



# BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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78-15

Carter Looks to Religion  
As Hope for World Peace

By W. Barry Garrett

WASHINGTON (BP)--President Jimmy Carter emphasized personal faith, the meaning of being "born again," family worship and religion as a force for good among the nations at the 26th Annual National Prayer Breakfast in Washington.

The prayer breakfast, attended by representatives of all branches of federal and state government, sounded a note different from previous years. Many such occasions in the past have been a glorified version of civil religion which exalted the nation almost as much as God.

The gathering of highly placed government officials, as well as of religious leaders, this year sounded a note of humility, service to God and humanity and of religion as a motivating force toward world peace. Some observers attributed the new attitude to the humbling effect of the Watergate scandals of the past few years and to the open commitment of President Carter to his religious faith.

"To me God is real. To me the relationship with God is a very personal thing. God is ever-present in my life, sustains me when I am weak, gives me guidance when I turn to him, and provides for me as a Christian through the life of Christ a perfect example to emulate in my experiences with other human beings," declared President Carter.

The president explained that he and his wife worship together every night. He said that "often during the day I turn to God in a quiet and personal way."

He then emphasized again his concept of being "born again." He said that many people do not know the meaning of these words. "For those of us who share the Christian faith, the words 'being born again' have a simple meaning "that through personal experience we recommit our lives as humble children of God which makes us in the realest possible sense brothers and sisters of one another," he said.

The president went on to say that for government officials, who have a concern for the needs of people, "the word 'family' has a broader meaning, the family of all human beings, and how we might alleviate world tension, misunderstandings, death, suffering, and loneliness and alienation through a common understanding, a common purpose and sometimes even a common belief."

As illustrations, Carter cited the spiritual fervor of Mahatma Ghandi of India, the religious commitments of Crown Prince Fahd of Saudi Arabia, Prime Minister Menahem Begin of Israel and President Anwar Sadat of Egypt as points for optimism in the solution of the problems of the Middle East. "I have a sense of confidence that if we emphasize and reinforce those ties of mutual faith and our subservience and humility before God and an acquiescence in his deeply sought guidance that we can prevail," he asserted.

"In a rapidly changing world we need to cling to things that don't change," the president continued, "to truth and justice and fairness and brotherhood and love and to faith. Through prayer, I believe we can find those things."

U. S. Sen. James B. Allen (D.-Ala.), who presides over the National Prayer Breakfast, called it "the finest we have had."

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An unusual highlight of the program was the "Prayer for National Leaders" offered by U. S. Rep. Barbara Jordan (D.-Tex.). At its conclusion, the audience burst out in applause.

Others on the program included U. S. Rep. Berkeley Bedell (D.-Iowa) and U. S. Sen. Richard Lugar (R.-Ind.), who brought greetings from the House and Senate prayer groups that meet every Wednesday for breakfast and inspiration. Bedell said, "I fear that we in th Congress are so busy arguing issues that if it were not for our prayer breakfasts almost no time would be spent examining our values."

Judge John J. Sirica of the U. S. District Court, and Gen. Louis H. Wilson of the U. S. Marine Corps read from the Old and New Testaments respectively. Max Cleland, administrator of veterans affairs, gave a personal testimony of his journey of faith after having his legs blown off in the Vietnam War. Former U. S. Sen. Harold E. Hughes led the closing prayer. The Blackwood Brothers Quartet provided the music.

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Harold Coble Dies  
In California

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2/3/78

WESTMINSTER, Calif. (BP)--Harold Coble, pastor of the Mid-Cities Baptist Church and member of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee died Feb. 1 after a lengthy illness. He was 51.

The funeral was held at the church in Westminster, Calif., where he was pastor for the last 16½ years. Coble had been president of both Arkansas and California state pastors' conferences and had been pastor in Missouri.

He is survived by his wife Betty; a son, Tom; two daughters, Paula Scott and Jenell Brooks; his mother Maye, and a brother, Wayne who live in Arkansas.

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Seminary Extension  
Accreditation Renewed

Baptist Press  
2/3/78

WASHINGTON (BP)--The Accrediting Commission of the National Home Study Council has renewed its accreditation of the Home Study Institute of the Southern Baptist Seminary Extension Department in Nashville.

