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Stanley, Draper, Smith  
Repudiate Farrakhan

By Jerilynn Armstrong  
and Craig Bird

DALLAS (BP)--Louis Farrakhan's anti-Semitic attacks on Israel have drawn fire from a group of prominent Southern Baptists--including the newly elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention and his two immediate predecessors.

In turn, part of their statement has drawn response from the convention's Foreign Mission Board because of possible danger to SBC mission work in Arab countries.

In a July 3 press conference at First Baptist Church, Dallas, SBC President Charles Stanley denounced Nation of Islam leader Farrakhan for his attacks on Israel and the Jewish people and his anti-Semitic rhetoric.

Farrakhan, has gained national attention for his support of presidential candidate Jesse Jackson. Jackson recently disassociated himself from Farrakhan's positions.

"Let it be known that we (the signers of the statement) Southern Baptists utterly repudiate such anti-Jewish sentiments and find them abhorrent and despicable to both Christian and American sensibilities," Stanley read from a prepared statement.

"As Bible-believing Christian Americans, we reaffirm our absolute commitment to the welfare and security of the state of Israel and urge all Americans to demonstrate their solidarity with Israel, our sole and trusted democratic ally in the Middle East, and urge prayer for the peace of Jerusalem," he continued.

The statement also quoted Genesis 12:3 which gives the biblical account of God's promise to bless those who bless Israel and curse those who curse Israel.

James T. Draper Jr., immediate past president of the 14.1 million member SBC, was listed as a signer of the statement which was read to him over the phone. He told Baptist Press he had reminded the group they were not speaking for all Southern Baptists, but only for themselves, since the structure of the convention does not allow "official positions" and each Southern Baptist speaks for himself or herself.

But the prominence of the nine signees and the possibility Arab nations might misunderstand the statement to be political prompted the 84-member board of trustees of the Foreign Mission Board, which was meeting in Ridgecrest, N.C. to respond.

Bill O'Brien, executive vice president of the FMB, said board members also oppose the slandering of any religious group, but would never seek to place one country in a preferential place, "thereby alienating other countries where Southern Baptist missionaries serve."

The statement adopted by the board emphasized that "missionaries' work is undermined, their position is compromised and their lives endangered by any statement that would seek to identify the denomination, which has sent them, with one particular country."

"Our missionaries work with all Semitic people and they stress God's love for all people. They do not enter into the political debate of their countries and do not assume positions over against one another. Their message is one of reconciliation and this should be the stand of those who have sent them to these various countries," the statement concluded.

Board president, R. Keith Parks spoke to both Stanley and Draper by phone after he learned of their statement, telling them of possible repercussions in the non-Jewish countries of the Middle East. When the SBC met in New Orleans in 1982, a resolution was introduced which implied political support of Israel but Parks argued successfully the resolutions should be tabled because of the damage it could do to SBC mission efforts.

Stanley and Draper told Baptist Press in separate interviews that they intended no political stance by the statement and certainly had no desire to hamper missionaries.

"Our purpose had nothing to do with politics but was a response to Farrakhan calling Israel an 'outlaw nation,'" Stanley, pastor of First Baptist Church, Atlanta, explained. He told Parks he "had no problem" with the FMB's response to the Dallas statement.

Draper, pastor of First Baptist Church, Euless, Texas, said he "had made it very clear I didn't want language which made it appear we were siding with Israel as opposed to Arab nations. Our statement was not meant to embrace one nation over another but to oppose the principle of intolerance against anybody's religion whether they are Jews or Muslims or Baptists or whatever."

Joining Stanley at the Dallas press conference were Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein, founder of the Holy Land Fellowship of Christians and Jews (an organization that promotes good will between evangelicals and Jews) and Russell Kaemmerling, editor of the "Southern Baptist Advocate," an independent publication with no official connections with the Southern Baptist Convention.

Not present, but listed as signers, were: Draper, Bailey Smith, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, Okla. and president of the SBC 1980-82; W.A. Criswell, pastor of First Baptist Church, Dallas, and president of the SBC 1969-71; Zig Ziglar, layman from FBC Dallas and current first vice president of the SBC;

Paul Pressler, a layman member of First Baptist Church, Houston and a member of the SBC Executive Committee; Paige Patterson, president of the Criswell Center for Biblical Studies in Dallas; and Ed McAteer, a layman from Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn. and director of The Roundtable (along with Stanley), a "Religious Right" political organization.

In the press conference, Stanley commended the work of Draper and Smith in their tenure as SBC president for "improving the climate of relations between Southern Baptists and Jews."

Smith stirred controversy soon after his election as president when he remarked "God does not hear the prayer of Jews." Soon afterwards concerted dialogue between the two religious groups arose to promote better understanding.

