



January 27, 1977

77-15

Editor's Life Marked
By "Unusual Courage"

By Sharon Roberts

NASHVILLE (BP)--"I'm sorry, Mr. Phillips, but the biopsy indicates that you have a malignant tumor in your chest."

For 38-year-old Elgene Phillips, an editor in the church recreation department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, these words by a Nashville physician marked the beginning of a courageous, hard-fought battle against Hodgkin's disease.

Late in the evening of Jan. 15, he lost his year-long struggle with cancer, but not before he had impressed friends and strangers alike with his appreciation of life and his deep faith.

"I have never seen anyone so unafraid of death," commented Leslie Weston, one of several nurses at Vanderbilt Hospital who knew Phillips personally. "We all realized that Elgene was a very special person and that he reflected, in his own quiet way, the Christian faith. He had an unusual kind of courage."

Courage was needed for Phillips, his wife Karen and their three children--Craig, 15, Cindy, 12, and Brooks, 6, in the days after that initial diagnosis in November 1975.

The first of a long series of tests, consultations and hospital visits began with a late November visit to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., where the diagnosis of Hodgkin's disease, a cancer which attacks the lymph glands, was confirmed.

"Although doctors were optimistic then about remission, Elgene had to cope with the reality of a terminal illness," said Larry Yarborough, a Sunday School Board youth consultant who was a close personal friend and accompanied him to Minnesota. "It was at this time that Psalm 103 became especially meaningful to him."

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"Elgene's faith went through a deepening process," observed Floyd A. Craig, who had worked with Phillips in the Junior High Sunday School department at First Baptist Church, Nashville, and was a close personal friend.

"There was always a balance between coping and a sense of faith. Even as he searched intensely for an answer to the question, 'Why is this happening to me?,' he never doubted God--just why," said Craig, a Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission staffer.

"Often he could laugh in the face of the situation," Craig continued, "but other times he needed to express anger. If he wanted to talk, we talked; in fact, I took him on so many late-night wheelchair rides that we both knew every available job opening in the hospital.

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Co-worker and friend Frank Hart Smith agreed: "I don't think Elgene knew anyone halfway."

Yarborough added, "You could always be yourself with him. Elgene accepted you for what you were and loved you for it."

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His memorial service, led by Floyd Craig, reflected that victory. It began with the singing of "Victory in Jesus" and ended, at Karen's request, with the "Halleluiah Chorus." The children requested a soloist to sing "Because He Lives."

An editorial Elgene wrote for April-May-June, 1977 Church Recreation Magazine, after he knew of his illness, was read as part of the service. "I have learned that life is a valuable possession...not something to be taken for granted," he wrote.

"God put you and me on earth for a purpose. We must become the real persons God intends us to be...and not merely exist on a day-to-day basis--never discovering what 'life' really is."

"Just as it is impossible to describe a beautiful symphony," said Floyd Craig, "so is it difficult to fully describe the kind of person Elgene was. You can't do it; you just have to be there. I was fortunate enough to be close to him."

Many others were fortunate too.

(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state papers

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Gas Shortages Close 8 SBC
Organizations in Nashville

NASHVILLE (BP)--Record low temperatures and critical natural gas shortages in the Southeastern United States closed eight Nashville-based Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) organizations for several days in late January.

The denomination's Sunday School Board, a four-building complex at 127 Ninth Ave., N., in Nashville, which also houses the SBC Historical Commission, shut down for four days. The closing is thought to be the first in the Sunday School Board's 86-year history.

The Southern Baptist Convention Building, at 460 James Robertson Parkway, which contains offices of six Southern Baptist organizations, shut down for three days. Occupants of the building are the denomination's Executive Committee, Christian Life Commission, Education Commission, Stewardship Commission, Southern Baptist Foundation, and Seminary Extension Department.

Many Nashville area schools, businesses and industries closed, reflecting statewide problems which have led Tennessee to ask for "disaster area" status from the federal government.

