



January 4, 1978

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JOT Cartoon Character Will Be Teaching Again

FORT WORTH (BP)--A loveable, animated little dot named JOT will be brought back to life in two new television cartoon episodes teaching moral and spiritual values to children.

Produced by the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission and the denomination's Foreign Mission Board, the two new JOTs, the first in five years, will be in both English and Spanish. They will be syndicated to television stations in this country and the Foreign Mission Board will distribute them to television stations abroad.

The first 18 JOT cartoons have already been dubbed into several languages and have been shown in numerous countries, including Holland, Australia, Hong Kong, and all over South America.

In several Spanish-speaking countries, where JOT is known as PUNTITO (little dot), the cartoon is also used to reach adults through their children. Several missionaries have staged JOT parties to interest children in Sunday School.

"We have found that when the children get involved in Sunday School, the parents often will come to see what is going on," said Alan Compton, the Foreign Mission Board's radio and television representative for South America.

Mrs. Ruth Byers of Fort Worth, who created JOT for the Radio and Television Commission, is executive producer. Compton and Miss Jo Darden, the Commission's assistant vice president, television services, are coordinators.

JOT is a dot. But he's all boy who breaks windowpanes with baseballs, likes cupcakes, and gets his hands dirty.

When the cartoon premiered in 1968, Newsweek magazine called it the "first successful and genuinely entertaining" cartoon teaching moral and spiritual values to small children.

At one time seen on as many as 100 television stations, JOT is now aired on 70 stations across the country. The show won the praise of parents, ministers, and educators across the nation. In addition, more than 500,000 children gave him their warm endorsement by writing him personally.

The JOT personality resembles that of a small boy, although both boys and girls identify with JOT. The problems he faces in the cartoons are typical of the ones children encounter in life.

Like the children in his audience, JOT often doesn't know how to handle these problems. But in each episode he finds a solution by applying some Bible verse or Christian principle. And as he learns, his audience also learns. The two newest JOT segments are titled "A Friendly Fuss" and "The Good Samaritan."

"A Friendly Fuss" is based on the Proverbs 17:17 verse that a friend loves at all times. JOT and his cousin fuss after the cousin breaks two of JOT's toys. They remember the Bible verse and work out their differences.

In "The Good Samaritan" episode, JOT and his friend, Tad, debate whether or not to get involved when they see a bully beating up a smaller child. They do become involved. Later, JOT's mother reminds them of the Bible parable and JOT and Tad sing a song about Good Samaritans.



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He Goes From Criminal
To Staff Evangelist

By Celeste Loucks

DEL CITY, Okla. (BP)--Richard Coss' rap sheet read like a police drama script.

In 11 years he was arrested 32 times. Coss started floating checks at age 16. He was charged with assault and theft of more than 30 cars. Prison authorities said he was an habitual criminal--not to be rehabilitated.

The muscular, red-haired Coss was a tough con artist who had worked his way from reform school in Waukesha, Wis., to the Chihuahua state prison in Juarez, Mexico, to the federal reformatory in El Reno, Okla.

And now he is a staff evangelist in one of the fastest growing churches in the Southern Baptist Convention.

It was while in prison in El Reno his life pattern was broken. Curiosity led him to a religious meeting held by the Christian Business Men's Committee International.

"I attended to break the monotony of prison life," admits Coss. When a Southern Baptist deacon in the group, Horace Hilton, took a special interest in Coss the young inmate asked, "Why did you come here to talk to me?"

"He told me, 'I love you.' It was the first time in 24 years that someone said that--and I believed it," Coss says.

"You've heard the cliché, you can't con a con. He (Hilton) wasn't plastic; he wasn't phony. I knew that man was real; he loved me. Behind that was Christ."

Although Coss had never heard the gospel before, he says, "I knew suddenly I had found what I had been searching for." After the encounter with Christ he began reading the Bible--earlier what he called a book for "good people"--and studying every Bible correspondence course he could get his hands on.

Now he says, "Prison was good for me. It's where I became a Christian."

