

JAN 13 1984

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

**(BP)**

**-- FEATURES**  
produced by Baptist Press

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January 12, 1984

84-7

Webb Confident 'Good Fruit'  
Will Come From God's Good Tree

By Craig Bird

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. (BP)--Greg Webb has a simple prayer.

"I want to know God's will for my life aside from any personal success or failure I may be experiencing at the time," the young actor said. "I am aware of God's care--not in the sense God gets me movie or television jobs but in the sense of well being I feel from his love."

Webb, 24, has been in Hollywood less than three years but has had a major role in a critically acclaimed movie ("Lords of Discipline") and the second lead in the recent NBC program "Boone."

He had been hopeful the series would be given another season to build an audience but NBC canceled it even though some lower rated shows were renewed. "Boone" was the only new show in the fall television season pitched toward the same family market mined by "The Waltons" and "Little House on the Prairie."

Webb feels strongly the family-oriented messages "Boone" delivered to the living rooms of America were good for both the viewers and television. And he admits disappointment he must now "look for other projects" (he doesn't consider himself unemployed).

Webb grew up in a Southern Baptist home in Murfreesboro, Tenn., (south of Nashville) where "being a Christian was taken seriously."

"My 'Christ following' has been fairly uneventful," he explained. "I became a Christian in my own home at the age of nine after talking with my father about it. I was active in First Baptist Church in Murfreesboro while growing up and a member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes in both high school and college."

He had been active in high school drama productions but during his first three-and-a-half years at Vanderbilt University in Nashville a future in the theater seemed as remote as the dreams of a professional sports career he had given up.

But the Christmas of his senior year, as he thought about the future and sought God's guidance, he began feeling leadership into acting. He auditioned for--and won major roles in--both of Vanderbilt's major spring productions.

When he told his parents he would take his college education (double major in business administration and sociology) and head to Hollywood, "they were definitely underwhelmed." He arrived in California in July 1981, took a tour of Universal Studios ("just like any tourist"), signed up for acting classes and, when his savings ran out, got a job keeping books for a newspaper which allowed him flexible hours.

He also joined First Baptist Church of Beverly Hills, where he presently is a member of the missions committee which works with the church's Thai, Korean and Spanish congregations.

After nine months he had had roles in a couple of small industrial films and been in a minor play and tossed aside his timetable to succeed. Then he was asked to read for the movie, "The Lords of Discipline."

The director had been casting unsuccessfully for months but Webb was the character he had been seeking. Webb signed to play Braselton, "one of the main s" in the film which studies social and moral questions at a boys military school.

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He spent the summer of 1982 filming in London, with final shooting in Charleston, S.C.

The movie was received warmly by critics and Webb expected to be offered several projects. Four months later "after the other actors who had major roles in the movie had already started working again," Webb was still looking.

He resumed acting classes and was preparing to go to New York and try his talents on Broadway when he was contacted about reading for the lead in "Boone." He didn't get the lead but was picked for Boone's companion, Roan.

The final week of shooting "Boone," Webb was reading three feature scripts, even while hoping NBC would pick up the show for another 13 weeks (in fact had the series been renewed a song written by Webb would have been included in the second show).

After two-and-a-half years the 24-year-old already has good reviews from a movie and a television series on his resume and enough confidence to face the ebbs and flows of an actor's life. Two things, his faith and his roots in Tennessee, help him keep it all in perspective.

"I don't try to use my roles as a platform to reform the world," he said. "When I act I become that character. I've been asked how, as a Christian, I can play scenes in a bar in "Boone" or a sinister character in "The Lords of Discipline."

"But that is not Greg Webb in a bar or involved in a secret society at a military school--that is the part I am playing. A lot of people in the entertainment industry are not 'holy' and they aren't open to listening to talk about Christianity. But they are more willing to listen after you have established yourself as a professional.

"I don't try to witness directly through the characters I play--I try to witness through the platform my success in acting provides."

That success has made him a personality in his hometown, but hometowns know how to keep favorite sons humble, too. When Webb went into a Murfreesboro bank while home for Thanksgiving a woman in the next line asked loudly if he were Roan from the television show.

Webb acknowledged he was. "I can't stand that show," the woman yelled back.

Such instances help Webb hold to his goal.

"When I wake up each morning I want to put God first for that day," he said. "Then I will trust good fruit to flow out of a good tree."

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Woman's Death On KAL 007  
Becomes Christian Witness

By Erich Bridges

Baptist Press  
1/12/84

SEOUL, South Korea (BP)--It was the most painful event of their lives. But Robert and Mary Beal think some good has come out of the shooting down of Korean Air Lines Flight 007.

