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May 14, 1982

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After Visits, Graham, Smith  
See Soviet Religion Differently

By Norman Jameson

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Billy Graham and Bailey Smith may have preached in the same Soviet churches within days of each other, but each came away from extended visits with a different view of religious life in Russia.

Graham, a Southern Baptist evangelist, said at the conclusion of a six-day visit to Moscow, where he addressed an international peace conference and preached in the Orthodox and Baptist churches, he saw no evidence of religious repression.

Smith, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, spent 15 days in four provinces of the Soviet Union as part of a Baptist World Alliance tour. His entire party of 34 North American Baptist preachers and layman had their BWA allotment of four Russian Bibles confiscated at the airport upon entering the country.

Many of the party also had their English Bibles, commentaries and reference books taken and Smith said he knew of only one person who got his books back when leaving the country.

Denton Lotz, the BWA representative on the trip, had provided the Bibles for each party member, telling them to place the Bibles in their luggage in an obvious place and they would be allowed in.

Smith said the airport security guard told him "very plainly" that "I'm taking these away from you because Bibles are prohibited in the Soviet Union."

Smith and Graham will share the platform during the Pastors' Conference rally June 13 in the Louisiana Superdome, an event preceding the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention June 15-17.

Olin Robinson, president of Middlebury College, Baptist minister and frequent visitor to the Soviet Union, appeared on CBS Morning News May 14 and said he was "astounded" at Graham's statements.

Robinson, who was instrumental, with former president Jimmy Carter, in getting Russian Baptist dissident Georgi Vins out of the Soviet Union, said, "From the revolution on, religion has been something to be tolerated, tightly controlled and when convenient, used, in the Soviet Union."

"Even in the Baptist church where Dr. Graham preached and where I have preached on several occasions, each minister has been in prison at one time or another," Robinson said.

"I believe the Soviets used Dr. Graham for propoganda purposes," he said. "Dr. Graham's presence is very important to the Soviets. It lends validity to their enterprise. That doesn't mean he shouldn't go, just that he should be very aware."

Smith, who said the Bible is the issue in Russian religious freedom, said he never saw a Bible outside a church. Pastors wrapped their Bibles in newspapers to avoid being seen carrying a Bible on the streets, he said.

Preaching in four congregations where worshippers totaled 4,000, Smith said he saw only three Bibles.

At the Moscow Baptist Church, Smith preached to 2,000 who packed the aisles and stood outside in the rain to hear him. Yet, he pointed out after his return, permission to worship is not the same as freedom to worship.

In one church where 500 attended, Smith said he asked them all to recite with him John 3:16, the first verse many Christians learn from the Bible. He was chagrined and saddened, he said, when no more than a dozen of the congregation could recite the familiar verse, "For God so loved the world..."

"I am more appreciative of America and the freedoms we have," said Smith. "I'm convinced America is special in the heart of God."

A second group of Baptist pastors was in Romania and Hungary, two other Communist-bloc countries, at the same time Smith's group was in Russia.

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Baptist Congressman Offers  
'Middle-Ground' Arms Plan

By Larry Chesser

WB  
Baptist Press  
5/14/82

WASHINGTON (BP)--A nuclear arms control proposal aimed at uniting Americans divided over how best to prevent nuclear war has been announced by a Baptist member of Congress.

Rep. Albert Gore Jr., D-Tenn., believes there is acceptable middle ground between those who advocate overall freeze and reduction in the nuclear arsenals of the United States and the Soviet Union and those who insist with President Reagan that the U.S. must expand its nuclear forces to close a "window of vulnerability." That middle ground, Gore contends, could satisfy both groups to make nuclear war less likely.

In a recent editorial, the Boston Globe concurred, stating Gore's plan "wouldn't create an ideal world, but it would lead to a much safer one."

Gore's complex proposal is the product of a 14-month study Gore conducted as a member of the House Intelligence Committee. It calls for both superpowers to freeze and then dismantle their most threatening and destabilizing weapons--those capable of a first-strike against the other's land-based nuclear missiles. Gore contends it is these "counter-force" weapons that forces both nations to keep their nuclear launchers on a hair-trigger alert.

The plan also would eventually reduce the number of warheads on each side to a level half the number allowed by Salt II.

The plan is intriguing not only because of its content, but also because of the reaction it is drawing. Arms control specialists in Washington and Moscow have expressed interest.

Though expressing reservations about Gore's proposed selective freeze not going far enough, it is a "step in the right direction," according to an aide to Sen. Mark O. Hatfield, R-Ore., one of the legislative leaders of the growing nuclear freeze movement.

