



-- FEATUERS

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Parks Renews Friendships,
Witnesses Again In Asia

By Marty Croll

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—During a recent visit to Indonesia, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board President R. Keith Parks and his wife, Helen Jean, met with about 30 former neighbors—all Muslims—to reemphasize the difference Jesus Christ can make in their lives.

The Parkses had shared the gospel with these friends and invited them to church when they were missionaries in Indonesia, but never had they been so definite about it. "We wanted another opportunity—probably our last—to really give them a clear witness," Parks said. "We gave them a pretty heavy dose and laid it on pretty strong."

Their four days in Indonesia were part of a 19-day swing through Southeast Asia—Parks' first trip back to that area in nine years.

To demonstrate the passage of time since Parks' tenure as a missionary in Indonesia (1954-68), one man Parks helped lead to Christ pointed to his 17-year-old son. The boy was one-year-old when Parks baptized the man.

He was one of many Indonesians whom Parks had baptized years ago and with whom he became reacquainted. "A good number of the national Baptist leaders were people that I'd either taught in the seminary, or some of them I'd baptized, or Helen Jean had had them in the choir. So most of the leadership we knew," Parks said.

"When we left Semarang, there were four major churches and several mission points. Now there are some 35 churches in that area, along with many mission points," said Parks. The Baptist seminary in Semarang was controlled mostly by missionaries when he taught there, he added, but now its leadership is mostly Indonesians.

While he was treasurer of the organization of Southern Baptist missionaries in Indonesia from 1965-68, Parks was an interim pastor in the Baptist church in Jakarta. Then they had only a handful of members. "Now they're trying to find room to extend their building because they're running around 300 in an English service and 300 in an Indonesian service. And the church also is involved in starting and sponsoring mission points on some outer islands."

During the trip Parks also spent time in Singapore, the Philippines, Guam and Sri Lanka. Since becoming board president in 1980, Parks has examined work in each of the other areas of Southern Baptist missionary presence, saving this area for last because he knew the most about it, he said. After leaving Indonesia in 1968, Parks was the board's secretary (now called director) for Southeast Asia for seven years. His last visit to the area was in 1975.

Parks was particularly pleased at the growth of the Christian community and the quality of Southern Baptists' missionary force throughout Southeast Asia, he said.

He told of two different occasions in Singapore and one in Indonesia in which the persons he was sharing the gospel with said they were already Christians. "It was encouraging. It made me feel Christians were becoming more numerous than before. I have never before had that experience in those places," he said.

In one instance, as he was cashing traveler's checks in a Singapore bank, he handed a tract to a teller, saying, "Here's the best news in the world. I'd like to share it with you."

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The girl said she already knew about it. "She was a Christian, so I said, 'Just keep it. You can share it with someone.' Another teller walked over and said something to the effect that she didn't know it, and the first girl gave her the tract," Parks said. "Then when I went to another window and gave a third girl one and asked her if she knew anything about it. She said 'no.' So I said, 'Well, your friend over there knows it, she can tell you all about it.'"

Baptist churches in Singapore have grown tremendously and have set impressive goals, Parks said. "I was very pleased to see the changes that have taken place," he said. "After some struggle, the missionaries and national leaders have become enthusiastic about finding ways to penetrate this urban state with its high-rise apartments." The strong national leadership has adopted a much more aggressive attitude than the attitude during his tenure as area secretary, he added.

Parks was impressed at the strength of the missionary force he met. Many missionaries, he said, have been moved to new countries and were forced to learn new skills and languages—some as they neared retirement—because of changes resulting from a changing world. Others continue to push on despite severe pressure against them.

"They've really endured a lot, and they don't do it in the sense of martyrdom, but really joy and delight," Parks said. "There is a basic commitment to missions that is a dominant note in their lives—a commitment to the Lord to represent him wherever he sends them."

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

Golonka Succumbs
In Atlanta

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ATLANTA (BP)—Elias L. Golonka, who for 10 years was a missionary to the United Nations and Internationals in New York City, died Sept. 5 in Atlanta.

Golonka, who turned 69 Sept. 2, had retired in July and had taken up residence in Atlanta. He had been hospitalized recently with a stroke and heart attack.

Golonka was appointed by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board to the U.N. post in 1974. In 1981, the title was changed to director of Christian Ministries to the United Nations.

Before his appointment as director of U.N. ministries, Golonka was assistant director of the HMB's language missions division from 1963 to 1973. Prior to his work with the board, Golonka was a pastor and denominational worker in Europe.

Golonka, a native of Orzeszkowo, Poland, was pastor of churches in Poland and Germany. He also was an officer in the Polish Army and a chaplain to displaced persons following World War II. After the war, Golonka was executive secretary for the Slavic Baptist Union in West Germany.

