

WXPosf JUL 1 1974

Kings Always Turned to Their Church

ATLANTA, June 30 (AP) —The name of the historic church in which Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. preached his doctrine of peaceful dissent—Ebenezer—is Hebrew for “stone of help.”

It was the church in which King's mother, Alberta King, was fatally shot today when a black gunman opened fire during services. Mrs. King, 70, was playing the organ while the choir sang the Lord's Prayer.

It was the church which her husband, known as “Daddy King,” took over as pastor 40 years ago from her father, the late Rev. A. D. Williams.

The motto of Ebenezer comes from the word that in a biblical quotation translates, “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.”

The King family has always turned to their church for comfort after tragedy and undoubtedly will do so again.

In the civil rights movement, Ebenezer Baptist Church was of strategic importance. It was there on Jan. 10, 1957, that the seeds were sown for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Many civil rights marches began at the tiny church many others ended there during the 1960s.

The younger King was copastor with his father at Ebenezer church. It was

there, the Saturday before the young civil rights leader was slain, that a meeting was held to decide what to do about Memphis. The decision was made to go ahead and march.

That march led to King's death in Memphis on April 4, 1968.

It was the church where on Feb. 4, 1968, exactly two months before King was shot to death, he made the famous speech for which he wanted to be remembered.

King's recorded voice giving that sermon, “drum major for justice,” swelled through the simple, red brick church near downtown Atlanta in his own funeral eulogy before his family, friends and the nation's leaders.

Outside, workworn brown mules drawing a creaking wooden wagon waited to take his body for burial while tens of thousands jammed the streets waiting for the private service to end.

It was the church in

which less than 16 months later, aging, graying “Daddy King” buried his second and last son, A. D. King, who had drowned in his backyard swimming pool.

The younger son had moved to Atlanta after his brother's assassination to take his place as co-pastor with his father. After that, “Daddy King,” now 73, stood alone in the pulpit preaching.

He occasionally had an assistant pastor preach, as he did today when his wife was shot to death.

Less than two weeks after her husband's death in 1968, Coretta Scott King told an Easter congregation at Ebenezer that continuing her husband's unfinished work would be the greatest tribute to him.

She spoke after the elder King had delivered a joyful sermon on “The Resurrection.”

King Sr. began his sermon by saying, “I'm not going to

let the devil put me in a corner. My head is blooded but unbowed.”

He told the congregation, “These are mysterious and perilous times in which we live. And, many times, our hopes are shattered.

“But never lose your faith—keep your faith,” he said. “You may have come here frustrated this morning but the Lord stands ready to help. He's such a good and kind Savior. I love him . . . I love the Lord . . . I do.”

“Yes yes,” the congregation replied almost in unison.

While preaching the funeral service for his second son, the gray-haired pastor told the audience, “I've still got a Martin Luther King and an A. D. King.” The reference was to his two young grandsons, named after their fathers.

“Two boys who are going to preach,” he said. “And then we are going to see what the end will be.”