Showtime — PETERS What's Happening

Mighty Invaders plan tribute to reggae artist Bob Marley

WASHINGTON

I & I Productions announces its second annual "Tribute to Bob Marley," to celebrate his birthday, Sunday, February 5, from 6 p.m. to 2 a.m. at Kilimanjaro's Heritage Hall, 1724 California Street, NW.

Bob Marley, reggae artist, rasta messenger, and political activist, died of cancer at the age of 36 on May 11, 1981 at the height of a successful recording career which spanned 20 years and 20 million records.

The "Tribute to Bob Marley" features a three-part cultural and musical program which begins with tributes expressed through dance, poetry, videos of his performances, reasoning, and Nyabinghi drumming.

Part two features a show performed by Baltimore's Reggae Band The Mighty Invaders, and a Reggae dance follows.

The first Tribute to Bob Marley was organized in 1983 and brought together three major elements of Washington's Black community — American born Blacks, African born Blacks, and Caribbean Blacks — in the spirit of Bob's vision.

How good and pleasant it be, before God and Man, to see the unification of all Africans..." (Africa Unite, 1980). Tribute organizer, Dera Tompkins noted, "Bob Marley was one of our most outstanding political and cultural heroes and we want to celebrate his life in a way that would reflect his philosophy of unity, peace and one love. We hope that in some small way we are continuing Bob's work by reaching all peoples of the community with his positive messages."

For more information, call 232-2552 or 328-3838.

THE MIGHTY INVADERS — Trevor, Kings, Yvonne, Colly and Freshly

Robert Nesta Marley, also known as Tuff Gong and Berhane Selassie (Light of the Holy Trinity), was born in Rhoden Hall, St. Ann, Jamaica, February 6, 1945. At age 8, Bob and family moved to Kingston where he received his "roots" education living in the ghetto areas, the last being Trenchtown. He persued a trade in welding but realizing his potential in music, Bob started singing at age 17.

In the following 20 years, Marley rose from neighborhood struggler to an international superstar whose name is known and respected on every continent. He was singlehandedly responsible for popularizing Reggae music internationally and sold over 20 million records worldwide. His music is a declaration of the tribulations brought upon the people by the system or "Babylon." Central to Marley's philosophy is the worldwide unity of Black people. A devoted member of the Rastafari faith, Bob viewed Africa as the "Zion" to which all Blacks should look to for inspiration and final redemption. The twin tenets of his lyrics were love and revolution — spiritually, but also in the form of armed struggle when necessary — "It takes a revolution to make a solution." "So arm in arm with arms we will fight this little struggle because it's the only way to overcome our little trouble."

His words and music came to "mash down" Babylon and lift the spirits of Africa's scattered children and turn their heads and hearts homeward. Bob's most urgent message to the people of the world is a call to action: "Wake Up and Live," "Get Up, Stand Up, Stand Up for Your Rights and Never Give Up the Fight."

In Africa, Bob is remembered as a warrior singing songs of resistance. In Jamaica, he is Jah's messenger, the Mighty Dread, Soul Rebel, and Natural Mystic.

Vanita Production has new TV show

URBAN SCENE/TV MAGAZINE, a fast-paced entertainment-oriented program dealing with contemporary issues of Urban America will debut on Saturday, Feb. 4. Local television personality DeWayne Wickham will anchor the show. Jean Reis of WXYV-103 and Pia Winters Jordan, formerly seen on Reel to Reel, will serve as correspondents for the show.

According to Mr. Wickham, executive producer, the program, will rely upon digital effects, graphics and video tapes to appeal to an entertainment-oriented audience. The program will resemble a news magazine format and will feature a lead story feature along with segments on Arts and Culture and Lifestyles.

Angela Gibson, producer, has included in the debut program segments on manhood, women's body sharing, women's body building, and blacks in western art.

URBAN SCENE from (L) Pia Winters Jordan, DeWayne Wickham, and Jean Ross.