During the Sunday School Board's four-day closing, President Grady C. Cothen estimated that it cost the board about \$80,000 for each day in salaries and fringe benefits for 940 employees--or a total of \$320,000. (The board receives no money from the SBC Cooperative Program unified budget.)

The 78 employees of SBC Building agencies and some eight employees at the Historical Commission, who also continued to receive salaries during the shutdown, managed to keep most of their work current despite the conditions, spokesmen said. The agencies involved will ultimately experience little or no financial or work production loss, they said.

The complex nature and size of the Sunday School Board, the world's largest publisher of religious materials, makes financial comparison difficult in relation to the other agencies. Sunday School Board leaders feel, though, that extra efforts by employees will ultimately minimize direct financial losses.

Many employees of the eight organizations continued to come to work or took work home during the shutdown.

The closings were voluntary, in compliance with the Nashville Gas Company's energy conservation measures for industrial users of natural gas, to insure adequate heat for hospitals and residential gas customers in middle Tennessee.

After the four-day layoff, Cothen told Sunday School Board employees that the board would begin operation again with six-hour workdays and significantly reduced temperatures in the four-building complex. SBC building occupants are also working under reduced temperatures and workday requirements as stipulated by the various agency heads.

"The work must go on," Cothen said to Sunday School Board employees, citing the necessity of mailing literature orders to churches and ever-pressing deadlines of the approximately 200 publications of the Sunday School Board as primary reasons for returning in heavy winter clothing to office areas where temperatures averaged only 54 degrees.

"Our only reason for existence is the churches," Cothen continued. He expressed special appreciation to board employees who had come to work even while the board was closed, and heads of the other agencies echoed Cothen's statements.

The Baptist agencies have been allocated a certain amount of natural gas each day, and property management personnel have been heating the buildings only to the extent permitted without exceeding the daily designated amount.

Census Bureau Rules Out
Religion Question in 1980

By Carol B. Franklin

WASHINGTON (BP)--In accordance with a new law which forbids requiring a person to give information about his religion, the Bureau of the Census has announced that it will not include a question on religion, even of a voluntary nature, on the 1980 census.

"The bureau will not ask a question on religion in the 1980 census because of recent congressional action which prohibits such inquiries in a mandatory undertaking such as the decennial census," Robert L. Hagan, acting director of the Bureau of the Census, stated.

The new law (PL94-521) reads: "No person shall be compelled to disclose information relative to his religious beliefs or to membership in a religious body."

The issue of including questions on religion in the Current Population Survey (CPS), a monthly voluntary study carried out by the bureau, has not yet been decided, according to Hagan.

The census advisory committee on population statistics voted in 1976 that the bureau should evaluate and pursue the idea of asking a question on religion in the CPS. According to the official minutes of that committee, two members strongly opposed this action, but "the large majority" favored it.

David L. Kaplan, assistant director for demographic censuses, told Baptist Press that "the matter of religious questions on the CPS is being held in abeyance." He said that the issue likely will be reviewed this year.

Religious researchers and representatives of some denominations have requested a question on religion on the census many times in the past but the bureau has decided each time not to include such a question due to heavy opposition.

Business interests, religious statisticians and Roman Catholic and some Protestant groups favor a question on religion. Those most strongly opposed are Jewish, Southern Baptist, and Christian Scientist groups, according to a A. Ross Eckler, former director of the Census Bureau.

In the last half of the 19th Century, the external aspects of religion were tabulated. Data such as the number of church buildings, the seating capacity, and the value of church property were collected during the 1850, 1860 and 1870 census returns. In 1880, there was a question about the number of "Sabbath Schools" and organizations for men and women. In 1890, the same question used the term "Sunday Schools."

In the present century, this type of inquiry was phased out. However, four mid-term censuses (1906, 1916, 1926, and 1936) collected comparative statistics from religious bodies. The results were published in the Census of Religious Bodies. This study identified itself as "a census of the religious organizations in the United States rather than of individuals classified according to denominational affiliations." Opposition grew until this was discontinued after the 1936 data were published in 1941.

Serious consideration was given to inclusion of a question on religion in both the 1960 and 1970 censuses but criticism again caused the bureau to drop the idea.

