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---FEATURES

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Kentucky Baptist Man Called "Legend of the Peace Corps"

By Beth Hayworth

WASHINGTON (BP)--Public officials and private citizens alike describe Barkley Moore, a Southern Baptist from Lexington, Ky., as "The Legend of the Peace Corps."

After more than six years among the Turkoman people in Northeastern Iran, Moore is now seeking to inspire others to invest their lives in service to people.

For Barkley Moore, 29, who grew up in Appalachia where he attended and later worked on the staff of Oneida Baptist Institute, Oneida, Ky., his experience in modern Persia was simply "living out my Christian faith."

Moore, president of the Baptist Student Union when he was a student at Oneida, was interviewed for Baptist Press by his former associate state Baptist student director.

Almost 6 1/2 years ago, Moore began his work in community development for Gonbad Kavous, a town of 40,000 in a remote area of Iran. Armed with three months' Peace Corps training, a beginner's knowledge of Persian, and a commitment to help others, he began work with the Turkoman people.

Six years later, the Shah of Iran and the Council of Ministers cited his work and presented him with a special medal. The Prime Minister of Iran gave him gifts in behalf of the Iranians, expressing appreciation for his service to that country.

Then, just before leaving Iran for home, the citizens of Gonbad Kavous made him an "honorary citizen," an unprecedented honor to an "outsider."

Unofficial tributes have piled up also from individuals. A young Moslem student, one of hundreds who learned English from Moore, spoke of him as the "second messenger," comparing his life to that of the prophet, Mohammed.

The story of Barkley Moore, the "legend of the Peace Corps," is being told and televised in newspapers, on TV and radio from Tehran, the capital of Iran, to Boston, Denver, Los Angeles, Lexington, Ky., and in small towns across the U.S.A. Already, he has taped an appearance on "To Tell the Truth," a national network television program to be broadcast April 2. He will appear on NBC's "Today Show" on March 1.

The legend of Moore's life in Iran is a story of faith and hard work of incredible physical strength and determination. It is the story of how one man inspired entire villages to do almost impossible tasks. But most of all, it is a story of love, of caring for people, of loving and being loved by them.

"My dear teacher," one high school student wrote recently, "I promiss (sic) to keep all your advices by heart and soul and I will use it in the darkneses of life like a bright light." In one month's time since returing to the states, Moore has received more than 150 letters from students in Gonbad Kavous.

Another student admitted in a letter that when he first came to Gonbad, teachers made fun of him because he could not speak Persian well. You were a "drollery target," the student confessed. "But when you left, a thousands eyes cried after you" and teachers now refer to you as a "victory target," he said. They tell us, the student continued, that if we work hard we can be a "second Moore."

"Why, sometimes I would eat three big meals at noon for fear of offending som one," Moore said, describing his attitude toward the people. "I didn't want anyone to think that someone else was more important to me than another," he explained.

Moore enlisted as a Peace Corps volunteer after graduation from the University of Kentucky in Lexington where he had two years in law school. His original contract with the Peace Corps was for two years, the usual term of service for volunteers.

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"I went to Iran with the feeling that if I could help just one person it would be worth two years of my life," he said. Twice he extended his time because he "couldn't leave" the people and the projects he was involved with in Gonbad Kavous. The people of Gonbad, speaking through top officials in Iran begged the U.S. government to grant permission for him to stay longer.

A part of the "legend" of Barkely Moore is that he is the only volunteer in the history of the Peace Corps to have served six years all in one country and basically in one region.

William Dyal, the Peace Corps area director for the region that includes Iran, said that Moore's commitment to service is "his sensitivity to the other culture and his capacity to work himself out of a job."

Dyal, a former staff member of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission explained that Moore "demonstrates the kind of volunteer energy that could bring renewal to our own country as well as to countries overseas."

The list of achievements attributed to Moore's effort include such things as the following:

*The building of a public library, the first for a town of 40,000. Begun in a free-rent room with 10 hardback books and 263 paperbacks, all in Persian, it now has more than 7,000 volumes, serves an average of 400 people a day, and is in its own new building. From this library, 31 others have been established in neighboring villages. All are now staffed and supported by Iranians.

*A kindergarten started in a corner of the library has grown into three schools for preschool children, four private elementary schools and two private high schools. "All the schools in Gonbad are overflowing," Moore noted, describing the need for schools and the desire for education among the Turkoman people.

*Laboratory equipment for high school science students and a fully-equipped gymnasium for the Gonbad sports team, for three years the gymnastic champions in Ira. Unfortunately, he lamented, the laboratory equipment is presently "gathering dust" because the science teachers are not trained to teach by that method.

