

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

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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78-210

**Allen Confers with Israeli  
Leaders on Controversial Law**

TEL AVIV, Israel (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention President Jimmy R. Allen arrived in Israel on the first anniversary of a controversial Israeli law affecting religious conversion to meet with Israeli leaders to discuss the law.

During a nine-day stay, which began Dec. 27, 1978, the elected leader of more than 13 million Southern Baptists was to talk with high Israeli government leaders, including the minister of justice and members of the Knesset, the Israeli parliament.

The law in question makes it illegal to offer or receive material inducements or other benefits to change religions. Baptists and other Christian leaders in Israel and the U.S. have strongly opposed it, fearing it may be misinterpreted to rule out the right of evangelical Christians to witness for their faith.

Southern Baptist leaders, including Allen, have met with the Israeli ambassador in Washington to express their displeasure with the new law and its possible effects on religious freedom in Israel.

Since the law was passed by the Knesset, Dec. 27, 1977, at least one incident of harassment of a group of Jewish-Christian believers has occurred, without official government sanction, according to Southern Baptist missionaries.

Some 200 religious extremists forced entry into a believer's home, tore up Bibles and hymnbooks, brandished their fists and shouted abusive language as they rampaged through the home.

Allen said his visit will seek to underscore the problem which evangelical Christians see in the concept of the law. He feels it provides social approval for resisting the sharing of personal faith or following one's own conscience with regard to religious affiliations.

"I think the example of Israel, as it relates to religious liberty, is important to people who are concerned for religious liberty all over the world," said Allen, pastor of First Baptist Church, San Antonio, Texas.

Allen, who will be accompanied by his wife, said he is making the trip "as an individual and as president of the Southern Baptist Convention," but not representing any particular agency or group. He said he will not travel at the expense of the Southern Baptist Convention.

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NOTE TO STATE BAPTIST EDITORS: Baptist Press will report the results of Jimmy Allen's visit to Israel sometime between Jan. 5 and Jan. 8.

American Wounded in Nicaragua  
In 'Very Critical' Condition

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12/29/78

GALVESTON, Texas (BP)--Jerry White, an American wounded in a misunderstanding with persons believed to be Nicaraguan officials, is in "very critical" condition at a Galveston, Texas, hospital following amputation of his right forearm.

DARGAN  
**E. B. C. HISTORICAL COMMISSION**  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

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A Southern Baptist layman, White was wounded Dec. 19 when he and five other American traveling companions on an independent mission trip from McAllen, Texas, failed to stop near Leon, Nicaragua, at the signal of persons believed to be Nicaraguan national guardsmen.

The travelers either apparently did not realize they should stop or feared to do so in the darkness. The guardsmen fired and White, the only one wounded, was taken to a hospital in Leon. He remained there until Dec. 23, when he was flown to Texas.

White attended Brigrance Road Baptist Church, Brazoria, Texas, before moving to McAllen, where he enrolled in Kingsway Missionary Institute to learn Spanish and eventually work as an independent missionary in Nicaragua, a family representative said. Earlier White and his wife did one year of independent mission work in Nicaragua.

Kingsway Missionary Institute students often take mission trips to Central America. White and his companions from the institute visited Tegucigalpa, Honduras, and were heading toward Bluefields, Nicaragua, when the incident occurred.

While in the Leon hospital White badly needed A-negative blood. Southern Baptist Missionary Stanley D. Stamps in Managua heard of the Texan's plight and donated a pint of his own blood. The family representative believes that "saved Jerry's life there."

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Fon H. Scofield Jr. Dies  
in Richmond Hospital

Baptist Press  
12/29/78

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Fon H. Scofield Jr., 66, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board pioneer in audiovisuals, died Dec. 27 in a Richmond hospital, apparently following a massive stroke.

Associated with the board for almost 30 years, Scofield produced 49 motion pictures and coordinated hundreds of audiovisual products since he began his career in 1948. In August, 1977, he retired as associate secretary for program and product development.

Before coming to Richmond, Scofield, a Charleston, Mo., native, worked with the North Carolina Baptist State Convention visual education department and was pastor of churches in North Carolina and Missouri.

His first wife, Maude Hunter Bowers Scofield, died in 1976. Surviving are his second wife, Johnni Johnson Scofield, also a veteran Foreign Mission Board staffer; a daughter; his mother; and two grandsons.

Scofield was a 1936 graduate of Wake Forest (N.C.) College. He also attended Andover Newton Theological Seminary, Newton Centre, Mass., and Duke University, Durham, N.C.

Funeral services were held Dec. 29 in Richmond, Va., with burial in Forest Lawn Cemetery.

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(BP) Photo mailed to state Baptist editors.

Popes, Guyana Horror Head  
RNS Top 10 News Stories

Baptist Press  
12/29/78

NEW YORK (BP)--The Roman Catholic Church's remarkable turnover in popes and the mass murder-suicide of People's Temple cultists in Jonestown, Guyana, ranked first and second respectively in the top 10 ranking of religion news stories of 1978, according to Religious News Service.

