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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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76-02

**FREEDOM 76, Youth Faced  
By Hunger, Give \$9,352**

By Dan Martin

**SAN ANTONIO (BP)**--Gruel, a bland, yellowish porridge, was sampled here by about 5,000 students and young adults, who experienced the plight of 460 million starving people.

World hunger became one of the major focuses of **FREEDOM 76**, a national meeting sponsored by the Southern Baptist Convention, the nation's largest Protestant denomination.

"Ugh," said one young coed. "It's awful. The texture. The taste. Ugh."

Besides sampling the soy-corn blend, the only nourishment received by many people around the world, the students were challenged to pray, to fast, and to contribute their time, their talents, and their lives to others.

Jimmy R. Allen, pastor of San Antonio's First Baptist Church, challenged them to forego one meal during 24-hour-period and to donate the cost of that meal (at least \$2.10) to a special offering for world hunger alleviation. The offering resulted in \$9,352.

The San Antonio pastor also challenged them to "fight for the kind of changes that will give someone the right to live" and specifically pointed to two resolutions pending in Congress (House Resolution 393 and Senate Resolution 66) which would make the right to food a basic cornerstone of our foreign policy.

He charged food decisions are made on self-interest bases and queried: "Couldn't we just decide to base our foreign policy on the fact that people are hungry and that we have the ability to help them? Couldn't we just feed people because they are hungry and not because they might be our tools?"

The special offering will be divided between Allen's feeding program at the San Antonio church (30 percent) feeding programs administered by the SBC Home Mission Board (30 percent) and SBC Foreign Mission Board hunger projects in Bangladesh (40 percent).

A young woman carrying a sack of bread, crackers, and grocery items was asked what she had done.

"Our group bought groceries. We spent \$7 to buy food for the whole conference. That way we'll have more money to give to the offering. We've already fasted for world hunger, so we decided to do it this way," said Pam Steward, a student at Shawnee Junior College in Illinois.

Kathy Isaac, a student at Wichita State University in Kansas, admitted to being "terribly confused" about world hunger.

"I did fast," she said, "but I feel it should be done in all seriousness and not just because it is a fad or because of an emotional appeal. I believe it is between the individual and God."

## Presidential "Primary" Reveals Conservatism of Young Adults

SAN ANTONIO (BP)--Southern Baptist young people are moderate conservatives, according to a poll taken here at FREEDOM 76, national Southern Baptist meeting for young adults.

Participants at FREEDOM 76 were offered an opportunity to state their preferences from among hopefuls for the Democratic and Republican presidential races.

Former Georgia Gov. Jimmy Carter and President Gerald Ford won handily, defeating Alabama Gov. George Wallace and former California Gov. Ronald Reagan.

"There was a lot of interest in the voting," said Harry N. Hollis Jr. of Nashville, coordinator of the citizenship area in the conference's Freedom Hall, where the voting machine was located. It was one of many options in Freedom Hall.

"The machine was used constantly. At one point, we had 35 or 40 people lined up to vote," Hollis said, adding that 539 young adults took part. That represents about 10 percent of the participants.

"I think the vote reflects renewed interest in the political process," he said, noting the activism of the students in the 1960s "often was activism for the sake of activism."

It was followed by a period of apathy and withdrawal in the early 70s, he added.

"We now have growing out of that withdrawal a political interest which is more healthy," he said. "It grows out of a Christian commitment, a determination to be involved in solving the problems of the world."

Hollis cautioned against "reading too much into the results of the poll."

"I do believe we can draw some conclusions, but it was not a scientific sampling because many of the registrants did not get to vote. It should not be taken as an absolute, final assessment of how all young people feel," he added.

"It's interesting Carter beat Wallace and Ford defeated Reagan. In both cases the moderate conservative won," Hollis noted.

Hollis, a staffer of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, also noted the moderate conservatives overwhelmed moderate liberal or liberal candidates.

For instance, Hubert Humphrey drew 74 votes and Edward Kennedy 63. Fred Harris, probably the most outspoken liberal, drew only 15 votes.

"Southern Baptist young people are essentially conservative, both religiously and politically. There's no question about it," Hollis added.

Hollis said many of the conference participants expressed displeasure with the choice of candidates, however.

