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July 7, 1977

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Editor Urges Graham
To 'Clear Atmosphere'

RALEIGH, N. C. (BP)--The editor of the Southern Baptist state news publication in Billy Graham's home state of North Carolina has editorially urged the famed evangelist to personally "clear the atmosphere" about recent disclosure of a \$22.9 million fund mad up of land, stocks, bonds and cash.

J. Marse Grant, editor of the Biblical Recorder, said in an editorial written for the paper's July 9 issue that "the ministry and worldwide influence of Billy Graham has been hurt by the revelation of the fund" and that the Southern Baptist evangelist should "call a national press conference to clear the atmosphere."

Graham is currently in Europe resting and working on a book and will not return for at least three weeks, a Graham associate said.

Grant, who described himself as a friend and supporter of Graham, questioned the wisdom of the World Evangelism and Christian Education Fund (WECEF) which the Charlotte Observer recently charged had been kept a secret.

Both Graham and William Mead, a Dallas businessman and WECEF president, deny that the fund was secret.

Before leaving the U. S. for Europe, Graham called the Observer story "grossly misleading."

The paper reported that in the last seven years the Billy Graham ministry had amassed \$22.9 million through the WECEF, an affiliate of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA).

The June 26 story by Robert Hodierne and Mary Bishop also reported that the World Evangelism and Christian Education Fund of Dallas, Tex., had taken title to a 1,200 acre tract of land near or at Oteen, N. C., midway between Asheville and the evangelists home in Montreat, with the intention of building a layman's training center.

In a statement made available to "all Southern Baptist editors," Graham said WECEF "is not a complete secret. It's entire holdings and a list of its gifts to other evangelical organizations was no secret." He said it has been on file with the Internal Revenue Service since the beginning in 1970 and that its IRS Form 990 report of assets "is public information."

The Observer story reported the WECEF accumulation of funds appeared "perfectly legal." And "in fact is normal, good money management."

The article claimed, however, that the two million contributors to Graham's ministry were not told of the Texas fund.

The fund reportedly provides money to Christian causes like the Baptist World Alliance in Washington, D. C., Campus Crusade for Christ, The Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and Young Life.

The newspaper reported that WECEF gets 80 to 90 percent of its monies from The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and all \$6.6 million given to it in 1976 came from the BGEA.

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Spokesmen for Graham said the WECEF has three sources of funds--designated gifts for specific purposes, foundations and estates--and that it does not rely on funds from small contributors to BGEA.

The evangelist described WECEF as "a nonprofit, charitable, religious and education organization with some of America's most reputable business men in control." He listed them as William Mead, chairman of the board of Campbell-Taggart, in Dallas, Tex., one of the largest bakery combines in the world; Dewey Pressley, president of the First International Bancshares, Inc., Dallas, one of the largest banking firms in the nation; and George Bennett, Boston, Mass., treasurer of Harvard University before retirement.

The evangelist said the fund was organized in 1970 for three principal reasons. They include 1) To help with student scholarships and other organizations with financial needs. 2) To build a graduate school for Biblical studies and communications at Wheaton College, his Alma Mater, beginning this fall. 3) To build a layman's training center in North Carolina after the Wheaton Center is completed.

T. W. Wilson, an associate of Graham and a long-time friend, said the North Carolina school "technically" will not be a Bible school. It will be more of a "training center," he said. "There will be no degrees, no credit, no competition with any Bible school or college. It will be just to help laymen and preachers alike who want to study the word of God for a month or two or three."

Last February, the Observer published a list of Graham organizations as part of a series on the evangelist. The list, which did not mention the fund, had been drawn up by Hodiernne, who showed it to George Wilson, executive vice-president of the Graham Association in Minneapolis.

According to Hodiernne, he asked Wilson whether the list was complete and he was told that he "had the complete picture." But Wilson recalls that the question was, "Does the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association have any other properties than those listed?", to which he answered "no," because the fund was a separate entity from the BGEA.

Hodiernne said that Wilson and other officials of the Association "deliberately misled us about the extent of their holdings." He said he first learned of the fund when he got a "tip" that the Graham Association "secretly owned land in western North Carolina." The reporter examined title deeds to the land and found that it was owned by the fund.

Graham told the Observer he apologized for any misunderstanding he may have created about his ministry's wealth.

He said he never mentioned World Evangelism and its holdings because he was never asked specifically about that group and therefore assumed The Observer knew of it. He said he thought he was being asked only about BGEA.

The Observer said Graham conceded that omission of WECEF from discussion of his ministry wealth may be drawing a very fine distinction between the BGEA and WECEF, especially in light of how closely related they are.

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Carter Names Vatican
Envoy, Baptists Protest

Baptist Press
7/7/77

By W. Barry Garrett

WASHINGTON (BP)--President Jimmy Carter has named David M. Walters as his personal representative to the Vatican, according to an announcement by the White House press room.

Walters, a Master Knight of the Order of Malta in the Knights of Columbus and a member of Serra International, is the first Roman Catholic named by an American President as an envoy to the Vatican. He succeeds Henry Cabot Lodge, who held a similar position under presidents Richard M. Nixon and Gerald R. Ford.

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The White House announcement came following numerous "leaks" and news stories in a wide variety of secular and religious publications, which, until late afternoon on July 7, the Carter administration refused either to confirm or to deny.

Opposition to Carter's action came swiftly and sharply from three of his fellow Southern Baptists--Jimmy R. Allen, newly elected Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) president; James E. Wood Jr. of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs; and Foy Valentine of the SBC Christian Life Commission. All three have sent telegrams to President Carter.

Wood, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, reiterated the historic Baptist opposition to special recognition of a religious body by the government of the United States.

