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85-52

Veteran SBC Journalist Leery
Of Religious Right Influence

By Lonnie Wilkey

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Religious right leaders including Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell are the most negative influence on Baptists' perception of proper church/state relations, according to a Southern Baptist journalist and authority on the relationship of church and state.

Stan Hasteley, associate executive director of the Washington-based Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and Washington bureau chief of Baptist Press, presented his observations during dialogue following a speech delivered to a joint meeting of the SBC Historical Commission, the Southern Baptist Historical Society and the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

Hasteley said the distinguishing feature of today's religious right is "their insistence that the country really was intended in its beginning as something of a holy commonwealth."

It is disconcerting, he said, to see those views on church and state broadcast and televised daily across the country. "I am concerned because many of our own people are hearing and buying into this revisionist approach to American history."

Hasteley pointed out he is worried more about the potential harm Robertson can do to church/state relations than he is with Falwell. Moral Majority leader Falwell, according to Hasteley, has "contradicted himself so many times on so many issues that I do not believe he has in his own thinking a consistent church/state philosophy. I am almost persuaded that more than anything else the man wants to be liked."

Hasteley said Robertson, however, is another story. The head of the Christian Broadcast Network and co-host of the 700 Club grew up in a privileged state as the son of a U.S. senator from Virginia.

"Robertson knows better than to echo the sentiment expressed by a former president of our own convention (W.A. Criswell of Dallas) that separation of church and state is a figment of some infidel's imagination. Yet, that is what goes forth out of Virginia Beach all the time on his program," Hasteley charged.

"It is very slick and he (Robertson) is a master of that medium. He is a formidable opponent to those of us with the limited resources such as those of the Baptist Joint Committee."

Hasteley was asked about the American Coalition for Traditional Values which includes the current SBC president and the last three SBC presidents on its board of advisors.

"I have not been surprised at Adrian Rogers or Charles Stanley's involvement in that group because each of them came to the presidency of the SBC with a high political profile--by politics I mean the larger American political scene."

But he said he has been surprised by the involvement of James T. Draper Jr.

In his speech to conference participants Hasteley related a brief history of the Baptist Joint Committee through the present term of executive director James M. Dunn.

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SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES
Historical Commission, SBC
Nashville, Tennessee

One of the internal problems which has plagued the Baptist Joint Committee the most, according to Hasteley, has been the persistent question of the breadth of its mandate.

Most of the debate, Hasteley said, has taken place within the confines of the Southern Baptist family, particularly the SBC Christian Life Commission. Hasteley said the two agencies often argued over who should represent the SBC in the nation's capital. Hasteley pointed out most of the difficulties have been settled since Dunn came to his post in 1981.

"Dunn's position basically is that the Baptist Joint Committee has more than enough to do in the church/state arena and accordingly has established an open-door policy with the Christian Life Commission and all other SBC agencies," he said.

Hasteley said the "jointness" of the organization's title has been both a strength and a weakness. "Its primary strength has been in the halls of Congress where most members do not know about intra-Baptist divisions but naturally are impressed when groups numbering some 30 million Americans band together in a common cause.

The weakness of the jointness, Hasteley said, is most visible within the SBC Executive Committee, particularly in that body's program and budget subcommittees, where questions regularly are raised about the low level of budgetary support from some denominations belonging to the Baptist Joint Committee.

"In short, the Baptist Joint Committee never has received adequate funding from the Southern Baptist Convention in some measure because the black conventions and the American Baptist churches do not give what is perceived as their 'fair share,'" Hasteley noted.

According to Hasteley the Baptist Joint Committee must defend its record each year in its request to renew funding, an exercise "not only appropriate but necessary in the appropriations process." He pointed out records will substantiate the Baptist Joint Committee "has been effective beyond any reasonable expectation, given the limited size of its staff and budget."

The problems lie, however, when the effectiveness question is raised in another spirit altogether, he said.

"The real reason, in my judgement, some within Southern Baptist ranks seek to dissolve the Baptist Joint Committee has little to do with the agency's alleged ineffectiveness and everything to do with its critics' fundamental disagreement with the concept of true religious liberty and separation of church and state. Religious liberty always has been the subject of divisive public debate in this country," Hasteley charged.

Hasteley emphasized that for nearly two centuries before the adoption of a Bill of Rights with its cornerstone declaration that government shall establish no religion or prohibit its free exercise, colonists lived within the same rigid religious structures they had fled from England to escape.

