



BAPTIST PRESS

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Carters Eulogize King,
Call For Legal Holiday

WASHINGTON (BP)--As millions of Americans celebrated the 51st birthday of Martin Luther King Jr., both President and Mrs. Carter called for renewed commitment to nonviolence and for passage by Congress of a national holiday to honor the slain Baptist civil rights leader.

In a message released here, the president said of King's contributions, "There have always been voices that urged violent repression in the name of religion. There have always been people who were willing to sacrifice others to further their own causes.

"Martin Luther King Jr. taught us a different lesson," Carter continued. "He taught us to live up to our highest principles of freedom and equal justice, to love and respect the tiniest spark of humanity in the most unlovable and find ways to fan that tiny spark into a lasting flame that would light the way to a better day."

Alluding to the international situation in Iran and Afghanistan, where "forces of tyranny and terrorism are engaging in violence, often in the name of religion," Carter said, "It is important that we remember the power of nonviolence to change both institutions and the hearts of individuals."

In Atlanta's Ebenezer Baptist Church, where King served as co-pastor with his father, Mrs. Carter called again for the designation of Jan. 15 as a national holiday.

She told an overflow crowd at the church gathered for a two-hour memorial service that "we must have a national holiday to commemorate this great man of hope, faith and love."

Noting that King's birthday is already celebrated as a holiday in the nation's capital and other localities, she declared that both she and the president "are committed to a national holiday for Martin Luther King Jr."

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America's Trash
Could Feed India

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LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--"If we could have what the United States throws away we wouldn't have hunger and no one would be without shelter and clothes," says an Indian seminary student.

The average income in Halingham Haokip's state of Manipur, India, is just five dollars a month, says the former general secretary of the Kuki Baptist Convention. Haokip, now a student in the doctor of ministry program at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, says most of the workers in his country are untrained.

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"My concern is to upgrade my people," he says. "We need more practical approaches. W (the churches) are struggling to exist."

His people are members of the Kuki tribe and make up 280 churches in Manipur where about 1.4 million citizens fight continually to ward off starvation and to find shelter.

He described impressions of his host country in a monthly newsletter sent to 280 churches and individuals in Manipur and neighboring areas of Burma, Nagalan and Assam.

Among the aspects of American life which have overwhelmed Haokip are the cars and varieties of food her. There are so many," he said, his eyes growing bigger. "In my country we have only rice and curry."

Haokip came from an obscure village three days from the nearest market where Christianity and education were feared.

"When a child goes to school, he can't help his father in the fields. And when a person becomes a Christian, he becomes an outcast," he says. He and some friends were threatened and then chased from their village after they accepted Christ.

Hungry for education after he became a Christian, he borrowed textbooks from friends while growing up. Later he was able to go to college and received a bachelor of arts degree from Gouhati University in Assam, a bachelor of theology from Eastern Theological College in Jorhat, Assam, and a bachelor of divinity from Serampore (a school founded by missionary William Carey) in Calcutta, West Bengal.

An opportunity then came for him to come to the U.S. for further theological training at Southern.

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Wood Hails Ruling Upholding
Federal Abortion Funding

By Stan Hasteay

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WASHINGTON (BP)--The U.S. government will appeal a federal district court ruling in New York striking down controversial legislation denying abortion funds to many poor women.

The ruling by Judge John F. Dooling Jr. of the U.S. District Court in Brooklyn invalidated the so-called Hyde Amendment, of which the latest version forbids medicaid payments to poor women unless a woman's life is in danger or if the pregnancy results from rape or incest.

At the same time, Judge Dooling delayed enforcement of his decision for 30 days to allow the government to appeal directly to the Supreme Court. The Justice Department announced immediately that the government will appeal.

Judge Dooling's lengthy opinion was based in part on his view that to deny funds for abortions to poor women deprives them of the free exercise of religion guaranteed in the First Amendment.