Gore told Baptist Press he has received a positive reaction from Reagan administration arms control officials.

The Tennessee Democrat said that while President Reagan's recently announced arms control proposal "does not appear, on the surface, to have many similarities to my proposal, I would not be surprised to see the structure of my plan appear on the administration's final draft when the talks have concluded."

Gore said there are both "positive aspects" and "remaining questions" to the president's proposal which he described as "clearly an opening position and not a proposed agreement."

Positively, Gore said Reagan's proposal signals that the president has determined that "arms control has an important role to play in enhancing our national security."

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"This is significant step for his administration to take," he said, "and it is a new departure."

Though all the details of the administration's plan are not available, Gore expressed concern over its continued reliance on counter-force weapons.

Gore credited the "tremendous outpouring of concern about the nuclear arms race" by Baptists and other members of the religious community with playing "an important role in convincing the president to move forward quicker than he had planned to do and in convincing the president to make a meaningful proposal and not just a cosmetic one."

With the emergence of the Reagan proposal, Gore says the role of arms control advocates is "somewhat changed." He warned against pushing proposals "contrary to the country's official negotiating position" but added that "it is important to provide a counterweight to those voices within the administration who don't put much stock in arms control."

He urged Baptists and others concerned about disarmament to "maintain a high degree of activity" on the issue.

A member of Mount Vernon Baptist Church in Alexandria, Va., Gore cited the importance of religion in shaping priorities. Pointing to the "many references in the Bible to the importance of peacemaking," Gore declared, "there is no higher priority for public office than trying to prevent a nuclear holocaust."

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Trails Dusty, But Happy  
On Way To Upper Volta

By Robert O'Brien

RB

Baptist Press  
5/14/82

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Oran Roberts has ridden a lot of hard, dusty trails since his teen-age days as a horse trainer on a ranch in Yuba City, Calif., and as a "buckaroo" on the T Lazy S cattle ranch in Battle Mountain, Nev.

His toughest may be the hot, long, rutted trails he traveled on a motorcycle in Upper Volta as a volunteer missionary last summer, helping people in nine villages in agricultural and church development.

Six weeks in a place like that, where comforts are few and hardships abound, would be enough for most guys, but not Roberts. He's going back to Upper Volta, and this time he's taking his wife, Cathy, and their two pre-school children.

"Everywhere I went last summer, people said, 'come back and help us,'" Roberts recalled with emotion during his appointment as a career Southern Baptist missionary agricultural evangelist May 10 at Monument Heights Baptist Church, Richmond, Va.

One village chieftain, in particular, touched his heart, Roberts said. "Befor I left, he gave me a young, white goat--an expensive gift in that culture. He called me his son and asked me to come back.

"It's not unusual for an Upper Voltaic man to call you his son, but there was something special in our relationship. He showed me so much hospitality I couldn't believe it. I've never seen hospitality like that--even out west. He gave me more than I ever gave him."

Roberts' trip to Upper Volta seemed like a journey through time to the lean, red-haired, freckled-faced young man from California. His calendar said 1981, but his senses said otherwise.

He watched carefully as Ray Eitelman, Southern Baptist agricultural missionary, showed him how to yoke oxen and handle a plow and cultivator behind the animals.

"It was like going back in history," exclaimed Roberts, who comes from a mechanized agricultural background. "I thought of my grandfather who plowed with horses in Oklahoma before tractors became accepted."

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A former high school dropout from a broken home, Roberts has come a long way from the 18-year-old buckaroo with nowhere to go to this 28-year-old career missionary appointee only weeks away from completing course work for a doctorate of philosophy in agricultural education from Kansas State University.

After a three-year U. S. Army hitch as a medical corpsman, Roberts began working his way through college, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and graduate school. He made it with a lot of hard work and prayer and the help of his wife, Cathy Burris Roberts of San Mateo, Calif., who also came from a broken home.

He trained horses, worked as a carpenter's apprentice, was an assistant apartment manager, did janitorial work, performed chaplaincy duties in the U. S. Army Reserve, did research and curriculum development as a graduate fellow, and served interim pastorates, including periods at Liberty Baptist Church, Chico, Calif., and Fellowship Baptist Church, Belleville, Kan.

The hunger, malnutrition and poverty Roberts saw in Upper Volta have motivated him to want to be the best agriculturist he can, but that's only part of his motivation.

"Not only am I an agriculturist, but I've been called to be a minister of the gospel," he declares. "If that were not the case, I'd go overseas with a donor agency, not with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board."

