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81-85

Carter: Religious Right
Influence To Decline

By Stan Hastey

PLAINS, Ga. (BP)--While acknowledging that the religious right had "a very profound effect" on last fall's elections, former President Jimmy Carter predicted that its leaders will soon have to modify their positions or be "bypassed" by the people.

Carter said the religious right's "measuring rod" for politicians last year, including their positions on issues like the Panama Canal Treaty, diplomatic recognition of Taiwan, SALT II and establishment of a Department of Education, did not come from the Bible.

"These were the kinds of things that were put forward as a measuring rod for whether or not a person was a genuine, born-again Christian," Carter said. "I think that there is too much wisdom present in the collective body of Christians for that sort of distortion to prevail more than a short period of time."

At the same time, the former president declared he harbors no "bitterness or ill feeling" toward leaders of the movement, some of whom denounced Carter and campaigned for Ronald Reagan in 1980. "I think they are deeply committed Christians....who are sincere in their belief, who let prejudice get the best of them for a while," he said.

He said further that larger questions such as racial equality, control of nuclear weapons and world peace are the kinds of issues which "ultimately, I think, will be seen as compatible with the Christian experience."

Carter's remarks came during an interview with three Baptist journalists following Sunday morning services at Maranatha Baptist Church May 24. The 45-minute session with the reporters marked only the second interview he has granted since leaving Washington in January.

Although he pointedly declined to criticize any Reagan policy or decision, Carter's answers to questions about his administration's achievements left no doubt that his priorities conflicted with those so far announced by his successor.

Noting he came to office following the scandals of Watergate, the disillusionment of the Vietnam War, and abuses by the Central Intelligence Agency, Carter said his first task was to help restore confidence in government and its leaders. "The people were looking for a restoration of basic truthfulness in press conferences, openness in government, the answering of any allegation," he said.

On the foreign front, he went on, "We had the constant threat of war," particularly due to the continually volatile conditions in the Middle East. Among his priorities in seeking to defuse the situation, he said, were working for peace between Israel and Egypt, restricting the sale of military weapons and trying to control nuclear weapons.

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"I felt that in our foreign policy in the past we had played a little too much (the) role of using intrigue and power in forming alliances for temporary advantage with leaders who represented principles contrary to our own nation's basic commitments," Carter elaborated.

Primary among those commitments, he said, was that to human rights.

"I tried to raise the banner of human rights in its broadest sense," he said, adding that among the tests of honoring the principle were "basic integrity of government," "human dignity," "alleviation of suffering and pain," and "elimination of torture" and "unwarranted arrests."

In domestic matters, Carter said his primary objectives included protecting the environment, conserving and developing new sources of energy, and making government more accessible to women and minorities, especially Spanish-speaking and black citizens.

He said he was aware of "how damaging some of those commitments were, politically speaking," and cited as "one of the worst things I did politically" was to push for ratification of the Panama Canal Treaty. But the decision to seek the treaty was worth it, he declared.

"I think it kept us from war and it was the right thing to do. It was the honorable thing for our nation to do and has the potential still in the future of reaping great benefits for our nation and its relationship with not only countries of this hemisphere but (with) others around the world who admired an end to colonialism."

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(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press.

Hadaway Assumes Post
At Urban Studies Center

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--C. Kirk Hadaway has become director of research for the Southern Baptist Center for Urban Church Studies.

Hadaway, 29, had been data development researcher at the Home Mission Board since 1979.

The center, housed at the Baptist Sunday School Board, was created by five agencies and six seminaries to assist denominational personnel in conducting research and developing strategies for ministry in urban areas throughout the world.

In his new post, Hadaway will conduct research projects and serve as advisor to seminary professors, foreign missionaries, agency employees and others participating in urban ministry research.

Larry Rose, executive director, said he hopes the center will eventually have 25-30 different research projects in progress at all times.

Hadaway, a Nashville native, holds the B.A. degree from Southwestern University at Memphis, M.A. degree from Memphis State University, and the Ph.D. from the University of Massachusetts.

He is currently completing research on the impact of urban location in local church growth and decline in the United States.

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In addition to the seminaries and the Sunday School Board, the center is supported by the Home Mission Board, Foreign Mission Board, Woman's Missionary Union and Brotherhood Commission.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Sunday School Board bureau of Baptist Press.

New Evangelistic Thrust Emerges
From Delayed Liberian Centennial

By Pat Bellinger

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MONROVIA, Liberia (BP)--The centennial celebration came a year late for the Liberia Baptist Missionary and Educational Convention. Instead of a celebration of the past, it was a challenge to evangelism in the future.

In 1980, on the eve of their centennial celebration, Liberian Baptists were jolted out of rigid adherence to tradition by the coup d'etat which struck deep into Baptist, as well as national, leadership. But after a year of reassessment and rededication, Liberian Baptists met to begin a second century with new emphases, priorities and enthusiasm.

They elected young adults untouched by the coup to many leadership positions, but they also welcomed other members who had spent time in prison following last April's coup.

God has given another chance, perhaps a last chance, to Liberian Baptists, said Southern Baptist missionary Bradley Brown in the sermon which messengers called the high point of the convention.

"If we do not put our emphasis, our priority, on evangelism and church planting and church growth, we will fail as a convention and the blood of thousands will be on our hands," said Brown. He noted that 85 percent of the Liberian people are not Christians although Liberia is often called a Christian nation. And he challenged others to follow the example of seminary students who have started going where the people are with street services.

One messenger, agreeing with Brown's emphasis on evangelism, suggested that the convention had strayed from its forefathers' intentions and concentrated its work in one area, neglecting thousands of others who had never heard God's word.