Proponents requested a religious question on the 1980 census. They cited the value of "religious statistics" in planning for schools, hospitals and other services provided by the churches; in various levels of government; in studying the sociological aspects of ministry; in providing the most reliable data on church affiliation and interfaith marriages; and in the marketing of religious products.

Dean R. Hogue, secretary of the Religious Research Association here, told the census advisory committee that church planning also includes schools and church-related education, matters which are of broad public concern, so that data on religious affiliation, preference, and relationship to the church all need to be taken into consideration. He also noted that private surveys often produce different answers.

Everett L. Perry of the program agency staff of the United Presbyterian Church expressed to the committee the need for more information "in a period of rapid religious change and fragmentation. This need is common to Protestants, Catholics and Jews . . . the sectarian use of the data may be secondary, but it would be helpful to trace the changes from the social science point of view in order to understand better what is happening in religious life in America," Perry said.

Opponents to a question on religion on the decennial census again voiced strong objections to inclusion of such a question. The issues at stake are religious liberty, the separation of church and state and the individual citizen's right to privacy, according to James E. Wood Jr., executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs here.

The American Jewish Committee also expressed concern to the bureau about the violation of the principle of the separation of church and state.

Kaplan told Baptist Press that mail to the bureau on the religious question has not been unusually heavy when compared to mail on other issues. He added that the bureau welcomes the views of citizens on this and other issues.

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Court to decide Case on
Sick Leave for Pregnancy

By Stan Hastey

WASHINGTON (BP)--The U. S. Supreme Court announced here it will decide whether pregnant women must be paid for sick leave when they leave their jobs to give birth.

In other actions, the high court took on an obscenity case, this one from Georgia, and determined that radio preachers Herbert W. and Garner Ted Armstrong must answer a charge against them in an Alaska court.

In the women's case, the court scheduled for oral argument three cases similar to one decided late last year involving the General Electric Co. In that case, the court ruled 6-3 that private companies have no obligation to provide pregnancy disability benefits to women who leave the labor force to give birth.

The issue in the new cases is whether companies and government agencies may single out pregnancy as an illness not covered by sick leave provisions.

Of the three new cases, one involves a private company, Nashville (Tenn.) Gas Co. The other two suits were filed by women against the Richmond (Cal.) Unified School District and the Department of Social Services of New York City.

In the Nashville Gas Co. case, women employees also objected to a company policy which denies them seniority considerations for purposes of bidding on new job openings when they return to the labor force. Two lower district courts earlier ruled for the women.

In the obscenity action, the high court decided to review the conviction of an Atlanta man for showing the film "Behind the Green Door."

Claude D. Ballew, proprietor of the Paris Art Theatre in Atlanta, argued in a written legal brief that his conviction by a jury of five persons was an abridgement of his right to a jury trial guaranteed by the Sixth Amendment to the U. S. Constitution. He maintained that five is an insufficient number of jurors.

Ballew also contends that "Behind the Green Door" is not obscene and should be included in the First Amendment category of "protected speech."

Last month, the high court agreed to hear an Illinois man's contention that the state's anti-obscenity statute is vague and is stated too broadly.

In another action, the justices denied an appeal by Herbert W. Armstrong and his son, Garner Ted Armstrong, that they should not have to answer charges against them brought by an Alaska woman.

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The woman, Margaret E. Aiken, took the Armstrongs to court, claiming that they had "alienated the affections" of her husband by convincing him that an earlier divorce was not "scriptural."

Based in California, the Armstrongs argued that Alaska's "long arm" law, which allows out-of-state residents to be tried in Alaska, violates their 14th Amendment due process rights.

They also held that if they are forced to stand trial in Alaska, they will have to discuss their religious beliefs in court. That would amount to a denial of religious freedom and free speech rights, the Armstrongs claim.

But the high court ruled that it cannot hear the case because the appeal was made before and not after a final determination by Alaska courts.

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Relief Money Appropriated
For Flooding in Indonesia

Baptist Press
1/27/77

JAKARTA, Indonesia (BP)--The Indonesia Baptist Mission has been granted \$5,000 by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board to help meet relief needs following severe flooding here and in surrounding areas.

