

**(BP)****BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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Amy Carter's Baptism
Intrigues Press Pool

By W. Barry Garrett

WASHINGTON (BP)--Amy Carter, nine-year old daughter of President and Mrs. Jimmy Carter, intrigued the non-Baptist world by her baptism at the First Baptist Church here.

She was baptized by Charles A. Trentham, pastor of the church, on Sunday, Feb. 6, three weeks after the family moved into the White House.

Maybe it wasn't Amy so much as it was the Baptist way of baptism that was so intriguing. When you combine the baptism of a President's daughter with baptism by immersion, you have a scenario that sends the non-initiated into a quandry. It is enough to make us Baptists cringe to know that we have failed so miserably to communicate some of our most precious beliefs.

This was dramatically illustrated in the White House press room while the press pool was preparing its report on the activities around the "pool" at First Baptist.

Since all of the press corps obviously cannot be present at every event they wish to cover, frequently a small group of reporters is assigned to a pool to report to the other reporters. So it was with Amy's baptism.

One of the first things that baffled the press pool was the fact that they were not allowed in the pre-baptism conference with the parents, Amy and the pastor of the church. It seems that nothing is off-limits to the inquisitive press, not even the intimate last minute pastoral instructions to the candidate for baptism.

This gives some credence to a comment of one elderly lady in the First Baptist Church as she said to the press pool, "You are welcome, even if it is just advertising." Another lady complained, "I think it is terrible how Amy's baptism has been played up by the press."

Again, the press pool was curious about the "tub" or "tank" as they irreverently called the baptistry. Some of them apparently never had seen a baptistry in a Baptist church. Speculation ran riot. How big was the "tub?" They guessed that it must have been four feet wide and six feet long. They then changed it to eight feet long when they realized that sometimes it has to accommodate a tall adult completely prone and totally immersed.

How deep was the water in the "tub?" They started to say that it must have been two and one-half feet deep, but increased their guess to three feet for their "pool" report. They didn't know, because they were not allowed to inspect it.

Listen to the description of the baptism by the press pool. It said:

"The baptism came early in the service. Behind the altar, with a small cross, is a 50-foot redos (drapery) with a 'red dosal'(sic) which was pulled apart to reveal Dr. Trentham standing with Amy, who was clad in a white baptismal robe.

"Trentham: 'Amy Carter, upon your confession of faith in Christ as your Saviour and Lord, and in obedience to His command, I baptize you, my sister, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.'"

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"Trentham then took Amy and with his arms assisted her in falling backward into the water. The water could not be seen by the congregation, except where reflections of light were cast on the background. A splash could be heard.

"The total immersion (submersion) was not more than two seconds, and Amy came up wet, but with no discernible sign of either distress or of inspiration."

One reporter, listening to the pool report wanted to know the age at which Baptists admit people to baptism. A Baptist reporter in the room explained that there is no certain age, but that a request for baptism is a voluntary act after a person understands the spiritual facts of life that qualify for baptism.

A significant part of Amy's baptism was that Gladys Silo Mbua, a 16-year old black girl from the Cameroons, was baptized at the same time, although the baptism had been scheduled independently of and prior to Amy's. Her mother sings in the church choir.

When the Mbua girl was baptized, a worshipper slipped a note to the press pool. It said, "Surely, this is a beautiful and loving witness of the love of God which transcends class, color, culture." The note was signed by Beverly G. Kennedy.

Prior to the worship service, the president and his family attended Sunday School. The class was taught by Fred Gregg, vice president of Equitable Life Insurance Company. The president participated freely in the class discussion during the lesson.

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First Baptist A Landmark
Before Carter Membership

Baptist Press
2/7/77

WASHINGTON (BP)--First Baptist Church here has long been a historical landmark in its own right--even before the events of recent weeks thrust it and its pastor in the national limelight.

But those events, says Pastor Charles Trentham, have created excitement among the church's 946 members about the opportunities for ministry caused by an influx of persons from various levels of government.

The influx began with the decision by President Carter's family to transfer their membership from the Plains (Ga.) Baptist Church, the small Southern Baptist congregation which has gained much national attention.

The Sunday after President Carter's family joined the 175-year-old Washington congregation, newly confirmed U. S. Attorney General Griffin Bell, an active Southern Baptist deacon at the Second Ponce de Leon Baptist Church, Atlanta, and Mrs. Bell joined.