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Chosen by the staff of RNS, international, interfaith news service, the top 10 rankings went like this:

1. Pope John Paul II, the first Polish pope in history and first non-Italian pope in 455 years, was elected after the deaths of Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul I.
2. The mass suicides and murders in Jonestown, Guyana, drew increased attention to the issue of government regulation of cults.
3. Three heads of state, Jimmy Carter, Menachem Begin and Anwar el-Sadat, cited religion as a factor in their arriving at a preliminary accord on the Middle East at Camp David.
4. An \$85,000 grant to the Patriotic Front of Zimbabwe by the World Council of Churches drew fire from several WCC member churches.
5. The revival of Islam as a political force was a major factor in the civil strife in Iran.
6. Abortion continued to be a political issue in the U.S., figuring in several elections in November.
7. The issue of women priests was a factor in the schism in the Episcopal Church and got a negative vote in the Church of England Synod.
8. Human-rights issues continued to challenge the churches around the world, particularly in Southern Africa and Latin America.
9. Birth of the world's first "test-tube baby" in England raised questions of biomedical ethics.
10. Inflation delivered major blows to the budgets of churches and ecumenical organizations.

Other major developments and events cited by RNS include:

--Admission of blacks to the priesthood in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons).

--Ecumenical advances include an agreed statement on papal infallibility by the U.S. Lutheran-Catholic dialogue, formation of a provisional Latin American Council of Churches in Oaxtepec, Mexico, and organization of an ecumenical coalition in Ohio's Mahoning Valley to attempt to reopen a steel mill.

--Recognition of the People's Republic of China by the U.S. raise the possibility of effects on religion in China.

--Homosexual rights continue as an issue in the churches (particularly United Methodist and United Presbyterian denominations).

--Several tuition tax credit bills fail to pass in Congress.

--The U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in the Bakke case raises more questions than it answers in regard to affirmative-action programs.

--Churches oppose government regulations at the federal and state levels.

Southern Baptists Help  
Counsel Cultists' Families

By Mark Smith

SAN FRANCISCO (BP)--In the wake of the mass suicide of 912 members of the People's Temple in Jonesboro, Guyana, several Southern Baptist leaders have joined other San Francisco Bay religious leaders to minister to the families and friends of the victims.

Frances M. DuBose, professor of missions at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, says the task will be a large one. He estimates that as many as 3,000 people--family members and relatives of those who died--may be directly touched by the "shame and heartache" the tragedy brought.

Donneter Lane, an official of the San Francisco Council of Churches, however, calls that figure conservative, saying that probably every black person living in San Francisco has been affected in some way by the incident, whether through friends, relatives, or casual acquaintances.

DuBose, a senior member of the San Francisco Conference on Religion, Race and Social Concern (SFCRRSC), spearheader of the counseling program, says the first objective of the organization, working with the San Francisco Council of Churches, was to bring pressure on the People's Temple attorneys to release funds from the church to pay for transporting the bodies of the victims to California for proper burial.

DuBose also said the San Francisco Council of Churches and the SFCRRSC, San Francisco's most powerful and influential religious council, next applied pressure on various government agencies and was "instrumental in cutting the red tape" so the released funds could immediately begin to flow directly from the People's Temple and to the courts for distribution.

"Our biggest task is just now beginning to take shape," he notes, "and that is the ministering to the living victims, members and non-members of the People's Temple.

"Of major concern to the families right now is all the legal technicalities they have been swamped with," DuBose adds. "We're naturally trying to work with them on it and help them understand it.

"The religious community has been meeting and praying regularly about all the ways the people can and should be helped," he says. "We have a strong sense of responsibility for what has happened.

"We will do everything in our power to help these people through this unfortunate situation. As we help them we need people to pray for us."

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Americans United Announces  
Top 10; Gunn Resignation

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SILVER SPRING, Md. (BP)--The death, at least for the present, of the tuition tax credit plan for federal aid to parochial schools heads the top 10 church-state stories of 1978, according to Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

In other developments, the nondenominational organization also announced that its executive director, Andrew Leigh Gunn, resigned Dec. 20 to return to the Methodist parish ministry. He joined Americans United on Sept. 23, 1976.

Besides defeat of tuition tax credits in Congress, other top 10 church-state stories are (2) The Michigan referendum defeat on Nov. 7 of a voucher parochial aid plan; (3) The November referendum defeat in Oregon of an attempt to stop state funding of abortions for poor women; (4) Continuing pressure on state legislatures to force Congress to call a constitutional convention to outlaw abortion; (5) The federal court ruling against New Jersey's 1976 law allowing special tax privileges for parochial school attendance; (6) The U.S. Supreme Court ruling against the Tennessee constitution's ban on clergymen serving in public office; (7) The defeat in Congress of a plan to provide massive "auxiliary services" aid to parochial schools; (8) President Carter's naming of former New York mayor Robert F. Wagner as "personal presidential envoy" to the Vatican; (9) The Washington State Supreme Court's ruling against public utilities passing along the costs of religious and charitable donations to ratepayers; (10) The furor over the Internal Revenue Service proposal to review the tax-exempt status of private schools suspected of racial discrimination.

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