Edward O. Sanders, chairman of the mission (organization of Southern Baptist missionaries), requested the money for food, clothing and possibly some reconstruction of housing, according to William R. Wakefield, the board's secretary for Southeast Asia.

The flooding came as a result of unusually heavy Monsoon rains. Two-thirds of Jakarta has been reported under water in the worst flooding in the area in 80 years. Western Java, where Jakarta is located, has experienced large crop losses.

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Migrants Get Southern
Baptist Relief Assistance

Baptist Press
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ATLANTA (BP)--The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board here has wired \$10,000 to the Florida Baptist Convention to provide food and blankets for migrant workers made jobless by the freeze in Florida which has destroyed crops.

The money will be supplemented by \$5,000 in Florida disaster relief funds requested by Harold C. Bennett, the Florida convention's executive secretary-treasurer, pending final approval by the convention's administrative committee.

The funds are the first disaster relief expenditures for the Home Mission Board's Christian social ministries department in 1977. (Relief funds in 1976 totaled \$55,500, including \$20,000 for the Teton Dam disaster.)

Baptist churches in the Fort Myers area have already gathered three tons of food to help in the effort.

According to Russell Kaufman, director of migrant ministries for Florida Baptists, the plight of the migrant workers depends on the "quickness of government agencies and how well adjustments in living arrangements can be made.

"Already there have been threats of evictions," Kaufman reports, "but we are working with other agencies to waylay this."

Kaufman has begun sifting limited funds down through associations and churches to the hardest hit areas. These include the Dade County-Miami, Fort Myers and Immokalee-Royal Palm Associations.

"The basis of the need is for food and warmth," he says.

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Kaufman foresees that the worst time is ahead--after all the fruit still on the trees is picked.

"Growers who have decided to replant will need migrant workers for the replanting," he says, but notes that most experts agree that in the migrants will begin to face the problem of little work.

"We hope to head off some problems by preparing ahead," he says. "If the government declares Florida a national disaster area, then we won't have as a big a burden."

Kaufman expects to use the funds to assist local churches and associations in their relief efforts: "There may be temporary assistance with utilities or occasional assistance for a short period with rent, but the churches will be the first line of providing help."

Funneling the funds through the churches also helps keep the people involved, he says.

"Perhaps this situation will have a positive effect, even though I'm sorry it must happen this way," Kaufman says. "I believe it will bring an awareness to the people of the migrants problems and cause a greater willingness for them to become involved in active ministry.

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Billy Graham Against
Apartheid in Africa

Baptist Press
1/27/77

NAIROBI, Kenya (BP)--Billy Graham said here recently that he believes apartheid (segregation) in South Africa has been a total failure and was wrong from the beginning, but he opposes the use of force to bring about change.

In an interview following a mass rally, the American evangelist commented on churches giving humanitarian aid to liberation organizations.

"I am against violence," Graham said. "I hope the people of Southern Africa will be able to solve their problems in a peace-like way, without fighting . . . but the church should use its moral influence in speaking out and talking about it."

Orville Boyd Jenkins, Southern Baptist missionary press representative, said Graham expressed fear that since the South African government, which has the Atomic Bomb, might use it "if their backs are to the wall. They have many bombs . . . and this will be a tragedy for whites and blacks in Southern Africa."

Expressing his own opposition to apartheid, Graham said that for many years he had refused to go to South Africa "until they were willing to integrate the big stadiums."

After refusing for 20 years, Graham said, he finally went two years ago. In the stadium about half the people were black, and they sat wherever they wanted to sit.

"I stayed only in hotels where black people could stay or in homes where blacks and whites could stay," Graham stated.

Concerning the sanctioning of apartheid by the Dutch Reformed Church, Graham observed, "there is a growing movement now to try to change the attitude of the church." More than 48 percent of the nation's European population belongs to the Dutch Reformed Church.