Oran and Cathy Roberts will have plenty of opportunities for ministry as missionaries in Upper Volta--and a lot to live up to.

One Upper Voltaic got so excited at the news missionaries would come that he decided to help them get an early start.

Luc Pare, a tall, slender man in his 30s, rode 100 kilometers (about 66 miles) on his bicycle to tell missionary Ray Eitelman that he had won 85 persons to Christ in 16 villages.

A month later, Pare came back to say 10 villages wanted to start preaching services, including seven in which Christian converts, who could read and write, had agreed to serve as teachers.


Now, that ought to be enough to keep even a buckaroo busy for awhile.

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

Ninth and O Helps  
Derby Day Crowds

By Clarence Matthews

 Baptist Press  
5/14/82

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--People rushing to get inside Churchill Downs on Kentucky Derby Day were greeted by men and women handing out Scripture messages.

Other racegoers were surprised with cups of lemonade when they returned to their cars on the parking lot of Ninth and O Baptist Church, near the track.

It's all part of Ninth and O members' attempt to be good neighbors and "stand tall in the midst of a pagan environment," said LaVerne Butler, the church's pastor.

The ministry associated with the track goes on throughout the racing season. The church's Woman's Missionary Union bakes cakes once a week for workers on the track's back side. Other members support the Churchill Downs chaplaincy program.

The 100,000 Bible tracts passed out Derby Day are printed at a cost of \$750 and distributed by Ninth and O members. They are not encouraged to proselyte but will discuss their ministry if asked, Butler said.

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"Want To Be a Winner? Here's a Sure Thing" is printed on the back of the small red, white and blue cards. "Winning the Race of Life Is As Simple as ABC." The message is followed by three passages from the New Testament.

A simple welcome to the Derby is on the front of the card.

Ninth and O, which has about 4,500 members, supports the ministries as part of its commitment to evangelism and missions.

"We wanted to reach out with a positive, friendly and helping way," Butler said. "Philosophically, we are not into gambling in any form. And we wish it wasn't at Churchill Downs. Anytime you have thousands of people coming into a neighborhood, you've got trouble."

But the location of the church about a block from the track has made it impossible for members to avoid the problems arising from the high volume of traffic, the influx of visitors and the revelry of the racing season, Butler said.

"For 13 years, I have tried to make lemonade out of this lemon," Butler said in a church bulletin at race time. "But I will have to confess it has been the most difficult of any single issue encountered."

So, the church decided to "squeeze the lemon and make it a little sweeter," he said.

Not all the work has been well received. The congregation has been criticized for opposing gambling at the same time it rents parking space to race track visitors.

Butler said the parking fee, about \$2 during the week and \$5 on Derby Day, is a minimum charge that is used for maintenance and to pay attendants.

He said it is difficult for outsiders to understand the seriousness of the problem the church faces during the racing season or the hardship endured by residents.

"As pastor, I have prayed that some wise soul would offer a solution for a better lemonade," Butler said. "Until that time, we keep squeezing and sweetening the age-old lemon" during the racing season.

Some have responded personally to the church's Derby-week ministry.

Lillian Butler, Butler's wife and WMU director, recalled that several years ago two visitors from Southern Illinois ended up having Sunday dinner at their home.

The men--abandoned by the group they came to town with--awoke Sunday morning with hangovers and no money. A paper carrier who was a member of Ninth and O stopped to listen to their problems and advised them to seek help at the church.

"They came over, cleaned up, washed their clothes and attended service where they made a profession of faith," Mrs. Butler said.

The Butlers invited the men home for lunch and then gave them money to return home.

"They sent the money back a year later," Mrs. Butler said.

Doctrinal Unity, Program Unity  
Rise, Fall Together, Rogers Says

By Dan Martin

ROME, Ga. (BP)--Doctrinal unity and program unity in the Southern Baptist Convention rise and fall together, former SBC President Adrian Rogers says.

"You can't have one without the other," said Rogers, immediate past president of the 13.8 million member denomination and pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn., at a press conference in Rome, where he was preaching at West Rome Baptist Church.

Rogers, however, noted he is in favor of the denomination's cooperative missions, education and evangelism efforts, but feels it is "not only illogical, it is immoral to ask a man to support with his money and with his influence ... things that are theologically repugnant to him."

Baptist Press obtained a tape recording of the press conference from West Rome church pastor Jerry Vines, who called the meeting.

The Memphis pastor told the press conference--attended by only one newspaperman, Jack U. Harwell, editor of *The Christian Index*, journal of the Georgia Baptist Convention--that Southern Baptists "have made a golden calf of the program.... It's almost easier to be against the Virgin Birth than the program."

