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Vote for Clinton is sin,  
pro-life activist claims

By Tom Strode

Baptist Press  
10/8/92

WASHINGTON (BP)--Operation Rescue founder Randall Terry and a loosely knit coalition of evangelicals and Catholics have initiated an election-year campaign with one message: Christians will sin if they vote for Democratic presidential candidate Bill Clinton.

A brochure titled "Christian beware ... To vote for Bill Clinton is to Sin Against God" was scheduled to be mailed Oct. 9 to 25,000 pastors, a spokesman for the coalition said. Terry announced the campaign, endorsed President Bush and distributed copies of the brochure to reporters Oct. 6 in front of the Supreme Court building.

Ann Thompson Cook, executive director of the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights, countered Terry's initiative, saying, "Randall Terry says to vote in one particular direction is to be a Christian and in another direction is to sin against God. That's Randall Terry's brand of religion. That is not shared by all religious Americans."

At press time, Baptist Press had made four calls to Clinton campaign headquarters in Little Rock, Ark., but was not given a spokesman for response.

Terry told Baptist Press, "The polls show that half of the evangelical Christians are thinking about voting for Clinton. This man is promoting rebellion against God's commandments. To vote for him is sin. For us to support Bill Clinton is to betray our faith.

"Now some people say, 'Oh well, it's the economy. The economy's in rough shape.' Well, what does that mean? That our first principles are for sale; that we'll sell out for our pocketbook," Terry said.

Among reasons Christians should not support Clinton, according to the brochure, are his endorsement of abortion, same-sex unions and condom distribution in junior high schools.

(While Clinton has endorsed civil rights protection for homosexuals, he has voiced opposition to same-sex marriages. Some observers say such marriages would be legal if homosexuality gains civil rights status.)

Charges about the Arkansas governor's lifestyle are cited in the brochure. Also included are brief messages from evangelicals, such as author George Grant and Traditional Values Coalition chairman Lou Sheldon, and Catholics, including Rep. Robert Dornan, R.-Calif.

The coalition hopes pastors will proclaim the brochure's central message to their congregations before the Nov. 3 election, Terry said. Ministers had asked him and others to do something about Clinton's candidacy, he said. A spokesman was uncertain if any Southern Baptist pastors would receive the mailing.

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Clinton, the governor of Arkansas, is a member of Immanuel Baptist Church, a Southern Baptist congregation in Little Rock.

Cook, of the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights, said her organization "believes that the government has no business obstructing women's decisions about when to have children and when not to have children. Whom to vote for based on their religious beliefs has to be left to each person and their own understanding."

The organization does not endorse candidates in elections, Cook said, though Clinton and Ross Perot are pro-choice while Bush is pro-life.

RCAR encourages pro-choice Americans "to look very carefully at positions and how the candidates will vote and whether they would vote to restrict women's access to safe medical services," Cook said.

Richard Land, executive director of the pro-life Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, said, "The Christian Life Commission has made strenuous efforts to articulate as clearly as possible what we believe to be the position most in harmony with biblical revelation on a number of moral and social issues. In doing this, we are fulfilling our (Southern Baptist) Convention-mandated responsibility to speak to Southern Baptists about moral and ethical issues and to articulate Baptist concerns in areas of public policy.

"As I have said on many occasions during this election year, we want to make every effort to give voters as much information as possible and then call upon them not to vote their region, their denomination, their party or their pocketbook, but to vote their values, convictions and beliefs," Land said.

"We believe not only in the priesthood of the believer but the priesthood of the voter. That does not mean that we believe Christians are free to do what they please or vote for whom they please. We do believe that they have a responsibility to seek God's guidance in every area of their lives, including casting a ballot.

"We believe it is entirely proper to give voters information on issues and to call them to pray about how God would have them exercise their responsibility to vote. It would be improper for the CLC to try to tell them how to vote," Land said.

The CLC distributed a comparison of the Democratic and Republican parties' platform positions on 15 issues in the September-October edition of Salt, its public policy newsletter.

Terry announced the campaign after the Supreme Court heard oral arguments in *Bray v. Alexandria Women's Health Clinic*, which involved the use of federal court injunctions to halt Operation Rescue blockades at abortion clinics.

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News service says search  
for FMB exec narrowed to 2

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RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--The committee charged with seeking a new president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, according to Associated Baptist Press, has narrowed its choices to two former missionaries.