URBAN SCENE will air on WBAL-TV, Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. and will be produced by VANITA Productions, a division of VANITA Enterprises, Inc. VANITA Productions is the mid-Atlantic area's largest minority-owned television production company.

Special program on spirituals

WASHINGTON

"Black American Choral Song: The Evolution of the Spiritual," a special program to mark Black History Month, will feature two concerts and a colloquium with master classes at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History on February 3 to 4.

The events organized by the Program in Black American Culture, a part of the museum's Department of Public Programs, will illustrate the evolution of the spiritual from styles of black congregational singing, with its echoes of traditional African choral song, to compositions reflecting the structured influences of European choral music.

All events are free and open to the public. They will take place in Carmichael Auditorium, located on the museum's first floor. A packet of information will be given to those who register by calling 357-4176.

Each of the concerts, which begin at 8 p.m., will offer songs in a traditional song service conducted by song leaders of the Mt. Early Baptist Church and the Antioch Baptist Church, both in Albany, Ga. and in more formally arranged spirituals by the Morgan State University Choir, directed by Nathan Carter. The choir completed a European tour and recording sessions with the London Symphony Orchestra and the Helsinki Philharmonic.

The colloquim opens on Friday at 3:30 p.m. with a master class on spirituals led by composer-arranger Eva Jessye. It continues a session entitled "Black American Choral Song: The Fold Tradition."

Presentations include "The Spiritual: A Restatement of African Patterns" by Sterling Stuckey, professor of history at Northwestern University: "The Song and the Singing: The Expression of Communal Power" by Bernice Johnson Reagon, director of the program in black American culture, and "On Song Worship" by Sarah Drakes and Helen Lee, song leaders from Albany, Ga.

The Saturday afternoon session, "Black American Choral Song: The Spiritual Arranged for Concert Performance," commences at 1:30 p.m. It offers "Survey of Black American Composers and Arrangers" by Evelyn Davidson White, professor of music at Howard University; "Style, Practice, and Repertorie: A Choir Director's Perspective" by Carter and "Field Collector, Arranger, Composer: A Case Study of Willis Laurence James" by Rebecca T. Cureau, associate professor of music at Southern University. The closing session of the colloquium will be a master class led by composer-choir director William L. Dawson.

Eva Jessye is known for her expertise in black American speech, and customs, combined with her outstanding musical abilities. She served as choral director for the original production of George Gershwin's "Porgy and Bess" (1935) and developed the Eva Jessye Choir, known internationally for its spiritual repertoire and its fidelity to the black American folk idiom. Of her many contributions to 20th-century American music, her work with spirituals is considered pre-eminent.

William Dawson organized the School of Music at Tuskegee Institute in 1931. Under his direction from 1931 to 1955, the Tuskegee Choir gained an international reputation for excellence in performance and in its repertoire of spirituals. Its national tours included concerts at Carnegie Hall in New York, the Academy of Music in Philadelphia and Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C. In 1956, under the aegis of a State Department program to share American music with other nations, Dawson toured Spain, teaching spirituals to various choral groups, among them the famous Orfeon Donostiarra of San Sebastian, and leading the groups in concerts of the works.

BOB MATTHEWS—Night Scene Seen

We have always been a firm believer in many local jazz artists, and now recognition is at hand for one of the stalwarts.

Charlie Covington, who has been called one of the best pianists to come out of Baltimore, has been named artist-in-residence at Harborplace for three weeks beginning February 16.

Last year, the Grubb brothers held down this slot, when they held daily seminars plus playing several free concerts.

This year, Charlie will headline a series of six free concerts on Friday and Wednesday evenings in the Great Hall of the Light Street pavilion, 6:30 - 8:30.

In addition to the evening sets, Charlie will host a series of lunchtime lecture demonstration on Feb. 16, 20, 23, 28, and March 1 and 5.

For your future planning, Charlie will share the stage on March 2 with Dorothy Donegan and bassist Keeter Betts. Many other artists will appear during the residence period, which ends on Tuesday, March 6, coinciding with the Mardi Gras.

