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Third of Four Parts
Election 1976--Focus
On Economic Issues

By C. Welton Gaddy
For Baptist Press

Economics is the number one issue in the '76 elections according to recent public opinion polls. Citizens are deeply concerned about a variety of money-related matters.

People want to know what can be done about unemployment, rising prices on basic commodities, and burdensome taxation. They want to know where candidates for office stand on these matters.

Christians rightly view economic issues from a moral perspective. The Bible has a great deal to say about daily work (Ex. 20:9, 2 Thess. 3:10), poverty (Prov. 17:5, Isa. 3:14-15), debts (Deut. 24:6, 12-13), taxation (Matt. 17:24, Rom. 13:1-7), and welfare (Deut. 14:22-29, Matt. 25:31-46).

All possessions are a trust from God. Financial resources are to be used responsibly. Thus, in this election year, economic policies are matters of moral as well as political concern.

No serious candidate for public office can avoid discussions on current economic problems. The two leading contenders for the presidency of the United States have repeatedly addressed themselves to various aspects of the economy. Here is a summary of the positions of Republican presidential candidate Gerald Ford and Democratic candidate Jimmy Carter on three major economic issues.:

1. Inflation. Both candidates agree on the severity of the problem of inflation. Their proposed solutions differ, however.

Ford has declared, "My first objective is to have sound economic growth without inflation." A control of federal deficit spending is the key to attaining this goal in Ford's opinion.

Carter has stated that the best way to control inflation is to reduce unemployment and to engage in comprehensive planning. He said, "We ought to have stricter enforcement of anti-trust laws and of consumer protection laws. And, we need a monetary policy that encourages lower interest rates, so investment capital will be available at reasonable rates."

Differences of opinions between the candidates characterize their discussions of wage and price controls. Ford has reiterated his "firm opposition to wage and price controls." Carter is against across-the-board permanent controls but favors standby controls which the President could apply selectively. He has proposed that food prices be stabilized by combining a concern for the consumer and the family farmer with national reserves of agricultural products. Ford plans to attack rising food prices more generally by combating all inflation.

Each candidate has promised to balance the federal budget if elected. Ford has projected the possibility of a balanced budget in 1979. Carter has announced that he would adopt a system of zero-based budgeting in which every federal program has to rejustify itself each year. He would balance the budget by the end of his first term in office.

2. Unemployment. Closely related to interest in inflation is concern about unemployment. On this problem, too, the candidates differ in their strategies for offering help. Both men outlined their proposals during the September 3 nationally-televised debate.

Ford opposes any short-term public employment programs. In fact, he plans to reduce the number of public service jobs from 320,000 to 40,000 by September, 1977. He sees expansion in the private sector as the best method for creating jobs.

Stimulation of private industry would be coupled with a reduction in federal taxes in Ford's plan. Businesses would be given tax incentives to locate in inner cities where unemployment is greatest. Finally, Ford would offer assistance so unemployed youth could learn and work at the same time.

Carter views the federal government as an employer of last resort. However, he does favor federally-created jobs where there is acute unemployment. His overall plan to reduce unemployment majors on strengthening the private sector and increasing cooperation between it and the government.

Carter has suggested, for example, that the federal government share in the payment of salaries for part-time workers presently unemployed. In the central cities, Carter would develop special Civilian Conservation Corps-type programs. He is convinced that implementation of the quality of life programs which he has proposed (in the areas of health care, education, housing, railroad repair, etc.) will provide the jobs needed.

3. Taxation. With most Americans in agreement that some of the inequities in the present tax system are immoral and that major tax reform is long overdue, the candidates' statements on taxation are particularly noteworthy.

Ford has called for "a permanent tax cut with spending restrictions to stimulate the economy and relieve hard-pressed middle-income taxpayers." He favors raising the personal exemption from \$750 to \$1,000. Deductions for single taxpayers and married couples would be standardized at \$1,800 and \$2,500 respectively.

Also, Ford would reduce estate taxes by increasing estate tax exemptions from \$60,000 to \$150,000. He would "restrict the use of artificial accounting losses as tax shelters," believing that high income taxpayers should pay a "reasonable tax."

Carter has labeled the present tax structure as "a welfare program for the rich." He intends to eliminate loopholes, such as the deferral system by which multi-national corporations do not pay taxes on money made overseas and not brought back into this country.

He favors "elimination of special privileges for people who have been economically or politically powerful." Carter advocates "a simple structure with all income treated the same . . . with a truly progressive tax rate so that those who made the most . . . paid the higher percentage in total taxes."

Candidates for all elected positions should state their views regarding the economy. In order to cast informed votes, ask office-seekers: How do you plan to control the budget for your office? Will you make a full disclosure of your financial transactions? At what points do you plan to cut back expenditures and at what points do you plan to increase expenditures? Do you favor more or less government involvement in the job market? How can your position assist the unemployed and the underemployed? Do you think the system of taxation in this community is financially adequate and morally just? In specific terms, how would you alter the present structure of taxation?

Given the moral responsibility of handling financial resources justly, Christian citizens must give serious attention to economic issues in the '76 elections. The voice of Christian conscience can make a significant contribution to current deliberations on economic policies. (BP)

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the third in a four-part series on "Moral Issues in the '76 Elections" by C. Welton Gaddy, director of Christian citizenship development for the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. Dr. Gaddy's series, written for Baptist Press, focuses on informed voting, civil and religious liberties, economic issues, and a responsible government.