Acting on a report from an examining committee which visited the Seminary Extension offices last fall, the commission granted the renewal "without stipulation." William A. Fowler, executive secretary of the Washington-based commission, noted that they were "most impressed with the high quality of the (Home Study) Institute's educational programs and service."

The Home Study Institute received its accreditation from the commission in 1972. An assessment of the program for re-accreditation is required every five years.

"This action by the commission reaffirms the Home Study Institute's standing as a member of the academic community," said Raymond M. Rigdon, Seminary Extension director. "It further strengthens the hands of students who may wish to transfer Seminary Extension credits to a degree program at a college or university."

A major element in the re-accreditation process was the preparation of a thorough self-evaluation report by Home Study Institute director Robert L. Lamb. After reading that report, an examining committee spent one day in an on-site investigation of the institute's materials, facilities, and staff.

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Cooperative Program Sets  
Record in January

NASHVILLE (BP)--Bolstered by an all-time record month of giving, the Southern Baptist Convention's national Cooperative Program unified budget has registered an 8.82 percent increase over last year after the first four months of the 1977-78 fiscal year.

Cooperative Program contributions total \$18,778,808 through January--more than \$1.5 million ahead of the same period last year. Total contributions for the year-to-date amount to \$27,427,505, including the \$18,778,808 figure and another \$8,648,696 in designated contributions. The grand total tops last year by more than 2.1 million, or 8.41 percent.

Contributions to the Cooperative Program in January totaled \$5,784,485, a record for on month and the second time in Southern Baptist history Cooperative Program giving has topped \$5 million in a single month. The previous record of \$5,328,221 was set in January, 1977.

Total giving in January 1978, including the Cooperative Program amount and another \$7,401,460 in designated contributions, totaled \$13,185,945--an 8.99 percent increase over January 1977.

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Graham Gift Increases  
Maranatha Building Fund

Baptist Press  
2/3/78

PLAINS, Ga. (BP)--Funds to construct a new building for Maranatha Baptist Church in Plains, Ga., have increased to \$35,000 partly because of a \$10,000 pledge from evangelist Billy Graham.

The Graham pledge came after letters were sent out by Georgia state Sen. Hugh Carter, asking for contributions to the fund. Senator Carter is chairman of the finance committee of the church, which has a \$250,000 building fund goal. He is also cousin to President Jimmy Carter, who attended Christmas services at the church, and who some reports mistakenly identified as the author of the fund-raising letters.

Maranatha Church was created after some members of larger Plains Baptist Church broke off last spring partly because of a disagreement over racial issues.

In a letter to Hugh Carter, Billy Graham said, "We are overextended financially at present but we will contribute \$10,000 to the Maranatha Church."

"We are delighted he (Graham) has made this contribution," Senator Carter said.

Since the breakoff, the small congregation has been meeting in the old Luther Botsford Church building. Fred Collins has been pastor of the church since last June. Maranatha Church has applied for membership in Friendship Association of the Georgia Baptist Convention, Collins said.

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'Living Proof' Among Top  
100 Commercials in 1977

DALLAS (BP)--Texas Baptists' "Living Proof" testimonies carried statewide on television last winter have been named in the "100 best" commercials of 1977 by "Advertising Age" magazine.

Production costs for the nine "Living Proof" TV spots featuring Christian testimonies of well known people, averaged about \$10,000 each. By comparison, another commercial which made the "100 best," promoting a popular brand of denim, cost more than \$250,000, "Advertising Age" reported in its Jan. 30 edition.

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The "Living Proof" commercials were the heart of the "Good News Texas" evangelistic thrust and were aimed at reaching every Texan with the message of Christ an average of 40 times. Radio, newspapers and billboards were also used to create awareness of how Christ can change peoples' lives.

Many churches which took full advantage of the campaign through evangelistic outreach reported substantial increases. While projected baptisms totals across the Southern Baptist Convention dropped about 11 percent in 1977, Texas Baptists experienced about a 4 percent decline.

