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80-77

**Wall Interprets Negative,
Positive Baptist Images**

By James Lee Young

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Southern Baptists project a series of positive and negative images that place the denomination outside the national practice of "polite" religion, according to the editor of Christian Century magazine.

"The Southern Baptist stands in contrast to the religion of civility" enjoyed by most main-line religious groups, James M. Wall told the Southern Baptist Historical Commission and Society in their annual joint meeting in Louisville, Ky.

The "state-recognized" religion of civility is "success-oriented, tolerant of others to an almost absolute degree, biblically illiterate and geared almost exclusively to a form of intellectual, as opposed to emotional, expressions of spirituality," Wall said. It is a "no-offense" religion.

Wall, an ordained United Methodist minister, said the Southern Baptist denomination projects a series of images which place them "outside the mainstream," and which "will make it very difficult for any future presidential candidate to seek office after expressing openly that he or she has been born again into a new life as a Christian." Wall's reference was to President Jimmy Carter, a Southern Baptist layman.

The editor cited four visible areas in which Southern Baptists project conflicting positive and negative images. He said Southern Baptists can be seen as both a Bible-believing people or inerrancy dogmatists; diligent missionaries or arrogant proselytizers; rigid moralists or defenders of values, and defenders of church-state separation or anti-Roman Catholic.

The positive side of the Bible-believing image is the "perception that Southern Baptists are rooted in the Bible as the source of faith and tradition," Wall noted.

"Unlike my own United Methodist Church, which became so liberal and unrelated to scripture in its church school literature that it had to start printing its scripture sources in red to emphasize that some sentences were from the Bible," Southern Baptists stand "firmly rooted within biblical tradition," Wall said.

This means, he noted, "that teaching, scholarship and preaching all have the Bible as a reference point. It is not just a guidebook; it is the book which records the history of God's people and God's actions in history."

The negative side of the Bible-believing-inerrancy image is the "rigidity of inerrance," Wall continued. In contrast to their "spirit of liberty and autonomy," Southern Baptists are seen to be "intolerant of anyone who does not accept the literal truth of every word in the scriptures."

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He cited the present struggle in the Southern Baptist Convention between those described in Christian Century as "pietists" and "scholastics." "The pietists have faith and are tolerant of those who read scripture differently; the scholastics are rigidly unbending and intolerant of all who do not accept their exceedingly narrow reading of scripture," Wall explained.

Wall sees Southern Baptists positively as having a "zeal for taking the word of salvation to the unsaved," as the "outspoken Christian willing to testify to their faith and support their testimony with a tithe."

The willingness to tell about becoming born again is not in line with the "American religion of civility," and such testimony comes across to others as "arrogant superiority." However, Wall continued, to "those of us who realize that such testimony springs from the joy of experience and not the arrogance of controlling others, such personal evangelism is perceived positively."

But the negative side is, "the arrogant proselytizer who feels superior to the non-believer and insists that those out of the fold have only a short time left before the eternal train leaves the station for heaven or hell."

Wall sees it as ironic that the country has chosen an American president "who projects an image as moralist at precisely the moment in American life that permissiveness of the 1960s and '70s had become institutionalized in our culture."

Wall sees Southern Baptists positively as the defenders of values based in religion, but negatively as rigid, intolerant defenders of narrow, moral views.

"The society that encourages excessive displays of pornography corrodes its own collective spirit...The rigid moralist is asking us," in this sense, "...to consider preserving human values, rooted in God," he said.

Negatively the perceived rigid moralist image shows Southern Baptists as concerned only with personal sins and not with societal evils.

In the church-state area, Wall commended Southern Baptists for their "consistent monitoring of any breaks in the wall of separation between church and state. "Public monies spent for religious purposes, or special treatment that might give Roman Catholics an edge in religious growth are both watched by vigilant Baptists," Wall said. "On the correct assumption that an authoritarian church will push its case as far as legally possible, such vigilance is wise."

While the negative image of Southern Baptists as anti-Roman Catholic appears to have been muted somewhat, the image remains "tainted with bigotry."

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Cullen Davis
Professes Faith

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EULESS, Texas (BP)--Cullen Davis, the Fort Worth multimillionaire acquitted of murdering his 12-year-old stepdaughter in 1977, walked down the aisle of First Baptist Church in Euless, May 4, and publicly professed his faith in Christ.

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His wife, Karen, joined him at the front of the church rededicating her life to the Christian faith. She had made a Christian commitment at age seven.

James Draper, pastor of First Baptist Church, said evangelist James Robison, a member of the congregation, was instrumental in Davis' decision. "He provided the motivation I needed," Davis said.

Robison talked with Davis in Davis' office in March. Three weeks later, after dinner in the Davis home, Davis told Robison he was ready to turn his life over to the Lord and become a Christian.

