



## BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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Carter Won't Blame Islam  
For Teheran Violence

By Stan Haste

WASHINGTON (BP)--President Carter refused to blame Muslims in general or the Islamic faith for the crisis in Iran.

At two points during his nationally-televised news conference Nov. 28, the Southern Baptist deacon and Sunday School teacher emphasized that Muslim teachings run contrary to the violence shown in Teheran by a mob of students who overran the U.S. embassy Nov. 3 and have since held American embassy personnel as hostages.

During an opening statement Carter declared: "There is no recognized religious faith on earth which condones kidnapping. There is no recognized religious faith on earth which condones blackmail. There is certainly no religious faith on earth which condones the sustained abuse of innocent people."

Later, in response to a reporter's question regarding U.S. relations with countries in the Islamic world, the president said the stalemate in Teheran does not indicate a general deterioration of relations with such nations.

"So far as I know," he said, "every Islamic country has condemned Iran for its capture of our hostages and has been very supportive. This includes Muslim nations which in the past have not been close friends of ours--Iraq, Libya and others.

"So I don't see this as a confrontation at all between our nation and the Islamic world. It's certainly not part of the Islamic faith to condone...blackmail, or the persecution or harm of innocent people, or kidnapping, or terrorism," Carter continued.

The president also expressed the view that "in some ways we've been drawn closer to these people because they see what has occurred in Iran as something of a disgrace for their own religious faith, and they don't see this as typical of what Muslims believe."

Even the more radical Islamic Shiite sect, of which the Ayatollah Khomeini is a leader, does not advocate violence against innocent persons, Carter noted. "It's the misguided actions of a few people in Iran who are burning with hatred and a desire for revenge completely contrary to the teachings of the Muslim faith."

No Missionary Cutbacks  
In Arab Countries Expected

By Susan S. Cahen

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Southern Baptists are not curtailing missionary activity in Arab countries because of the current crisis in Iran, according to a Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board official just returned from the Middle East.

"I know nothing of any plan or thought of withdrawing from any Arab country at this time," said J.D. Hughey, the board's secretary for Europe and the Middle East, just back from a tour of 15 countries within his area.

Missionaries earlier had withdrawn from Iran and for several reasons the Baptist church in Ankara, Turkey, has been put on inactive status.

If tensions were to arise, Hughey said, it would be strictly the missionaries' decision whether or not to withdraw. They have been authorized in advance to take whatever action seems desirable.

"But, I repeat, I saw no evidence of fear or panic on the part of the missionaries, just a readiness to get on with the job, prudently, but persistently," Hughey emphasized.

Hughey did not visit Iran but said, "It is clear we won't have missionaries in Iran for some time because of the highly volatile and unstable conditions."

The area secretary said he understands that the holding of hostages by Muslims is not new. He related an incident in which one Muslim leader had offered the sons of prominent families an opportunity to be educated at one of his schools, in effect holding them hostages to see that the families followed his will.

But, he said, during visits to Yemen, Gaza, Jordan, Israel and Egypt he saw no disturbances or display of any anti-American feelings. Many showed the same degree of Arab hospitality he had been accustomed to.

In Yemen, Hughey and other members of a hospital evaluation team touring Southern Baptist-supported hospitals in the Middle East were invited to a feast by the local hakim (the local Muslim religious judge).

Hughey expressed appreciation for the hospitality shown them by the hakim's father who had held the same position. The hakim replied that "the friendship of the father is carried on by the son."

Hughey said that in Gaza, the atmosphere was remarkable quiet. In Amman, after the takeover of the U.S. embassy in Iran, it was absolutely quiet, he said, and in Egypt, everyone was very friendly and he felt no anti-American sentiment.

"What has happened in Iran has caused waves throughout the Arab world," Hughey said. "Even in Egypt now you see women with the Muslim scarf (not veil) on their heads and covering their hair and necks. This is the accepted feminine orthodox Muslim attire. They call it 'decent dress.'

"The Muslim people seem to be more eager to express their Muslim loyalties than before," Hughey said, "but I personally don't think the upsurge of radical Islam with its extreme expressions of hostility toward westerners and other religions is likely to prevail.

"I think there are enlightened Muslims whose influence already has been felt and will eventually be felt even in the land of (the Ayatollah) Khomeini. But, because of what is happening in the Muslim world, Christians cannot expect any special privileges lest the radical elements be antagonized."

Hughey emphasized that "it will probably be necessary for some time to maintain a low profile even in friendly Muslim countries."

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#### Rogers Calls on Baptists To Urge Hostage Release

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention President Adrian Rogers urged here that members of the nation's largest Protestant denomination wire or write the U.N. Iranian embassy in New York City "strongly urging swift release of the American hostages in Iran."

Rogers, who also urged "concentrated prayer of intercession in this grave matter," invited "persons of all faiths concerned for world peace and humanitarianism to join Southern Baptists in praying and writing." He said the embassy's address is 622 Third Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017.

"Letters and telegrams should be emphatic and show deep feeling but not be hostile or sarcastic," suggested Rogers, pastor of the 11,000-member Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn.