He quoted voters as saying:

"I backed into the voters both."

"With the great problems we're facing in this nation, it's a shame that better people aren't running for president."

"The options weren't very good."

Hollis called the voting an "educational experience."

"Many young people have never been in a voting booth. They seemed to really enjoy the educational value of it. It also had another effect. Many of them started thinking about their choice of a presidential candidate. Many of them are considering who they will support in 1976," he added.

The outcome of the presidential preference poll:

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DEMOCRATS: Carter, 145; Wallace, 101; Humphrey, 74; Kennedy, 63; Henry Jackson, 34; Lloyd Bentsen, 28; Birch Bayh, 19; Morris Udall, 17; Harris, 15; Sargent Shriver, 11; Terry Sanford, 6; Milton Shapp, 1.

REPUBLICANS: Ford, 291; Reagan, 197; John Connally, 60.

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Carolyn Weatherford Is As  
Liberated as She Wants To Be

Baptist Press  
1/5/76

By Teena Andrews

SAN ANTONIO (BP)--Carolyn Weatherford doesn't consider **herself** a "radical bra-burning feminist", but admitted that "the more I talk the more feminist I sound."

Miss Weatherford of Birmingham, executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Convention Woman's Missionary Union, led one of several seminars during FREEDOM 76 discussing women in their varied and potential roles as Christians, church members, and missionaries.

"I'm as liberated as I want to be," Miss Weatherford said in her seminar on women in the church. "But I think many churchwomen want to be freer than they are," she added.

The WMU director pointed out that few career opportunities exist for women in the Southern Baptist Convention except in the traditional area of Woman's Missionary Union.

"Some women may want to hold positions as president of the Sunday School Board or president of the Southern Baptist Convention," she said at the four-day national Southern Baptist meeting for young adults.

Women have not played major roles in religion so they have no heroes, she said.

We tend to look too much at Paul's statements on women and the Old Testament view, instead of at Jesus who treated women as human beings," she said, pointing out the many women to whom Jesus ministered.

Miss Weatherford objected to the word "equality" to define how she feels about women's roles in the church, saying that men and women are endowed with different qualities.

"At the crucifixion of Jesus, the men fled--they couldn't suffer with him vicariously--but the women stayed," she pointed out. She felt it was no accident that Jesus first appeared to women after his resurrection. In Jewish society, she said, it was a revolutionary idea for women to tell men something important.

During the Middle Ages many women entered nunneries. "Women could be leaders in a convent, but there were no leadership opportunities in the outside world," she said.

Even the Reformation was not concerned with improving the lot of women. The de-emphasis of Mary destroyed women's traditional, biblical female model. In summary, women played limited roles in church history, Miss Weatherford pointed out.

She noted that a few women played important roles in American church history, but said these were crusaders who were not playing natural roles for women.

Only in the area of missions have women really achieved, she said, calling Lottie Moon, a well-known Southern Baptist missionary to China, a "feminist in many ways. She was frustrated by the instructions of men at home who didn't know what it was like in China," she said.

In the modern-day church, Miss Weatherford said that "some of the strongest foes to women are other women." As an example, she cited Florida's first woman president of the Baptist state convention. No men complained, but many women did, she said.

In local churches, most women hold traditional positions in volunteer leadership. She said some women are on committees, but few are on such responsible ones as finance. Few women are ordained as deacons, she added.

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Miss Weatherford expressed regret that so few women hold positions of importance in SBC life, such as membership on boards of agencies and faculties of seminaries.

"There is more openness in the Southern Baptist Convention toward women than there has been in a long time," she ended, optimistically.

Several home and foreign missionaries expressed their opinions of women's roles on the mission field in a seminar on women in missions.

Marilyn Prickett, a singer and speaker, serves as a roving missionary to the central 18 states with her husband. She feels more roles exist for women now in home missions than five years ago.

Phyllis Merritt, a Southern Baptist home missionary who earlier served in New York City high rise apartments and now serves in Christian social ministries in New Mexico, noted how her role changed after becoming a mother.

Mrs. Merritt, along with Wally Wagner, a foreign missionary to Austria, pointed out that being responsible for children and a home limited their ability to get out among the people, but that they were able to find other ways to serve.