Golonka took up residence in the United States in 1950 when he became pastor of First Baptist Church in Minneota, Minn. He later was pastor of First Polish Baptist Church in Chicago. Golonka had been a speaker for the Polish Baptist Hour, a national radio broadcast, since 1959.

Golonka was educated in Europe and held degrees from Baptist Theological Seminary and the School of Foreign Languages, both in Hamburg, Germany.

He also was a graduate of Northern Baptist Theological Seminary in Chicago and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C.

He is survived by his wife, Nancy.

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(EDITOR'S NOTE: Presidential candidates Ronald Reagan and Walter Mondale spoke Sept. 6, 1984, to religious gatherings in Washington. Religion in politics and religion in government have surfaced as key issues in the presidential campaign. Baptist Press Washington Bureau Chief Stan Hasteley covered the addresses and files separate stories on Reagan and Mondale.)

Reagan Applauds Pluralism,
Church-State Separation

By Stan Hasteley

WASHINGTON (BP)—President Reagan, in an effort to define his views on religion and politics, told a Jewish audience here he favors separation of church and state and religious pluralism.

Speaking Sept. 6 to the International Convention of B'nai B'rith, a Jewish laymen's organization, Reagan declared: "The United States of America is, and must remain, a nation of openness to people of all beliefs. Our very unity has been strengthened by this pluralism.... The unique thing about America is a wall in our Constitution separating church and state."

Such separation of church and state, he elaborated, "guarantees there will never be a state religion in this land but at the same time it makes sure that every single American is free to choose and practice his or her religious beliefs or to choose no religion at all."

The president's remarks were made some three hours after Democratic presidential candidate Walter F. Mondale, in a speech to the same audience, attacked Reagan's alliance with the Religious Right, a movement Mondale described as "an extreme fringe."

Reagan's comments came during a time in which the issue of religion and its place in politics suddenly caught fire and dominated the campaign. Fueling the debate were remarks Reagan made in Dallas last month at a prayer breakfast held in his honor the day he accepted the nomination for reelection. On that occasion, he said: "Politics and morality are inseparable, and as morality's foundation is religion, religion and politics are necessarily related.... Without God, democracy will not and cannot endure."

He told the Dallas audience that on one of the campaign's most emotional issues, prayer in public schools, those who oppose his school prayer amendment are "intolerant of religion."

In his B'nai B'rith speech, Reagan sought to reassure Jews, many of whom openly criticized the Dallas statement, that he respects the religious persuasions of all citizens.

While affirming once more what he called "the return that millions of Americans are making to faith," Reagan added: "As we welcome this rebirth of faith, we must even more fervently attack ugly intolerance. We have no place for haters in America.... The ideals of our country leave no room whatsoever for intolerance, anti-Semitism or bigotry of any kind—none."

The president did not mention the furor over his Dallas address. His speech appeared to represent an effort by his campaign advisors to play down the issue, as he devoted only nine paragraphs of a 50-paragraph speech to religion. The rest of the address presented an overall defense of Reagan's domestic and international policies, with special attention to the administration's close ties to the State of Israel.

Reagan received his longest applause when he decried several efforts in the United Nations during recent years to censure or otherwise punish Israel, and declared: "If ever the United Nations should vote to expel Israel, then Israel and the United States of America will walk out of that hall together."

Mondale Condemns Reagan-
Religious Right Alliance

By Stan Hasteley

Baptist Press
9/7/84

WASHINGTON (BP)—Denouncing what he called "moral McCarthyism" and "partisan zealotry," Democratic presidential candidate Walter F. Mondale attacked President Reagan's alliance with Religious Right figures, declaring, "Most Americans would be surprised (to learn) that God is a Republican."

Speaking to the international convention of the Jewish organization B'nai B'rith, Mondale cited Jerry Falwell, founder and president of Moral Majority, Inc., and television evangelist Jimmy Swaggart as examples of those "reaching for government power to impose their own beliefs on other people."

He added: "And the Reagan Administration has opened its arms to them."

The B'nai B'rith speech was seen as the climax to a two-week blitz in which Mondale has attacked Reagan repeatedly for remarks the president made at a Dallas prayer breakfast last month that "religion and politics are necessarily related," and that those who oppose his school prayer amendment are "intolerant of religion."

Mondale sought to exploit Reagan's four-year association with the Religious Right before a friendly audience. Jews have been among those expressing concerns about the president's Dallas statement.