Charles Covington

We're happy for Charles, and know you are too.

* * *

This is the week that the Left Bank Jazz Society returns with Herbie Mann as the kickoff artist.

Herbie will have with him, David (Fathead) Newman on tenor sax; O'Donel Levy, guitar; Frank Grazis, bass, and Scott Teaker, piano.

Over in the corner, we will be pushing for Herbie to play a sax, since it is sometimes forgotten that he excels on that instrument as well as on flute.

Powers-that-be indicate that Chef Willis will be on hand in the kitchen, and Mrs. Gladys is expected to be present with those cakes and pies. And we hereby reserve our slice of apple pie.

* * *

Understand that Lady Rebecca is scheduling a benefit for the fire victims of the Quantico Ave. disaster. Haven't been able to pin down the exact time and place, but would suspect that during her regular gig at the Woodstock on Friday evenings, donations will be accepted.

Becky is sympathetic to the victims, since she was the victim of a fire tragedy just a couple of years ago or so.

* * *

Forgot to mention last week that Slappy White will be on the bill with Redd Foxx when the big two-day event takes place at the Towson Center on the Towson State Univ. campus.

A lot of people don't realize that Redd and Slappy were once a team—doing their comedy bits together for many years. And, the music for the set will be provided by Miss Damita Jo.

Haven't heard whether or not Carlos Johnson will be accompanying her, but it could happen.

CCB celebrates History Month

The Community College of Baltimore will host a lecture series throughout February in honor of Black History Month. The public is welcome to attend free of charge. All events will be, held in either the Gaare Auditorium of CCB's Liberty Campus Nursing Building or in the Forum of the Harbor Campus, Bard Building, Lombard Street at Market Place.

The series began February 1, with a talk by Marion Banfield on "The Black Female as a Single Parent", in the Gaare Auditorium.

Charles Dugger, an English teacher with the Baltimore City Public Schools, will give a presentation on "Kwanzaa, a Black Spiritual Celebration", on Tuesday, Feb. 7, at 2 p.m. in the Forum. Created by Dr. Maulana Karenga in 1966, Kwanzaa is an African-American holiday celebrated during the last week of December. This lecture will be repeated on Wednesday, Feb. 15 at 2 p.m. in the Gaare Auditorium.

Highlighting the series will be a lecture by writer and producer Maya Angelou, on Feb. 16 at 7:30 p.m. in the Forum. Following her talk, "Citizens Celebrating Baltimore", the 118-member singing group sponsored by CCB and Mayor William Donald Schaefer, will perform in concert. The author of five best sellers, including I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings and And I Still Rise, Angelou has had articles published in a number of national publications, including "Cosmopolitan", "Redbook" and "The New York Times". In addition she has written and produced several programs for television including a five-part mini-series for CBS, Three Way Choice, and the PBS documentary, Afro-American in the Arts. Due to limited seating, tickets must be reserved in advance for this event.

John Maupin, D.D.S., Assistant Commissioner of Health in the charge of clinical services for the Baltimore City Health Department will serve as the moderator for a panel discussion on "Health Care in the Black Community" on Wednesday, Feb. 22 at 2 p.m. in the Gaare Auditorium. Panelists include Drs. Oakley Saunders and Patricia Newton.

The series will close on Wednesday, Feb. 29 at 2 p.m. in the Gaare Auditorium with a panel discussion on "Student Expectations of Predominantly Black Institutions of Higher Education". Boyce Moseley, Principal of Northwestern High School, will lead this discussion between student representatives from Douglass, Dunbar, Polytechnic, Western, Lake Clifton, Walbrook and Northwestern High Schools.

For more information about this series and to reserve tickets for the Maya Angelou talk call CCB's Office of Student Life at 396-0248.

Part of Black History Month

Shriners to pay tribute to black musicians here

WASHINGTON

Prince Hall Shriners will observe Black History Month, Sunday, February 5, at 3 o'clock p.m. in the Department of Commerce Auditorium.