Mrs. Wagner made her home an unofficial student center, where she counseled with students and held Bible studies.

Elaine Dickson of Nashville, supervisor of the young adult section at the Baptist Sunday School Board, asked her seminar group on Christian freedom for women to identify certain rules and norms in American social systems that tend to be oppressive to women.

Participants noted that, in government, women seldom run for elective office. In some churches, women are often frowned on for wearing pants suits.

In most churches, it was pointed out, it is either a rule or a norm that women are not deacons.

Miss Dickson said when women run into oppressive rules and norms, they have to decide on a personal response--acceptance vs. confrontation; dependence vs independence; resistance to change vs acceptance of change.

"The first in each group tend to be more conservative people while the second are very radical," she said, "and we have to chose where we're going to be."

Miss Dickson, who admitted she supports the Equal Rights Amendment, said she is somewhere in the middle of the two extremes.

"I respect people on both sides because they are the flag wavers--they are the ones who keep the issues alive. There is a place for all kinds of people. I work in the middle to get the best out of both extremes."

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5,000 Flickering Candles  
Welcome 1976, Bicentennial

Baptist Press  
1/5/76

By Dan Martin

SAN ANTONIO (BP)--In the flickering light of 5,000 candles ringing San Antonio's historic Alamo Plaza, young adults from 42 states welcomed in America's third century here with prayer and song here.

The 5,000 college students and single and married young adults concluded FREEDOM 76, a four-day national conference sponsored by agencies of the 12.6 million-member Southern Baptist Convention, the nation's largest Protestant denomination.

The candlelight procession of young people formed at the San Antonio Convention Center and stretched for a number of blocks to the Alamo Plaza, across the street from Texas' historic shrine.

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As they walked along the meandering river, most of the participants were silent, although some sang hymns and religious choruses. Still others stopped to talk with New Year's Eve revellers at the night spots along the river.

The scene cast a strange scenario: Police scooters lit the area with their flashing red lights. The candles flickered and guttered. The lights were reflected in store windows and on the moist pavement.

As the marchers reached the Alamo Plaza, they sang several songs, including America the Beautiful, Amazing Grace, the national anthem and others.

After the long procession eventually got to the plaza, participants knelt on the wet ground and pavement to pray for America as it enters its third century.

As the young adults prayed, silence deepened and policemen held passing cars back for the few minutes the prayer continued.

Even the walk back to the convention center, parking lot and nearby hotels was subdued as participants reflected on the four-day meeting.

During the meeting they were invited to look at America--past present and future--and at their own lives, lifestyles and calling. They "experienced" hunger and contributed \$9,352, to help alleviate suffering and starvation around the world.

Prior to the parade, participants worshipped at a special 76-minute service in the Convention Center, led by Fort Worth pastor Bill O'Brien. They heard music, testimonies and sang songs.

They also signed a declaration making plain their dependence on God and their interdependence on each other. They pledged to pray and be concerned for each other during the New Year.

They also were called to make specific responses to the call of God for vocational choices. More than 1,000 of them indicated an interest in pursuing the matter of Christian vocations.

The four-day meeting in San Antonio had been in the planning for more than two years. It emphasized Baptist Heritage, Christian Citizenship, Christian Discipleship and the Mission of the Church at the start of the nation's third century.

(BP) Photo Will Be Mailed to editors

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FREEDOM 76 Youth Put  
Theory Into Practice

Baptist Press  
1/5/76

By Larry Jerden and David Risinger

SAN ANTONIO (BP)--FREEDOM 76 became more than a soft chair in an auditorium for more than 100 young adults. It became a face-to-face expression with need.

Each afternoon, as part of several ministry options, a mini-van load of the conferees took the San Antonio Baptist Association "Game Wagon" to a different Mexican-American neighborhood. When they raised the basketball goal and brought out the kickball, football, and volleyball, swarms of neighborhood kids flocked around, eager to play.

Other groups of students and young adults turned theory into practice during afternoon work projects. They went out into several parts of San Antonio, some sewing patches for quilts, others sorting out medicines to be distributed through a church-operated free clinic, and still others scrubbing off old paint, brushing on new paint and installing paneling in areas of need.