By program, he said he meant the entire work of the denomination, of which the Cooperative Program is a major part.

The Cooperative Program is the denomination's unified giving plan, through which the 36,000-plus churches support missions, education, evangelism and other efforts, including state and national conventions, missionaries at home and abroad, theological education, colleges and universities, hospitals, child care facilities and other activities.

In 1981, according to the SBC Stewardship Commission, the churches contributed \$229,471,751, of which \$81,685,873, was channeled through the national convention.

For Rogers, an outspoken proponent of Biblical inerrancy (belief that the Bible, in its original autographs, is without error), denominational support is linked to conservative theology.

He said Southern Baptists started out "with a moderately narrow theology," and while the denomination "always refused a written down, finely honed creed," there were common beliefs, such as "the inerrance of the scriptures, salvation by grace through faith, the priesthood of the believer, autonomy of the local church, baptism by immersion of believers only, the security of the believer...."

Alongside that narrow theology, the denomination "had a broad program. Well, then somebody said about 1925, we need to narrow the program. So we got the Cooperative Program. So not only could we more or less believe the same things, but correspondingly and logically, we could support the same things."

After the "golden years" of a narrow theology and a narrow program, Rogers claimed that "what we have now is a broad theology where everybody is saying we have unity in diversity. But the unity in diversity is only theological, not program wise. And so now the sin...in the Southern Baptist Convention is not that you be aberrant in your theology; but the sin in the Southern Baptist Convention today is that you be aberrant in your program, that you don't do the program just right, that you fail to support everything."

He added the question revolves around "what we believe about the word of God. If we can't settle that, I believe it is the ultimate cancer that will destroy the organism. There are two different schools of thought; there is a continental divide; there is an east is east and a west is west. Either the word of God is infallible or it's fallible; it is inerrant or it is errant."

He charged the denomination has "many professors who do not believe the Bible is historically, philosophically, scientifically and theologically without error," a point inerrantists stress, maintaining the Bible is without error in all of these dimensions.

He said he would "fight, really, for the right of every man to believe as he wants," and added: "I don't want to talk too bravely, but I'd be willing to die for...the freedom...for you to believe what you believe. But don't you realize that when you're asking me to pay your salary or else be thought of as a bad boy, that you are forcing your beliefs on me...?"

He commented there are some within the denomination "who would like to put a steel band around our dollars. They say you do not have room to wiggle program-wise, but we've got plenty of room on the other side to wiggle theologically. And, again, I say, what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander."

Rogers said if he could prescribe a solution "the best...would be to go back and narrow up this again, so we can say everybody more or less believes alike, everybody more or less supports alike...Nobody's in a strait jacket."

But, he added, "I sincerely doubt that will ever happen."

Rogers' "next best thing," is "that as we have widened the theology, correspondingly we widen the program," to allow freedom of belief but also freedom to support or decline to support the component parts of the denomination.

"I would say that perhaps we could remove tension from our Southern Baptist Convention if we would relax our insistency of Southern Baptists walking in lock-step program-wise," Rogers said. "We cannot put people in a strait-jacket program-wise and have an unlimited freedom theologically."

He said he knows his proposal "strikes at the very vitals of what we are trying to do because someone says the genius of our Southern Baptist work is the concentration of our efforts in our programs," but adds, "First best is to have a commonality of beliefs and a commonality of program."

While Rogers says he does not advocate changing the wording of the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message statement in regards to the Scripture, he did say the problem could be solved if the statement were amended and "just simply said the Bible not 'has' but 'is' truth without any mixture of error, period." The average layman wouldn't see the difference, he added, but "that is where the theological fur would begin to fly."

He claimed that when denominationally-employed persons sign the statement and still believe the Bible is fallible, the "problem (is) not theological but ethical."

Rogers commented that the 1981 annual meeting of the denomination in Los Angeles "was the biggest headon collision we've ever had in the Southern Baptist Convention. I do think that we came away agreeing to disagree."

He added he was "grieved, strongly grieved" that SBC President Bailey Smith was opposed for re-election to a traditional second term, but added he thinks "a lot of the spirit of conviviality was due to Bailey's spirit of grace."

While participants came out of the convention "without being all bristled up," Rogers says he does not think "that the issues were dissolved just because we came out in sort of a nice feeling. The gut level issues were not resolved, and I don't think that they will be for a long time."

He predicted a large attendance for the 1982 annual meeting in New Orleans (June 15-17) and said: "I don't feel the conservatives are going to be asleep, or that they are not going to be interested, that they are not going to be there. They will be."