But the most concrete results of the Good News Texas/Living Proof Campaign was reported by a Dallas media research firm: a 12 percent increase in the number of Texans who characterized themselves as active in church affairs.

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Faculty Enters Debate  
On Robert Alley

Baptist Press  
2/3/78

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Faculty at the University of Richmond have urged in a resolution that the officers and trustees of the university ask controversial professor Robert Alley to resume his chairmanship of the department of religion.

Alley, a tenured professor, reportedly requested transfer to chairmanship of the university's newly-created area studies program following heated response from many Virginia Baptists after he told a group of atheists in an address Dec. 6 that Jesus "...never really claimed to be God or to be related to him."

The controversy has caused sharp debate on the Richmond campus, with some students reportedly circulating petitions on his behalf on the basis of academic freedom and the editor of the student newspaper labeling his stance as "hypocritical" coming from a Baptist minister and representative of a Baptist school which accepts the traditional Baptist position of belief in the divinity of Jesus.

Even the faculty resolution, voted on by about half of the university's 300 faculty members, was not unanimous, although it carried clearly by a show of hands, reports indicate. A source on campus said the resolution was voted on grounds of academic freedom of a tenured professor not in an attempt to support Alley's statements on the divinity of Jesus.

Earlier, a group of about 300 students gathered in front of the home of University President E. Bruce Heilman and engaged him in a 30-minute question-and-answer session on the Alley situation.

The trustees will deliberate on the resolution at their March 3 meeting. Heilman, who earlier apologized for Alley's statements, said he will not comment further on the situation until the trustees meet.

The resolution said Alley's request for transfer was made during "intense pressure brought to bear on him and the University of Richmond...To avoid what seemed to be an impending catastrophe for the university, Dr. Alley, after consultation with the faculty and administrative colleagues, proposed a single option that seemed to avoid disastrous confrontation--a lateral shift to area studies.

"In the calmer atmosphere of the past month, the faculty suggests the possibility that another option might now be pursued," the resolution continued, urging that Alley be asked to retain his religion department chairmanship.

It urged the university to "declare its continuing commitment to academic freedom..." and allow "...each faculty member to disseminate the findings of his research and thought... without fear of any punitive action whatsoever."

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SBC Transportation Plans  
Announced in Atlanta

ATLANTA (BP)--Extensive plans to simplify transportation problems have been made for the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, which meets in Atlanta, June 13-15.

About 20,000 persons will attend sessions in Atlanta's World Congress Center in the heart of downtown Atlanta.

Three special bus routes are already planned to bring convention-goers from downtown hotels to the World Congress Center. Twenty hotels within a 10-minute ride of the congress center have already committed 4,392 rooms to SBC messengers.

In addition, Atlanta Civic Center parking lots will accommodate 2,300 automobiles about one mile from the SBC hall. Shuttle buses will carry messengers from this lot to the center. Cost for parking there is \$1 per day for SBC messengers.

Also, a fourth bus route is being considered serving the Northeast Expressway. Five major motels on this expressway have committed 1,200 rooms for SBC use.

Atlanta arrangements leaders have said that transportation plans are still flexible, depending upon how messengers make hotel reservations.

Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) buses will be used. Fare will not exceed 35 cents.

William L. Self, chairman of local arrangements, said that some 5,000 public parking spaces are near the World Congress Center. But most of these spaces are filled during the day by working Atlantans.

"We are urging SBC messengers to plan to use a shuttle bus from their hotel, or park in the Civic Center lot and ride a MARTA bus to the World Congress Center," Self said.

"Messengers need to make reservations soon. Downtown hotels are already filling up. Address of the SBC Housing Bureau is 233 Peachtree St., NE, Atlanta 30303," he said.

Hotel and motel reservations should be made on application forms printed in "The Baptist Program" or available from the Baptist state convention offices.

Tom Duvall, chairman of the SBC transportation committee, is deputy director of MARTA and a deacon in Rainbow Park Baptist Church, Decatur, Ga.

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Carter Announces 1979  
Conference on Families

Baptist Press  
2/3/78

WASHINGTON (BP)--President Jimmy Carter announced a White House Conference on Families, Dec. 9-13, 1979, in Washington, and Congress has held two days of hearings to review plans for the event.