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Edwin McNeely  
Dies At 93

Baptist Press  
7/5/84

FORT WORTH, Texas -- Edwin McNeely, 93, professor of ministry of music at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary from 1921 to 1961, died June 30, in Anderson, S.C.

McNeely had written lyrics for numerous hymns, including "New Life for You" in the Baptist Hymnal (1975 Edition).

He was named a distinguished alumnus by Southwestern in 1967 and distinguished teacher, musician and Southern Baptist churchman by the Sunday School Board's church music department in 1971. He was minister of music at the former Evans Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth for 25 years until the mid-1950s.

Survivors include his wife, Addie Wilson McNeely of Anderson, S.C.; daughter Marilyn, wife of James Dunn, executive director-treasurer of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.; and stepson Robert Heritage, director of choral activities and instructor in music theory at Anderson College, Anderson, S.C.

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Recognize Drug Problem,  
Southern Baptists Urged

By David Wilkinson

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)—Southern Baptists have a drug problem "and it is high time we recognized it," a spokesman on abuse of alcohol and other drugs has warned.

Ronald D. Sisk of the Southern Baptist Convention's Christian Life Commission outlined the scope of drug abuse in the opening session of a week-long conference at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center. Participants in the Christian Life Commission meeting are examining new approaches to education and action in response to the drug crisis.

"Southern Baptists who once boasted the little ditty, 'I don't drink and I don't chew and I don't go with girls who do' are drinking, smoking, chewing, snorting, sniffing and injecting themselves," Sisk said. Recent surveys, he added, indicate 48 percent of Southern Baptists drink. An estimated 16 percent of those persons become alcoholics—a higher percentage than virtually any other religious group in the nation.

Surveys also reveal that one-fourth of active Southern Baptist church youth have used alcohol and nine percent have used some kind of hard drugs in the past 12 months.

In addition to factors within American society as a whole, Sisk cited four "internal reasons" for the Southern Baptist problem with drug abuse:

1—Southern Baptists have tended to ignore their own alcoholic drug problems because of their historic, public opposition to alcohol.

As they moved away from their prohibitionist background, Baptists developed "an unspoken accommodation with the world," Sisk explained.

"We expect our preachers not to drink. We pay the temperance workers to fight alcohol. We criticize the deacon whose car we see parked at the local liquor store. But when an average Baptist is asked if he or she drinks, the response is often, 'I know the church is against it, but I don't see anything wrong with a friendly little drink.' Somewhere along the way, a lot of Baptists stopped listening to our annual sermons of abstinence."

2—Churches and families have not provided adequate abuse prevention and education.

3—Southern Baptists "absolutism" on the issue of alcohol abuse has inadvertently contributed to the problem.

"The shrillness of our Baptist opposition to alcohol—and I am unalterably opposed to alcohol—has made drinking the one sure way for Baptists to rebel," Sisk explained. "If you want to shed your Sunday school image or shake-up your sweet, little Southern Baptist mother, you do it with a six pack."

4—Southern Baptists have "given in" to social and economic standards of their culture.

"We have accepted the Judas income from alcohol and tobacco production and we have let our culture shape-us rather than acting to shape our culture," Sisk claimed.

Recognition of these problems, Sisk concluded, is the first step toward finding "creative and effective ways to deal with the crisis of alcohol and drug abuse which confronts our nation and our churches."

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CORRECTION--In (BP) story, "Baylor President Refutes Ziglar Attack On University," mailed 6/25/84, Paige Patterson was incorrectly identified in the seventh paragraph as an associate pastor of First Baptist Church, Dallas. His title is president of Criswell Center for Biblical Studies in Dallas.

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WMU  
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2,000 Women Reaffirm  
'Missioning' Role

By Carol Sisson Garrett

Baptist Press  
7/5/84

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--More than 2,000 Southern Baptist women who recently assembled for WMU week at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center were reaffirmed in their "missioning" role as speakers addressed the meeting theme, By Love Compelled.

"We are missioning women. We are late 20th century women who are seeking ways to express our missionary zeal, our concern for a world that is lost without Christ," said Carolyn Weatherford, Woman's Missionary director.

Weatherford called for the women to witness, minister and support Bold Mission Thrust, "not because of our love for WMU or our love for the lost people of the world or our love for each other. We will do this because we are compelled by the love of God," she said.

Lela Hendrix, special projects coordinator for the Christian Life Commission, reminded the women that they could not "escape from being active by buying into a thought pattern that said we are not accountable because we are women."

Hendrix expressed concern for women in Southern Baptist Convention life today. Referring to the recent SBC resolution against the ordination of women, she said, "Women who are Southern Baptist who compose 55 to 60 percent of the 14 million membership of the SBC must not become slain lambs in the political battle that a few Southern Baptists are fighting."