"I have known Griffin Bell for a long time and he's a man who takes his Christian faith seriously," said Trentham, who has held two evangelistic meetings at Bell's former church in Atlanta. "It says a lot about a family who will move their church membership before they even move their furniture," added Trentham.

A week after the Bells joined, nine-year-old Amy Carter, who made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior when the Carters joined, was baptized by Trentham, along with another person, Gladys Mbua, a 16-year-old black girl from the Cameroons, who had previously been scheduled for baptism on that day.

"Everyone at the church is excited about the many doors that have been opened to us for witness to our faith," Trentham said, noting that people have been joining "from staffs of embassies and all levels of government."

Although he admits that much of the influx of new members is attributable to President Carter's membership there, he points out that there are changes with every administration--as new members come in and old ones leave.

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And, he notes, the church has long served government leaders. It was organized in the old U. S. Treasury Building in 1802, he says, to serve government workers and has had its share of well known legislators and high ranking government leaders in its membership over the years.

"From the very beginning," says Trentham, "pastors of the church have had close touch with Presidents and other government leaders. After the assassination of Lincoln, the church's pastor went to the White House to call on President Andrew Johnson to assure him of the prayers of the congregation and its desire to be a reconciler during the conflict."

The church, which also met for a period on the site of Ford's Theater, the place of Lincoln's assassination, has been attended by two other Presidents. Harry Truman, a Southern Baptist, worshipped there but never joined. Warren G. Harding and Lyndon B. Johnson have also attended services.

Dually aligned with the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and the American Baptist Churches (ABC) in the U.S.A., Inc., the church participates in several ministries.

They include the "Cheer Up Club" for outpatients of a mental hospital, a cooperative effort called "Bread for the City" for people who would not ordinarily apply for welfare but need help, and the "International Ecumenical Series" on Sunday evenings geared to help single young adults get acquainted and confront contemporary problems from a religious perspective. Trentham says some 35,000 young singles live in a mile radius of the White House, which is six blocks from the church's location at 16th and O Streets.

Besides its contact with the great and the near great in political realms, the church has a place in Baptist history. The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs was formed there in the late 1930s, and pioneer Baptist statesman, Luther Rice, whose efforts led to the organizing of the predecessor of the SBC and ABC, was a prominent member in the early 1800s.

Trentham, who is very conscious of the difficult role of serving as a President's pastor, comments: "The one thing I'm striving for is to make my preaching un-newsworthy. By that I mean, I don't want to be a commentator on the political scene or an instructor of the President. I want to be a servant of the word of God, bringing the resources of the Christian faith to those who are in leadership roles and who need spiritual sustenance and the prayers of a loving congregation."

The 57-year-old minister, with white wavy hair and a unique style of public speech, is a native of Jefferson City, in east Tennessee, and has had a long tenure as pastor and professor.

Before coming to Washington, he served 21 years as pastor of First Baptist Church, Knoxville, a Southern Baptist congregation, and for 12 years as dean of the School of Religion at the University of Tennessee.

He also has been a professor of religion at Baylor University, a Southern Baptist school in Waco, Tex., a professor of systematic theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, a Southern Baptist school in Fort Worth, and pastor of the Sycamore Heights Baptist Church, Fort Worth; Piedmont Baptist Church, Dandridge, Tenn.; Ocoee Baptist Church, Benton, Tenn.; and New Market (Tenn.) Baptist Church.

He holds two earned doctorates, one in theology from Southwestern Seminary and one in moral philosophy from the University of Edinburg, Scotland.

Active in SBC affairs, he has served on the boards of trustees of several Baptist agencies and is former chairman of the SBC's Christian Life Commission. He is author of several books and wrote the commentary on Hebrews for the Broadman Bible Commentary.

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Baptist Leader Again
Attacks IRS Ruling

Baptist Press
2/7/77

By W. Barry Garrett

WASHINGTON (BP)--The executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs here has again attacked a ruling by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for its attempted definition of an "Integrated Auxiliary of a Church."

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In an article on "The Churches and the IRS" in the February issue of Report From the Capital, James E. Wood Jr. charges that the government through the IRS regulation has entered the religious realm that constitutionally has been reserved to the churches alone.

The focal point of Wood's objection, according to his article, is that "The IRS has, in effect, arrogated to itself the highly questionable role of determining what is and what is not 'religious' activity of church agencies and institutions. In doing so, the IRS has violated both the letter and the spirit of the First Amendment," he said.

"The IRS regulation on 'Integrated Auxiliary of a Church' must be regarded as a serious encroachment of government on religion and an exercise of political authority totally unacceptable to the churches," Wood declared.

