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Jimmy Carter Says SBC  
Missions Spirit Damaged

By Jim Newton

**NEW YORK (BP)**—Former President Jimmy Carter said the spirit of Bold Mission Thrust within the Southern Baptist Convention has been seriously damaged by capture of control of the convention by "conservative leaders."

Carter made the comment in an interview with Baptist Press while in New York as a volunteer working with Habitat for Humanity, an interdenominational Christian organization concerned about providing low cost housing for the poor.

It was Carter who as president called together Southern Baptist Convention executives and leaders for a meeting in the White House on June 7, 1977, in which the ideas of Mission Service Corps and Bold Mission Thrust emerged as a major Southern Baptist emphases.

Bold Mission Thrust is the overall denominational plan for Southern Baptists to proclaim the gospel to every person in the world by the year 2000.

Mission Service Corps, the brainchild of Jimmy Carter, is the volunteer project in which Southern Baptists spend one to two years at their own expense or with the support of a sponsoring church or individual(s) to undergird and reinforce Southern Baptist mission efforts.

Asked to evaluate the effectiveness of Bold Mission Thrust and Mission Service Corps during the seven years of their existence, Carter noted they got off to a good start but have since floundered.

"A lot of people who were interested in the Cooperative Program (the SBC's unified budget plan) and the home and foreign mission programs pledged to give their support," he said.

Carter said he and his wife, Rosalynn, made a pledge to support a Mission Service Corps volunteer for three years. "A lot of people did that. But in the last few years, that sort of spirit has been seriously damaged in the Southern Baptist Convention."

The spirit has been damaged, he said, "by the intrusion, or dominance, which is a better word, of the 'conservative' leaders who have pretty well captured control of the convention."

He said conservatives are tied to a philosophy exemplified by Moral Majority, and to some extent, by super church television ministries.

"The emphasis on foreign missions, Bold Mission Thrust, and the Cooperative Program is much less than it was in 1977," he said.

He admitted he had intentionally stayed "aloof" from the struggle between Baptists on the "right" and "moderates." Asked why, he responded: "I was quite active in the SBC when I went to the White House....but I've never been particularly interested in the political workings of the convention.

"One of the reasons I am a Southern Baptist is because of the autonomy of the individual churches. As long as Maranatha Baptist Church (in Plains, Ga.) suits Rosalynn and me, that's where we will stay and we will be happy as Christians and the right relationship with God through Jesus Christ will not be adversely affected," he continued.

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"Well, I don't feel compatible with what has happened lately in the Southern Baptist Convention, but I also don't have any inclination to withdraw as a Southern Baptist."

Carter said he did not feel it was appropriate for him, as a former president with a high profile, "to try to organize or lead a movement of moderates to recapture the Southern Baptist Convention.

"I've got more important things to do," he said. He listed his involvement in Maranatha Baptist Church as a deacon and Sunday school teacher; writing two new books; teaching at Emory University in Atlanta; building the presidential library; working with the Carter Center at Emory on human rights, peace, nuclear arms control and the Middle East, plus his work with Habitat for Humanity.

Carter led and organized a team of 48 volunteers, many of them from his church in Plains, to work for five days rebuilding a six-floor apartment building in drug-infested, poverty-stricken lower east side Manhattan.

Carter, a new member of the board of directors for Habitat for Humanity based in Americus, Ga., expressed strong support for Habitat's efforts to provide low-cost housing for the poor in 11 countries and 51 project sites in the United States.

Although he expressed desire for continued volunteer involvement with Habitat, Carter clarified he never had said he planned to be a missionary or (MSC) volunteer after he left the White House. "That was a misquote from Fred Gregg (Carter's Sunday school teacher at First Baptist Church, Washington), not from me," the former president said.

Carter said he felt could better invest his experience and influence with his broader involvements than if he were serving as a missionary in a small village.

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Decisions Made  
At Centrifuge Camps

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9/5/84

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—A total of 5,051 or 24.78 percent of those attending Centrifuge youth camps this summer made public decisions about their relationship with Jesus Christ.

Centrifuge, begun in 1979 by the church recreation department of the Baptist Sunday School Board, reached an all-time high attendance this summer with 20,383 youth participating in 53 sessions of camps. This is an increase of 4,081 over 1983.

The public decisions included 669 professions of faith, 3,909 rededications and 473 vocational decisions.

Don Mattingly, director of the Centrifuge program, attributed the increase to the four additional camp sessions at the conference centers and better utilization of the facilities on the two college campuses where the camp is held.