"Yet, thanks to the truly heroic efforts of wise patriots who included a host of free-thinking, freedom loving Baptists, the long and costly battle for religious liberty was won.

"Perhaps the supreme irony on the page of Baptist history we are now writing is that so many contemporary descendants of those heroes of our faith would now toss their freedom onto the scrapheap of the nation's history," he concluded.

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Support, 'Grief' Greet
Statement By Parks

By Dan Martin

Baptist Press
4/25/85

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Expressions of support and "grief" have greeted statements by R. Keith Parks, president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, that he will not support incumbent SBC President Charles Stanley for reelection.

Parks said April 19 he will not support the reelection of Stanley, whom he said has shown "minimal" participation in the convention and in support of the denominational unified program of financial support, the Cooperative Program.

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Parks said when threats to withhold funds or to reduce Cooperative Program contributions are made "the missionaries are the ones becoming hostage to the conflict and the lost of the world are the losers."

Stanley, pastor of First Baptist Church of Atlanta, told Baptist Press: "It is most unfortunate that Dr. Parks would drag our Foreign Mission Board into the present conflict in our denomination."

"There are no organized efforts against or attacks being made upon the Cooperative Program or our foreign mission program. In fact, Cooperative Program funds are higher than ever before. We are right on target," he said, adding First Baptist Church of Atlanta has doubled CP giving to \$250,000 per year.

Stanley said he believes the action of First church, Atlanta in "doubling" contributions, "has encouraged other churches to give to the Cooperative Program."

Former SBC President James T. Draper Jr., pastor of First Baptist Church of Euless, Texas, noted he is "saddened" by Parks' comments.

"Remarks I made several weeks ago seem to be hinted at in his statement," Draper said, alluding to an address he made at the Baptist Public Relations Association, in which he said the Cooperative Program could collapse and thousands of churches might withdraw financial support if Stanley is defeated by, what he called, a massive effort led by denominational executives.

At that time, Draper responded to a question by saying his church might escrow CP funds in an attempt to "force people to sit down and adopt a strategy to resolve our problems."

Following Parks' statement, Draper told Baptist Press: "My remarks were intended to cause us to move forward in our world mission enterprise; not to dismantle it. I regret he (Parks) has interpreted it otherwise. My statements were made out of a context of concern because salaried denominational people are leading a massive campaign against a particular president."

He added Stanley's election is "of no consequence to me except as it is manipulated by denominational executives."

"When I became president (in 1982), denominational executives begged me to be president of all Southern Baptists. I tried to do that for two years, and now we have people who are paid by the Cooperative Program who are not going to even be employees of all Southern Baptists and are representing only a portion of them," Draper added.

Adrian Rogers, SBC president in 1979-80, and pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church of Memphis, Tenn., said: "I am deeply grieved by the statement. I feel Keith Parks has a heartbeat for missions, but I think he has gone 180 degrees in the wrong direction."

"A firm belief in Scripture is not an enemy of missionary enterprise. The demise of a great missionary church or convention is rooted in and grows from liberal theology," Rogers said. He disagreed with Parks' statement there is no drift toward liberalism in the SBC, by noting: "It (liberalism) is there and it is clearly documented."

Four denominational executives—the president of the SBC Home Mission Board and three seminary presidents—also commented on Parks' statements.

William G. Tanner, president of the Home Mission Board, did not say who will get his vote for SBC president, but did agree with Parks' assessment of the effect of the current controversy on missions.

"Regardless who is elected president...both the denomination and the Kingdom of God will be the loser if the focus is on politics instead of on missions and evangelism, which I feel is the reason for the existence of our convention," Tanner said.

"It is incumbent upon the convention president to take the initiative and provide the leadership, not just in word, but also in deed, if Southern Baptists are to be reconciled, know peace in the convention and center on reaching a lost world for Christ," Tanner added.

This must be demonstrated by the president, said Tanner, first by balance in his convention appointments, in the way he conducts convention business; by his example in leading his church in Cooperative Program giving, and in participation in denominational life.

Tanner commented the "mission enterprise could be significantly weakened" if churches withhold gifts or put CP funds in escrow. The Cooperative Program is not an end in itself, it is a means to an end of doing missions work through a faith principle I've called 'cooperativeness.' This 'cooperativeness' is a way of life for Southern Baptists who have worked to do together what no one church could do alone.

"If this channel, this principle of 'cooperativeness' is fragmented, we will have destroyed the nature of our denomination and will have become a convention of non-cooperating churches instead of one based on the principles of unity within diversity," Tanner said.