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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
W. C. Fields, Director
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor
James Lee Young, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Orville Scott, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Tex. 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
MEMPHIS Roy Jennings, Chief, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, Tenn. 38104, Telephone (901) 272-2461
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Gomer Lesch, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 254-5461
RICHMOND Richard M. Styles, Acting Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON W. Barry Garrett, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

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Hollis Johnson Elected
Foundation Head

NASHVILLE (BP)--Hollis E. Johnson III, a Nashville banking executive, has been elected executive secretary-treasurer of the Southern Baptist Foundation here, succeeding Kendall Berry, who retires Dec. 31.

Johnson, 41, will join the Foundation staff Nov. 1 as executive secretary-treasurer elect to work with Berry during his last two months as chief executive officer, according to D. Frank Cole, president of the Foundation's board.

A native of Nashville, Johnson has been employed at First American National Bank for 17 years and is currently a vice president and trust officer and manager of the bank's investment management division.

He is active in church, civic and professional affairs, serving as an investment advisor for four years for the Southern Baptist Foundation, member of the board of directors of the Nashville Society of Financial Analysts, Sunday School director for Belmont Heights Baptist Church, coach of third and fourth grade football at Franklin Road Academy, and as a member or director of several civic and professional organizations.

Past responsibilities have included serving as president of the Nashville Area Junior Chamber of Commerce and commissioner of Knothole Baseball in Nashville.

After graduating from Vanderbilt University in 1956, Johnson served in the U. S. Navy and then joined First American Bank. He married Celeste Morrison in 1960 and has two children.

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(BP) Photo will be mailed to Baptist state papers.

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Seminary Extension
Names Robert Lamb

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NASHVILLE (BP)--Robert L. Lamb, professor of religious education and religion at Gardner-Webb College, Boiling Springs, N. C., has been named associate director in charge of home study education of the Southern Baptist Seminary Extension Department here.

The 46-year-old native of Missouri succeeds J. Ralph Hardee, who resigned to join the faculty of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.

Lamb, a member of the Gardner-Webb faculty since 1962, formerly taught in public schools, served as minister of music and youth at First Baptist Church, Richardson, Tex., and served as director of Christian education for an Army chapel in Germany

He is a graduate of Stephen F. Austin College, Nacogdoches, Tex., and earned master of religious education and doctor of education degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth.

He will join the Seminary Extension Department of the six Southern Baptist theological seminaries, Dec. 15, according to department director Raymond M. Rigdon.

He is married and has three children.

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Baptist Couple Hears
'Call of the Caribbean'

By Teresa Shields

RICHMOND (BP)--December 1977 may not seem like an exciting date to some people but to Lamber and Denise Mills, it is the time on which their sights are set. By that time they will be on their way home--to their Carribean island.

After completing his master of divinity degree at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Mills will become full-time pastor of Central Baptist Church on Antigua in the Leeward islands of the West Indies.

Mrs. Mills will have completed the religious education diploma and will be assisting her husband in the church there.

"This is a perfect example of a missionary working himself out of a job," Mills commented. "Shelby A. Smith, the Southern Baptist Missionary there, was my pastor when I accepted the call to the ministry.

"I was assistant pastor there for awhile. Then, I decided to come to the states to school. First I went to Oklahoma Baptist University and now I am at New Orleans. When I get back, I will be pastor, and Shelby will move on to other mission-related responsibilities."

Central Baptist Church is the largest Baptist Church on Antigua. It has a membership of over 300, yet Sunday morning attendance might run as high as 800, according to Mills.

"This is just opposite from churches in the states. We had an average attendance of 770 at the first of this year. The auditorium will hold 800. When I was there it was filled every Sunday, but I just couldn't bring myself to believe there were 700 or 800 people in the audience."

Mills continued, "Everytime I hear from the church, something new has been added, new buildings or a primary school or something like that. Our church is really growing. From it, four other missions have been started. One is now a full-time church--Villa Baptist Church."

Central Baptist Church has a radio ministry where tapes from the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, Fort Worth, are played as public service broadcasts. A 30-minute television show on the island's only television station also gives the church members more opportunities to share Christ.

"All of the Radio-TV work is financially supported by the Foreign Mission Board," Mills explained. "But it is done through the mission (organization of Southern Baptist missionaries) and the local church. So, even like with the Baptist Hour, at the end of the program it will say, 'This has been brought to you by Baptists in your area.' I think that's real good because it lets people know who Baptists are. It's not just some people in the United States, but it's the people from the church over on the hill. It's something they can relate more to."

Although Mills became a Christian before he ever heard of Southern Baptists, he and a group of believers with the help of a missionary from another denomination organized a Baptist church.

"We called it Antioch Baptist Church," he related. "We didn't know much about Baptists, but some had heard of them. They knew Baptists met on Sunday mornings at 11:00, so we started meeting then, too.

"I was saved when a man came to St. Kitts, where I grew up, and started holding Bible classes. I went because it was new and something different. This man had no formal Bible training, but he held these classes and scores of people came and were saved. Then we were baptized and formed a church. Later some missionaries started coming to teach the people there more."

Mills then moved to the neighboring island of Antigua where he became involved with Central Baptist Church. After two years of college in Oklahoma, Mills went back and was pastor of Central Church while the Smiths were on furlough. Earlier this year Mills went back for three months while the Smiths were on special furlough. He brought a wife back to the states with him. He and Denise were married in March 1976.

"Denise and I plan to go back home, God willing, to work in the Central Baptist Church when we finish seminary," Mills concluded. "The work there is very promising. We think it will be the focal point in Southern Baptist missions in the Eastern Caribbean."