"As Christians, we should show our love for all people but, at the same time, show that we strongly oppose mistreatment of American citizens and make it clear that we support our government."

Rogers emphasized the need for prayer, declaring that "a military confrontation with religious overtones would be a moral and spiritual disaster."

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#### Manhattan Ministry Runs on Coffee Cups

By Mike Livingston

Baptist Press  
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NEW YORK (BP)--Elmer Sizemore probably gets more out of coffee than Maxwell House, Mrs. Olsen, and Joe DiMaggio put together.

Sizemore is pastor of Manhattan International Baptist Church in New York, a city where personal contact with strangers is usually confined to rubbing elbows with someone when the subway lurches.

With commerce and survival being the chief concerns of many who work and live in Manhattan, starting a church or simply meeting people there is different from anywhere else.

So Sizemore's first big task was to decide how he could best meet people in such a competitive atmosphere. The plan he devised is working.

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"I must drink 15 to 20 cups of coffee a day," says the Southern Baptist home missionary. "I drink it in restaurants, in coffee shops, in corporate buildings on Wall Street and in a variety of places. And every time I have coffee, I'm with someone. If I have 20 cups that's at least 20 people I talk to and witness to."

The unusual approach to ministry has helped him become a part of the scene in Manhattan. "I'm recognized by many people on Wall Street, around the upper East side, in midtown, and in the New York University area," Sizemore says. "Those are the four areas where I have tried very hard to get to know people. Restaurants just seem to be a good place to do that."

Through his approach, Sizemore has been able to start a church and two Bible fellowships--one on Wall Street and one at New York University.

All three are active and vital. "If you make yourself available in those areas every week for a prayer and visitation there will always be others who will come up on the scene in need of ministering," he says. "The Lord just seems to put people in the place where they are the most effective."

His day usually begins, Sizemore jokes, when he gets to "the office," a Greek restaurant owned by the John Phillips family.

After a couple of cups, depending on the day of the week, it may be time to take the subway over to New York University where Haruko Nawata, a Japanese student working on her master's degree, is helping him recruit other students to the Bible fellowship held there.

That fellowship, like the one on Wall Street, is not structured like a home Bible study. The session is deliberately unstructured in order to be able to deal with the problem of the day.

From NYU Sizemore might reboard the subway en route across town to a coffee shop where he has told a man he will meet him to talk over a problem the man has been having at work.

When he comes up from the subway to street level, a storekeeper waves through the window of a small shop as Sizemore stands squinting, waiting for his eyes to adjust to the bright sun.

As he threads his way through the push of rush hour traffic, a smile is fixed on his face. It's obvious that Sizemore is thrilled to be in Manhattan.

"Here in Manhattan, I suppose you could say that one must learn to live on the streets. He must learn to live in the corporate buildings, and in the restaurants, and in banks, wherever people are.

"And then, too, everybody is always going to bring his own uniqueness to whatever job he does," says Sizemore.

"Like me, I've got a real taste for coffee."

Southern Baptist Woman  
To Be Olympic Chaplain

By Teresa Sanders

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Barbara McElhaney's "flock" is a group of world-renowned athletes and her "parish" the cold, snowy Adirondacks of upstate New York.

The second-year religious education student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary is among the 14 chaplains selected for the 13th Winter Olympics in February at Lake Placid, N.Y.

One of three women, she is the only Southern Baptist to serve in a group that is to include a specialist in Eastern religions, a rabbi, Episcopalian, Lutheran and Methodist, Eastern Orthodox and Catholic.

The chaplaincy program is one of six major areas of concern of a Religious Affairs Committee, the first such committee in modern Olympic history. Three other Southern Baptists are on that board, including David Book, pastor of the Baptist Chapel in Lake Placid; Ken Prickett, Home Mission Board field representative; and Bracey Campbell, managing editor of the Nashville (Tenn.) Banner.

Other activities of the committee will be an emergency human services center, worship services, local religious entertainment, religious literature distribution and religious media coverage.

The Winter Olympics is a new missions venture for Mrs. McElhaney, 33, and a mother of two, and for the other clergy members. This marks the first time a chaplaincy team has participated in the premier sports event that holds the focus of the world while it plays.

What will a chaplain do in the Winter Olympics? "We meet the athletes and build relationships with them on a one-to-one basis," said Mrs. McElhaney. "Then, if a crisis arises we can talk with them because they already know and trust us."

Book had earlier paved the way for Southern Baptists. He talked with Olympic officials about having a Southern Baptist fill a chaplaincy slot. They agreed to interview her and then offered her the position.

Among the suggested requirements was that she speak German, an easy chore for Mrs. McElhaney. She was born in Germany and came to the United States about 12 years ago. She and her family now call Mt. Zion, Ill., home.

She didn't have the experience in pastoral care that the committee preferred, but she is taking a crash course in pastoral counseling and reading books suggested by her professor.

Her husband Eugene, a student at Boyce Bible School, supports her efforts. He has agreed to stay at home and care for their two children--Eric, eight, and Gina, seven--while she meets and ministers to athletes from around the world.