Jeremiah Walker, interim convention president who was elected to continue as president, echoed the same concern in a Sunday morning message which urged convention members to leave their "tents of ease" and "go down from the mountain" to places where people need their ministry.

Cecelia Toweh, the first woman to be elected vice president, said she hoped to see three new churches in her county within the year to help meet the convention goal of starting new work in two to five areas of each county.

Walker also said the spirit of the meeting was one of fellowship as messengers sought God's help in restructuring their convention. "Everyone seemed to want a changed convention with a new role and with a definite emphasis on evangelistic thrust," he said.

The spirit of fellowship was evident as the convention worked on a revision of the constitution, including a change which called for one vote from each church in electing officers. Previously, any messenger who paid the proper fee could vote.

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"The churches and individual messengers felt a real part of the convention as for the first time they were a real part of the constitution-making process in this revision," said Abraham James, chairman of the study and planning committee and its subcommittee on constitution review.

Although some Baptists, imprisoned after the coup because of government or family ties, remain in jail, the presence of many who had spent at least brief periods in prison added a bittersweet note to the meeting. Two who were released Christmas Eve and two released on the anniversary of the coup, April 12, received special welcome.

The convention theme song, "Higher Ground," was sung often and with great enthusiasm as a symbol of the convention's forward direction. But another song, led by William Minor, who had been released from prison only two weeks earlier, summed up the feeling of the meeting, "I Can Tell the World."

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(Pat Bellinger is missionary press representative for Liberia.)

Canadians Add Fourth
SBC-Related Association

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PENICTON, B. C. (BP)—Southern Baptists in Western Canada have organized their fourth association, the Wheatland Baptist Association in Saskatchewan/Manitoba, according to a report presented at the Canadian Baptist Conference in Penicton.

Fifty-five Canadian SBC churches and missions are now participating in the four associations. The other three Baptist associations affiliated with the SBC are the Capilano, Plateau and Midwest Baptist Associations.

More than 100 Baptists attending the Canadian Baptist Conference at Eckhardt Avenue Baptist Church voted to establish a committee to plan SBC work in Canada. The committee, composed of representatives of each of the four associations, will also study "structural possibilities" for the future.

The conference also asked the Northwest Baptist Convention and SBC Home Mission Board for assistance in sponsoring an annual evangelism conference, elected a committee to study theological education needs in Canada, and expressed interest in the Home Mission Board's church planter apprentice program.

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Former SBC WMU
Leader Is Honored

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INDEPENDENCE, Texas (BP)—Mrs. R. L. Mathis, director of the Baylor University Student Union, will be awarded the 1981 Texas Baptist Elder Statesman Award, June 7, at the annual homecoming celebration of Old Independence Church.

The church at Independence in Central Texas was established soon after Texas won its independence from Mexico in 1836 and is one of the oldest in Texas.

Kenneth Chafin, pastor of the South Main Church in Houston, and W. J. Wimpee, religion professor and chaplain at Baylor, will deliver major addresses at the meeting.

The award is presented annually to a person who has rendered distinguished Christian service. Last year's honoree was Guy D. Newman, president emeritus of Howard Payne University in Brownwood.

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Before being named director of Baylor's Student Union in 1952, Mathis served as director of church activities at First Church in Dallas. Mathis will retire May 31, 1981, and will become director emeritus of Baylor's Student Union.

Since 1935, Mathis has held a number of Southern Baptist denominational positions in Texas, the United States and the world. She was state chairman of Texas Woman's Missionary Union in 1937; WMU youth secretary for Texas, 1938-1945; executive secretary-treasurer of Texas WMU, 1945-1949; and Texas WMU president 1949-1955. She also has been a member of the executive board of the Baptist General Convention of Texas and is a life member of the executive board of Texas WMU. She also has been active with the Baptist World Alliance, serving as vice president 1965-70 and as president of the Woman's Department, 1970-80.

She served two terms as president of the Southern Baptist Convention WMU from 1956-1963 and 1969-1975. She was promotion director for SBC WMU from 1963-1969 and was elected second vice president of the SBC in 1963.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Dallas bureau of Baptist Press.

Baptist Marine
Sets World Mark

Baptist Press
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COLUMBIA, S.C. (BP)—Wayne Rollings has leaped from an airplane 1,200 times.

He has swum 15 miles at a crack and run up to 32 miles.

But his physical achievement that made the record books is his 40,000 situps in 16 hours.

A complete physical specimen, Rollings is also a complete and excited Christian. A career Marine, he is Navy ROTC advisor at the University of South Carolina.

"I've known few people as vivacious as Wayne," says his pastor Mickey Cockrell. "He really lives his testimony for Christ.

"He is a great Christian witness to the students on the USC campus. He loves young people. And at the church, his leadership in outreach is amazing."

Rollings read of a Russian athlete last fall who established a world's situp record of 36,500 in 17 hours. He felt "it just didn't seem right for a Russian to hold the record."

Rollings is shaped like a tree trunk from the top of his closely cropped hair to the bottom of his feet. At 40 years old, he was already doing 500 situps and running eight miles a day to keep in shape.

To prepare for his assault on the Russian's record, he upped his situps to 1,000 a day in December, 2,000 in February, 3,000 in March and 4,500 in April. It takes him about 90 minutes to do 4,000.

He also did 1,000 pushups daily and 300 pullups every other day. He was running 12 to 16 miles a day by April. "Your entire body has to be in condition just to hold your hands behind your head for 16 hours," he says.

He started at 8:31 a.m. and reached the 40,000 mark 16 hours and three minutes later and about 15 pounds lighter.

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