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(EDITOR'S NOTE: Following is the first of a three-part series exploring the relationship between terrorism and religion.)

Terrorists Give
God A Bad Name

By Marv Knox

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—The 1980s have not been good for God's reputation.

Of course, religious traditions relate that Jesus healed the sick and lame, Jehovah created and loved mankind and Allah dictated a code for living. But now their followers are killing, maiming and frightening thousands of innocent people.

In Northern Ireland, Protestants and Catholics battle it out. In Lebanon, Muslims blow up Christians while Christians shoot Muslims while Jews retaliate from across the border in Israel. In India, Sikhs kill for a homeland, as do Jews and Muslims in Palestine. And in the United States, Christians bomb abortion clinics.

How, in God's name, can people do these things to each other?

"Religion involves emotion; strong religion involves strong emotion. If you believe strongly you act; you participate in the world, try to change it," explains Glenn Igleheart, Southern Baptists' former interfaith witness leader and now state director of missions in New York.

"Terrorism in most major religions is justified by either a scripture tradition or theological premise based on a holy writing or the leaders of the faith," adds George Braswell, professor of world religions at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. "Every religion has had its terrorists that either fight within it or outside of it."

Despite terrorism's public identification with religion — How many times has a reporter on the nightly news said, "Responsibility for the incident has been claimed by the such-and-such religious sect ... "? — its motives usually are broader than faith alone.

"There are in each religion plenty of people who try to use the predominant religion of the country to justify political steps they want to take under any circumstances. Therefore, religion becomes an excuse for terrorism rather than a reason," says George Sheridan, regional interfaith witness coordinator for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

That is understandable, because "the hopes and political aspirations of a nation entwine themselves with the religion of a people," explains Larry Braidfoot, director of Christian citizenship development for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

"The religion of a culture has an enormous amount to do with the hope of a culture," Braidfoot says. "One of the things that happens with any terrorism is that political and social frustration which issue in violence wind up getting sanctioned by the religion of the people."

That phenomenon is bound up in what Sheridan calls "crisis of cultural identity," where factors such as religion, nationalism, politics, economics and social/ethnic culture blend together and produce violence.

Religion sometimes is the spark that sets this dangerous mixture aflame, says Braswell, noting the "authoritative power" of many religions throughout history has stirred up violence over issues that were economic, political and social as well as religious.

Consequently, religion and culture "enhance and constantly refine each other," Braidfoot explains. The source of terrorism cannot be blamed exclusively on one or the other. However, religion is dynamite in the hands of the cultural terrorist: "When religion sanctions or is interpreted as sanctioning terrorism, it raises it to a level of intense energy it might not have without religion. Religion gives terrorism a sense of moral passion, a sense of conviction that would not be possible for a non-religious person."

The problem often is compounded by a "mood or psychology of desperation," adds Braswell. That is seen in what Igleheart calls "a confrontational style of facing society."

Minority peoples, such as groups in the Middle East, who are denied certain rights over many years, embody this mood, Braswell says: "A problem such as the Palestinian situation breeds generation after generation of discontent. They have no opportunity any day of their lives but to hear, 'We've been treated this way; we have no rights.' And so they form militias; that's all they know. And they are justified by all they've been taught."

Braidfoot describes this as "not a sense of hopelessness, but a real sense of scarcity of options." Terrorists seem to have developed "pessimism about gradualism — social reform brought about gradually through an electoral process — a pessimism about the ruling powers bringing about change."

"If there was complete hopelessness," he says, "there would be no terrorism."

That thought produces both good news and bad. The good news — hope apparently remains a part of the fabric of humanity. The bad news — terrorism is bound to continue. And God will get his share of the blame.

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F-10
(Mo.)

Missourians Join Missionaries
In Lesotho Prayer Partnership

By Brenda J. Sanders

Baptist Press
3/9/87

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (BP)--Randy and Nancy Sprinkle believe in the power of prayer. They believe so strongly, in fact, that they intend to entrust the spiritual support for a new Southern Baptist mission field to Missouri Baptist prayers.