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President Hits Pride At
National Prayer Breakfast

Baptist Press
1/27/77

By W. Barry Garrett

WASHINGTON (BP)--President Jimmy Carter warned against the weaknesses of "pride" in a speech at the National Prayer Breakfast here.

"It is easier to admit personal weakness than our national weaknesses," the President said as he urged the nation to live up to its ideals.

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Carter hit hard at the concept often repeated that America is the strongest, wisest, best nation on the earth as a cover up for the nation's failures and mistakes.

Failure to acknowledge our mistakes precludes the opportunity to find solutions to our problems, the President said. "When we lose our inclination to search, we lose our relation," he continued.

The National Prayer Breakfast was begun 25 years ago by a group of congressmen and other government leaders. It has escalated both in attendance and in extent to state prayer breakfasts for governors and others. Some 4,100 guests were present this year at the Washington Hilton Hotel's Grand Ballroom. It took two overflow banquet rooms to accommodate the crowd.

Congresswoman Marjorie S. Holt (R.-Md.) presided at the breakfast, which was attended by high ranking leaders from all three branches of the government. Spokesmen from the House Prayer Group, the Senate Prayer Group and the Pentagon Prayer Group participated in the program. These groups meet for breakfast each week for prayer and fellowship.

The keynote speaker for the occasion was Rep. Jim Wright (D.-Tex.), the newly elected majority leader in the House of Representatives. His message expressed the overall tone of the entire occasion. He emphasized the fact that "we are all sinners," that God is active in forgiveness, that forgiven sinners must act responsibly and that God has given his people the ability to solve their problems with his help.

Wright asked the assembly, which represented much of the power structure of the nation, "Do we dare believe that we are able to usher in a new age? If we say 'no,' we are denying the power of God."

As he pleaded for a new beginning in America, the Texas congressman urged love and forgiveness in the nation--Democrats and Republicans, hawks and doves. Only in this way can we achieve national unity and discharge responsibility, he insisted.

Hitting at the sham of a civil religion, Wright said, "We in the United States have made a pretense of being a covenant nation. Both the Congress and the Supreme Court open their sessions with prayer, and our coins have inscribed on them, 'In God We Trust.' Is this religion or religiosity? Is it real or pretense?"

President Carter observed, in his opening remarks, "Jim Wright's comments made me proud to be a brother with him, to be an American, to be a child of God. What he said is an inspiration."

The President explained that when he was preparing his inaugural address, he included II Chronicles 7:14 in his text, but that his staff insisted that the people of the country objected because they might think he was being proud and would misunderstand his motivation. He used Micah 6:8 instead.

The President then appealed to the leaders of government to heed the exhortation of Jesus, "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." He said the public officials are "public servants. It is hard for people to translate this concept to the President of the United States," he continued as he indicated that this was his concept of the office.

U.S. Sen. Charles H. Percy (R.-Ill.) introduced the program by a call to fellowship. "As we gather for the 25th annual prayer breakfast, enter the third century as a nation, have a new national administration and are in the first weeks of the new Congress, we are reminded of the foundations of our democracy, our national spirit of understanding and the pursuit of our common goals," he said.

Percy expressed optimism for the future of the nation. He said, "Our people are reasserting a trust in our leaders," but he reminded the audience that government alone cannot solve the problems of the country. He referred to President Carter's inaugural address in which he said, "This inauguration ceremony marks a new beginning, a new dedication within our government, and a new spirit among us all. A President may sense and proclaim that new spirit, but only a people can provide it. We can take this concept one step further," Percy said. "Together we must make our actions as noble as the ideals we profess. Our power stems from the people who elect us and whom we serve."

Greetings were brought from the House of Representatives Prayer Group by U.S. Rep. Gunn McKay (D.-Utah), from the Senate Prayer Group by U.S. Sen. Peter V. Domenici (R.-N.M.), and from the Pentagon Prayer Group by General David C. Jones, chief of staff of the U.S. Air Force. Prayers were offered by Julian M. Carroll, governor of the state of Kentucky, Burt O. Lance, director of the office of management and budget, and former Sen. Harold Hughes of Iowa.



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