The IRS, in the January 4 Federal Register, published its official rule defining an "Integrated Auxiliary of a Church." In doing so the IRS claims that it is merely carrying out the mandate imposed by Congress in the Tax Reform Act of 1969.

In 1969, Congress used the term, "Integrated Auxiliary of a Church," for the first time in legislative history. Neither the churches nor legislation had previously used this expression to describe church-related agencies. IRS says that since this is a new term in tax law, it must be defined. The churches, on the other hand, say that in attempting such a definition the government is invading the exclusive domain reserved for religion itself.

The IRS rule says that an organization's principal activity must be "exclusively religious" if it is to be considered an "Integrated Auxiliary of a Church." It then says that it will not be considered to be exclusively religious if that activity is educational, literary, charitable, or of another nature (other than religious).

Church-related organizations that are not classified by IRS as an "Integrated Church Auxiliary" will be required to file Form 990 annually. "It should be noted," Wood points out, "that Form 990 would require information relating to annual income, expenditures, and salaries and that this information would be available to the press and any other persons requesting it.

"Inevitably," he continued, "the regulation would impermissibly entangle the state in the affairs of the churches. The informational returns would provide a basis for audit and a concomitant mandate to monitor the internal affairs of the churches."

The IRS regulation cited examples of church-related organizations that are not to be considered "Integrated Auxiliaries of Churches." They are a hospital, a school, an orphanage and a university.

"Interestingly enough," Wood observed, "parochial schools are exempted under the discretionary power of the secretary of the Treasury."

"The churches' acceptance of the regulation would be tantamount to their acceptance of the authority of the state to define the role and mission of the churches," he continued. He was emphatic that under the Constitution, as interpreted by the Supreme Court, "Each church is the sole source of the definition of its mission and the church alone is capable of determining those agencies or auxiliaries which are integral to that mission."

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FCC A 'Pawn' Witness
Tells Baptist TV Hearing

Baptist Press
2/7/77

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)--The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is a "pawn" in the hands of the television industry and local action groups must be formed to correct the situation, according to seminary professor.

Larry McSwain, associate professor of church and community at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., on study leave in the area, was one of 13 persons who appeared before a hearing on television and morality conducted by the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission on the campus of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary here.

The hearing is the fourth and final in a series on television and morality conducted in cities across the United States by the Christian Life Commission. Others were held in Richmond, Montgomery and the Dallas area.

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McSwain urged local action groups be formed to analyze local station programming and challenge the renewal of FCC licenses of those stations unresponsive to local concerns.

"In my view, one of the most positive steps the Christian Life Commission could take would be to develop resources that would support and give guidance to local groups challenging the continuing licensing of those stations which perpetuate violence in children's programming. That would include most stations which air national network programming," said McSwain.

"I know of no evidence that television as an industry is committed to the public good in the face of declining profits. The industry survives on what sells--violence and sex sell," said McSwain.

McSwain charged that "no rational human in this country can accept the idiocy of the advertising which bombards the television viewer three minutes out of every 10. It has no educative, moral or even product appeal in the main. We as a viewing public have become dupes in an industry that has lost all sanity in the sale of both worthwhile and worthless products. In my judgment, the greatest moral objection must be raised to the advertisement of the media--perhaps more strongly than to the programming which they support.

He called for development of "a comprehensive index of violence" to be distributed annually or semi-annually by the media, and added that "the U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare has promised such an index to the Senate Subcommittee on Communications for four years and I have no knowledge of such being released."

Roy L. Barron, managing editor for the Daily Independent Journal in San Rafael, Calif., and Baptist deacon, suggested a positive approach, urging church members to "join some kind of massive fan club" aimed at encouraging the good programming.

Barron commended the American Broadcasting Company for its recent broadcasting of "Roots," although he said he wished it "had shown some white people as good and blacks as not." Maybe Southern Baptists needed to see "Roots" more than others did. Southern Baptists were organized over the slavery question and Southern Baptists don't like to talk about slavery."

"But, there is much horrible stuff on television and we ought to do something about that," Barron continued, citing two recent shows. In one, he said, "Detective Baretta is nearly stripped by a group of prostitutes" and in the other, "all three of Charlie's Angels become involved in pornographic movies." Barron said he would be uncomfortable with any kind of government censorship and said he hoped the television industry would regulate itself.

