

**(BP)****BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

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

**ATLANTA** Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041  
**DALLAS** Richard T. McCartney, 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) \_\_\_\_\_, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2798  
**RICHMOND** Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151  
**WASHINGTON** Stan L. Haste, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

Asset Freeze Hurts Iranians,  
Baptist Center Attitude Helps

By Norman Jameson

December 13, 1979  
79-210

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Iranian students in the United States are being severely effected by the economic freeze President Carter put on Iranian assets in retaliation for the seizure of Americans at the embassy in Tehran.

About 50 students and wives shared a traditional holiday meal at the Vanderbilt University Baptist Student Center and some indicated they had only enough money to remain in the United States a few weeks.

Government checks for students at Vanderbilt's Peabody College of Education stopped coming four months earlier when the shah lost control of the government. While they may be students in America, those at Vanderbilt are professors and government workers in Iran and have been sent to the U.S. to gain expertise in specific areas. That's why the government pays their expenses.

No bank will cash even personal checks from Iran and since visas do not permit the student to work in America, there is no way to get money, and savings are being rapidly depleted.

Said one: "I am selling my car to take care of this month's expenses. I don't know what I'll do after that."

The dinner, served by Baptist volunteers and hosted by Barry Vincent, Baptist Student Center director and coordinator of ministries to internationals for the Nashville Baptist Association, was part of regular weekly services to Iranians.

The Baptist Student Center has classes for English, crafts, and cooking, specifically for the wives of the Iranian students, who otherwise may be lonely and frustrated in a strange culture.

Immediately after students in Iran seized the American embassy and took 50 hostages, Iranians in the U.S. expected retaliation against them. They stopped jogging, quit going to classes, had extra locks put on their doors, and stayed sheltered in their apartments. Everyone called their English teacher individually and asked if she still wanted them to come to class.

When she told them to come, Vincent said she demonstrated the kind of consistent attitude "that communicates something about my faith and my relationship with God and the world that I feel is worth communicating."

The Iranians, speaking on the 38th day of captivity for American hostages, said they don't expect the United States to return the shah to Iran. Sayed M. Moshiri, a professor of science education at the University of Tehran, said the shah's return would not be necessary to end the tension between the two countries.

All that's required, he said, is for the shah to abdicate and return to Iran the "hundreds of billions of dollars he's stolen." When told that those who held the American hostages are demanding nothing less than the shah's return, Moshiri and others indicated they do not know what the captors were thinking and that they do not trust the news reports from Tehran.

AMERICAN CRYSTAL LIBRARY  
SBC & HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

But they've learned that neither can they trust the reports Iranians are receiving from America since they had a letter from family in Iran expressing concern for their welfare because they heard that Americans were throwing Iranian students into the ocean.

Attitudes exhibited by the Iranians at the dinner indicated why there are serious misunderstandings between the two nations. The Iranians believe the shah is an employee of the CIA; that he is in the United States plotting with the CIA, Henry Kissinger and the Rockefellers, whose banks hold the shah's "billions," to return to the throne in Iran; that Iranians did not know methods of torture until the CIA introduced them to the shah who used them to control Iran by terror; and that America put the shah back on the throne in 1953 when he had been kicked out of the country by irate citizens.

The Iranians displayed an intense dislike of Kissinger, former President Nixon's secretary of state. They feel American foreign policy still follows the direction set by Kissinger, who Moshiri thinks actually enjoyed seeing the torture of Iranians.

"I really think ordinary criminals kill only once and then are caught," Moshiri said. "But educated criminals like Kissinger kill millions and millions and get away with it. We sincerely believe that the pain and misery of Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and the loss of all of them is the result of Kissinger's grand design. The same tragedy will repeat in the Middle East and the Kissinger plan will be implemented at cost to the American people. The tragedy is the American people must pay the cost of Kissinger's grand design."

The students and their wives all indicated they would return to Iran when finished with school. They consider the Ayatollah Kohmeini their spiritual leader and say even his tactics are an improvement over the shah.

They were grateful for the hospitality shown by the Baptist Student Center and said they have not been the subject of harrassment by Americans when they are on the street.

-30-

Evangelism Directors  
Study Baptism Report

By Dan Martin

Baptist Press  
12/13/79

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention evangelism leaders, pleased with preliminary reports of increased baptisms during 1979, sought to find ways to continue the uptrend.

The leaders, in their annual meeting, heard projections which indicate a 9.7 percent increase in baptisms in the 1978-79 church year.

The increases come after three years' decline in baptisms, long regarded the measure of evangelism efficiency among Southern Baptists. During the past two years, Southern Baptists have recorded the lowest baptismal figures in more than a quarter of a century, dropping to 336,050 in 1978.

"The projections indicate at least 368,646 baptisms during 1979," said C. B. Hogue, director of evangelism for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. "We properly praise God for that. The increase may be the turnaround we have prayed for."

