



--FEATURES
produced by Baptist Press

SBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
W. C. Fields, Director
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor
Norman Jameson, Feature Editor

December 1, 1978

78-196

Ford, Dallas First Baptist
Featured in TV Special

By John Rutledge

DALLAS (BP)--A prime-time Christmas television special starring Tennessee Ernie Ford and filmed at First church, Dallas, is the fruit of a convincing argument to network executives that there is money in religious-oriented television.

A "carrot and stick" argument to NBC was given by an independent television producer, Joseph Cates, who says he has made it his business to look for holes in network programming and try to fill them.

In this instance the void was in religious Christmas specials.

"I read a listing of the 40 Christmas specials of the three networks last year and, lo and behold, I realized there was not one genuinely religious program worthy of Christmas celebration," he said. "It's scandalous."

When Tennessee Ernie Ford approached him with the idea of reworking a special that had been shown in 1960 consisting mostly of religious music, Cates told him that it would be more effective if taped in a church setting. Because of his contacts with First Baptist's minister of music Gary Moore, he said, "I knew the church to do it in."

But Cates, 54, had to convince network executives to try something new. In the past five years he has produced 30 programs concerning country music for the networks. They were reluctant to experiment, but it paid off.

The special, shown Dec. 2, was filmed with a live audience on two nights, Nov. 1 and 2, at First Baptist's sanctuary.

The story deals with the donkey that Mary rode to Bethlehem, and was written by Charles Taswell, author of "The Littlest Angel." The music included traditional Christmas carols and original songs sung by Ford and the choir.

Part of Cates' argument for the special, the "carrot" in the analogy, was that the 50 million evangelicals in the country might be a target group for certain advertisers.

"The networks don't think a religious program will get a large audience, simple as that," Cates said. "But in commercial broadcasting it is sometimes not necessary to get a large audience. A smaller audience that is absolutely loyal and faithful is sometimes very important."

But the "carrot" is not sufficient by itself to get religious programming on television, or to keep off programs with violent or sexual themes. A stick is needed, and the amount of clout produced is up to the viewers.

"Lack of public pressure" is the main reason only one religious Christmas special will be shown this year, Cates said.

"Letters are very important. If we could get 800 people to write NBC New York and say 'I like this, I want to see more of it' it would jar them a little bit. If you put on a program and all of a sudden a couple of thousand people think enough to write, they'll say, 'Hey, wait a minute. Maybe we miscalculated...maybe there is a market to be served, maybe even a profit to be made serving this market.'

You have to make yourself heard. Is that not the lesson of our times?"

(BP)**-- BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICESBC Executive Committee
480 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355W. C. Fields, Director
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor
Norman Jameson, Feature Editor**BUREAUS**

ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Richard T. McCartney, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Tex. 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
MEMPHIS Roy Jennings, Chief, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, Tenn. 38104, Telephone (901) 272-2461
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) L. Bracey Campbell III, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2798
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON W. Barry Garrett, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

December 1, 1978

78-196

Israel Award
Honors Criswell

By Debbie Stewart

DALLAS (BP)--W. A. Criswell, pastor of the world's largest Southern Baptist Church, has become the only Christian clergyman ever to receive the Israel Humanitarian Award.

The Dallas office of the Development Corporation for Israel said that Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin selected Criswell to receive the "very prestigious, seldom presented award." Criswell is pastor of the 20,000-member First Baptist Church of Dallas.

"We cherish him as a friend," Uri Lubrani, Israeli ambassador to Iran, said of Criswell at a state of Israel tribute dinner Nov. 28 in Dallas.

Criswell received the award because of his efforts to "increase understanding and acceptance of Israel among the community of nations," according to Michael A. Robinson, representative for the Israel development groups.

Criswell, in accepting the award, said that "the land of Israel belongs to the children of Jacob forever. I cannot preach the Bible and hide my face from this everlasting covenant with the children of Jacob."

Lubrani said that Israel and neighboring Arab countries are "nearly, nearly there" in achieving peace in the Middle East.

"If we shall eventually beat our swords into plowshares and all of us, Jew and Arab alike, shall return to his vineyard and sit under his fig tree, love's labor has not been lost," Lubrani said, "and the words of our great prophet Isaiah shall have come true."

-30-

Carter Cautions Against
Jonestown 'Overreaction'Baptist Press
12/1/78

WASHINGTON (BP)--President Jimmy Carter said that it would have been unconstitutional for the FBI to investigate the People's Temple cult before the recent Jonestown, Guyana, mass murder-suidice and warned against an "overreaction" which could result in the denial of religious liberty.

The president made his remarks at a nationally televised news conference in Washington. He called the Jonestown events, which claimed more than 900 lives, a "tragedy" but pointed out that they did not occur within the United States. "I obviously don't think the Jonestown cult was typical of America," he said.

On the question of whether the FBI should have investigated the cult more carefully in light of reports of psychological and physical abuses inflicted on members at the Jonestown commune, the president replied, "It is unconstitutional for our government to investigate" groups which are "based on religious belief."

Only when evidence exists that federal laws have been violated do government investigative bodies have a role to play when religious beliefs are involved, Carter said.

-more-

The president also touched on religious matters in answer to a question about U. S. support of the Shah of Iran, whose government has been threatened in recent weeks by internal dissent.