The two foreign missionaries are preparing to begin mission work in Lesotho, a small, independent nation totally surrounded by the Republic of South Africa. The Missouri natives will leave for the field in April.

As they go, their home state will support them with a prayer partnership, based on the already-established Missouri Woman's Missionary Union "prayer network."

"I think it's very clear that it's the Lord's will for us to be involved in this prayer effort," says Alberta Gilpin, director of the Missouri Baptist Convention's WMU department. "We began the prayer network with Bold Mission Taiwan (a three-year partnership mission project with Baptists in Missouri and Taiwan) and have gradually made it really a Missouri prayer network. Now this wonderful opportunity has come for us to pray for missionaries with Missouri ties who will be serving in a country that has never had missions work before."

Sprinkle agrees it is evident God's guidance was involved in bringing about the prayer partnership with Missouri Baptists.

The Sprinkles, who previously had been foreign missionaries in Ethiopia and Botswana, were approved at the October 1986 Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board meeting to begin work in Lesotho. At that time, they began to pray that God would show them how to approach the opening of a new mission field.

"In November, I was impressed in my own prayer time that what we needed was a group of intercessory pray-ers to undergird and lift up the work in Lesotho," Sprinkle recalls. "First I thought of a church group, then an association — then a whole state."

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Sprinkle says he had no idea which state convention would be best for such a task but felt God would prepare one. He called on Minette Drumwright, director of the Foreign Mission Board's intercessory prayer office, for help.

He told her he was interested in locating a "whole host of people who would enter into a prayer partnership" with him concerning the work in Lesotho.

Drumwright previously had heard of the Missouri WMU prayer network and told Sprinkle there was already a state convention with an organized prayer effort. When she told him that state convention was Missouri, he became excited.

"Minette didn't know that Missouri was my home state," Sprinkle says. "It was very obvious God had laid the groundwork for this prayer partnership before it ever occurred to me."

Sprinkle contacted Gilpin and discussed the idea with her. She agreed it would be a wonderful way for Missouri Baptists to grow as "prayer warriors."

Plans for the prayer partnership are in developmental stages, Gilpin reports. The WMU prayer network bulletin, a monthly prayer guide mailed to associational WMU prayer coordinators, will be utilized. "For every day of the month of March, we plan to include a fact about Lesotho," Gilpin notes. "We feel this will help create an awareness of the country and its people."

Sprinkle and Gilpin are to tour the state, explaining the prayer partnership and talking about the new mission work in Lesotho. They are to be joined by Missouri WMU President Norma Altis and state WMU Prayer Coordinator Marilyn Coble.

When the Sprinkles arrive on the field in Lesotho, they will send back information each month on the needs of the people in that country. Information will include prayer requests to be shared with associational prayer coordinators, who will in turn get the information to Missouri Baptist churches.

As time goes by, the Sprinkles also will share details about answers to prayer, showing their Missouri partners tangible evidence of "the power of faithful prayer."

The missionary couple plans to obtain a video camera. Sprinkle hopes to videotape scenes in Lesotho which can be sent back to Missouri. "I'd like to communicate through video where the work is, what prayer needs are and how prayers are answered," he says. "I think this would make Lesotho a 'real' place to Missouri Baptists and would stimulate them to pray for the work there in all earnestness."

Drumwright says, "Prayer is the highest priority in missions. Missouri Baptists will be able to see that prayer can make a difference in the progress of work on a new mission field.

"I personally will be watching this prayer partnership as it develops and grows. I'd like for other states to be motivated to join in a major prayer involvement like this one."

Sprinkle adds: "When God wants to do something, he calls his people to prayer. The fact that God is calling Missouri Baptists to join in prayer for Lesotho from the first day of our ministry there, points to the incredible things he must want to accomplish in that land."

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Sanders is a newswriter for Word & Way, newsjournal of the Missouri Baptist Convention.

Louisiana Acteens
Make WMU History

F- (D)
(L)
By Oscar Hoffmeyer

Baptist Press
3/9/87

ELTON, La.—Acteens Kim and Karen DeRosier made Woman's Missionary Union history this year.