Also, a missions offering of \$28,680.95 was collected at the camps. The money will be divided equally between Home and Foreign Mission Boards for the Annie Armstrong and Lottie Moon offerings.

In addition to the two national conference centers, Ridgecrest (N.C.) and Gloria (N.M.), Centrifuge was held this summer on the campuses of Mobile College, Mobile, Ala., and North Greenville College, Tigerville, S.C. The fifth camp staff held camps in Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, Washington, Utah and Idaho. Also, one week of camp was held in Illinois.

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Pension Equity Not New  
To Southern Baptists

By Ray Furr

DALLAS (BP)—Southern Baptist churches and agencies participating in the Church Annuity Plan won't have to join the rush by businesses to correct pension inequities against women.

The new pension law make mandatory changes the Southern Baptist Annuity Board made in its annuity plan several years ago.

Annuity Board President Darold H. Morgan praised the passage of the Retirement Equity Act of 1984 as, "...a law...long overdue in bringing a type of fairness a truly civilized society cannot afford to ignore."

He noted, however, the changes are not new to Southern Baptists. "Several years ago we chose to resolve the inequities the provisions of the new law seek to correct. The law, among other things, will guarantee retirement benefits for homemakers whose employed spouses die before reaching early retirement age, and allows women to keep their pension credits if they leave their jobs to raise families.

"Participants in the Church Annuity Plan have been receiving this just treatment for many years," he explained. "When widows reach early retirement at age 55, they are entitled to their spouses' benefits no matter when their spouses died."

Morgan noted the Church Annuity Plan is also in compliance with the new law in that it requires a written consent from the spouse before an employee can waive benefits. This action overrides the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, which gave only the employee the option to waive benefits.

According to a 1978 study by the Department of Labor, an estimated 10,000 widows were losing benefits because the women's husbands died before reaching early retirement age, usually age 55, without signing over their retirement benefits. Morgan said an estimated 4,000 widows are receiving benefits from the board. "Most of the widows were spouses of retired Southern Baptist ministers and missionaries."

As for the pension credits earned for continuous service, Church Annuity Plan participants have no age or continuous service restrictions to fulfill to qualify for eligibility in the retirement plan. Most of the provisions will become effective on Jan. 1.

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Love, Kindness Solve  
Many Church Conflicts

By Jim Lowry

BSSB-F

Baptist Press  
9/5/84

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)—In Baptist churches, a consequence of freedom may be conflict—not necessarily disruptive conflict, but basic disagreement between two or more persons.

How these conflicts are handled may spell the difference between a continued ministry and possible disintegration of the witness and growth of the church, according to Brooks Faulkner, supervisor of the career guidance section of the church administration department, at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Many times, conflicts in Baptist churches are between deacons and pastors. A look into the pastor-deacon relationship in resolving conflict was the topic of a session at the National Deacon Ministry Conference during Bible Preaching Administration Week at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center.

Faulkner said all conflict is not necessarily bad. Why the conflict occurs and how it is resolved are two important parts of deacon-pastor relationships.

According to Faulkner, deacons and pastors have different reasons they believe conflicts occur in Baptist churches. A recent survey from the church administration department provided some insights into conflict from the eyes of both parties.

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An interesting insight, Faulkner said, is that in his opinion, rarely is the right thing being discussed in a conflict. Usually, there is some underlying problem.

For deacons, reasons for conflict with the pastor range from "he's been here too long," to "I just don't like him." Other reasons were "the pastor is too nice," "he doesn't challenge the congregation," "he has a few privileged confidants" and "he's lazy."

On the other hand, pastors see conflict arising because of "subterranean pastors in the congregation" and "the neighboring church is growing and we are not."

Pastors sometimes have the opinion they are expendable, which Faulkner said likely grows out of the fact 2.8 ministers are predicted for every Southern Baptist congregation by 2000.

Other reasons listed by pastors for conflict with deacons are existing conflicts at the arrival of a new pastor, the congregation not allowing the pastor to lead and the church being spiritually stagnant.

Faulkner said neither group should be callous or insensitive when working with others. "Kindness works wonders when working with people," he said. "I wish we had a kit available where by adding water a solution would grow up immediately, but it is not that easy.

"Kindness, gentleness and compassion are a few ways to deal with conflict, but they don't come easily," he continued. "Mature Christians give love whether it is deserved or not."

Some advice Faulkner offered deacons is to realize there are some problems everywhere. Don't over-react to a problem which could be solved with a conversation between two friends. Also, don't make demands regarding uncontrollable matters.