"At most conferences you just sit and be comfortable and have fellowship" said Kathy Beckmenger of Baytown, Tex. "You just 'take in.' But here we are giving something to someone else."

The "something" shared included not only afternoons of recreation and work projects, but personal sharing and a Christian witness.

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Sharing their Christian witness was one of the major objectives of the 5,000 students and young adults who attended FREEDOM 76, the four-day event sponsored by the Southern Baptist Convention through its agencies for college students and young adults.

"We had about 10 workers the day I went out on the game wagon," noted Charles Reynolds of Earlysville, Va. "We had the organized games, popcorn treats, and a worship time, but I mostly enjoyed just playing airplane--swinging some kids around. It was the personal contact that I liked the best."

Reynolds added that he noted the "keen competition" among the 50 or so neighborhood kids who participated. "I guess this was a valuable outlet for them," he commented. "We were out there for two hours, and they really played hard. One little boy came to second base when I was playing there and said, 'I blew that last one, but I'm gonna kill it next time.'"

He noted that he and some of the other participants took time to talk to some of the kids about Sunday School and Jesus. That led into the devotional.

"The devotional leader made a point in telling them that the Bible is not a Baptist book or Catholic book or Protestant book, but God's book for us," he noted.

Kathy was joined by Mark Blemford, a "missionary kid" from Bangkok, Thailand, in playing football. Both had served as summer missionaries, and compared the afternoon volunteer work by the conferees with their experiences as missionaries.

"It was remarkably like summer mission work," Mark commented. "But even after a summer of work in West Virginia, I was apprehensive about going out here. I didn't know if I could relate."

"I wondered about the effectiveness of just a day's work or two or three days' work, just like I wondered about how effective just a summer's work would be," he added. "But I later found out that all but one of the kids I worked with in West Virginia later made professions of faith."

"I believe what we did here was valuable, too, because even though we will leave, God is still in these neighborhoods. He is still there working."

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#### Wrapup

FREEDOM 76 Undercuts  
Comfortable Apathy

Baptist Press  
1/5/76

By Theo Sommerkamp

SAN ANTONIO (BP)--The 5,000 Baptist students and young adults who attended Baptist-sponsored FREEDOM 76 should have left here with doubts and uncertainties--amid hope for the future.

That's the way it was meant to be. The program for this national convocation, sponsored by agencies of the Southern Baptist Convention, was intended to make them uncomfortable.

It brought them stomach-to-stomach with world hunger--theirs a stomach that had never known extreme hunger, let alone starvation, the other the stomach that had never in its life been fed an adequate meal.

The program told them of the awesome responsibilities of freedom, as well as rights.

It told them that America, just entering the third century of its existence, would need their participation as Christian citizens in framing domestic and foreign policy in the years following the Bicentennial year.

Many students and young adults went home less certain of the courses they have chartered for their lives. Again, it was deliberately engineered.

Had they given serious enough consideration to serving as missionaries, or in some other church related vocation? If in secular employment, were they exercising good Christian discipleship there?

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FREEDOM 76 gave no pat answers. It gave only guidelines and support. The participants would have to make their own choices, accept the responsibilities, in their private devotions.

Jimmy R. Allen, pastor of First Baptist Church in the host city, directed the attention of the 5,000 students and young adults to the plight of 460 million persons around the world who are starving to death. "While we are at this meeting, 40,000 people will starve to death, most of them under five years of age," he pointed out.

"The biggest decision most of us have to worry about is whether we will have Mexican food, fish, or steak for dinner." But the right to life and adequate nourishment is the crucial problem facing starving people around the world, he added.

Many of them heeded Allen's plea to forego one meal during the convocation and donate the cost of the food, or a minimum of \$2.10, to a special offering taken to alleviate world hunger. He said \$2.10 will feed six people through the food program of First Baptist Church, San Antonio, and will provide nourishment for 20 people in Bangladesh.

Delegates responded with \$9,352 for the special offering. The proceeds were shared in Baptist-maintained food programs in San Antonio, nationally, and internationally.

To sharpen the focus on world hunger, a soy-corn blend known as gruel, was served to delegates touring a world mission exhibit. The bland, yellowish porridge got this rating from one sampler: "Ugh. It's awful. The texture. The taste. Ugh," she grimaced.