Four years after he was released from prison, on Dec. 23, 1975, Coss received a "full and unconditional pardon" from President Gerald Ford--one of three pardons granted that day. The other two were to Jimmy the Greek and Richard Nixon.

Today Coss works out of a small upstairs office in an annex of the First Baptist Church of Del City, Okla. His title is minister of special ministries and staff evangelist.

His work includes ministry to inmates; preaching and revivals in prisons and jails; personal and Bible correspondence; parole advisor; book and tape ministry; inmate family counseling; prison newsletter; and tract ministry to prisoners in other countries.

He also reaches confused young people involved in drugs and at the fringe of crime in Oklahoma City.

Coss believes there is a new openness among prison officials to offer prisoners opportunity for change through spiritual conversion. "Some are taking the stand it's time to get back to the Bible," he says.

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Comparing the response he receives in prisons to churches, Coss says in a church he can "preach his heart out" and have few persons make a Christian commitment. At prisons however, "You don't need to tell these people they are sinners. They know that." And among prisoners he doesn't find the stigma of admitting to sin. "They have no community standing," he says with a grin.

He encourages Christians to become involved in prison ministry. "Start in small city jails," he says. "Find Gideons or some Christian already involved to see how to work."

Coss admits there will be disappointments. The prisoners can be rude and rejecting. "You're going to get burnt--be ready for it."

Yet other prisoners, like Coss, will be waiting and receptive. He tells of a prisoner who had read material mailed through the prison ministry and who later wrote, pleadingly, "Richard, I am in the same boat you were. I had never heard the gospel. Why doesn't someone come and save me?"

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(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state papers by the Atlanta Bureau of Baptist Press.

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Baptist Press

Baptist Bible
Scholar Dies

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--William Walter Adams, Baptist theologian and educator died Dec. 24, 1977. He was 85.

Adams, a native of Chelsea, Ala., was president of the Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City from 1946 until 1954 when he resumed teaching duties as a New Testament professor at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. He taught at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary from 1963 until his retirement in 1968.

He is survived by his wife, Beulah Elimna Reeves Adams of Tuscaloosa, Ala., and by two sons, William Walter Adams Jr., Liberty, Mo., and Bert Newton Adams, Madison, Wis., and by four grandsons.

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Cooperative Program Spurts
Ahead After Three Months

NASHVILLE (BP)--Giving to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) national Cooperative Program unified budget rallied strongly during the third month of the 1977-78 fiscal year.

Undesignated receipts, funneled to SBC causes from 33 state or multi-state Baptist conventions, amount to \$12,994,323 through the first three months--8.94 percent ahead of the same point last year. A total of \$4,692,157 in December registered 13.96 percent ahead of the same month last year.

Total giving for the year to date, including the Cooperative Program amount and another \$1,247,237 in designated gifts, is \$14,241,560, a 7.87 percent increase over the same point last year.

Porter W. Routh, executive secretary-treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee, said the "significant increase in Cooperative Program receipts" represented "a growing interest in and commitment to Bold Missions Thrust," the SBC goal of proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ to every person in the world by the year 2000.

Southern Baptist agencies are working on a \$55,080,000 operating and capital needs budget and Southern Baptists have voted an additional challenge budget of \$8,320,000 for unmet mission needs. The SBC has voted to set a goal to double total Cooperative Program contributions on the state and national levels by 1982 and then double twice more by the end of the century to fulfill the Bold Mission goal.

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Bluefield College
Granted Accreditation

Baptist Press
1/4/78

BLUEFIELD, Va. (BP)--After four years of effort, Bluefield College has been granted full academic accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

Bluefield granted bachelor degrees to the first graduating seniors May 21, 1977. Full accreditation by the SACS came December 14, 1977, the earliest possible date following the granting of the first degrees.

Bluefield becomes the fourth fully accredited senior college to be associated with the Baptist General Association of Virginia. The others are the University of Richmond, Averett College in Danville, and Virginia Intermont College in Bristol.

Bluefield has been a junior college since 1922, granting nearly 5,000 associate degrees in 55 years. The college will maintain two dozen associate degree programs in addition to the new bachelor degree majors.

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