

Paige Patterson details missiological 'battle' at IMB

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MATTHEWS, N.C. (BNG)—Four months before the Southern Baptist Convention's [International Mission Board](#) announced plans to eliminate between 600 and 800 jobs, a seminary president said about 750 missionaries need to be removed because they are ineffective or doctrinally unsound.

In comments delivered in April, but only recently posted on YouTube, [Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary](#) President Paige Patterson described “a serious battle on the mission field.”



David Garrison Patterson, an instigator 35 years ago of what some call the “conservative resurgence” and others term the “fundamentalist takeover” of the SBC, said the problem lies in methodology promoted by David Garrison, a 30-year IMB staffer who now serves as global strategist for evangelical advance.

During a question-and-answer session following his address at the April 10-11 annual meeting of the [International Society of Christian Apologetics](#), Patterson described Garrison’s philosophy of multiplying the witness of missionaries through partnership with “church-planting movements”

emerging around the world.

“Dr. Garrison advocates—and this has become widespread on our Southern Baptist mission fields now—he advocates what he calls the wrinkling of time,” Patterson said.

“What he means by this is it’s taking too long to evangelize the world, so we need to get out there, and we need to do church planting by the thousands and thousands and thousands of house churches,” Patterson said.

That means rapidly appointing pastors of these house churches on the basis of whether they appear to be leaders, without taking time to train them, he added.



David Platt, president of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board, announced plans to eliminate between 600 and 800 jobs in August. (IMB Photo)“We have tried a number of these in Bangladesh and in China, particularly, where the results have been disastrous,” he continued. That’s predictable, he said, because small house churches “with no biblical understanding,” whose members “are hard put to find the Gospel of John in a Bible drill,” won’t grow into biblically based churches.

“What they’re going to do is to watch Benny Hinn on television and follow him, and that is exactly what is happening,” Patterson said. “The vast

majority of our house church plants that we have done are now off in the name-it-and-claim-it gospel and have abandoned New Testament faith entirely and completely.”

Questioning the ‘Camel Method’

Along with that, Patterson said, comes the [Camel Method](#), a strategy developed by longtime IMB strategist Kevin Greeson to engage Muslims into talking about Jesus using a familiar legend in Islam that has been translated into multiple languages.

“It is a high level of insider movement situations where a person says: ‘You ask me what I am? I’m a Muslim,’” Patterson elaborated. “Now he’s a Christian missionary, appointed Southern Baptist missionary to the Middle East, and he tells them he’s a Muslim. Well, how can he say that? Well, Muslim refers to a learner and so forth, so he just means it that way. But that is deceptive, and God doesn’t bless deceptive methodology.”

Southern Baptist missions is “shot through right now with this methodology,” Patterson asserted.

“Now when I say shot through, thank God I don’t mean anything like all of them,” he explained. Most are among “the finest people on the face of God’s earth,” he insisted.

750 missionaries ‘need to be brought home’

However, about 750 “need to be brought home,” Patterson said.

“Either they are in this movement or else they’re singing ‘Standing on the Promises’ while they’re only sitting on the premises,” he said. “In either event, they need to be brought home.”

Patterson’s concerns about church-planting movements are nothing new. In 2003, he distributed a white paper written by a seminary professor to IMB

trustees during a debate that led to policies adopted in 2005 banning the appointment of missionaries who use a “private prayer language” and requiring candidates undergo “believer’s baptism,” preferably in a Southern Baptist church.

IMB trustees [dropped those policies](#) earlier this year, after new President David Platt unveiled plans to develop “multiple pathways” for service that include both traditional missionaries and lay volunteers.

In August, Platt announced plans to cut personnel by 600 to 800 jobs over the next six months, citing several years of budget shortfalls. The first phase involves a voluntary retirement incentive offered to staff and active career missionaries age 50 and older with at least five years of service.

Video posted

ICSA Apologetics [published](#) a video of Patterson’s hour-long Q&A Aug. 11. Wade Burleson—a former IMB trustee who resigned from the board in 2008—[posted](#) the five-minute segment focusing on the IMB on his blog Sept. 13.

Patterson’s lecture, titled *Consequences of Revolution: The Conservative Resurgence in the Southern Baptist Convention: A Case Study*, celebrated victories including amendments to the Baptist Faith and Message in 1998 and 2000 defining the roles of women in the home and church.

By 1979, the year the conservative resurgence was launched, “the bridle was off the horse, and Southern Baptist Convention was destined to look like the United Methodist Church with female pastors everywhere,” Patterson said.

“Quite a number of churches who disaffiliated from the denomination have now installed women as pastors,” he said. “Meanwhile, I know of no church that is presently actively involved in the Southern Baptist Convention that

boasts a female pastor.”

Some disappointments

Among disappointments, Patterson said, “as moderates predicted, conservatives have had a difficult time working with one another once the moderates departed.”

“Concerns, sometimes petty, sometimes serious, have divided leaders,” Patterson said, mentioning examples of influence of the “emergent church” movement and strained relations between Calvinists and non-Calvinists.

“How divisive this ultimately becomes remains to be seen,” he said of the spread of Reformed theology and ecclesiology.

Patterson noted he does not question the sincerity of missionaries who believe in church-planting movements and insider methods of evangelism, but he believes they are in error. Their superiors, on the other hand, “know exactly what they are doing.”

“So, we are fighting another grand battle, this one more subtle than the other one, actually,” Patterson said. “So, I ask you to pray for us as we fight the next battle. It is forever the devil on parade.”

Patterson, 72, confessed that at his age, “I just shake my head and I say: ‘How many wars you got left in you, boy? Here you’re going to have to fight again.’”