The Beals' 28-year-old daughter, Rebecca Scruton, died on the jetliner destroyed by Soviet missiles. In the months since the tragedy the couple has comforted other victims' family members, encouraged President Reagan and spoken of their trust in God to hundreds of people.

A Southern Baptist couple from Del Rio, Texas, the Beals live in Seoul, South Korea, where he works as a civilian with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. They're members of Seoul International Baptist Church, led by Southern Baptist missionary J.G. Green.

Rebecca was coming to Seoul on KAL 007 to visit her parents. A vibrant, attractive mother of two children--Todd, six, and Alicia, two--she had lost her young husband, Dale Scruton, to cancer in December of 1982. She sang "It is Well With My Soul" in her husband's hospital room minutes after his death, and faced the lonely months afterward at her home in Connecticut with faith. But she wanted to spend some time with her mother.

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Rebecca bought a ticket for an Aug. 27 KAL flight to Seoul from New York, left the children with her parents-in-law in Massachusetts and went to the airport. But she had forgotten her passport. She was rescheduled for an Aug. 30 flight--KAL 007.

When the Beals heard something had happened, they rushed to the airport in Seoul for the long hours of waiting, then grieving with other families. Despite their own pain, perhaps because of it, the couple began to comfort others.

"As we were thrown together with people who were without hope, it seemed like the dramatic awareness and the reality of the hope we have just became so visible that we had to share it," Mrs. Beal said.

"There was a beautiful Korean girl who was a Christian. We introduced ourselves to each other. Nina was her name. She was the wife of a crew member (on KAL 007) and they had only been married five months. We were able to encourage each other and pray together there."

Less than a week later the Beals listened to President Reagan on television as he expressed grief and anger over the airline incident. They wrote the next day, telling him of Rebecca's faith and her courage after her husband's agonizing death as she faced rearing two small children alone.

"There is now an empty place which can never be filled," they wrote. "But, retaliation of a kind which would bring about further loss of life and pain to other loved ones would not bring our Becky back nor would she desire that. We are encouraged to learn that you have a similar attitude. We pray for you that God will give you the strength and wisdom to handle this situation...."

They closed by describing the reaction of six-year-old Todd to his mother's death: he silently drew a picture of a little boy crying and said, "This is how I feel."

President Reagan replied personally, saying words "cannot describe how touched I am by your letter." He thanked the Beals for their prayers and added he knew "from what you tell me that your grandchildren shall grow up and make lasting contributions to this nation--in their parents, in their grandparents, they find an example to follow."

The president later quoted the Beals' letter in an address covered by national news media.

The couple shared their experience with their church in Seoul as the congregation named a new chapel (designed by Beal) in Rebecca's memory. Mrs. Beal spoke to some 600 women as the International Christian Women's Conference met in the city.

When they returned to the United States, the Beals found additional comfort in several places:

--A friend of Rebecca's at her church, Calvary Baptist Church of Meriden, Conn., related after forgetting her passport and missing her first flight, Rebecca came home discouraged. But she found a Scripture passage which so impressed her she wrote it down for the friend. It was Lamentations 3:52-57, which reads in part: "Mine enemies chased me sore, like a bird, without cause.... Waters flowed over mine head; then I said, I am cut off. I called upon thy name, O Lord, out of the low dungeon...thou saidst, Fear not."

--Rebecca told another friend just before leaving that she planned to "share the Lord" with the person sitting beside her on the flight. She also said she might have forgotten her passport the first time, "but I know I have my passport to go to heaven."

--On Christmas Eve Mrs. Beal was going through a box of Rebecca's things and found a letter, addressed to her, which had never been mailed. In it Rebecca spoke of the Lord's purpose being carried out in her husband's life and death and that "everything is the way the Lord wants it."

"The impact at the time was one of the Lord saying, 'I'm still in control. No matter what the circumstances are,'" Mrs. Beal said.

During the New Year's holidays, the Beals visited their grandchildren in Colorado, where they will be reared by their late father's sister and brother-in-law. They are adjusting "very nicely," Mrs. Beal said, though family members try not to remind them of the parents they won't see again. Friends at Calvary Baptist in Connecticut have established the Scruton Children's Fund to help with their support.

As they prepared to return to Korea in January, the Beals offered no easy answers for the catastrophe which claimed their daughter's life. Their pain is achingly real. But they stressed the Lord has been honored and glorified throughout their family's personal tragedy. "The whole story," Mrs. Beal said, "is one of encouragement."

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WMU Names Six Girls  
National Acteen Panelists

Baptist Press  
1/12/84

SULPHUR SPRINGS, Ala. (BP)--Six teenage girls were named to the eighth National Acteen's Advisory Panel by Woman's Missionary Union, auxiliary to Southern Baptist Convention, during its executive board meeting.