The search "has been narrowed," ABP asserted Oct. 6, to Don Kammerdiener, 56, FMB executive vice president, and Avery Willis, 58, director of the Sunday School Board's discipleship and family adult department.

However, ABP also wrote "the nine-member committee has not limited itself to those two and may eventually go another direction, committee sources said."

ABP said two search committee members "confirmed the selection of Kammerdiener and Willis on the condition of anonymity."

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Kammerdiener refused to comment to ABP on its report.

Willis was quoted by ABP as saying he could offer "a fresh look at what we are doing" in foreign missions. ABP added: "Willis said he is in agreement with the trustees current bent and would favor some more changes in the FMB."

Kammerdiener has been an FMB administrator since 1980 and is a former missionary in South America. Willis, a former 14-year missionary in Indonesia, pioneered the MasterLife discipleship program widely used among Southern Baptists.

According to ABP, "the committee's short list" of candidates was Kammerdiener, Willis and four large-church pastors: Adrian Rogers of Bellevue Baptist in the Memphis area and former three-term SBC president; John Bisagno of First Baptist in Houston; Jim Henry of First Baptist in Orlando, Fla.; and Tom Elliff of First Southern Baptist in Del City, Okla.

One search committee member, Hoyt Savage, an FMB trustee from Nevada, was quoted as denying a rumor that Rogers had declined an offer of the job from the committee. Savage also was quoted as saying search committee chairman Joel Gregory, who recently resigned as pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas, had ruled himself "out of the picture" early in the process.

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Campolo tells students faith  
demands radical commitment

Baptist Press  
10/8/92

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Christianity is a radical commitment that should impact how people spend their money, relate to society and love others, Tony Campolo told 1,300 Kentucky Baptist students.

Campolo, author and sociologist from Eastern College in St. Davids, Pa., was the keynote speaker for the Kentucky Baptist Student Union convention Oct. 2-4 on the campus of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

When Christianity ceases being radical it is no longer Christianity, Campolo said.

Following Christ means rejecting the "cultural definition of your identity," he said, adding that nobody can serve both God and the dominant culture that stresses materialism. "If you don't see the difference between the United States of America and the kingdom of God, you have a theological problem."

Christians, Campolo emphasized, are called "not just to touch lives but to transform systems."

He said God wants "to bring justice and hope and help" through Christians. "He wants you to go to the poor, the oppressed and the downtrodden."

Jesus' own death was the result of his challenge to the society of his day, Campolo said. "They put him on the cross because he was a threat to the system. He was a danger to the society, because he asked people to march to the beat of a different drummer."

Christianity and the American lifestyle are inconsistent, Campolo asserted.

"The system demands that we buy things we don't need," Campolo said, explaining that people get the idea from advertising that these "things" will meet their spiritual and emotional voids.

Particularly at Christmas, people are "spending their lives to earn money to buy things they don't need, to give to people who have everything," he said.

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But while Americans continue in this consumer frenzy, other priorities are being sacrificed, Campolo said.

To illustrate, he cited a recent Columbia University study showing husbands and wives spend an average of 8.5 minutes in conversation each day. Furthermore, many children are unnecessarily being placed in day-care centers, he said.

The problem with the "get more things" mind-set, Campolo said, is that "something is dying inside the lives of this generation's kids."

"There is no passion left," he charged. "No one responds to the cheerleaders' little dances anymore. The world is full of people who are already dead; they're just waiting around to get buried.

"It's time for a new breed of Christians who look at the world and all it's trying to sell and say, 'I don't need it, I don't want it. I belong to the kingdom of God.'"

Radical Christianity also should impact the way people understand love, Campolo said.

Love means caring more about the person who is loved than about yourself, he explained. "Love is a decision to give up power. In today's world, most people don't understand that."

Successful marriages depend on love, not romance, Campolo told the students.

"The problem most of us have is that when we talk about love we're really talking about romance," he explained.

Noting most American males marry between the ages of 23 and 25 and most females marry between the ages of 21 and 23, he theorized, "You will marry whoever has you romantically turned-on at the socially prescribed ages for marriage."

However, most romanticism declines 80 percent in the first two years of marriage, he added.

Striking a difference between love and romance, Campolo told the students: "It doesn't matter if you're romantically turned on at the time of marriage, because whether your marriage works or not depends on whether you understand love or not.

"Romance is not a lasting emotion. You need to build a marriage on love. It is easier to be romantic about someone when you don't have to live with them. ... But every wedding creates the possibility for a marriage, because marriage depends on love."

