

## Carter

continued from page 9

**KW:** Harriet Pakula Teweles asks: Is there a personal moral tension between being a good Christian and being a good Commander of a nuclear submarine?

How can an officer—especially one of great faith—reconcile being asked to lead troops into battle with the Fifth Commandment: Thou Shalt Not Kill?

**JC:** The most important Bible teaching that I remembered when I was in the Navy and when I was Commander-in-Chief, was that we worshipped The Prince of Peace. Jesus Christ is The Prince of Peace. So, I considered myself, as a submarine officer, as helping to preserve the peace. And I felt the same way when I was president. As a matter of fact, although we had some terrible challenges and temptations when I was in office, we never dropped a bomb... we never launched a missile... and we never fired a bullet. I think that one of the main requirements for a strong military, like a strong submarine force, is to prevent war, not to cause war.

**KW:** Larry Greenberg says: It seems like we are at a point now where books are moving from bound paper to digital media. How will this impact the study and reverence for the Bible?

**JC:** You can already download any of the religious texts onto electronic mechanisms like a Kindle. But I think many people prefer to hold a book in their hands. We recently gave my daughter Amy a new electronic device, but since she used to work in a library, she still insists on reading exclusively from books. I take my Bible with me to church every Sunday to teach the Bible lesson. I do that whenever I'm in Plains, oh, about 35 to 40 times a year. So, I think that for many people, particularly when reading

Holy Scriptures, a Bible you can hold in your hands is most appropriate.

**KW:** I still prefer the touch of paper. I still haven't made the jump to reading books electronically.

**JC:** [Chuckles] I can understand that.

**KW:** Troy John asks: Do you see any parallels between the lead-up to the 1980 Presidential Election and the 2012 campaign?

**JC:** Not really. Back in those days, we didn't have massive sums of money pouring in. We never ran any negative advertisements. I always referred to President Ford during the 1976 campaign as "my distinguished opponent." That was all. And I behaved the same way as an incumbent, when Ronald Reagan ran against me in 1980. And the amount of money we raised against each other from special interest groups and from lobbyists for the general election was zero. Neither President Ford, nor Governor Reagan nor I ever raised a single dollar from them to run against each other in the general election. Sadly, all of that has changed. What this massive infusion of more money into the political campaign has caused is a mammoth increase in negative ads. That's a tragedy, in my opinion, and a step backwards for the political system of our country.

**KW:** Troy also says that he read in the Wall Street Journal that not since Herbert Hoover has a party out of power had such an opportunity to run against everything that troubles the American family—prices, interest rates, unemployment, taxes, fear of the future, etcetera. Do you think the Republican Party will employ that strategy against an Obama administration which



President Jimmy Carter in Ghana

seems vulnerable in terms of both foreign and domestic policy?

**JC:** Well, I'm not a political strategist, and I'm certainly not one for the Republican Party. [Chuckles] I will say that any incumbent president has to run on his record, and President Obama has had a very limited number of accomplishments so far. But he's been handicapped by the lack of any cooperation on the part of the Republicans who serve in the House and Senate. So, Congress has been an obstacle to President Obama. I think the American people will be able to ascertain as the election approaches who is to blame for the stalemate and who deserves credit for the best proposals for the future.

**KW:** Lisa Loving asks: How should we as Americans and as voters work to overcome the sometimes hateful tone of our politics today?

**JC:** Unfortunately, every American citizen takes the same position as you do, Lisa, that we don't like negative advertisements. But they work! And, as you see, many a candidate has prevailed by tearing down the reputation of an opponent in a more advantageous position. I think that the best approach would be if the American people ever insist that we cut down on the massive amounts of money that moves into the campaigns from special interest groups, and if we resist publicly by saying "No more negative advertisements that destroy the reputations of one's opponents." In the meantime, just don't pay any attention to negative ads, if you can avoid them, and try to focus on the issues.

**KW:** Tracy Ertl, Publisher of TitleTown Publishing, says: I love Jimmy Carter! I was barely a teen when you took office. You were truly the first President that I recognized as such with any true understanding. Mr. President, what is something that every God-believing American could do this year to bring more stability and safety to the youth of the country?

**JC:** I think all of us could insist on preserving the truth and preserving the peace.

We could insist that political candidates tell the truth about controversial issues. And secondly, we should be sure to encourage our political leaders, after they're elected, to preserve the peace. My latest book, of course, is about the Bible. I worship as a Christian. I worship The Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ. He's not The Prince of War. That's why it really aggrieves me when I sometimes see fellow believers lobbying to start a war over something minimal when the peaceful approach might be the best. I was lucky enough to get through four years in office under very trying circumstances.

**'Just don't pay any attention to negative ads, if you can avoid them, and try to focus on the issues'**

We never dropped a bomb, we never launched a missile, and we never fired a bullet in anger. And we not only resolved our problems peacefully, but we promoted peace between adversarial nations. For instance, Egypt and Israel had been at war four times in the quarter-century before I became president, and I was able to negotiate a peace treaty between them that has held up for over 33 years. So, I think peace and telling the truth are the keys.

**KW:** Reverend Florine Thompson asks: Based on your Biblical worldview, should the US support Israel, militarily, at any cost?

**JC:** I tried to eliminate the need for Israel to strike out, militarily, by removing its major threat and attacker, and that was Egypt. I've written a few books on the subject. There's no doubt that the best way to resolve Israel's problems is to negotiate peace between Israel and its immediate neighbors, particularly the Palestinians. And that's something that's not going to be achieved, in my opinion, without the strong involvement of the American president. I hope that President Obama, during his second term, will insist upon a peaceful resolution of the issues that divide the Israelis from their neighbors, and bring about a two-state solution with the '67 borders as modified by a common agreement that would let the Palestinians and the Israelis and the Jor-

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