

RELIGION

Goodwill ship docks at Portland



How It All Began

'Holidays coming soon. Why don't we go to Mexico?' 'Great idea!' responded the little group of American college students enthusiastically.

Their dreams, however, were not of sun-drenched beaches or exotic foods. Their interest was people. God and people. They had made an exciting discovery: how to know God in a deeply personal way. This was too good to keep to themselves. They wanted to tell everyone. Mexico was close.

Why not start there?

They did. Every vacation time. Other students joined them. Soon they branched out to Europe as well. No longer limiting their time to holidays, many began devoting a year or two to traveling and sharing their faith.

Everywhere the pattern was similar. They would sell or give away literature and simply talk with people: the mother in a park with her children, the friendly shop owner, the couple waiting for a bus, anyone who had time for a chat.

A ship?

When their leader, George Verwer (then in his midtwenties), came up with the idea of a ship, his friends thought it was crazy.

'A ship? What would you do with a ship? You don't know the first thing about ships or sailing.'

George's response was to point to a map, saying, 'Look at how much of the world's population lives in port cities. We could transport our people and books to them with a ship and while we're at sea, our people could be studying together.'

Eventually he convinced enough people, and the search was on for a



The goodwill ship Logos II, currently visiting the Portland waterfront, made it's maiden voyage in 1971. (See related story and photo, front page, Metro section.)

suitable ship. Not just any ship. Their ship had to be ocean-going and able to store enough food and water for long voyages. It had to contain space for a lecture hall, a book exhibition and storage of vehicles for inland travel. It had to accommodate at least 120 people. Above all, the price had to be right because the young people possessed very little money.

Almost ideal

Numerous ships were visited and dismissed as unsuitable. One of them was the Danish ship, Umanak. In spite of the rejection, its name popped up again and again. The ship seemed ideal in every way except one. It was designed for a cold climate and lacked the air-conditioning so important for life in hotter climates where much of the world's population live.

After much thought, some engineers worked out a way to adapt the ventilation system for cooling. In September, 1970, negotiations were started to purchase the Umanak. The cost was (\$)70,500 pounds.

In order to buy the ship, the young people needed to find (\$)70,500 within one month - or lose their down-payment of (\$)7000. The Logos moored off Calcutta, India.

They had only (\$)45,000 on hand from contributions for the project. A scary situation for a group of young people without financial resources. They could only pray hard that God would help them.

He did. Within one month they received donations for just the amount needed. On October 15, 1970, the ship became officially theirs. She was christened Logos ('Word' in Greek) and was towed off to Holland for a necessary overhaul and alterations.

Professional seamen and volunteers with a variety of skills came from many parts of the world to roll up their sleeves and plunge into the dirty, greasy job of preparing the ship for action. They did it all out of love for God;

they received no pay whatever. Other people donated special equipment or supplies needed for the ship and its crew.

First voyage

Finally, in February, 1971, Logos made the first voyage under her own steam as she sailed from Rotterdam to London. Visitors and friends who had heard about the ship streamed on board to see it. The ship's company was kept busy giving tours or loading supplies for the long voyage ahead of them.

A week later Logos set sail for India, calling in at Logos, Nigeria and Cape Town, South Africa, en route. In each port a small book exhibition was set up on deck under an awning and the public was invited aboard to buy books and attend meetings.

India at last!

The ship's company had hoped that many people would be interested enough to visit the ship, but they had a few secret doubts. To their amazement, crowds began flocking to the ship. As a matter of fact, in India so many people came that the ship's crew had to come up with ways to control the crowd. Local people were curious about the ship and hungry for the literature which could be purchased in the book exhibition.

After India came Indonesia. In the next seventeen years Logos visited over one hundred countries. In 1972 she visited Bangladesh just after that country was created. In 1974 she sailed into war-torn Vietnam shortly before the collapse of Saigon. In 1981 she was able to enter China, although under considerable restriction. In 1982, in the midst of the Lebanon/Israel conflict, a cease-fire stopped the fighting for a couple of weeks, just long enough for a Logos visit.

Everywhere the story was the same. People were eager to obtain literature and to talk with the international crew and staff of this unusual ship.

Tate to replace Ralph Reed

Republican Randy Tate, who had strong support from Christian conservatives during the lone term he represented Washington state's 9th Congressional District in Congress, is under consideration to head the Christian Coalition, a former colleague said Thursday.