Randall Lolley, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C., said he "hopes Southern Baptists, hearing Dr. Parks pour out his soul, will see the issue rally is the dismantling of missions, education and benevolences by people who seem not to have that as part of their agenda."

Roy Lee Honeycutt, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., told Baptist Press: "Now is the time for leadership which has lived our Southern Baptist heritage, supports our cooperative mission and is committed to healing the wound that is hemorrhaging the life from our convention.

"Southern Baptists should pray for the emergence of new convention leaders who will recapture the spirit that made us a worthy vessel for God's use. We need leaders who will embrace our diversity as a blessing; who will sound the call to unity in freedom, unity in cooperation, unity in mission and unity in reconciliation."

Honeycutt added: "The Southern Baptist Convention must decide who these persons must be, and it must be in Dallas and not before. This is a convention issue which only the convention in annual session can resolve. No small group acting as 'power brokers' should presume to decide the future of the denomination.

"The question must be: 'When all of this is over, will there be a place in the SBC for all of us?' The leaders since 1979 have said no, but the leaders we elect in 1985 must say yes to the whole family of Southern Baptists."

Russell H. Dilday Jr., president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, said the comment from Parks "helped clarify the fact that the issue in the convention confrontation is not theological liberalism.

"The issue," said Dilday, "is whether Baptists will continue to be a body of autonomous churches united in our biblical faith, engaging in cooperative efforts, or will we be a group of independent churches supporting our favorite programs with designated support in the old society method."

He added the primary concern of Baptists is missions. "I believe messengers from our churches will step forward to express with their votes their objections to this political effort and will help put our convention back on track."

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CORRECTION: Please add the following information to the 1985 Report of the SBC Committee on Boards, Commissions and Standing Committees, published in (BP) April 16:

Rick Lance of First Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, Ala., will replace Al Finch, of First Baptist Church, Prattville, who moved, on the Foreign Mission Board.

Baptist Press regrets the error.

Thank you,
Baptist Press

Hollis Urges Church
To Confront Violence

By David Wilkinson

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Domestic violence, both physical and psychological, is a "malignant social problem" that must be confronted honestly and creatively by the church, said a Southern Baptist ethicist.

Harry N. Hollis Jr., of the Christian Life Commission believes domestic violence is in part the outgrowth of an American culture that "glorifies violence in its entertainment media" and maintains "a tradition of violence as a way to solve problems."

Hollis, associate executive director and director of family and special moral concerns for the Southern Baptist Convention agency, spoke at a conference on "A Christian Response to Family Violence." The three-day meeting was sponsored by the Virginia Baptist General Board's department of Christian life concerns.

Sin, Hollis stressed, is the "tap root" of violence which plagues individuals, groups and institutions in American society. Domestic violence, he said, has been described as a "national epidemic." Citing findings from recent national studies, Hollis reported:

--Physical abuse occurs in up to 60 percent of U.S. families.

--An estimated 1.8 million wives in America each year are beaten by their husbands.

--More than one million cases of child abuse occur annually, and 2,000 children die each year from abuse.

--Some experts believe one of three female children and one of seven male children suffer sexual abuse by 18 years of age.

While most public attention has focused on physical forms of domestic violence, Hollis said psychological and emotional violence within families is "every bit as real and destructive" as physical violence.

Unfortunately, he noted, "the emotional battering many family members endure is an often unrecognized and thus undealt with tragedy in our midst."

Emotional violence, he explained, finds expression through avenues such as hostile humor or the "put down," indifference, isolation and simple inattention, each of which "ignores the need for intimacy."

In response to the problem of domestic violence, Hollis suggested churches:

--"Sensitize" people to the prevalence of violence in society.

--Help families learn to use conflict creatively and to express anger in healthy ways.

--Minister to the victims.

--Help rehabilitate people who engage in domestic violence.

--Seek to change social conditions which often lead to violence.

--Advocate a reduction of violence in the mass media.

--"Share the good news of Christ's peace" as an alternative to violence.

Mother, Daughters Escape
Apartment Fire In Spain

OVIEDO, Spain (BP)—Southern Baptist missionary Judith Hale of Chattanooga, Tenn., and her daughters Lisa and Kristy escaped injury in a noontime fire in their apartment in Oviedo, Spain.

Field evangelist Dennis Hale was away on mission business when the April 11 fire damaged 13-year-old Kristy's bedroom, a small bathroom and hallway.

