

# 'Godfather' of Religious Right dead in Memphis\_101804

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## 'Godfather' of Religious Right dead in Memphis at age 78

**By Robert Marus**

*ABP Washington Bureau*

WASHINGTON (ABP)—A Southern Baptist layman credited with being the “godfather” of the modern Religious Right is dead at age 78.

Ed McAteer died after a long battle with myeloma, a form of cancer, Oct. 5 at his home in Memphis, Tenn. His wife, Faye, was with him when he died.

Ed McAteer
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In the late 1970s, McAteer became convinced the nation was on a declining moral trajectory. He left a successful career as a salesman and executive with Colgate-Palmolive to enter political advocacy.

He soon became one of the driving forces in convincing Jerry Falwell, the fundamentalist Baptist television preacher, to enter politics in the late 1970s. McAteer—along with Religious Right activists Paul Weyrich, Paul Viguerie and Howard Phillips—helped Falwell found the Moral Majority in 1979.

Although the Moral Majority no longer exists, it was the first major organization encouraging fundamentalist Protestants to get involved in secular politics.

McAteer organized the first National Affairs Briefing, which brought about 15,000 pastors and other conservative Christian activists to Dallas in 1980. At that meeting, then-presidential candidate Ronald Reagan cemented his ties to the Religious Right by famously declaring, "I know you can't endorse me, but I endorse you."

McAteer—a member of Bellevue Baptist Church near Memphis—devoted much of his time in recent years to building support among evangelical Christians for Israel.

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