Claude R. Swanson, head of Mecca Temple No. 10 has announced that Chairman Calvin "Bootsie" Harris, retired ward manager for the D.C. Department of Recreation, has arranged for 250 senior citizens to be guests of the Shriners at this event.

The program will be a "tribute of Black Musicians," and feature a musical rendition by "Touch of Class Productions," recognizing the contributions of classic Black artists such as Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Scott Joplin, Mahalia Jackson, Billie Holiday, and Aretha Franklin. Mr. Harris states that "Howard University has consented to provide video taping of this event as a community service."

This event is the first several events, highlighting the Shriner's 1984 program, geared to reach out into the Washington, D.C. community.

The senior citizens will be provided transportation to the Commerce auditorium by the D.C. Department of Recreation, as a regular senior citizens' activity, under the leadership of Ms. Juanita Moore, Director of Senior Citizens' Programs.

NATIONAL THEATRE which closed in 1982 for renovations, recently opened with the presentation of "42nd Street," a musical bursting with excitement and drama. The National Theatre is located in front of the newly - made Western Plaza.

Religion In Modern Life

Christian education urged by Baptist Congress

By Eddie King
AFRO Staff Writer

For nearly 50 years, the building has sat on the corner of Mosher and McCulloh St. For nearly 50 years it has served as a multi-purpose center for thousands of Maryland Baptist associates.

Today, that same building still stands, and it is the home of the Baptist Congress of Christian Education, an auxiliary to the United Baptist Missionary Convention of Maryland.

Headed by Rev. Lester Hamrick, associate minister at New Antioch Baptist Church, the Congress of Christian Education has become one of the most influential religious educational resources in the state.

The large three-story brick building at 1494 McCulloh St. holds several classrooms in which the work of the Congress is done.

The Baptist Congress of Christian Education is the teaching part of the Baptist Missionary Convention, Inc. It offers training to every member of the Convention who is interested in being active in the church.

There are courses offered in lay-leaders training and other areas of church involvement. How to be a good missionary or how to teach Sunday School are examples of some classes.

Each semester load carries about six instructors and about 30 students.

The Congress Staff goes to participating churches and set up and devise educational programs for the churches whether they be in Sunday School or some other aspect.

Some 46 Baltimore churches use the services offered by the Congress.

"We have a teaching ministry, a fellowship that allows everybody to learn in every aspect of the church. It is our goal to bring together every church under an umbrella and have us strive together for a better knowledge of the Bible," declared Rev. Hamrick.

37 staff members compose the staff of the Congress, each serving in a variety of capacities.

An estimated 6.5 million people are a part of the national United Missionary Convention, Inc. and the Congress caters to the approximately 10-15 thousand Maryland Baptists, a part of the Missionary Convention.

The site for the Congress is also the holding place for the Women's Auxiliary of the Convention, the Virginia Seminary School of Religion extension and the gathering place for quarterly meeting of the Maryland executives.

About 75 churches are a part of the Baltimore chapter of the Convention including Faith, City Temple, Fountain, Concord and New Antioch Baptist Churches in Baltimore City.

The Baptist Congress of Christian Education has become most noted for its Annual Church-wide Institute in which a series of one-week classes are offered. Close to 1500 attend the annually held learning festivity.

"We are teaching a lot of churches," said Rev. Hamrick, "and each time we see them grow. Every member of the church ought to be educated in how to work in the church. We just want to make sure we're here to teach them when they're ready."

The Baptist Congress of Christian Education has catered its services to thousands in this site for nearly 50 years. It is the headquarters for the Maryland chapter of the United Baptist Missionary Convention and auxiliaries located at Mosher and McCulloh Sts.

How to get church news in the AFRO

For coverage of religious events and/or placement of announcements in Metro Church Briefs, write to Eddie King, AFRO-AMERICAN Newspapers, 628 N. Eutaw St., 21201 or call 728-6200, Ext. 275 at least two weeks in advance of the event.