Fay Brown, public relations associate at Golden Gate Seminary and mother of an 18-month old boy, told the panel, "A parent's own common sense dictates that a continual dosage of horror, brutality and death as seen on television programs which hold life as something very cheap can, over a period of time, warp a child's outlook of the world, his ideals and values.

"During the course of an evening of television viewing children are exposed to a dosage of murder, gunfights, slugfests, car crashes, robberies, rapes, and especially in recent years, drug-related violence," testified Brown. "This is the picture of the adult world we are presenting to our children, a world where deception of the law is upheld and many times the criminal is put on a pedestal and hero-worshipped.

"The family life portrayed is often filled with violence--husbands and wives yelling at each other, usually about unfaithfulness, which our children readily hear about--parents screaming at children and siblings arguing with each other," she said. "Is this an accurate picture of family life? If not, then is a child able to distinguish what is real from what is fantasy?"

Another housewife, Ellen Knippel, from San Anselmo, told the hearing that one of her chief concerns is the constant portrayal of "superhuman" characters, such as "Bionic Woman," "Six Million Dollar Man," "Electra Woman," "Isis," "Bewitched," "Wonder Woman" and "Superman." "These programs say that when one is not able to handle life one needs special powers outside oneself and outside God. These programs scare me because they condition children into accepting occult-type religious practices," she said.

"I would like to suggest a criteria for parents in deciding about this type of programming and all the rest, " said Knippel. "If you don't have time to watch it (the program) with your children and discuss it together--then don't watch it. Watch only what you can digest and evaluate."

The director of the Committee on Moral Concerns for California, a non-profit group involving 15 denominations, W. B. Timberlake, testified that it is hypocritical for the TV industry to say TV violence and sex exploitation do not affect the viewer, while claiming TV advertising incites the viewer to emulate the actors by using the advertised products. The industry is guilty of a double standard."

Both Timberlake and Jerry L. Schober, superintendent of Golden Gate National Recreation Area in San Francisco, called television a "babysitter" for this generation, as well as a powerful tool for providing "misdirected" educational lessons.

"We should be writing to the sponsors (of TV programs) to say we will boycott their products as long as they sponsor programs of that kind," Schober said.

Harold K. Graves, president of Golden Gate Seminary, asserted to the panel; "I resent that the use of alcohol is taken for granted. It seems that everyone --men, women, even policemen, judges and the medical profession--must have a drink. The whole concept one receives from TV seems that alcohol is a mark of good taste, necessary for elegant living, and required participation if one is to be successful and popular."

Graves added: "The portrayal of casual sexual encounters as normal and acceptable infers no moral consideration at all."

Elmer Gray, editor of The California Southern Baptist newspaper, testified that one of TV's "greatest offenses is its stereotyped portrayal of religious leaders, of churches and church members. Some programs invariably characterize a preacher as a 'nut,' a 'fraud' or a 'weirdo!'"

Rick Durst, a student at Golden Gate Seminary, said that many TV programs "stress outward values and not inward character." Another seminary student, Donald Longbottom, asserted that TV "has no right to control our lives to the extent it does." He joined others in calling for a boycott of offensive programs.

D. Glenn Saul, assistant professor of Christian ethics at the seminary, said he is "troubled by the trend in recent years in which television seems to follow the pattern of other media in seeing who can go one step farther. The language, mindless violence, and distorted concepts of human sexuality are so frequent that there is no way in which a person can adequately monitor what his children are subjected to."

Saul urged the Christian Life Commission to press the TV networks to determine some guidelines or limits on the exploitation of sex and violence. "I believe it will be difficult to do," predicted Saul, "but it should be done. One guideline should be the acceptance of the basic sacredness of home and family life. Any representation of homosexuality, unmarried arrangements of couples living together presented as a norm is morally objectionable, especially during times when children watch," he said.

"I believe," observed Saul, "that most Americans realize the sacredness of marriage even if they don't practice it. Likewise, the exploitation of sex in everything from commercials to serious drama that is intended to be titilating is objectionable. One might get the idea from TV that the display of flesh, the chase, and eventual sexual conquest are the major things in life. Such a view is unacceptable in its distortion," said Saul.

Baptist Relief Funds and
Supplies Aid the Northeast

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Baptist Press
2/7/77

ATLANTA (BP)--The economically crippled, snowbound northeast will receive money, clothing and blankets from Southern Baptist individuals, churches and organizations across the nation.

The Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention has sent \$17,000 to the northeast (\$10,000 to the Baptist Convention of New York, \$5,000 to the Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania-South Jersey and \$2,000 to the State Convention of Southern Baptists in Ohio) for relief use.