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"The irreconcilable conflict of deeply and widely held views on this issue of individual conscience excludes any legislative intervention except that which protects each individual's freedom of conscientious decision and conscientious nonparticipation," he said.

James E. Wood Jr., executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs here, called the district court's decision "a profoundly significant one for maintaining the integrity of the First Amendment."

Wood, one of 40 expert witnesses to testify during the 13-month trial in Judge Dooling's courtroom, said in a statement that "While the Hyde Amendment is manifestly discriminatory in public policy against the poor, even more alarming is that one's free exercise of conscience and religion in this matter is abrogated."

He went on to assess Dooling's ruling "as supportive of the guarantees of the First Amendment for all citizens and for the inviolability of one's individual conscience in facing what is intrinsically a complex moral issue."

Dooling agreed with the argument of Wood and others that denial of abortion, because a woman cannot afford to pay, might violate her free exercise of religion. But he specifically rejected the companion argument that forbidding federal funding of abortions amounts to an establishment of religion.

Numerous religious activists for abortion rights have maintained that the denial of funds and all other legislative attempts to restrict abortion violate the No Establishment clause of the First Amendment by embracing a particular theological viewpoint, especially that held by the Roman Catholic Church.

The New York case dates to September 1976, when Cora McCrae, a 24-year-old Brooklyn resident, sought an abortion at a Planned Parenthood clinic only to discover that she could not obtain it because the Hyde Amendment had just gone into effect.

Planned Parenthood went to court with McCrae and obtained from Judge Dooling first a restraining order and then a preliminary injunction against implementation of the Hyde restrictions. Under those orders, McCrae was able to obtain the abortion.

The U.S. Supreme Court already has pending another challenge to the Hyde Amendment, a case it agreed to hear last fall. But there is serious question as to whether the justices will consider basic constitutional challenges to the Hyde language in that case or decide it on more narrow jurisdictional grounds.

In the McCrae case, should the high court decide to review it, the justices will likely be forced to settle the basic questions.

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Rowatt Urges Increased
Attention To Families

By Jerilynn W. Armstrong

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EUSTIS, Fla. (BP)--"The church of the 1980s will be called upon to carry a heavier burden than ever before as it seeks to minister to its families in the midst of constant change," a seminary professor said at a conference here.

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Three trends will emerge during the 1980s to "give parents additional responsibility to educate and prepare their children with less available funds and time," Wade Rowatt of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary told 400 persons at the 16th annual Rec (church recreation) Lab.

Rowatt, associate professor of psychology of religion, said the trends will be:

--A polarization of Christian and non-Christian beliefs resulting in increases both in religious programming and in violent and sex-oriented programming;

--Increasing economic stress in families causing more dual-career marriages;

--Continued decline in quality of education.

"Although the 1980s will hold numerous adjustments for the family, it can also be a decade when families pull together if they can learn to live together," Rowatt said.

"Learning to live together is where the church can be of invaluable assistance," he added. "The church can remind its membership of God's commitment to the family and that he works through the family to touch the lives of individuals."

Rowatt noted that emphasizing the importance of the family is only step one. Step two is training parents and children to function as a family. "Churches must stop telling a man to be a Christian father and start teaching him how to become one."

Besides making families a priority, Rowatt believes that churches must expand their counseling and human resource services to help broken families, families undergoing tremendous stress and other related problems.

"As ministers of recreation, you have the exciting and unique opportunity to minister and counsel in a casual, relaxed atmosphere," Rowatt said.

"You can make your family life center live up to its name by bringing families together for fun and fellowship," he said. "Through games, sports and other activities family members can have fun relating to one another and build love rather than hostility."

Rowatt also reminded the group that in the midst of activities and plans they should not sacrifice their own families.

"We do our churches a great disservice when we do not set specific hours for time with our families," he said. "Each of you needs private time with yourself, your spouse and your children in order to strengthen your relationships and become a more capable servant of Jesus Christ."

The Rec Lab was sponsored by the church recreation department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.