Metro Church Briefs

Martins West

It's the Annual Awards Fellowship Banquet sponsored by The Baptist Congress of Christian Education at Martins West tonight, Fri., Feb. 3 at 6:30 p.m. Subscriptions are $20. For further info., call 539-0537.

New Bethel Christian Community

New Bethel Christian Community Church, 3000 Dorchester Rd., will celebrate the 2nd Anniversary of its assistant pastor tonight at 7:30 p.m. featuring guest choirs and soloists. Rev. Mary Antoinette Phillips is the honoree for this occasion. Rev. Michael Thomas of Adams Chapel will be the speaker.

Bethel A.M.E.

Black History Month will be observed at Bethel A.M.E. Church in Cambridge, Md., 621 Pine St. on Sun., Feb. 5 at 3:30 p.m. Guest speaker will be Mrs. Gloria Richardson, civil rights leader and activist. For further info., call 228-8725.

Shiloh Christian Community

The 21st Anniversary of the Octettes will be celebrated on Sun., Feb. 5 at 3:30 p.m. at Shiloh Christian Community Church, 2820 W. Lombard St. The speaker for the occasion will be Rev. Dr. Violet Fisher.

Harlem Park Community Baptist

Harlem Park Community Baptist Church, 612 N. Gilmore St., will host gospel music extravaganza on Sun., Feb. 5 at 6 p.m. Admission is $2. Featured will be The Mighty Gospelaires, M's Mary Francis Polk and Her Gospel All Stars and The Welcome Travelers and others. For further info. call 366-0463.

Bethel A.M.E.

Mon., Feb. 6 is the last day for class registration in the Bible Institute of Bethel A.M.E. Church. Classes are $5 each with the exception of Old and New Testament which are free. For further info. call Dr. Patricia Outlaw at 523-4273.

New Rehoboth Baptist

Shelly Stokes in concert at New Rehoboth Baptist Church, 2504 N. Hilton St., on Fri., Feb. 10. The concert is sponsored by the Church Training Auxiliary to the Mt. Bethel Association.

City Temple Baptist

The Senior Usher Board of City Temple Baptist Church, Eutaw Place and Dolphin St., invites you to spend an evening with them "Watching The Parade of States" on Sun., Feb. 12 at 5 p.m. Special guest will be Rev. Quay Rich, pastor of Grace Baptist Church.

Mt. Calvary Baptist

It's the musical program of 1984 at the Mt. Calvary Freewill Baptist Church, 1607 E. Oliver St., featuring the Mass Choir of New Antioch Baptist Church, Voices of Simmons, Truetone Gospel Singers, Rev. Samuel Banks, Harriet Mooring, The Armstrong Singers, Johnson Brothers, Gale Delotch of Wash., D.C. and many others. The service will begin at 6: p.m. Admission is free.

First English Lutheran

A Valentine concert by His Harvesters, a men's gospel quartet from Mountain Christian Church in Harford County, will be sponsored by the Lutheran Hospital Auxiliary for the benefit of the Lutheran Hospital on Sun., Feb. 12 at 3:30 p.m. at First English Lutheran Church, 30th and Charles St. Donation is $5. For further info, call 767-7011.

Mt. St. Mary's

In conjunction with Black History Month, Mount Saint Mary's College will hold a special campus celebration on Sun., Feb. 12 at 7 p.m. with a Black History Mass held in the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception. Mt. St. Mary's is in Emmitsburg, Md. For further info. call 447-6122, Ext. 384.

Aberdeen Post Theatre

Aberdeen Proving Ground's Equal Opportunity Office will sponsor their eleventh annual "Gospel" program at the Aberdeen Proving Ground Post Theatre. This year's program will host more than 12 groups which will include Katie Jackson, Gospel Ambassadors, AG Publication Center Gospel Choir of Middle River, the Celestial Gospel Singers of Havre de Grace and the Mt. Nebo Gospel Choir from Upper Marlboro.

St. John A.M.E.