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The First Baptist Church, Conway, Ark., in cooperation with the Faulkner County Baptist Association, has shipped 33 cartons of supplies, including 107 blankets, to Home Mission Board missionary Gaynor Yancey in the inner-city in Philadelphia. The church plans a second shipment to Potsdam, N. Y.

First Baptist Church, Pasadena, Tex., sent Yancey \$1,000 for blankets and clothing, and churches in Columbia, S. C., and Versailles, Mo., also sent supplies.

Washington, D. C., Baptists are collecting blankets, coats, sweaters and gloves at four locations in the metro area to ship to Philadelphia for use in the Baptists' 'Operation Snowblanket' relief efforts.

The Home Mission Board disaster relief funds, according to Paul Adkins, who oversees distribution of such funds for the board, "will go primarily for food, blankets and gloves, although some may be used for rent and fuel."

The \$17,000 sent to the northeast brings the total disaster relief funds sent by the board this year to \$27,000. The Florida Baptist Convention has already been sent \$10,000 for blankets and food for migrant workers jobless because of ruined crops.

New York Executive Secretary Jack Lowndes reports, "Buffalo and the 'up country' have desperate situations."

"When the Home Mission Board made the first \$5,000 available, we immediately sent it to directors of associational missions in the hard-hit areas."

Lowndes says he also found out that the local Red Cross was feeding thousands of people who had been rescued from their homes.

"They were running out of funds so we took them money. They were overwhelmed by our generosity and commended our organization for being aware of human need," Lowndes says.

In Pennsylvania, the clothing and money are being routed to Frankford Avenue Baptist Church where Yancey serves as director of weekday ministries.

According to G. W. Bullard, executive secretary of the Pennsylvania-South Jersey Convention, "We are working through Yancey and Frankford Avenue because that work is in the southern part of the city, a low economic area hit hard by the severe weather."

The Ohio Convention is directing funds into three areas, says Darty Stowe, assistant to executive secretary Ray Roberts.

The German Village Baptist Church in Columbus received \$1,000 to distribute to nearby areas, the West Side Baptist Church, also in Columbus, received \$500 and the Baptist Mission Center in Dayton received \$500.

"These places will act as a point of contact for pastors or churches in the area that have emergency needs," says Stowe.

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'Operation Snowblanket'
Aids Philadelphians

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2/7/77

PHILADELPHIA (BP)--Operation Snowblanket will meet emergency needs for warm clothing and blankets in the inner city here.

Southern Baptist Home Mission Board missionary, Gaynor Yancey, and the staff of Frankford Avenue Baptist Church will distribute toboggan caps, gloves, scarf mufflers and blankets.

Yancey says the church has received money, clothing and blankets from across the nation.

"My home church in Pasadena, Tex., sent \$1,000," Yancey says. "Response began even before we told anybody what we were planning."

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"We were trying to do something viable for the community, but not get into great drains of money," Yancey says.

"Children came to the church who didn't even have gloves. All of us here at the church have been sitting under blankets in our homes, but there are people in this community who do not have blankets to even sleep under."

The church, located in a predominantly Catholic and last all-white stronghold of the city, has opened many doors in the community through weekday ministries.

"During Operation Snowblanket, we plan to distribute the Good News New Testament," Yancey says. "It is the one the Pope has put the seal of approval on."

Churches and schools in the area will help publicize what has become a community-wide effort.

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Former Foundation
President Dies

Baptist Press
2/7/77

NASHVILLE (BP)--Lemuel B. Stevens, 79, a former president and long-time member of the Southern Baptist Foundation, died at his home here after a brief illness.

Stevens, a Nashville business and civic leader, served as Foundation president in 1967-68. He was elected to the board in 1961, served several years as vice president, and was completing his fourth term as a director. He was chairman of the denominational agency's investment committee for the current fiscal year.

The president of Stevens & Co. management engineers and chairman of the board of Gray & Dudley Co., and chairman of the Oak Corp., Stevens is survived by his widow, Mrs. Cornelia Folk Stevens, a son, a daughter, all of Nashville, and four grandchildren.

For many years he was a trustee of Baptist Hospital and Belmont College (a Baptist school) in Nashville.

Funeral services were at Immanuel Baptist Church in Nashville where Stevens was a member with burial in Mt. Olivet Cemetery, February 8.

The family asked that donations be made to the Middle Tennessee Council of the Boy Scouts of America or the Immanuel Baptist Church's building fund, in lieu of flowers.

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