fontana, Calif., area, showed up in Cleveland and Smith learned that Southern California was motorcycle Mecca.

For a time he ran a "cycle-convert center" out of a couple of shacks near Riverside, Calif., and served on a church staff. He organized cycle chapters in Anaheim, Sepulvedo, Riverside, Pomona, San Bernardino and Rialto, Calif.

Last year, Smith and Jimmy (Simon) Bullard, 25, national sergeant at arms, a former "acid dropper," and other national leaders of Christ's Patrol made a six month cross-country tour evangelizing bikers and starting new chapters.

They regularly mingle and rap with bikers in clubs and bars, and place tracts on motorcycles. Their appearance, including tattoos, missing teeth, long hair and clothing, help them fit into the bikers' world.

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But appearances only show where they've been in life, said Smith. The big difference is on the inside, he insists. With shaggy, graying hair, boots and a beard, he looks like most bikers, except that he wears a tie.

The seriousness of the Patrol's ministry is easily illustrated.

Once, Smith related, he faced a six-man "death-squad" for an hour-and-a-half at knife-point because club leaders mistakenly thought he was a rival leader on their "turf."

Smith says Christ's Patrol has a good reputation with law enforcement officers and outlaw bike clubs alike, although his chopper was "ripped off" while he was touring last year.

"We're respected now," said Smith, "but at first we were laughed at a lot."

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(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state papers

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Jess Moody To Accept
Pastorate in Van Nuys

Baptist Press
9/8/76

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (BP)--Jess C. Moody has announced his resignation as pastor of the 5,000-member First Baptist Church, a Southern Baptist congregation here, to accept the pastorate of the First Baptist Church, Van Nuys, Calif.

He will assume the pastoral responsibilities for the 12,000-member independent Baptist church, Oct. 10, succeeding Harold Fickett Jr., who resigned last year to become president of Barrington (R. I.) College.

Moody, a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Pastors' Conference and pastor of the West Palm Beach church for 15 years, spearheaded the effort that founded Palm Beach Atlantic College about five years ago and served as the college's first president.

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SBC Second in Giving
To American Bible Society

Baptist Press
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NEW YORK (BP)--For the first time since 1963 Southern Baptists are running second in contributions to the American Bible Society.

During the first seven months of 1976, the American Lutheran Church (ALC) topped all givers with \$301,626, a whopping \$252,593 increase over the \$49,033 given by the ALC at the same point last year.

Southern Baptists ranked second with \$163,116, an increase of \$23,643, and the United Methodist Church ranked third with \$89,292, a \$2,390 increase.

The huge ALC increase, an American Bible Society spokesman said, was due to an oversubscription of a special ALC missions appeal, which resulted in a special \$245,000 grant to the society.

Overall through the first seven months, 76 denominations and other sources contributed \$1,122,281, compared to \$819,868 given at the same point last year. Other major amounts came from the Bible-A-Month Club, \$79,723; Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, \$67,396; chaplains, \$51,097; miscellaneous, \$48,200; the Church of the Nazarene, \$48,081; the Lutheran Church in America (LCA), \$37,174; the American Baptist Churches in the USA, \$35,113; Assemblies of God, \$22,100; Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), \$21,729.

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Georgi Vins Resolution
Moves Ahead in Congress

WASHINGTON (BP)--Congress took one more step toward approval of a resolution calling for a broader practice of religious liberty in Russia.

The House Committee on International Relations has reported out a resolution by unanimous vote urging the Soviet Union to free dissident Baptist minister, Georgi Vins, who is serving a five-year sentence in a hard labor camp in Siberia. U. S. Rep. Thomas E. Morgan (D. - Pa.) is chairman of the committee.

Present plans call for a vote in the House of Representatives on September 20. No opposition to the resolution is expected.

Although hearings on the problem of religious liberty have not been held in the Senate, Rep. John Buchanan Jr. (R. - Ala.) and Sen. Henry M. Jackson (D. - Wash.) are in consultation about procedures for action on the resolution in the Senate before adjournment of Congress the first week in October.

Buchanan, formerly a Baptist pastor, has taken the lead in pushing the resolution through Congress. At the present time he has 140 co-sponsors in the House, representing high-level bipartisan support for the resolution. Jackson has long been an advocate for relief of persecuted Jews and other dissident groups in Russia.

The resolution calls on the Soviet Union to honor its commitments for religious freedom in its own constitution and in the Helsinki agreement and the United Nations Charter on Civil and Political Rights, which it ratified.

The Vins case has received attention throughout the western world, prompting demonstrations in Britain and a petition drive in many countries. Many thousands of signatures were secured on the petitions requesting the Soviet government to free the Baptist minister.

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Group to Lobby in Calif.
Against Hiring Homosexuals

Baptist Press
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SACRAMENTO, Calif. (BP)--A Southern Baptist minister now a full-time lobbyist here says the organization he represents will push for more restrictive legislation prohibiting homosexuals working in such areas in California public employment as school teaching, police, juvenile work and similar jobs.

W. B. Timberlake, a former pastor 29 years, who represents the approximately 500-member Committee on Moral Concerns, said the group will lobby in January to restore parts of a former law concerning sexual deviancy as it applies to public employment of homosexuals in certain fields.

A. B. 489, the consenting adults bill, also known as "the homosexual bill of rights," became law Jan. 1, 1976, and makes legal in California "all deviant sexual conduct between consenting adults, a so-called victimless crime," said Timberlake, a past two-term president of the Southern Baptist General Convention of California and former Oklahoma attorney.

Signing the bill into law opened the door for homosexuals to be legally on public payrolls in fields such as school teaching, law enforcement and juvenile work, he noted.

"The shock of this unprecedented legislation caused a great deal of moral outrage and unprecedented interest in the governmental processes on the part of many Christians. A flood of letters and telegrams numbering in the thousands called on (California) Gov. (Jerry) Brown not to sign the bill into law," said Timberlake, a member of First Southern Baptist Church, Sacramento.

A subsequent effort to get 312,000 signatures on petitions to put the matter before the voters in referendum failed, due primarily "to a lack of funds," said Timberlake. The group did get over 200,000 signatures, however, he noted.

The Committee on Moral Concerns is made up, according to Timberlake, of persons from some 11 Christian denominations--with 236 pastors and other church leaders as members. It includes a "sizeable number" of Southern Baptists, he said, and is funded through news-letter subscriptions and donations.

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In Atlanta, Ga., an interdenominational protest of that city's "Gay Pride Day," proclaimed by Mayor Maynard Jackson in June, was registered, as petitions containing more than 16,000 signatures were presented to the mayor.

Representing petitioners to the mayor's office were William L. Self, pastor of Wieuca Road Baptist Church, and John Sharpe, pastor of West Hills Presbyterian Church, both in Atlanta.

Self, who is part of a group called "Citizens for Decent Atlanta," told The Christian Index, Georgia Baptist state paper, that he is not sure what steps the citizens group will take next.

Timberlake, who served three years as president of the interdenominational California Council on Alcohol Problems, wrote a letter to Mayor Tom Bradley of Los Angeles protesting the mayor's and city council's designating of Bicentennial Week there earlier this summer as a time to celebrate "homosexual pride" and homosexual contributions to the country.

The Los Angeles mayor's office responded with a form letter thanking Timberlake for his letter, the minister said, but the mayor's letter did not refer to the gay pride subject.