His wife and daughters were having lunch when they heard an explosion and their electricity went off. Firemen arrived quickly and brought the fire under control. Closed doors prevented it from spreading beyond that part of the apartment. Firemen speculate the fire was caused by a faulty table lamp cord. The heat from the fire caused the explosion, which blew out a window in the bedroom.

The Hales lost family photos and Kristy's clothing and bedroom furniture.

April 10 had been Hale's birthday, and, according to Southern Baptist press representative Karen Quimby in Spain, "The Hales feel like the prayers of fellow Baptists...helped prevent what could have been a greater tragedy."

The Hales have worked in Spain since 1965. Kristy was featured in the 1984 foreign mission study book, "The Welcome Knock."

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Sanchez: American Ethnics
Key To World Evangelization

By Michael Tutterow

Baptist Press
4/25/85

HOUSTON (BP)—"Ethnics in the United States can be the bridge to evangelizing the world," asserted a Southern Baptist seminary professor.

Daniel Sanchez, associate professor of missions at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, asserted the nation's ethnic growth presents evangelicals a unique opportunity to fulfill Jesus' command to share the gospel with people of all races, cultures and languages.

American ethnics hail from more than 200 ethnic groups, Sanchez told an audience of more than 850 people at the National Convocation on Evangelizing Ethnic America.

"Never in the history of the world has one nation sought to evangelize a (more diverse) group of people within its border," he said. "But the One who gave us the mandate (to share the gospel) also provides the means" to do the task through God's Spirit, said Sanchez.

Christianity was born in the pluralistic setting of first-century Jerusalem, noted Sanchez. Following Jesus' resurrection, the apostles first presented the gospel to an ethnically diverse multitude, where God performed a miracle which allowed those present to hear the gospel in their own language, he explained.

"The world literally has come to our Jerusalem," said Sanchez. If evangelicals are to carry out Jesus' charge to evangelize the world, they "must capture a vision of God's global plan," he said. That plan, added Sanchez, embraces all cultures and languages.

Missiologists report people are most receptive to the gospel when they are in transition, said Sanchez. He added, American ethnic church growth seems to bear out that conclusion.

Within two years after the arrival of the first Vietnamese refugees in the U.S., noted Sanchez, there were more Vietnamese congregations than had been in Vietnam. Southern Baptists alone, he added, now report more than 200 Southeast Asian congregations.

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"God is using the movement of history to touch more people with the gospel," asserted Sanchez. God now challenges American evangelicals to build on ethnic response and "develop a strong multicultural base for world missions," he added.

World evangelization also requires American evangelicals to understand the dynamics of the changing American scene and respond to those changes with compassion, said Sanchez.

American Christians must recognize most ethnics are urban dwellers, he explained. Sanchez noted 88 percent of all U.S. Hispanics, 90 percent of all Pacific Islanders in this country and the majority of American Indians live in the nation's largest metropolitan areas.

But ethnic urbanites remain largely unevangelized, lamented Sanchez. He noted in Dade County, Fla., an ethnically diverse city, 50 percent of residents claim no religious affiliation. "We have a tremendous mission field at our doorstep," claimed Sanchez.

American evangelicals face many obstacles in reaching American ethnics, said Sanchez. Not only will Anglos need to embrace diversity, but ethnics will need to cope with increasing diversity within their own language groups, he said.

"Ethnic churches ought to reflect the different stages of assimilation (into American culture)," said Sanchez. Though he charged that all churches need to be open to all people, Christians must realize that people can best understand the gospel in a church setting which includes their language and culture.

But, warned Sanchez, ethnics which become locked into one stage of acculturation risk losing the next generation of ethnics. As second and third generation ethnics become assimilated into American culture, he explained, they identify with less with the culture of their church and its presentation of the gospel.

While culture is valuable, it "is a means, not an end, in the communication of the gospel," cautioned Sanchez. "Ethnic churches ought to be committed to ethnic identity, not ethnic idolatry."

Reaching America's ethnic population will require extensive church starting efforts, added Sanchez. Ethnic church growth "will not happen by accident," but through cooperative planning by both Anglos and ethnics, he added.

Sanchez suggested evangelicals employ home Bible fellowships to form the basis for new ethnic churches. Ethnics, with their value of family and friendships, have responded well to Bible study in intimate settings, he said.

With millions of ethnics now interwoven into the American fabric, it is the Christian's responsibility to care for them and to find ways to bridge culture with the gospel, he said.

"God can help us develop new methods, to be creative, to find new ways to reach people with the gospel," said Sanchez. Ethnics then reached in the United States "can be the bridge for evangelizing the world," he concluded.