Carter noted that the Shah "has moved forcefully and aggressively" in altering some ancient religious traditions in an effort to bring Iran more into the mainstream of the modern world. Those actions have resulted in opposition by conservative religious leaders.

"We do not have any intention of interfering in the internal affairs of Iran," the president declared.

-30-

Donald Anthony
Dies in Dallas

Baptist Press
12/1/78

DALLAS (BP)--Donald M. Anthony, 48, director of the Texas Baptist Christian Education Coordinating Board, died in Dallas Nov. 24, following an illness of several months.

Funeral services were in Hillcrest Baptist Church, Dallas, and burial was in Laurel Land Memorial Park.

Anthony's death followed by almost four months that of his associate, Chester L. (Chet) Reames, director of the division of student work, who was killed in an automobile accident in Dallas.

Before becoming Christian education director for Texas Baptists, Anthony was vice president for academic affairs, Texas Eastern University, Tyler, 1975-77; president, Tarrant County Junior College, Northeast Campus, 1969-75; and registrar and professor, Mary Hardin-Baylor College, 1964-66.

He is survived by his wife, the former Bobbie Rae Thorn; two children, Susan Carole and Stephen Mark; a brother, M. J. Anthony; and two sisters, Mrs. David Wilson and Mrs. John Monroe, a missionary to Rhodesia.

-30-

Cooperative Program
14.57 Percent Ahead

Baptist Press
12/1 /78

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Strong giving in November, the second month of the 1978-79 fiscal year, increased contributions to the Southern Baptist Convention's national Cooperative Program budget to \$9,512,166, or 14.57 percent ahead of the first two months of 1977-78.

Giving in November itself amounted to \$4,696,217--an 18.7 percent jump over the same month in 1977.

"The 18.7 percent increase in November reflects a continued concern for Bold Mission Thrust" (the SBC plan to proclaim Christ to the world in this century), said Porter W. Routh, executive secretary-treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee.

"If the 14.57 percent increase for the first two months continues, we will be able to meet the basic operating and capital funds goal for 1978-79," Routh said.

The 1978-79 calls for a basic operating budget of \$62 million to fund worldwide Southern Baptist causes, with an additional \$2 million goal for capital needs of SBC agencies. The total 1978-79 budget--\$75 million--reflects an additional \$11 million goal for Bold Mission Thrust challenge funds.

Southern Baptists were also running ahead on designated gifts above the Cooperative Program figure.

Designated contributions in November totaled \$460,716, or 10.59 percent ahead of last November. For the year to date, Southern Baptists have designated \$1,151,265 to SBC causes, a 37.39 percent increase over the first two months of last year.

Total contributions, including Cooperative Program funds and designated gifts, amount to 10,663,432 for the year to date. That's a 16.17 percent increase over last year.

-30-

R.A. Leader: Down
In Well With Youth

By John J. Hurt

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Dan S. Whorton, who once aspired to a missionary career overseas, instead found a ripe mission field working with Royal Ambassadors in Richmond, Va.

By day, he's the assistant treasurer for the Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, handling financial reports from 111 mission treasurers around the world.

After work, he crosses historic Monument Avenue to his two-story brick house to work with black youth enrolled in his Royal Ambassador chapter or to be host to those who have come back to him for fellowship and guidance.

"It is a joy to see how well they do when they learn Christ is interested in their everyday lives," says the 44-year-old bachelor. "You have to get down in the well with them when there are disappointments. They know they can stand on my shoulders because I get down in the well with them."

The quiet, almost timid, Whorton finds no problem relating to the teens who make a second home of his home. The entire first floor is given to chapter activities and recreation. Eating facilities are crowded into the small kitchen to give the boys extra room.

Whorton claims one upstairs bedroom as his own. Missionary friends visiting Richmond may be staying in one of the three others or they may be occupied by one-time Royal Ambassadors back in Richmond.

During his 14 years in Richmond, Whorton has seen some of his boys take their own leadership roles. One has graduated from college and is teaching physical education at a school for the handicapped. One in the Army may be headed toward a preaching ministry.

Others make it clear Whorton and his Royal Ambassador program have made the big difference in their lives, including two high school track stars with scholarships to Carson-Newman College, a Baptist school in east Tennessee.

"Whether I'm running track, or sleeping, or anything--whatever happens to me will be because God wants it," Kenneth Foster, sprint star and president of the chapter, told a Richmond newspaper.

Waddell Simpson, distance runner, told the reporter, "Most all of us have a strong belief in God and the Bible. We stick together. We ask God to help our team and to help others. It gives us confidence."

Linwood Patterson, 18-year-old headed for the University of Pittsburgh on a football scholarship, made his track reputation with the shot put. Whorton and his RA program "taught me how to deal with the problems I had," he says.

All three athletes are committed to following Whorton's example in helping others.

"I love that man," says Foster. "He is always on a person-to-person basis and sincere."

"They know I care about them--what they are and what they can be," Whorton says.

He insists there have been few problems with the variety of youngsters who share in his home. Other boys act somewhat as policemen--learning the identity of those who break the rules and seeing it doesn't happen again.

"They don't have any doubts about the Bible," Whorton says of his Monday night teaching role. "Their problem is in not knowing it. They want to learn."



BAPTIST PRESS

460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219

ym ^{CRJ}
CD

DEC. 5 1978

[Faint, illegible text]

LYNN MAY HO
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
127 9TH AVE NO
NASHVILLE TN 37203