Original plans for a White House Conference on Families were projected during Carter's presidential campaign. He announced his intention for such a conference in a speech to the National Conference of Catholic Charities in Denver, Oct. 4, 1976.

In his recent official announcement, Carter explained: "The main purpose of this White House conference will be to examine the strengths of American families, the difficulties they face, and the ways in which family life is affected by public policies."

"The conference will examine the important effects that the world of work, the mass media, the court system, private institutions, and other major facets of our society have on American families," he continued.

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The two-day joint congressional hearings were held by the Senate Subcommittee on Child and Human Development, Sen. Alan Cranston, D.-Calif., chairman, and by the House Subcommittee on Select Education, Rep. John Brademas, D.-Ind., chairman. Congress has provided \$3 million for the funding of the conference.

Already throughout the nation coalitions are being formed, and organizations with concerns for families and children are making their plans for participation in the 1979 conference.

At the present the coordination for the conference is located in the office of Department of Health, Education, and Welfare Secretary Joseph Califano. In the near future, an executive director and an advisory committee of 35-40 members will be named.

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National Lay Rally  
Begins to Take Shape

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2/3/78

ATLANTA (BP)--Plans have taken shape for a National Conference of Baptist Men in Atlanta, June 16, at which President Jimmy Carter is the invited speaker.

The lay meeting, scheduled the day following the three-day, 121st Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting, features breakfasts for 19 vocational groups in 11 Atlanta hotels and the World Congress Center, climaxed by a 90-minute rally at the 16,500-seat Omni Coliseum.

Glendon McCullough, executive director of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, sponsor of the men's conference, said a concert by an 800-voice choir of Southern Baptist men and boys from the Southeast, will open the rally which features Carter.

Paul C. McCommon, director of the music department for the Georgia Baptist Convention, is supervising recruitment of the choir and will direct it.

Open to Southern Baptist pastors and wives as well as lay couples, the meeting is one of a series of projects the Brotherhood Commission will sponsor during the next two years to interest Southern Baptists in mission opportunities, McCullough said.

Registration fee for the conference, including the breakfast and rally, is \$12.50. Admission to either or both events is by registration receipt only, McCullough said.

The four-fold purpose of the conference is to provide a forum for communicating the values of lay involvement in the Christian movement; show that Southern Baptists represent a broad spectrum of backgrounds vocationally, ethnically, culturally, and economically; make Southern Baptists aware of ways that lay persons share their Christian faith through their vocations; and emphasize forcefully the urgency of involving lay persons in missions.

At the breakfasts, scheduled to start at 7 a.m., nationally known Southern Baptist lay persons will tell how they share their Christian faith through their professions.

The breakfast groups are for Baptists in agriculture, the arts, business and professional positions, church-related vocations, communications, education, engineering, government, health services, law enforcement, legal professions, management, military, retirement, sales, positions requiring technical skills, sports, transportation, and young adults in search of a vocation for service.

McCullough said a person may register for the conference by sending name, address and preferred breakfast group and a check for \$12.50 to the Brotherhood Commission, 1548 Poplar Avenue, Memphis, Tenn. 38104.

He encourages persons planning to attend the conference to arrive early and include sessions of the SBC on their schedule. Only 17 percent of the messengers to the 1977 convention were lay people, McCullough reminded. He expressed the hope the men's conference would increase the percentage to 30.

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# -- FEATURES

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78-15

Georgia Church's 'Missionaries'

Witness 'On Backside Of Nowhere'

By Everett Hullum

SELLS, Ariz. (BP)--Where the sun bakes the earth in 120 degree temperatures...

Where long-armed desert cactuses stand taller than any tree...

Where adobe walls and tin roofs make one-room homes...

Where cyclone-like dust devils whirl across the land...

On the backside of nowhere--a mission youth group found out what sacrificing for Christ means.

For the third consecutive year "summer missionaries" of Ash Street Baptist Church of Forest Park, Ga., a suburb of Atlanta, packed up, loaded a chartered bus and traveled 1,800 miles to Sells.

