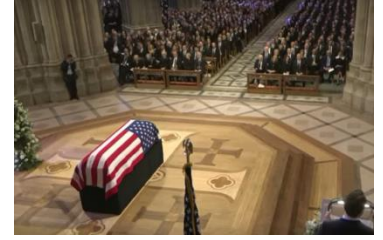


A Legacy of Humanitarian Service

On January 9, television broadcasts in our area aired the memorial service of two heroes. Both were remembered for their humanitarian service, acts of kindness, and love for their fellow man. They each were public servants with a life guided by their faith in Jesus Christ. Their ages at the time of their passing were more than a half-century apart. What they had in common was a love for the Lord. Televised memorial services were held for one-hundred-year-old Jimmy Carter and 45-year-old Greensboro police officer Michael Horan.



Carter, a farmer from small town Plains, Georgia, went from humble beginnings to become the 39th President of the United States. However, his most significant contributions to mankind were global and domestic acts of service throughout his entire earthly life. Carter was awarded the 2002 Nobel Peace Prize for his work in finding peaceful solutions to international conflicts, advancing human rights, and promoting economic and social development. Michael Horan felt a calling to protect the citizens of his community, serving as a police officer. Fellow police officers described Michael Horan as someone who always had their back, and who provided emotional support to fellow officers who interacted with the dark side of the community on a daily basis. When the need arose, he instantly volunteered to help clean-up efforts following the hurricane that devastated Western North Carolina. That is the kind of man he was. Unfortunately, his life was cut short when he rushed towards a gunman in a grocery store, leaving behind a wife and two young children. Horan saved countless lives that day – just two days before Christmas. *Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends (John 15:13).*



The pastor at Michael Horan's service reminded the thousands who gathered for the service, "this life is not all there is." Because of God's Grace, there is a life to come in Heaven. Believers will be reunited with loved ones of faith. That comforts the family and friends of those who have gone before us.

Jason Carter, grandson of Jimmy Carter, had a similar point when he said, "He may be gone, but he hasn't gone far." Jason Carter said that most of the employees of the Carter Center work globally in the poorest and most marginalized countries of the world. Jimmy Carter effectively eradicated a deadly disease with "love and respect instead of medicine," by educating and empowering neighbors to help neighbors by teaching them about safe drinking water. The results speak for themselves. The disease was caused by unhealthy drinking water, which had "existed since the beginning of mankind until Jimmy Carter." Once a disease that globally took 3.5 million lives a year, now the annual death toll is 14. Jimmy Carter's life was a testimony that the "power of America was not its military, but its values." Our values define who we are and our influence on the world.

We don't know how many days we will live on this earth. Each of us is one step from this world to eternity. Michael Horan and Jimmy Carter focused on helping and serving others. In our world today, we have a monumental challenge. It was said at Horan's service, "Our world is not what God intended for us." We are followers of Jesus, called to change our world for the better. People like Michael Horan and Jimmy Carter did it well. Now, it is our turn. If you are reading this, you still have breath and a heartbeat. How are you stepping up to help others in need? What will be your legacy when your journey is done?

What is the Point? How am I using the time and opportunity God has given to me to serve those in need?

Prayer: Dear Lord. You have given me life and the opportunity to serve my fellow man. Place me where I am needed, Lord. Let me put others before myself -- in my family, my community, and beyond. Amen.