The panelists are: Darla Bailey, Richmond, Ind.; Amy Brown, Liberty, Mo.; Audra Chambers, Greensboro, N.C.; Holly Hutson, Sarasota, Fla.; Kim Rakes, Surgoinville, Tenn., and Julie Surratt, Amarillo, Texas.

Selections are based on scholastic achievement, school and church activities, and accomplishments in Studiact, the individual achievement plan for Acteens. In addition to their applications and written testimonies, candidates had to be recommended by their pastor and Acteens leader.

Panelists will be featured in the April issue of Accent, the monthly missions magazine for girls in grades 7-12.

Their duties will include writing for Accent and appearances at state and associational WMU related meetings. They will also serve as pages at the WMU annual meeting, June 10-11 in Kansas City, Mo., and at the SBC which immediately follows.

This year's panelists will be featured program participants for the national Acteens convention in Fort Worth, Texas, July 18-21.

Panelists will serve until Dec. 1, 1984 when selections for new panelists begin.

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Valentine Cites  
'Good Things' In 1983

Baptist Pr ss  
1/12/84

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--In the midst of gloomy 1983 headlines, a leading Southern Baptist ethicist has reminded the nation life in the past year was "remarkably good."

Foy Valentine, executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, related "10 good things that happened in 1983" in a guest editorial in USA Today, a national newspaper with more than 1.2 million readers.

Valentine found promise in the midst of peril, noting the world managed to avoid nuclear war and global financial catastrophe. "In spite of brinkmanship and bullheadedness in high places, the nations of the earth did not stumble down Armageddon's hill of horror," he noted.

The Baptist executive praised church groups and other concerned citizens who "worked faithfully in support of peace with justice" and helped bring "the awful consequences of nuclear war" into clearer focus.

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Valentine, who wrote a similar year-ending column for the national publication last year, also found hope in human relationships. "Friendships have grown, family ties have been strengthened, the milk of human kindness has kept flowing, and the web of human relationships binding us all together may be a bit more substantial this year than last," he wrote.

The disenfranchised, disaffected and disaffiliated saw some of last year's worst fears bottom out, he continued, citing increased involvement in world hunger relief and other human rights causes.

On the political scene, Valentine concluded: "Demagogues found little new running room" in 1983. The militarists in Argentina were reined in. Arafat's rhetoric wilted. Extremists generally found the world unreceptive to their intoxicating oratory."

Valentine recognized improvements in responding to the crisis in public education as national and local leaders "finally started coming to grips with one of the gravest social concerns of our time."

For Valentine, who has directed the Southern Baptist social concerns agency for 23 years, 1983 brought indications "values are somewhat more in and blatant immorality is somewhat more out. Increasing numbers seem to me to have decided to sell image and buy character, to sell indulgence and buy duty, to sell herpes simplex and buy sexual decency, to sell addiction and buy sobriety, to sell entitlement and buy obligation."

"Spiritual values," he concluded, "have not been obliterated, and moral values have not been lost. Thank God."

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Missionaries Robbed;  
Car Used in Bank Robbery

Baptist Press  
1/12/84

LONDRINA, Brazil (BP)--Armed thieves robbed Southern Baptist missionaries William and Carolyn Smith as they returned home Jan. 10.

The Smiths weren't hurt but their car was apparently used in a bank robbery Jan. 11.

The missionary couple, veterans of more than 20 years of evangelistic work in the southern Brazilian city of Londrina, drove into their garage about 9:15 p m. As she was locking the front gate two men appeared, shoved her aside and confronted Smith with a pistol.

Smith tried to talk the men out of taking the car, then asked permission to remove personal belongings from it. The thieves apparently became nervous and one fired th pistol, hitting the floor or the wall. At the same time Smith dropped to the floor.

"I really thought he had been hit because I saw him go down," Mrs. Smith said. As she began to scream and pray the two men jumped in the car and sped away.

A crowd of neighbors rushed to the scene and friends who drove by "right at the same time" chased the stolen car but couldn't catch it, Mrs. Smith said. The police arrived soon after.

A vehicle matching the description of the Smiths' car was used in the robbery of a Londrina bank the next day. Five armed men severely beat the bank's director and escaped with a small amount of money.

The Smiths lost a portable electronic organ and small sound system which were in the car plus Mrs. Smith's foreign resident documents. The couple has identified one of the assailants in police mug books.

"The police have been very good," she related. "Bill was chaplain of the police for two years. They've just been real nice to us and they're really looking for the car. We've been here for 20 years and of course we know a lot of people in town." She said she knew "the Lord was taking care of us" during the robbery.

Smith is a native of Amite County, Miss. Mrs. Smith was born in Orlando, Fla.

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