Dr. Russ Johnson, president of the Black United Fund and formerly Professor of Communication at Antioch, Morgan and Howard Universities, will deliver his trial sermon at St. John A.M.E. Church, 810 N. Carrollton Ave. on Sun., Feb. 19 at 11: a.m.

Miracle Deliverance Center

There will be a mid-winter Gospel extravaganza on Feb. 19, 3 p.m. at the Miracle Deliverance Center, 3108 Ellamont St., given by Doris McNeil featuring many groups.

Martin L. King Community

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Church Cathedral Building Fund Committee will present the Morgan State University Concert Choir in its 1984 Columbia performance on Sun., March 4 at 4 p.m. in the Hammond School Auditorium, Rt. 32. Donations will be $5. For further info. call 653-2943.

Rosa Parks Catholic School

The Liberty Heights, Park Heights and Windsor Ave. Campuses of the Rosa Parks Catholic School Cluster will be conducting registration for the lower schools through March 6-16. For more info. call Mrs. Nooney at 664-9433.

Grace United Methodist

The Rainbow Blitz is coming to Baltimore on Friday, Mar. 9 and Sat., Mar. 10, with a national complete youth ministry workshop featuring J. David Stone and a team of national youth leaders representing Protestant and Catholic youth ministry. It will be held at Grace United Methodist Church, 5407 N. Charles St.

Ray of Hope Baptist

The Library Committee of the Ray of Hope Baptist Church, 3000 Parkside Drive, will present an evening of traditional and contemporary songs of praise, featuring the Vocal Choir and Gospel Choir of Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church. The program begins at 7:30 p.m.

The Nurses Unit of Ray of Hope will celebrate their annual day at 5 p.m. on Sun., Feb. 5. Rev. Joseph Lewis, pastor of St. John Baptist Church of Turner Station will be the guest speaker.

Fellowship Church of Christ

The Gospel Music Workshop of America (Maryland Chapter) will host its third meeting scheduled for Mon., Feb. 6 at Fellowship Church of Christ, 1725 Division St., at 8 p.m. sharp. The Rev. Evora Robinson, chairlady, is urging all singers, musicians, directors and directresses to please be present.

Howard Johnson

An evening of Christian fellowship at The Howard Johnson Restaurant on Route 40 at Ingleside Ave. on Mon., Feb. 13 at 6:30 p.m. The speaker will be Dorothea Davies. The event is sponsored by The Aglow Fellowship-West Baltimore Evening Chapter. For further info. call 945-3038.

Rev. Al Green in revival

Rev. Al Green was once a demanded sex symbol. He was "cool" and he had style and grace and pizzazz. He had a voice that some say could melt a woman right down to her beginnings.

The Rev. Al declares he still is cool, and he still has style and grace and pizzazz, only it's channeled in a different direction.

In these times, the Rev. is crooning for the Lord. People still faint, and they still shout and scream at his every note, but this time it's because something is felt deep down inside—the Holy Ghost let's say.

Rev. Al Greene will be in a four-night revival in Baltimore beginning this Sun., Feb. 5 at the Calvert Educational Center, 200 E. North Ave. Eventhough this is a preaching revival, there is some indication that one or two of his gospel hits may be sung. Admission is free.

As a concert artist, his rock-gospel presentation could very easily fit in with Walter and Edwin Hawkins or André Crouch, but his preaching levels off in the same category as some of the best as does his singing.

Apparently, Rev. Green's ministry is even more important to him than his recording career that made him famous. He risked everything and gave up singing soul and oriented his music towards contemporary gospel.

In the latter part of his soul career, some said that one could almost tell he was becoming more involved with God. No matter where he was performing on a Saturday night, he'd managed to fly back to his hometown, Memphis, for Sunday morning service.

Appearing with Rev. Green at Calvert will be the King Choral Ensemble, Southern Baptist Youth Choir and the Recording Kings.

Rev. Al Green

Evang. Caesar in concert

By Eddie King
AFRO Staff Writer

It was just last June that she was kicking her heels around town talking about the man she loved, the man God had sent in her life.