In another statement, Allen applied the world hunger problem to the foreign policy of the United States. He described two resolutions pending in Congress (House Resolution 393 and Senate Resolution 66) which would "make the right to food a basic cornerstone of our foreign policy."

Several of the more than 50 seminar and discussion groups at FREEDOM 76 reenacted an emphasis on the meaning of freedom. A keynote speaker, William M. Pinson, Jr., warned there is more to freedom than the opinion held by most people.

Pinson, pastor, First Baptist Church, Wichita Falls, Tex., said the majority may think of liberty as freedom "from" tyranny, whereas freedom also involves the responsibility of being free "for" some achievement.

One student put it aptly: "Freedom needs to involve a purpose or goal--otherwise it can create chaos." But freedom is highly personal also. "People must be able to make up their own minds," another student pointed out. "Just as God gave us freedom to choose him or not, we must allow them freedom of choice."

Participants in FREEDOM 76 demonstrated their Christian citizenship through community work projects. They painted a rescue mission, sorted medicines for a church's free clinic, and provided a portable playground in a neighborhood short of recreational facilities.

They also took a penetrating look at the national political scene. Young adults today no longer have a "bumper sticker" approach to politics, said Harry N. Hollis Jr., Nashville, director of family and special moral concerns for the SBC Christian Life Commission. "There's a lot of interest in the political process," he said.

Given a chance to express themselves politically through a Presidential preference ballot, delegates revealed their conservative bent.

Former Georgia Gov. Jimmy Carter, a Baptist, won the Democratic "race," 145 to 101, beating out Alabama Gov. George Wallace. President Gerald R. Ford led the Republican "ticket," outdistancing former California Gov. Ronald Reagan 291 to 167. The young adults cast 539 ballots--about 10 percent of the registrants. The total included ballots cast for other candidates. Hollis, however, cautioned against "reading too much into the results of the poll."

W. F. Howard of Dallas, chairman of the program committee, and Ed Seabough of Atlanta chairman of the promotion and registration committee for FREEDOM 76, said a major aim of the meeting was to "furnish a strong missions emphasis."

Delegates had their previous life commitments questioned. Through mission exhibits, both home and foreign, and through speeches, seminars and multi-media they were urged to weigh carefully whether God is calling them into career missionary service.

After conference closing addresses by Glendon McCullough of Memphis, executive director of the SBC Brotherhood Commission, and Edward V. Hill, pastor, Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church, Los Angeles, many students and young adults responded to an invitation for commitment.

The commitment was not only to career missionary service, but also to other church-related vocations, and to manifesting Christian discipleship and citizenship in everyday business, social, and family life.

Through commitment cards containing their names and addresses, Baptist agencies will be able to keep in contact with them and counsel them on career opportunities.

Although the convocation failed to attract the 7,500 to 10,000 persons originally hoped for, those who worked for more than two years to organize FREEDOM 76 said they consider it a success.

The "real excitement" of FREEDOM 76 is that students and young adults, on one hand, and the denomination, on the other, experienced one another, said Stanley Nelson of Richmond, a member of the program committee and staff member of the SBC Foreign Mission Board.

"We weren't out to make money on this," he said. "Our real purpose has been achieved. The young adults are seeing that denominational agencies are real. The denominational agencies are realizing that the young adults are real. It's two-way street of relating in a vital way."

The Bicentennial flavored all of FREEDOM 76. It was scheduled to end as Father Tim ushered in the new, and Bicentennial, year.

The final phase of FREEDOM 76 consisted of a dramatic celebration service followed by a candlelight procession of at least 5,000 people along the sidewalks bordering a picturesque river in downtown San Antonio. This walk took them near the Alamo, a Texas state freedom shrine for which the city is perhaps most famous.

"We want FREEDOM 76 to continue to speak to student and young adult involvement throughout the third century of our nation," said Charles Roselle, Nashville, general chairman of the convocation and director of the SBC's program of National Student Ministries.

"We also want FREEDOM 76 to put feet to the mission strategy of our denomination for the remainder of this century, through the witness of students and young adults who have met here and who will be the leaders in the year 2000," Roselle continued.