"This was a meaningful decision in both of our lives and I fully expect that there will be some changes in our lives as a result of this," Davis said. "I didn't expect to receive so much publicity from making my public commitment but I hope it will influence others and have a positive effect."

Davis reported that he and his wife have not decided if they will join the church in Eules. "We both belong to other churches and are in the process of deciding where to place our membership," he said.

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Amendment Proposed To Ban
CIA, FBI Use of Clergy

By Larry Chesser

Baptist Press
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WASHINGTON (BP)--An expected floor amendment from Sen. Daniel P. Moynihan appears to be the best remaining chance in the Senate this year for a legislated ban on intelligence agency use of clergy.

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, which in recent weeks abandoned its efforts to originate a comprehensive charter for all U.S. intelligence agencies, unanimously cleared a three-page bill aimed at strengthening congressional oversight of intelligence activities.

The narrowly focused bill does not mention the use of clergy by intelligence agencies or other disputed areas contained in the 172-page charter introduced by Sen. Walter Huddleston, D-Ky., in February.

Despite concern of committee leaders that any amendments would jeopardize the bill's chances of passage, Moynihan told reporters he would introduce an amendment which would specifically prohibit paid, concealed relationships between the intelligence community and clergy, journalists and academics, as well as ban the use of these professions for intelligence cover.

James E. Wood Jr., executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, supports the amendment, but says it should extend beyond "employment" to a prohibition against any form of government solicitation of these groups for the purpose of intelligence information.

The select committee's decision to go with the "Intelligence Oversight Act of 1980" was a matter of practicality, according to Chairman Birch Bayh, D-Ind.

"I don't know of a better example of where a quarter of a loaf is better than none," he said. "We have been given assurances that any other alternatives wouldn't move...this bill has about all the weight it will bear."

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Huddleston agreed, saying that adding other features to the bill would "increase the probability" of the legislation getting bogged down.

The Senate committee and its House counterpart held numerous hearings on the charter this spring and were unable to resolve the disputes between those who want tighter restrictions on the intelligence community and those who want controls loosened. Coupled with election year pressures, these unsettled areas doomed the charter for this year.

"Not to have a comprehensive charter is frustrating," Bayh said, "but I think this is an important step."

Some committee members, including Bayh and Huddleston, still favor a charter for the intelligence community and have announced their intentions to pursue that next year.

With several committee members agreeing to oppose any amendments from the floor, chances for Moynihan's rider are uncertain.

Bayh and Huddleston are among those expected to oppose any floor amendment, even though both indicated they support the ideas contained in Moynihan's amendment.

In announcing his proposed amendment, Moynihan accused the Carter administration, which opposes a legislated ban on the use of clergy by the intelligence community, of growing "confused and even incoherent in its positions" on the CIA charter, and concluded that the administration "no longer desired a charter that the Congress could recognize as such."

Should the Senate and House decide not to pass legislation prohibiting intelligence agency use of clergy, the relationships between the intelligence community and clergy will continue to be determined by internal regulations of both parties.

The Southern Baptist Convention's Foreign Mission Board, which has joined the Baptist Joint Committee in supporting a legislated prohibition against the use of clergy, has a policy forbidding its personnel from participating in the intelligence gathering process.

In the intelligence community, the CIA, for example, has an internal regulation restricting the use of clergy, journalists and academics, but this restriction can be waived with the approval of the director of the CIA or the president.

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WMU Names Wildes
Information Director

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5/9/80

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Beth Sayers Wildes, an editorial assistant for Contempo magazine for three years, is the new public information director for Woman's Missionary Union, auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention.

Mrs. Wildes will coordinate news coverage and reporting for the national office of WMU. She will edit special publications for the auxiliary and assist in general public relations work. She succeeds Debbie Wattier, who resigned.

Mrs. Wildes is a graduate of the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, and is pursuing a degree in mass communications from the University of Alabama, Birmingham. She is a native of Demopolis, Ala., and a former summer missionary in North Dakota.

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Mexican Baptists Out To Win
The Largest City for Christ

By Irma Duke

MEXICO CITY (BP)—How can 7,000 church members reach 15 million people for Christ?

In Mexico City, which many predict will be the largest city in the world by the turn of the century, Baptists are attempting to do it through PRUEBA, a Spanish acronym for a Baptist urban evangelization program there. The program is designed to saturate the city with the gospel in four years.

And that's no small task. Thousands of people are moving daily into this crowded metropolis. One study predicts that by the year 2000 its population will be 32 million—larger than the total population of many Southern Baptist mission fields.

PRUEBA emphasizes witness training for the 7,000 church members, the key to winning these millions to Christ, according to Ervin E. Hastey, associate consultant in evangelism and church development at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. Hastey, a former missionary to Panama and Mexico, is associate director of the effort under Jose S. Velez, pastor of Pro-Hogar Baptist Church in Mexico City.