Additionally, realize the pastor is present because you hired him; don't expect him to change to fit the mold you had prepared for him, possibly based on a former pastor. He said that in disruptive fighting no one wins.

And, he added, give people time to grow. "Every butterfly was once a worm. It takes time for people to transform themselves; give them time. If everybody loved others as they love themselves, they would give them time to become butterflies.

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ACTS Goes To 24 Hour  
Broadcasting Sept. 16

Baptist Press  
9/5/84

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—The American Christian Television System (ACTS) will increase its broadcasts to 24 hours per day Sept. 16 to make the Baptist TV service more attractive to cable television systems and more responsive to late-night viewers.

ACTS has been transmitting its family and Christian entertainment programs 18 hours per day since June 12 over the Weststar V satellite. The move to 24-hour broadcasting over the Spacenet I satellite comes a year earlier than expected, says ACTS President Jimmy R. Allen, because it now can be done without increases in costs.

Another programming change will put two of ACTS' talk shows in the same time slot on alternating days. "Life Today," hosted by Allen, and "Lifestyle" have been airing back-to-back for an hour each Monday through Friday. Both shows will now expand to 90 minutes, but "Life Today" will be Monday-Wednesday-Friday, and "Lifestyle" will air Tuesday-Thursday.

Allen said viewers and cable systems reported the back-to-back programs gave ACTS "too great a talk show image."

ACTS will rearrange its program schedule into a daily seven-and-a-half hour basic program block to air 2:30-10 p.m. Central time. The block will be repeated twice within a 24-hour period and an hour-and-a-half of other material added to complete the 24-hour cycle.

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"A great number of people who need the gospel also are night people," Allen said. "It's our hope our effectiveness in sharing Christ will be enhanced by broadcasting all night."

"So many cable systems have expressed a desire for a 24-hour service that this decision will bring immediate expansion of ACTS into a number of new TV markets," Allen said.

ACTS has now signed on 107 cable systems that service 1.7 million homes in 262 communities with 4.6 million potential viewers. Recent additions include cable systems in Atlanta; Mobile, Ala.; Tulsa, Okla., and Des Moines, Iowa.

ACTS has been using the Weststar V satellite while Spacenet was being prepared for service. To give cable TV systems time to make the satellite switch, ACTS will begin transmitting to Spacenet Sept. 16 while continuing to use Weststar until Oct. 1.

Allen also announced ACTS will begin filling program breaks that had been reserved for local promotional spot announcements with national spots. The breaks, four minutes per hour, will be filled with national spots and public service announcements, but local ACTS boards can insert their own promotional spots "as they are able," Allen said.

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Conference Speakers Urge  
Diligence In Race Relations

By David Wilkinson

Baptist Press  
9/5/84

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)—In the midst of intense debate about immigration laws and refugee policies, Southern Baptists have been challenged to follow God's "higher law" to "offer hospitality, justice and acceptance to those strangers who have become our neighbors."

W. David Lockard of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission told a conference at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center the Bible repeatedly calls for compassion in response to the "special vulnerability" of refugees.

"In a sense," he said, "the refugee is at our mercy, lacking the protection and benefits ordinarily provided by kinship and birthplace. His status, security and privileges derive from the kindness and hospitality of the citizens who inhabit and control the land."

Lockard, who directs the agency's race relations program, said Christians should be actively involved in shaping immigration and refugee policies in response to "one of the nation's most pressing social issues." But the "more immediate concern," he added, is the church's attitude toward those refugees and illegal immigrants who already are here.

He warned against "compassion fatigue" which results in "helping no one because we know we cannot help everyone."

The refugee crisis was one topic at a Christian Life Commission conference on race relations. Other speakers included Chan C. Garrett and Emmanuel L. McCall of the Home Mission Board and Daniel G. Rodriguez and Sid Smith of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

Rodriguez pointed out immigration and high birth rate have made Hispanics the fastest growing minority in the U.S. Six of 10 adult Hispanics now living in this country were born outside of the U.S., he added. Like Lockard, he noted, the immigrants are more than a serious public policy issue; they represent "a great opportunity to share the gospel."

Garrett, who recently completed an in-depth study of racial attitudes in Southern Baptist churches, presented a "good news/bad news" assessment. While noting progress in some areas, he warned "prejudice continues to trouble our churches as it troubles our society."

He urged Southern Baptists to "guard against the serious apathy which leads to an unfounded optimism that continued progress is inevitable. It is still essential to teach and preach the basics related to Christian attitudes and actions in the area of human relations."

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