The 57 adults and young people spent four days driving in the bus and a rented van; they spent eight months earning the money, training for witnessing, practicing story telling, Bible studies and songs; they held workdays, 24-hour volleyball games, car washes and "silver Sundays" of coin-saving by church members; then each worker contributed an additional \$110 and time--from vacation, jobs, school.

According to the Ash Street missionaries, it was worth it.

At one of the Vacation Bible Schools held on the Papago Indian Reservation, 19-year-old Tracy Miller told a story to 30 youngsters semi-circling her on benches.

Barefoot, clothes ragged, they have a life expectancy of 42 years. Ninety percent will die in this vast, inhospitable land where 7,000 Papagos are scattered over an area the size of Connecticut. Their families average less than \$700 a year in income.

During the Ash Street workers' five days in Sells the 300-plus Papago Indian children receive 15 hours of concentrated love-and-attention, distilled from the year's 8,740 hours of isolation.

The children thrive on the attention.

"As we were pulling out," says 15-year-old Deborah Cantrell, "a bunch of them saw us going over to the trading post for gas and they tore out from all over the village, just running to the car."

The kids surrounded the car, touching the Ash Street young people. "Goodbye friends, see you tomorrow," they yelled. When the car turned onto the road, the children continued running alongside it, hanging to the open windows.

On a tall rock nearby, another seven or eight Papago youngsters stood, singing a song they'd learned at VBS. Its simple words were the last ones Deborah and the others heard: "God loves you, I love you. And that's the way it's going to be."

Marion Fulmer, an adult sponsor, and his wife have spent their last three wedding anniversaries sleeping in Sells--he in his bedroll in the men's quarters; his wife in the women's.

But Fulmer expresses no regrets. "It makes it worthwhile just to see the warmth change from one year to the next," he says.

Randy Stroup, a 23-year-old postman, gave up his vacation for his third trip. This time he knew what to expect--"hard work"--but the needs he had seen changed his life:

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"There were kids who had never heard the name Jesus, didn't know who he was," he says. "That's why we come to Sells to share Christ with them and tell them they can accept him and what he can do for them."

Dan Elliott, 20, says, "The first year a lot of my reason for coming was curiosity. Then we got a burden for the kids--they just need love and care."

Whatever the reasons, the Ash Street group keeps coming back.

Twenty-one-year-old Alan Leverett, back for his third year, explains. "When I first got here, I was shocked. And let down. I guess I saw all the dirt around here; I wasn't used to that.

"I saw the living quarters we were going to stay in, I said, 'Oh, Lord.' And when I stepped off the bus, it felt like I'd stepped into an oven. I wasn't used to that. And when the bus left...I wanted it to take me."

"But you know, after the first year, well, there's a love and a spirit here that covers the dirt and you don't worry about that any more. That's just part of it."

Alan Foster says, "We spend a lot of money but it's worth every cent. We all feel that way. We could go 20 miles up the highway to a black ghetto in Atlanta, but you couldn't get the same spiritual growth. Because there's not the same closeness, not the same sacrifices, suffering the same heat, sleeping on the same floor. I don't think I'll ever be the same."

Nor will Ash Street Baptist Church. For as the youth have changed, so has the church.

Pastor Charlie Thompson says it's more mission-minded, more involved. The mission trip, with other emphases, has led to increased giving for missions. Its people experience a vicarious thrill in the reports the youth give each summer after they return.

The stories of the looks on Papago children's faces when they were given scarfs, kerchiefs, health supplies--of the youngster who grabbed an Ash Streeter's hand and look d so longingly for love--these stories swell the church.

"Yet they cannot know," says Alan White, church youth leader, "they cannot possibly know unless they've been there. We can tell them, show them all the pictures. But until they've been through it, been filled with the spirit, they cannot know. I never knew until I experienced it. I did not know how the Lord could work.

"He'd worked a lot in my life. But when it came down to the Lord providing us ice--gas--water--you know, those little things that have to add up to make a trip go; that's when I knew it was worth it all."

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Adapted from And a Cast of Thousands, by Everett Hullum and Celeste Loucks. Used by permission.

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

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