They are the first sister team selected simultaneously as members of the National Acteens Advisory Panel from the same state, reports Marti Solomon, national Acteens consultant for the national Woman's Missionary Union.

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The veteran teenage missionaries from Elton, a southwestern Louisiana town of less than 5,000 residents, were chosen from among more than 120 girls from across the Southern Baptist Convention to serve on the six-member panel.

"Karen and Kimberly were unique in every way and have represented Acteens very well in their church and in Louisiana," says Solomon.

This coming year they will:

- Write for Accent, the national Acteens magazine.
- Speak at Acteen meetings in Louisiana and other states.
- Serve as pages and speak at the annual meetings of Louisiana Baptist and Southern Baptist WMU, and as pages at the Southern Baptist Convention in St. Louis.
- Be program leaders at the state Acteens convention and the Louisiana Acteens Fall Fairs.
- Participate as the first Acteen Activators Abroad from Louisiana when they will participate in a national evangelistic blitz in Jamaica in July.

Acteen Activators Abroad is a program in which groups of Acteens and their leaders participate at their own expense in mission tours sponsored by the state and national WMU with assistance of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. Requirements include completion of 50 hours of prescribed training and preparation.

Reaching this level of service did not come quickly. The DeRosiers have been involved in Acteens for several years and had applied as national panelists twice before.

"We've been in church since the day we were born and just started out in Mission Friends. From there we went to GAs and to Acteens. Mom was Acteen director, and we've done a lot through Acteens since we started in sixth grade," Kim says.

Last year the girls, whose parents are Mr. and Mrs. Franklin DeRosier of First Baptist Church of Elton, were named "Top Teens" and featured in Accent magazine.

For the past two summers the girls have been summer missionaries, first in California and then Massachusetts.

The girls made a difference in both places with their ministry, says Alice Aud, Louisiana Baptist Acteens director. "Because of their work in California, the church tripled in membership, and in Massachusetts their servant role impressed the people," she notes.

"In Burbank, Calif., where we worked with Central Baptist Church, we did it all -- Vacation Bible School, backyard Bible study, telephone surveys, door-to-door visitation and Sunday school enrollment," Karen recalls.

On the other side of the continent, the girls helped Pastor Bob Douglas and his wife, Mary, with a new congregation near Amherst, Mass.

"We did not know exactly what we would be doing in Massachusetts until we got there," Kim says. "The church had just started. We helped start Sunday school and helped the new members. But we also did painting, housework, clipped coupons for Mrs. Douglas, mowed grass."

For their trip to Jamaica the girls are raising their own funds for expenses ... one of the events was a "kidnap supper" where they kidnapped men of First Baptist Church of Elton and the wives paid ransom to get husbands back.

The cost was \$10 per husband. "We had to call some wives to come get their husbands," the girls remember.

They are scheduled for mission work at Carver Baptist Center in New Orleans at the end of June after returning from the Southern Baptist Convention.

But Acteen work is not their only interest.

Kim is a high school cheerleader, has played on the varsity basketball team and likes to cook. She plans to enter Northeast Louisiana University in Monroe and major in physical therapy or special education and "do some kind of missionary work."

Karen likes music and is in a music group, the "Encounters," swims and bicycles. She plans to enter Louisiana College to study nursing or English and maybe go to seminary.

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Southern Seminary Program
Receives Accreditation

By David Wilkinson

N- (O)
(SBTS)

Baptist Press
3/9/87

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--The master's degree program in social work at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has been awarded accreditation by the national Council on Social Work Education.

The accreditation, the first to be granted by the council to an educational institution other than a college or university, comes 75 years after the establishment of Southern Baptists' first social work program.

In 1912, Maude Reynold McClure, principal of Woman's Missionary Union Training School, helped organize a Baptist "settlement house" in downtown Louisville, Ky., launching what is generally considered to be the beginning of Baptist center work in the Southern Baptist Convention. Baptist centers have been instrumental in providing Christian social ministry in America's urban areas.

