

CONTRASTING & COMPARING

**Conservatives
and
Moderates
in the
Southern Baptist Convention**

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**A General Comparison/Contrast of Conservative & Moderates
in the Southern Baptist Convention**

	Conservatives	Moderates
<i>Theological</i>	<p>* Affirm the <u>inerrancy</u> of the Bible. Find no errors in the autographs, philosophically, theologically, scientifically or historically.</p> <p>* Bible <u>is</u> the Word of God.</p> <p>* Emphasize the necessity of theological <u>integrity</u>.</p> <p>* All are <u>creationists</u> (though not all are "young earthers").</p> <p>* All affirm <u>soteriological exclusivism</u> (people are saved only through Christ).</p> <p>* Affirms Scripture as the foundational source of religious spiritual authority.</p> <p>* Affirm congregationalism with strong <u>pastoral</u> authority/ leadership.</p> <p>* Believe the office of pastor is restricted to men. (complementarians in the home/church).</p> <p>* View autonomy as a precious check against both hierarchicalism and connectionalism.</p>	<p>* Affirm the <u>authority</u> of the Bible in matters of salvation. Accept some errors in areas such as science and history.</p> <p>* Bible <u>contains or becomes</u> the Word of God.</p> <p>* Emphasize the necessity of theological <u>diversity</u>.</p> <p>* Many are <u>theistic evolutionists</u>.</p> <p>* Many affirm <u>soteriological inclusivism</u> (some in other religions may be saved).</p> <p>* Affirms Scripture, along with reason, experience, and tradition as sources of religious/spiritual authority.</p> <p>* Affirm congregationalism with strong <u>congregational</u> authority and democratic process.</p> <p>* Affirm men and women as pastors: (egalitarians in the home/church).</p> <p>* View autonomy as the right of every church to do or believe what it wishes and not have its fellowship questioned associationally or denominationally.</p>

	Conservatives	Moderates
<i>Theological Cont'd</i>	<p>*Affirm the eternal continuation of both heaven and hell.</p> <p>*See the priesthood of all believers as guaranteeing direct access to God for all believers and as a doctrine of responsibility.</p> <p>*Discover no contradictions or internal inconsistencies in the Bible when it is properly interpreted.</p> <p>*Affirm <u>historical-grammatical</u> interpretation.</p> <p>*Find no mythological elements in Scripture.</p> <p>*Emphasize the transcendent truth of Scripture.</p>	<p>*Some embrace the idea of the annihilation of the wicked.</p> <p>*See the priesthood of all believers as a doctrine which gives to each the right to believe anything he/she wishes.</p> <p>*Discover specific contradictions and internal inconsistencies in the Bible.</p> <p>*Affirm <u>historical-critical</u> interpretation.</p> <p>*Open to mythological elements in Scripture.</p> <p>*See much of the Bible as culturally conditional.</p>
<i>Moral</i>	<p>*Pro-life.</p> <p>*Most favor some type of voluntary prayer legislation in the public school.</p> <p>*All see homosexuality/lesbianism as sin and a choice of lifestyle.</p>	<p>*Pro-choice.</p> <p>*Most oppose any voluntary prayer legislation in the public schools.</p> <p>*Some see homosexuality/lesbianism as an acceptable lifestyle and a pre-disposed psychological orientation.</p>

	Conservatives	Moderates
<i>Political</i>	<p>*Most are politically conservative (Republicans)</p> <p>*Emphasize peacemaking together with a strong military.</p> <p>*Usually favor smaller government, less taxes, state and local rights, and greater individual freedom</p> <p>*Advocate separation of church and state to the extent that government neither establishes religion nor interferes with its practice.</p>	<p>*Many are politically liberal (Democrats)</p> <p>*Emphasize peacemaking without intervention of the military.</p> <p>*Most favor big federal government with multiplied social and welfare programs.</p> <p>*Advocate separation of church and state to the extent that the church makes little attempt to impact community morality through government.</p>
<i>Denominational</i>	<p>*See the other as "moderates," or "liberals," or "neo-orthodox."</p> <p>*View creeds and confessions as important defining documents, though always subject to Scripture.</p> <p>*Believe that the institutions and agencies of a denomination should operate with confessional integrity.</p> <p>*Intensely evangelistic and missionary.</p> <p>*Are more comfortable in cooperative ventures with evangelical groups like IVF, Campus Crusade, Promise Keepers, and Wycliffe Bible Translators.</p>	<p>*See the other as "fundamentalists."</p> <p>*View creeds and confessions as problematic at best, confining and wrong at worst.</p> <p>*Believe that the institutions and agencies of a denomination should operate without confessional restraint.</p> <p>*Inclined heavily toward "social ministries."</p> <p>*Are more comfortable in cooperative ventures with groups like the CBF, BJCPA, and mainline denominations.</p>

The information used to compile this chart was gleaned primarily, though not exclusively, from the following works:

Nancy Ammerman, Baptist Battles, Rutgers, 1990.

Thomas Bland, Jr., ed., Servant Songs, Smyth and Helwys, 1994.

Robert Ferguson, ed., Amidst Babel, Speak the Truth, Smyth and Helwys, 1993

Walter Shurden, ed., The Struggle for the Soul of the SBC, Mercer, 1993.