By August, the program calls for 60 percent of the local church members to be trained as active witnesses for Christ. Part of that training, an extensive study of the book of Acts and how the early church witnessed, has just been completed. The training also includes seminars for missions directors, pastors, deacons and other laymen.

Once these people are trained, Mexico City Baptist leaders hope to make the best possible use of their time and abilities through a personnel resource bank. All church members and missionaries have been asked to fill out a form indicating their talents. Leaders are using this information to suggest witnessing assignments and activities.

Another essential part of PRUEBA is its prayer plan. The prayer committee, headed by Southern Baptist missionary Pat Carter, paired every Baptist church in Mexico City with another church in the city, then with another church in Mexico, and then paired off the Mexico City churches with another Baptist church in the world.

Some prayers have already received dramatic answers, according to Hastey. Mexico City Baptist leadership prayed from the beginning that whatever God had in mind for them, they would be flexible and it could be incorporated into their plans and schedules. At that time, they had no idea that evangelist Billy Graham would be speaking in a 50,000-seat soccer stadium rent-free but the details were worked out. Government officials actually moved the date of a youth concert to give them the stadium when Graham could come.

The Graham Crusade in March 1981 will be followed by a series of simultaneous revivals in the 46 Baptist churches of the city. Simultaneous crusades are also planned for November 1981, with 46 evangelists and 15 choirs from the United States invited to participate. Hastey said he believes 1981 will see the greatest evangelical impact Mexico City has ever experienced.

Criswell Says Patterson Won't Lead Inerrantists

DALLAS (BP)—Pastor W. A. Criswell of the First Baptist Church, Dallas, said May 8, that his associate, Paige Patterson, will withdraw from the leadership of a movement aimed at electing presidents of the Southern Baptist Convention and controlling nominations of the trustees of SBC agencies.

Although the Dallas pastor praised Patterson's commitment to the effort and his zeal to keep SBC institutions "true to the Word of God in its credibility, infallibility and inerrancy," he said the methods used by Patterson are "those of a different world" that Baptists traditionally disdain.

For the last two years, Patterson, president of Criswell Center for Biblical Studies in Dallas, and others have led a convention-wide organizational effort to insure election of an SBC president committed to biblical inerrancy. They have charged that the denomination is drifting toward "liberalism."

Patterson recently unveiled the latest plan to attempt to elect the SBC president for at least four consecutive years, possibly as many as ten.

He told the Baptist Standard, Texas Baptist state newspaper, in an interview, April 14, that he had kept Criswell "fully" informed about his organization's efforts.

But the hue and cry over the news accounts of those efforts and Patterson's naming of seven persons he accused of liberal teachings prompted a meeting, Tuesday night, May 6, at First Baptist Church, Dallas, which sponsors the Criswell Center.

The meeting was of the present chairman and six former chairmen of deacons at the church, who have been something of an executive committee since Criswell's heart attack in January.

No formal vote was taken, but the expression of the men was reportedly 4 to 3 in favor of Patterson withdrawing from his political involvement.

Criswell said Patterson's future involvement would be "resolved" and Patterson "will be a part of the resolving. After a little while you will never hear of it again."

Patterson was hospitalized with a pneumonia-like ailment at Baylor University Medical Center and was unavailable for comment.

NOTE TO EDITORS: The following statement by officials of First Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas, and its Criswell Center for Biblical Studies, was issued to deal with rumors growing out of internal discontent over the participation of the Criswell Center's president, Paige Patterson, in political activities aimed at controlling Southern Baptist Convention presidential elections. The statement should be added to the Baptist Press story, entitled "Criswell Says Patterson Won't Lead Inerrantists," which was mailed earlier in today's Baptist Press mailing. That story appears on page 6 of the mailing.

"W.A. Criswell, pastor of First Baptist Church, Dallas; Bill G. Grubbs, chairman of the fellowship of deacons; and Charles Tandy, president of the board of trustees of the Criswell Center for Biblical Studies, in order to counter false rumors and confusing media accounts, issue the following statement:

"We express our total, unqualified and enthusiastic support for the Criswell Center for Biblical Studies, with its president, Dr. Paige Patterson, and with its faculty and administration. We are in total support of that for which the Criswell Center firmly and unapologetically stands--that the Bible is the inerrant and infallible Word of God.

"We will aid, support and encourage the efforts of Dr. Patterson as he continues to give dynamic and capable leadership to the Criswell Center in the years to come as he has in years past. As for our state and national conventions and as for the institutions our associations of churches support, we commend them all to the grace of God. We love them and pray for them, believing that God will keep them and us true to the Baptist Faith and Message. As comrades in a common determination to win our world to Christ, we pledge our every support."