Further, love develops from understanding "certain things in your personality," he said, stressing that a healthy marriage partner must love herself or himself first.

Echoing a command of Jesus, he illustrated, "If you 'love your neighbor as yourself' and you hate yourself, your neighbor is in real peril. Thus, becoming a Christian is essential. Because becoming a Christian is the only way to deal with your dark side; what we are without Christ is dark and ugly.

"Here is the good news: Jesus went to Calvary to take care of the dark side," Campolo said. "He will enter into you and purge you and cleanse you and drive out the dark side. ... God wants to rescue you from sin, not just so you can go to heaven, but so you can be competent and capable to love."

(BP) Brites

Compiled by Art Toalston & Erich Bridges

Baptist gives captain simple explanation

MIAMI (BP)--"You won't hear this from the higher echelons," an 82nd Airborne captain told a Tennessee Baptist volunteer in south Florida helping feed victims of Hurricane Andrew, "but you've (Southern Baptists) blown their minds. They don't know how you do this relief work -- you don't have people ordering others around, demanding, with strict discipline." The Baptist offered a simple explanation: "It's because our motivation is the love of Jesus."

Witch doctor says Christ more powerful

ASUNCION, Paraguay (BP)--A young Christian mother was abandoned by her husband, reported Donna Hastey, Southern Baptist missionary in Asuncion. Desperate and worried about her sick child, the woman resorted to going to a witch doctor at the suggestion of her mother-in-law, with whom she is living. When the witch doctor saw her among the patients he scolded her. "What are you doing here?" he demanded to know. "Don't you know that what you have in you is more powerful than anything I can do?" Later the mother reflected, "It took the enemy to teach me what I had been trying to ignore."

They towed his car; no problem

CHICAGO (BP)--When Chicago police towed Apolonio Hernandez's car to make room for street cleaners, the pastor of Chicago's Bethel Baptist Mission turned it to a plus -- his found his car deposited in front of a Puerto Rican family's house and began making friends with them. That sort of outreach is why the 60-ish Hernandez, a former pastor in Mexico, is leading one of state's fastest-growing Spanish-language congregations. "The thing that makes (new converts) forget their (ritualistic Catholic) past is their new relationship with Christ," Hernandez notes. "Before, what they had was a tradition, and now they have a conviction (which) makes all the difference in the world."

He sees behind sports 'glamour'

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--As a boy, Bob Bailey looked up to sports heroes. "I transferred my dreams to them. I said, 'Oh, if only I could be like them ...'" Bailey now is chaplain of the Louisville Cardinals in AAA baseball and director of missions for the Southeastern Baptist Association in Indiana. "Once you get to know (the athletes), you find out they are real people just like you and me," Bailey comments. "They have real wants and needs. Their lives are not as glamorous as we believe. They are out there doing a job just like you and me. It is a high-paying job but still it is just a job."

Blind youth's trust made her think

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. (BP)--Tara Young met a blind boy in one of the Vacation Bible Schools she led in upstate New York as a summer missionary. Young, a student at Western Kentucky University, was impressed with the boy's personality and wide circle of friends. "What impressed me most is his trust in his peers. He has complete confidence in their guidance," Young reflected. "Do I have that kind of 'blind' faith to simply put my life in the hands of Christ, not knowing where he will lead me?"

He unknowingly became a composer

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. (BP)--Christian songwriter-singer Michael Card, grandson of a Baptist pastor and a Baptist musician, was asked by a professor at Western Kentucky University, William Lane, to write songs for sermons Lane was preaching at a local Presbyterian church. Card, then a student in biblical studies, "ended up doing that for six years. Every week people would say, 'I really like this' or 'I didn't understand that' ... and unbeknownst to me, I was being trained to be a songwriter." Card feels "college age is an important time to speak to people. You're away from home, you're sort of deciding on your own what you're going to be and what your stand is going to be."

CORRECTION: In the (BP) story titled "Gregory resignation 'firm' from First Baptist, Dallas," dated 10-7-92, please change the dates to Oct. 6 in the 1st and 3rd paragraphs, not Oct. 7.

Thanks,  
Baptist Press

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CORRECTION: In the (BP) story titled "Southeastern to inaugurate Patterson as 5th president," dated 10-7-92, please correct the title of Luther Rice Seminary; "Theological" is not part of its official name.

Thanks,  
Baptist Press

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