*A school started also in the mountain village of Dozane, an isolated town of 1,700, five hours by horse at the end of a dirt road. Dozane had no school or any sort. It had a Mosque, because the people there are very religious. Moore spoke in the Mosque preaching to the villagers about responsibility for their "one treasure"--their children. The new school enrolled 128 last year.

Moore insists that the credit for these and other projects should not be given to him. "I couldn't have done one thing without the cooperation of the people." Moore also related how, when a project was going well, he would get out and let the Iranians take it over.

"The whole idea was to get them to see how much people working together would be able to do," Moore explained. By working with Iranians "as a friend to friend" we were able to do things, he emphasized.

The accomplishment that gives him the most personal satisfaction cannot be measured, Moore said. "You can count chairs, books and buildings, but if that was all I did, I would be somewhat disappointed," Moore elaborated. He was referring to an unofficial program that he was engaged in throughout the six years in Gonbad--getting teenage dropouts back in school.

Moore found boys who had no hope and were living out their young lives in remote mountain villages. He convinced them that they could make it in school and that God had a unique purpose for their lives. More than that, he gave them a place to live in Gonbad by bringing them into his own home and getting them in school.

Several of these young men are now studying in other countries and many of them are at the top of their classes. Primarily, it was the "success stories" of these students that kept him in Iran past the usual time to return home.

The young Kentuckian said he first became interested in school dropouts when he worked on the staff at Oneida Institute, as assistant to the president in charge of public relations and alumni affairs. "I spent many hours bringing boys down from the 'hollows' to our school," he declared.

When Moore left Iran, he pledged to continue his support for 14 of these former dropouts who need to live away from home while they are in school. He admitted that already he had borrowed money to send back for their support, having used all his Peace Corps salary for their support in the past. "I can't do otherwise," he responded to an Iranian friend who said he had done enough and shouldn't try to do more.

"If I quit now, what will happen to them?" he asked, expressing confidence that many of these students will return to their villages as teachers, doctors and community leaders.

In a long story published in the Tehran (Iran) Journal, Moore was praised as one who could "inspire others...who was never afraid to talk of God and love" and as a person who loved the people of Gonbad Kavous and was loved by them. The Journal also mentioned that businessmen will less interest in community development trembled at the threat of a confrontation with the intense, energetic young man who had the reputation "for getting things done."

Moore attributes his motivation to his upbringing in a Kentucky mountain family and to his teachers at Oneida Baptist Institute in Oneida, Ky. "They taught me that people are important--not things," he said earnestly.

"The essence of our Christian faith is the value of one person," he continued. Moore added that for him, Christianity was "living things" and not just "speaking things," because "the most effective way to witness is to live out your faith."

"The whole key to the thing is caring about other people," Moore said in summing up his Christian commitment.

Since returning to the United States, the Peace Corps has employed Moore to work for a few months as a recruiter on the West Coast, travelling over a 12-state region.

Peace Corps officials, and those who know him, feel sure that his testimony will convince many persons, young and old, that if they really care, they can make a difference for someone, somewhere, and that perhaps that difference will be for a whole village and thousands of people.

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BP PHOTO mailed to Baptist state papers by Washington Bureau.

North Carolina Baptist Study
Negro Convention Relationships

1/29/71

RALEIGH, N.C. (BP)--The General Board of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina appointed here a five-man committee to "work out possible future projects and relationships" with the state's Negro Baptist body--the General Baptist State Convention.

During the board meeting here, it was also announced that T. Robert Mullinax, pastor of First Baptist Church, Laurinburg, N.C., had been named executive secretary of the convention's Council on Christian Higher Education.

The committee to study relationships with the Negro Baptist convention in the state was asked to study the possibility of black churches how affiliated with the General Baptist Convention becoming dually aligned with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, the Southern Baptist affiliated body.

W. Perry Crouch, executive secretary of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, told the board that the action was prompted by several developments, including open activity by the American Baptist Convention in the state "almost begging black churches to dually align with their convention.

The committee was also asked to study the possibility of future joint convention sessions between the two Baptist bodies. Last November, a proposal was introduced at the convention's annual session in Greensboro, suggesting such a joint meeting.

Election of Mullinax by the Council of Higher Education for the convention is to be effective March 1. The 40-year-old pastor will succeed Ben C. Fisher, who resigned last fall to become executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Education Commission, with offices in Nashville. A native of Cedartown, Ga., Mullinax is a graduate of Gardner-Webb College, Wake Forest University, and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, all located in North Carolina. He has been pastor of numerous North Carolina Baptist Churches. He is past president of the Southeastern Seminary Alumni Association.

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