Clarifying WMU's position on the ordination issue Weatherford said, "WMU has not spoken for nor against the ordination of women which we think is the activity of the local church and to which we would not speak." She did, however, remind the women that WMU is an organization of ministry and witness and has historically tried to help women and girls hear, understand and respond to God's call for their hearts. "I hope you understand our long-term commitment in mission support. I hope you as leaders of WMU would be able to answer the critics who would pervert our use of the term ministry," Weatherford said.

Beverly Hammack, Bible study leader, focused on Jesus as a pattern for ministry calling him "a role model in caring." She taught the women how Jesus ministered to people in crisis, people in depression and people who needed to be heard. Hammack is the assistant director of the Christian social ministries department of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Weatherford told the women they could take pride in reporting what WMU has done. "However, the real test of our success is whether Carolyn Weatherford or Jane Doe has the commitment to be on missions herself, individually," she said.

Hendrix issued the call to use such individual commitment. "With the cross in our heart, with the Bible in our heart and our hand and with the church family as our nurturing place, we can go into the marketplace, the neighborhood, and the world," she said.

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Challenges To Private,  
Tax-Exempt Schools Limited

By Stan Hastey

WASHINGTON (BP)--Private elementary and secondary schools received a major boost July 3 when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled black parents who allege such school illegally discriminate on the basis of race have no legal standing to challenge their tax exempt status.

At stake in the case, *Allen v. Wright*, was the ability of parents of black school-age children to challenge the Internal Revenue Service practice of granting tax exemptions to such schools if they claim to be non-discriminatory in their admissions policies.

One of the schools cited in the complaint by the seven parents was the Briarcrest Baptist School System, of Memphis, Tenn. W. Wayne Allen, pastor of the sponsoring Briarcrest Baptist Church, denied emphatically that his school practices race discrimination.

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Allen, who entered the case on the side of the government, told Baptist Press that if the black parents' claim of standing had been upheld, "other tax-exempt organizations, including churches--would not be able to operate without having the tax code used against them."

The U.S. Catholic Conference, Allen noted, filed a friend-of-the-court brief on his side because it is currently fighting an effort by pro-abortion groups to have IRS strip it of tax exemption because of its opposition to legalized abortion.

For the Supreme Court to rule the black parents had standing to bring such action against allegedly discriminatory private schools, Allen declared, "could have been disastrous."

In the high court's 5-3 ruling (Justice Thurgood Marshall abstained), Justice Sandra Day O'Connor held the parents failed to show "that their children have been the victims of discriminatory exclusion from the schools whose tax exemptions they challenge as unlawful." Such an injury must be demonstrated, she said, before the federal courts have jurisdiction because they are bound by the constitutional doctrine of "separation of powers," (the distinct roles the Constitution assigns to each of the three branches of the federal government).

Nor did the parents' claim that granting tax exemptions to the private schools denied their children the opportunity to a desegregated education in public schools give them legal standing, the court majority ruled.

Such a claim would be sufficient, O'Connor wrote, "only if there were enough racially discriminatory private schools receiving tax exemptions in (the parents') communities for withdrawal of those exemptions to make an appreciable difference in public-school integration."

Allen, whose church's kindergarten through grade 12 school system has an enrollment of 2,750, underscored his school's extensive efforts to recruit black children, an effort he described as "affirmative action."

One administrator at the school, he explained, is assigned the task of recruiting minority students. Further the school has brought in minority consultants from the National Association of Independent Schools to help in the outreach program, Allen said. He added the school has also engaged in extensive advertising to attract black pupils. Yet because some black ministers warn their people not to send their children to schools like Briarcrest, Allen went on, "we are making slow progress."

Allen asked to enter the case in 1977 as an "intervenor" before a U.S. district court "to insure that the IRS did not roll over" and because he felt the private school interests should be directly represented in the legal test. The district court granted his request.

To the charge that his school is nothing more than a segregation academy, Allen said his church began planning and surveying with the view of establishing a school nearly two years before a federal court ordered the desegregation of Memphis schools. Allen said the school's "greatest challenge" from its founding has been "to demonstrate what our motives are."

He described those motives as revolving around an intense commitment to the view that children should be educated from the earliest levels in a Christian atmosphere.

Senior justice William J. Brennan Jr., one of three dissenters, derided the majority for using the standing issue "to slam the courthouse door against the plaintiffs who are entitled to full consideration of their claims on the merits."

In his angrily-worded statement, Brennan further accused the majority of using the separation of powers argument "as if the mere incantation of that phrase provides an obvious solution to the difficult questions" presented by the black parents.

The court majority, he declared, "displays a startling insensitivity to the historical role played by the federal courts in eradicating race discrimination from our nation's schools."

Justices John Paul Stevens and Harry A. Blackmun also dissented.