During the same year, McClure began teaching social work courses at the Training School, beginning an educational emphasis that eventually became a full-fledged degree program at the seminary. The Carver School of Missions and Social Work, the successor to the WMU Training School, was merged with Southern Seminary in 1963.

C. Anne Davis, dean of Southern Seminary's school of social work and a Carver School graduate, welcomed the accreditation as "a recognition of what the church is doing in terms of ministry to people."

Accreditation is important, she said, because "you can't do social work without interfacing with the world. We are trying to bridge the gap between the church and the world, so we have to meet the requirements on both sides of the bridge."

While university-based master of social work programs meet certain needs, they do not specifically prepare persons for service through the local church, Davis said.

In addition to local church ministries, Davis noted, social work graduates move into four other areas — missions through the Southern Baptist Home and Foreign Mission Boards, children's homes and homes for the aged.

Currently more than 100 students are involved in the seminary's social work program.

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Church Blossoms
Into Couple's Future

By Elizabeth Watson

F- (O)
(SWBTS)

Baptist Press
3/9/87

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--The church Victor and Jodi Morrison planted in Canada last summer has blossomed into part of their own future.

In Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's 1986 summer Praxis program the Morrises started two Bible studies in Lloydminster, Saskatchewan. Praxis is a Home Mission Board program which uses seminary students to start churches in new work areas.

This spring Morrison will receive the master of divinity degree and return to Lloydminster as pastor of a new church which grew out of the Praxis effort.

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"The Lord surprised us," Morrison said. Soon after the couple returned to Fort Worth for their final year of studies, they sensed God calling them back to Canada.

"God's timing is perfect," Mrs. Morrison said. "God allowed us enough time to be sure we weren't still feeling the 'warm fuzzy' sensation which initially accompanied the Praxis experience."

Jack Connor, director of missions for Canada's Keystone and Northern Lights Baptist Association, interviewed the Morrisons for the Praxis program. He says it's not uncommon for students to return to the Praxis field after graduation.

"Students who will graduate shortly after Praxis are prime candidates for full-time ministry positions on the Praxis field," Connor said. "When interviewing prospective Praxis students, we keep our eyes open for those who are in their final semesters at seminary."

After four years in seminary, the Morrisons said they were thankful for a practical ministry opportunity through Praxis. "We were more than looking forward to being in full-time ministry," Morrison said. "In the 10-week Praxis program, that's all we got."

Mrs. Morrison, who received the master of arts in religious education degree in December, said Praxis is a "faith-stretcher."

"It was a good balance between supervised ministry and independent church planting," she said. "Although we worked under the supervision of a supportive neighboring church, we were really on our own in a pioneer area."

Dan Crawford, who directs Southwestern's Praxis effort, said 61 students are signed up for the 1987 program.

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Pulpit 'Wordsmith'
Needed, Prof Says

N-10
(66879)

Baptist Press
3/9/87

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)--A spotlight focused on the "neglected art of pulpit communication" when Craig P. Skinner delivered his faculty inaugural address during Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary's academic convocation this spring.

Skinner's address, "How to be a 'Say-so-ist'" emphasized the Old Testament psalmist's exhortation to "let the redeemed of the Lord say so."

"Every preacher should be a wordsmith," Skinner said. "But we bruise our congregations with bent and blunted language, beating them with shop-soiled cliches and worn words. Instead we need clarity and enthusiasm."

He pointed to the value of wisdom, noting the Apostle Paul's wisdom was that of a sensitivity to persons. "We need to sharpen our preaching into a style that cuts through boredom and turns the ear into an eye," he said.

Skinner stressed the importance of crafting sermons to achieve a purpose and the significance of energy, noting, "After teaching homiletics for over 20 years, I am certain no purgatory can exist for me, as I have already listened to thousands of students' sermons."

Skinner emphasized the necessity of focus on Christ, saying if a preacher wants to be one of the redeemed who says so, "talk much about the glorious riches of Christ."

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