On Sun., Feb. 12, she will be back in Baltimore, but this time she'll be the Mrs. Shirley Caesar-Williams, married to Bishop Harold R. Williams formerly of Baltimore.

Evangelist Caesar will be in full concert at Bethel A.M.E. Church, 1900 Druid Hill Ave. at 3 p.m. belting out some of her greatest hits. Rumors say that her latest album, "Jesus" has been nominated for a Grammy Award.

So far in her career, she has been awarded three gold records demonstrating a selling power comparable to any pop artists. Ebony Magazine deemed her as the "Best Female Gospel Singer."

She is the first black female gospel singer, and to this day still is, to win a Grammy.

Hailing from Durham, N.C., Evang. Caesar began her career as a member of the Charity Singers in Durham, later joined the Caravans and finally ventured out into a solo career— a career that has netted her more awards and citations than any other living female gospel performer.

Evang. Shirley Caesar

Also appearing on the program will be soloist Bonita Byrd of Bibleway Freewill Baptist Church. The program will be hosted by The John R. Bryant Inspirational Choir. "Aunt" Pauline Wells Lewis will be the M.C. for the program.

Ticket donations are $6 in advance and can be purchased at usual ticket outlets including the church. For further info. call 523-4273.

Prayer key to Syria trip

By David E. Anderson

When presidential candidate Jesse Jackson went to Damascus in a successful effort to free a U.S. airman held by Syria, he did not travel alone but as part of a 15-member delegation, mostly religious leaders, from around the nation.

While there was no doubt Jackson garnered the headlines and was de facto leader of the delegation, the group, which described its journey as a "mission of faith," was actually headed by the Rev. William Howard a former president of the National Council of Churches.

What did the trip mean to some of those others not running for president?

Prayer seemed to be central.

For Thelma Adair, a Presbyterian laywomen and former moderator of the United Presbyterian Church, the trip showed that "we as persons and as religious leaders do not need to be afraid to take the initiative to witness in the world on the basis of belief."

"We did not put our faith under a bushel," she said. "It was the tool we had and used the tool."

The members of the ecumenical delegation "believed enough in the energy created by the power of intercessory prayer that miracles could happen."

"We did nothing without authenticating ourselves as religious leaders," she added. "there was always prayer."

Another religious leader on the trip, a Unitarian Universalist minister, the Rev. Jack Mendelsohn, also stressed the prayerful aspects of the trip.

"Jesse Jackson does a lot of praying on these missions," Mendelsohn said. "That is, we do a lot of standing around and joining hands."

"We did it with the Foreign Mendelsohn also noted that the interreligious character of the group, including minister Louis Farrakahn, U.S. leader of the Nation of Islam, was a plus in Damascus.

"Well, it is a very good thing in a setting like that to be able to have one of our group pray in Arabic, just as members of the Syrian clergy prayed in Arabic and English."

The Rev. Wyatt T. Walker, former chief of staff for Martin Luther King Jr., and now pastor of Canaan Baptist Church in New York, also stressed the moral dimension of the trip and its purpose.

"We did not go to Damascus to negotiate, because we had nothing to give," Walker said. "We went as an ecumenical mission to make a moral appeal for the humanitarian release" of Lt. Robert Goodman Jr.

And again, when the Syrian Foreign Minister announced that Goodman would be freed, "Jesse stood quickly and embraced the Foreign Minister and asked for a word of prayer" Howard said.

The Foreign Minister was very much a part of that prayer," Howard said, "and tears ... welled up in his eyes."

Howard also said the U.S. delegation was "not unaware of the activities of Syria in the Middle East in many different areas and incidents."

"But the Arab Leaders have their own litany of abuses, and if we pull out our litany of abuses, they pull out theirs and back and forth we go."

"We did not focus on any issue other than our humanitarian did it with a whole group of religious leaders in Syria, which is a multi-religious state. There are many branches of Christianity and several branches of Islam in Syria."