"It's true, he is being considered," said Rep. Jennifer Dunn, R-Wash., a member of the GOP leadership in the House. "It's been circulating around the Republican Conference."

Tate, who received a 100 percent rating from the Christian Coalition during his two years in Congress, did not return phone calls seeking comment.

One published report Thursday said Tate was one of at least two candidates a special search committee was reviewing to replace the

coalition's current director, Ralph Reed.

Art Rhodes, chief of staff to Rep. Mike Parker, R-Miss., was also under consideration, reported Roll Call, a Capitol Hill newspaper.

Parker is a former Democrat who switched parties shortly after Republicans took control of the House in 1994. His most recent rating from the coalition was 86.

The coalition, which grew out of religious broadcaster Pat Robertson's failed 1988 presidential campaign, has emerged as the major force in conservative politics with 1.8 million members and more than 1,900 chapters.

In some states, including Washington, the coalition has virtually taken over the Republican Party from the inside.

On the national level, GOP presidential candidates regularly court the coalition and its members.

The coalition's most potent weapon is the millions of voter guides handed out just before elections.

Under Ralph Reed, the Christian Coalition has become a lobby force to be reckoned with on Capitol Hill, focusing on everything from the balanced budget amendment and tax relief to a ban on so-called partial-birth abortions and the barring of homosexual marriages.

Reed, who became a highly visible spokesman for religious conservatives, recently announced he was resigning effective Sept. 1 to form a political consulting firm.

Tate got his start in politics as a Robertson delegate to the 1988 Republican convention, and Dunn said

he is well known to Robertson.

"He was there from the beginning," Dunn said. "I would expect Robertson to pick someone he could work with."

While Dunn said she hasn't spoken directly with Tate about the possibility of replacing Reed, she has spoken to some of his closest advisers.

"Randy Tate is very highly regarded and has a very credible reputation with House members," Dunn said. "I think he would be great. He is energetic, positive, very articulate and he knows the process."

Tate has been weighing his future since losing his bid for reelection last year.

He has not ruled out challenging the man who beat him, Democrat Adam Smith, in 1998.

Prayer in public schools proposal

Religious Freedom Amendment introduced in Congress

Religious conservatives in Congress on Thursday introduced a "religious freedom" amendment to the Constitution that would explicitly allow prayer in public schools, religious symbols on government property and tax dollars for private religious schools.

Critics immediately denounced it as unnecessary, saying the First Amendment already protects religious expression.

The amendment was introduced by Rep. Ernest Istook, R-Okla., and had 116 co-sponsors, including many House Republican leaders.

Istook said the leaders promised him a vote on the floor this fall.

To be approved, such an amendment would require a two-thirds

vote of each house and acceptance by three-fourths of the states.

The revised language reads: "To secure the people's right to acknowledge God according to the dictates of conscience: The people's right to pray and to recognize their religious beliefs, heritage or traditions on public property, including schools, shall not be infringed."

The government shall not require any person to join in prayer or other religious activity, initiate or designate school prayers, discriminate against religion, or deny equal access to a benefit on account of religion."

Istook said the measure was necessary because the Supreme Court had broadened the protection of free speech in many ways but lim-

ited that speech when it involved religion.

At a counter news conference, several Democrats spoke heatedly against the measure, saying it would, among other things, pit religions against each other for access to government education money.

Rep. Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., said: "How can people who call themselves conservatives, people who don't trust government to regulate the railroads or deadly weapons, trust the government to meddle in the religious education of our children?"

He added that the sponsors were really only seeking positive ratings in the Christian Coalition voter guides.

The Christian Legal Society, a

national association of evangelical lawyers that would ordinarily applaud such an amendment, withheld its support on Thursday.

Steve McFarland, general counsel of the group, said the reference to "the people's right," could be misconstrued to mean a legislature, rather than individuals, and imply the involvement of government.

This language was acceptable to the Southern Baptist Convention and the National Evangelical Association, two important groups that had withheld their support from the earlier versions.

McFarland said his group also wanted lawmakers to wait for two Supreme Court rulings on religious freedom to see what type of amendment might be needed.

'Matrons Of Motivation'

Awards Dinner

Honoree-Mrs. Fannie Lee Smith
Guest Speaker-Evangelist Mary Green;

Theme:

"Faith of Our Mothers..."
Scripture Text: Proverbs 31:10-31

Sunday 4-7 PM
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