He blasted the appointment of Walters as an "ecclesiastical appointment." He pointed out that President Carter first cleared the appointment with the president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Joseph Bernardin.

"This, itself, reveals the ecclesiastical nature of the appointment and the concern of the President for ecclesiastical approval of the Roman Catholic to serve as an envoy to the Vatican," he said.

"In a personal interview with Mr. Walters," Wood continued, "the new envoy indicated to me that he saw his appointment as representing the concerns of our government for 771 million Roman Catholics throughout the world." He then reported that Walters saw his role as primarily with the human rights of individual Catholics rather than the ecclesiastical structure itself.

Walters indicated to Wood that he would have no problem with the President's appointment of other envoys to other ecclesiastical bodies, such as the World Council of Churches in Geneva or to Buddhist or Muslim communities if the President were to decide to do so.

"Clearly the appointment does involve an official recognition and entanglement of the executive branch of this government with a particular church," Wood declared. "It also officially underscores the special concern of this government, to the point of preferential treatment, for one religious body not accorded any other church or religious body anywhere in the world," he said.

Wood's statement was in line with the historic position taken by the Baptist Joint Committee since its beginning in the 1930's. Both Joseph M. Dawson, the committee's first executive director, and C. Emanuel Carlson, his successor, vigorously protested ambassadorial representation at the Vatican by the United States government. The Baptist Joint Committee in its official actions supported its executive directors in leading Baptists to protest these actions by Presidents Roosevelt, Truman, Nixon and Ford.

Wood explained: "The committee has done so for the following reasons: (1) The Vatican can communicate with the U. S. government in the way any religious group communicates with it; (2) The Vatican maintains an apostolic delegate in Washington on Massachusetts Avenue in the manner of an ambassador; and (3) since Rome is at once the capital of Italy and location of the Vatican, the U. S. has an embassy in Rome already."

Allen, San Antonio pastor and SBC president, sent President Carter a telegram expressing regret over his decision to appoint a personal envoy to the Vatican. Allen told the President that he believes "that this practice is in violation of the spirit and probably the letter of the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States."

He urged the President to find other ways to maintain effective communication with the head of the Roman Catholic Church on matters of mutual concern.

In a separate statement, Allen said, "it is essentially ironic that this announcement is being made hard on the heels of the Papal statement urging American churchmen to attack the constitutional prohibitions against using public tax money to propagate the Roman Catholic faith.

"It is unbelievable that an Italian Churchman, who has never enjoyed the privilege of living under the American system of church-state relations, would use his spiritual authority to instruct American churchmen to seek to destroy the American system," continued Allen, former national president of Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

Andrew Leigh Gunn, executive director of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, also sent President Carter a telegram protesting the appointment of Walters. "The American people look to you as a defender of their liberties," the Methodist clergyman declared. "Appointment of a special envoy to the headquarters of one church can only weaken their faith in you and your administration," he told the President.

Valentine also expressed strong disagreement, calling it "an unnecessary mistake when made by some other Presidents . . . (and) an unnecessary mistake when made by President Carter..."

"The appointment, like the most recent Supreme Court ruling permitting tax aid for sectarian schools, is evidence of the continuing efforts of vested interests to erode the principle of church-state separation," he said.

"No plank in the platform of the U. S. is of more paramount importance than that which is encompassed in the First Amendment, which supports religious liberty and its immensely important corollary, separation of church and state," Valentine said.

The appointment of Walters as "personal representative" of the President to the Vatican does not require confirmation by the U. S. Senate as does that of a full ambassador to a foreign country. Although such a position is unsalaried, there is considerable expense to the American taxpayers involved in the trips to Rome and in the staffing of the office.

Diplomatic representation by the United States to the Vatican has had a varied history. In 1848, the United States established full diplomatic relations with the Vatican, but in 1867 the Congress prohibited federal funds for the continuation of such a relationship.

In 1939, President Franklin D. Roosevelt named Myron C. Taylor as his personal representative to the Vatican, and in 1951 President Harry Truman nominated General Mark W. Clark as ambassador. While there was strong opposition to the Roosevelt action, fury broke out throughout the nation over the proposal by Truman, so much so that he was forced to withdraw the nomination.

Presidents Nixon and Ford, and now President Carter, sought to avoid the religious controversy by naming their ambassadors as "personal representatives" rather than seeking full ambassadorial status for them.

The Catholic Standard, publication of the Archdiocese of Washington, reported that the U. S. Senate recently, as part of the State Department authorization bill, repealed the prohibition of funds for representation at the Vatican. The House of Representatives is now considering the proposal.

"This means," according to the Catholic Standard, "that Mr. Carter may soon have the option of upgrading the personal envoy post to full ambassadorship."

Walters has practiced law in Miami, Fla., since 1950 with the firm Walters and Costango. His emphasis has been on international law. For 10 years prior to that he was with the Department of Justice and from 1943 to 1946 he served in the U. S. Army in the Counter-intelligence Corps.

The new Vatican envoy has served as a fundraiser for both the Democratic Party and Catholic Church agencies. He was southern regional chairman of the finance council for Carter's presidential campaign and he is a member of the Democratic Party's national finance council.

A native of Cleveland, Ohio, Walters is a graduate of Baldwin-Wallace College, a United Methodist school in Berea, Ohio, and Cleveland school of law. He holds a doctorate in law from the University of Miami.

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CORRECTIONS

In Baptist Press story mailed 7/5/77, entitled "Avoid Distortion of Religious Experience, Pastor Urges," make the following corrections.

Graph 3, line 1, change "World to "Moral"; graph 4, line 3, change from one's experience to read: of one's experience; graph 14, line 4, change out to our; last graph, delete the word we between who and cannot in line 2.

Thanks, Baptist Press