The former vice-president, trailing badly in every public opinion poll, took Falwell to task for including in a benediction delivered at the Republican National Convention that Reagan and Vice-President George Bush are "God's instruments for rebuilding America," and for declaring on another occasion that if Reagan is reelected, "We will get at least two more appointments to the Supreme Court."

Mondale said Swaggart, who has a television audience larger than Falwell's, "insists that Catholicism is a 'false religion,' and that Jews are damned to go to hell," Mondale charged. Nevertheless, he added the Baton Rouge, La. evangelist "is a welcome policy advisor in the White House."

Mondale said he was not calling "for the suppression of these voices," adding: "The same freedom that permits me to worship and speak my mind also protects them. There can be no rationing of the First Amendment in America. To protect anyone, it must protect everyone."

Mondale was also critical of Sen. Paul Laxalt, R-Nev., head of Reagan's reelection team, for sending a "Dear Christian Leader" letter to 45,000 evangelical preachers, urging them to join in the reelection effort. If Laxalt's letter "were an isolated example," Mondale said, "one might dismiss it as partisan zealotry. Unfortunately, it is not the exception."

The former U.S. senator from Minnesota declared, "I believe in an America where all people have the right to pursue their faith not just freely, but also without insult or embarrassment; where religious freedom is not a passive tolerance, but an active celebration of our pluralism...."

"I believe in an America that honors what Thomas Jefferson first called the 'wall of separation between church and state.' That freedom has made our faith unadulterated and unintimidated. It has made Americans the most religious people on earth."

Mondale accused Reagan of saying at the Dallas prayer breakfast that religion "needs defenders against those who care only for the interests of the state. His clear implication was that he welcomed such a role for himself."

But, Mondale warned, "The Queen of England, where state religion is established, is called Defender of the Faith. But the President of the United States is the defender of the Constitution—which defends all faiths."

Mondale, who later the same day delivered portions of the B'nai B'rith speech to the annual meeting of the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., also declared: "I don't doubt Mr. Reagan's faith, his patriotism, and his family values. And I call on him and his supporters to accept and respect mine."

He said he spoke to the issue of religion only reluctantly. "What I am doing here today is something that, in 25 years of public life, I never thought I would do: I have never before had to defend my religious faith in a political campaign. I have never thought it proper for political leaders to use religion for partisan advantage by advertising their own faith, and questioning their opponent's. But the issue must be joined."

Grass Looks Greener
For Pastor Turned Chaplain

By Marv Knox

HAMMOND, La. (BP)—Ministers who love golf have been known to joke about trading their pulpits for putting greens.

Not Doug Cheatham. He's serious as a touring pro working the back nine. And next January he'll trade the pastorate of Hammond's Woodland Park Baptist Church for the Professional Golfer's Association tour.

Cheatham's not turning pro—he's turning chaplain and will work in cooperation with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board as a volunteer chaplain to the PGA tour community.

Cheatham's dream was sparked by a conference on the use of recreation and sports as tools for evangelism. "I met a number of people who had been involved in ministry to professional athletes," he recalls. "I sensed God could combine my love for both ministry and golf to provide a pleasurable, challenging, innovative approach to ministry."

He recognizes many pro golfers "have been hustled in the name of religion," and has vowed not to similarly violate the golfers' individuality and personal dignity.

Consequently, he'll build his ministry to the pros as time and relationships permit, dealing with them in one-on-one situations which run the gamut from victory to trauma.

Other ministries to the professional golf community will be more tangible.

He hopes to involve local churches in day-care for the golfers' children so their wives can have free time. Another idea is to help churches provide transportation for caddies, many of whom have little money and no means of getting from their hotels to the golf course.

Cheatham also intends to promote the tour Bible study and to provide spiritual-development opportunities for caddies.

But Cheatham's ministry will extend beyond people directly affiliated with the tour.

He has plans to utilize Christian pro golfers in local clinics which will provide golf tips with evangelistic messages. The idea is to appeal to people in the community who will come hear a golfer but won't go to church.

Such an event should have two purposes, he thinks. First, Christian golfers in a community can get together to form a network in which they can share their common love for Christ and enjoyment of golf. Second, these people can be put in contact with non-Christian golfers who have been exposed to Christianity. He hopes the Christians will continue in ministry to their non-Christian counterparts.

He hopes to help continue that contact by providing the local groups with videotaped golfing tips/evangelistic testimonies which can be used in local meetings throughout the year.

Cheatham has other plans for ministry and admits they all are still tentative. He intends to spend early months on the tour getting familiar with people and procedures. Then later he'll try to implement the various ministries as they are applicable.

And as he joins the tour, he hopes to provide a ministry that is "attractive, compelling, done in good taste and there when it's needed."

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(Photo available upon request from Louisiana Baptist Message.)



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