-more-

As evangelism leaders responded to the projections, Roy Collum, director of evangelism for the Mississippi Baptist Convention, said: "I believe Southern Baptists were genuinely shocked at the decline in baptisms, particularly the decline last year. The decline got people to praying, and I think that's the number one reason for the increase this year."

Joe Ford, director of evangelism development for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, noted he believes the denomination "has felt the rekindling of the spirit of urgency. It comes from current events, and I think God is speaking to us to be urgent in our task."

"I also believe there has been a better delineation of goals through Bold Mission Thrust (the SBC plan to communicate the message of Christ to the world in this century). When an organization adopts a goal, it has a better chance of hitting it. We have a tendency to hit what we are shooting at when we aim. The goals are helping us to aim better."

Dan Sanchez, who heads the evangelism emphasis for the Baptist Convention of New York, said, "I think it's always encouraging to see an increase in baptisms. It shows that things are being done right, but I also believe a decline in baptisms is not a cause for alarm. There have always been times of sowing, planting, cultivating and reaping. If we're doing these things, then the statistics will take care of themselves."

"I'm pleasantly surprised that Southern Baptists have had a significant turnaround.... Two years ago the trend was discovered, and last year it was confirmed. This year we made a turnaround. It's amazing that it has happened in two years. I don't know of any other denomination that has accomplished this--discovering and reversing a downward trend so significantly," he added.

Several of the evangelism directors traced reasons for the increase to emphasis on ongoing programs of evangelism.

"Basically, the increase can be traced to increased lay evangelism training, simultaneous revival, and motivating pastors to put evangelism as their number one priority," said Don Harms, evangelism director for the Northern Plains Convention.

Harms explained that in North Dakota, one of the four states in the Northern Plains Convention, much of the increase can be attributed to simultaneous revivals in April of 1979. "More people were saved in those revivals than had been baptized in North Dakota during the entire past year. When you get the churches involved in simultaneous revival, you always have an upsurge in baptisms."

Hogue said he believes renewed emphasis on doctrinal studies also has had an impact. "The church training on the study of "The Doctrine of Salvation" has had a significant impact on the increase in baptisms," he said. Hogue wrote a study course book, "The Doctrine of Salvation," which was used in church training last year.

Adrian Rogers, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, urged evangelism leaders never to forget that sin is the number one problem of mankind and that Jesus Christ is the only answer.

He listed six enemies of evangelism: disobedience to the commands of Christ, disbelief, dilution, dissipation, dissension and discouragement. He warned that Southern Baptists should never "water down the message to accommodate the hearer," and said energy can be spent on many things other than evangelism, making "good the enemy of the best because we have too many irons in the fire."

Rogers also warned against dissension in the denomination, saying he would not compromise his beliefs but should never hurt a Christian brother. "We can disagree, but we should never hurt one another," he said.

Carolyn Weatherford, executive director of the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union, told evangelism leaders: "Last year the state papers were filled with the reasons baptisms were down. Are you going to care as much this year when they are up a little?"

William G. Tanner, executive director-treasurer of the Home Mission Board, added: "While the statistics show an increase this year, Southern Baptists should ever be mindful of the task before us. The slight increase should not lull us into a false sense of security."

"There's a sense of urgency about the need for evangelism at home or abroad. Winning the lost should be--must be--the number one priority of every Southern Baptist."

-30-

House Passes Measure to  
Combat Domestic Violence

By Stan Haste

Baptist Press  
12/13/79

WASHINGTON (BP)--The House of Representatives passed and sent to the Senate a bill designed to curb the growing problem of physical abuse and violence within American families.

Passed 292-106, the measure calls for coordination of all federal programs that deal with domestic violence by a new interagency council composed of representatives from federal agencies, state and local government, and members who have themselves been victims of or worked with victims of such violence.

In addition, the bill authorizes the department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) to distribute 75 percent of the funds appropriated by the measure to the states for distribution at the local level.

The bill will cost \$15 million for fiscal year 1981, \$20 million for 1982, and \$30 million for 1983, when it expires.

Another 15 percent of the funds will be spent in the states to administer programs relating to domestic violence, develop a media campaign on the subject, encourage citizen participation in projects, make annual reports to HEW and state legislatures, and provide technical assistance at the local level. The other 10 percent will go to HEW for program development and coordination.

An estimated two million American couples have used a lethal weapon against one another and husband-wife violence is estimated to include at least half of all American families. Testimony before the committee on education and labor said that during 1975, one-fourth of all persons murdered in the United States were killed by a family member and half of such victims were killed by a spouse.

Rep. Paul Simon, D-Ill., a prime sponsor and floor manager of the bill, told Baptist Press after its passage that "Violence is, unfortunately, very much a part of the American scene."

In the Senate, a similar bill is under consideration by the subcommittee on human resources, chaired by Alan D. Cranston, D-Cal. The Senate passed a similar measure last year but it died in the House. House passage of the bill makes likely its prospect of becoming public law.

-30-

