

(BP)**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
480 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** _____, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Tex. 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1998**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

January 25, 1980

80-16

**Rogers Joins Group Urging
Prayer in the Schools**

By Stan Haste

WASHINGTON (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention President Adrian Rogers and at least four other Southern Baptist ministers have joined a larger group of conservative religious spokesmen urging removal of prayer in the schools from the jurisdiction of the federal courts.

Official actions of the Southern Baptist Convention and the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, however, have upheld U.S. Supreme Court decisions in the past two decades opposing state-supported religion in public schools.

Rogers, elected to a one-year term as SBC president last June in a tumultuous annual meeting of the 13.4-million-member SBC, said, "My involvement is as Adrian P. Rogers. Period. It's not as president of the Southern Baptist Convention or as pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church" in Memphis, Tenn.

Also joining in as sponsors of the Coalition for the First Amendment were James Robison, evangelist from Hurst, Texas; Paige Patterson, president of the Criswell Center for Biblical Studies, Dallas; Charles Stanley, pastor of First Baptist Church, Atlanta, Ga.; and Morris Sheats, pastor of Beverly Hills Baptist Church, Dallas. Other names in the coalition include television evangelists Jerry Falwell of the Old Time Gospel Hour, Pat Robertson of the 700 Club, and Jim Bakker of the PTL Club.

Announcement of the group's formation came during the annual meeting of the National Religious Broadcasters in Washington. It will seek to reinstate prayers in the public schools by pressuring Congress to remove the subject of prayer from court jurisdiction. The effort is spearheaded in Congress by U.S. Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., a Southern Baptist.

Although Rogers is the most prominent of the Southern Baptists lending their support to the coalition, Robison, the fiery Texas evangelist, serves as chairman of the interfaith group.

The coalition's effort could result in overturning the effect of two historic Supreme Court decisions in 1962 and 1963, rulings which held that states as local educational units may not write prayers and enforce their repetition, nor require religious exercises such as Bible reading or recitation of the Lord's Prayer.

Many citizens, nevertheless, incorrectly have concluded that the court banned voluntary prayer itself from public school classrooms.

The Southern Baptist Convention has consistently supported the high court position and has fought all efforts to overturn the decisions through the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

-more-

The SBC adopted resolutions supporting the high court position in 1964 and 1971, years when battles over school prayer similar to that now shaping up for 1980 were fought. The SBC's 1971 resolution specifically supported voluntary prayer.

Baptist Joint Committee Executive Director James E. Wood Jr. expressed "dismay" and "disappointment" at the news of Rogers' involvement in the prayer effort. He said that the SBC president, who is a member of the Baptist Joint Committee by virtue of his position, has "completely repudiated the official resolutions of the Southern Baptist Convention."

"Dr. Rogers did not consult with anyone on our staff about the serious First Amendment questions raised by the position of the new coalition," Wood added. Rogers' stance "in fact runs precisely contrary to that taken repeatedly through the years by the Southern Baptist Convention, the Baptist Joint Committee, and its other member bodies," he said.

Wood promised that "in view of the mandate given us," his agency will continue "a vigorous fight" against "all attempts to undermine the First Amendment's ban on an establishment of religion by the state."

"I don't see myself in opposition to the SBC resolutions," Rogers told Baptist Press, "although they are resolutions of those bodies meeting at those times. "I am strongly opposed to any state-supported religion, but I do not believe in separation of God and government and neither did our founding fathers."

Rogers said, "The Supreme Court did not ban voluntary prayer in public schools, it is true. Many public schools are at fault for misinterpreting the decisions. But the bottom line is that we have come to an almost anti-God and humanistic approach in some of our school systems because of their misapplication of the Supreme Court rulings."

He said that in his view "all this legislation (the Helms effort) does is take this jurisdiction from the Supreme Court and place it in the hands of local bodies. I would be opposed to the enforcement of prayer, but I also feel that local bodies should control and interpret what we mean by voluntary prayer."

Others on the coalition's list of sponsors besides the five Southern Baptist ministers, Falwell, Robertson and Bakker include Bill Bright of Campus Crusade for Christ, Ben Armstrong of the National Religious Broadcasters, Robert Dugan of the National Association of Evangelicals, and Southern Baptist layman E. E. McAteer, one of the country's best known spokesmen for conservative political causes. McAteer is a member of Bellevue Baptist Church, where Rogers is pastor.

At a news conference held in conjunction with the religious broadcasters convention, U.S. Rep. Philip Crane, R-Ill., a presidential candidate, announced his support for the coalition. Crane is widely considered the most conservative of all 1980 presidential hopefuls.

Crane said his "cooperation" with the coalition was motivated by "deep commitment" to "the need to return to fundamental principles in education, the need to preserve basic constitutional functions, and the need to reaffirm our moral and religious heritage."

The Illinois congressman pledged to join the efforts of Senator Helms, who has long led the forces for so-called "voluntary" prayer in the schools.

Specifically, Crane vowed to fight in the U.S. House of Representatives to bring Helms' prayer language to a vote. It is currently stalled in the House Judiciary Committee, chaired by U.S. Rep. Peter W. Rodino Jr., D-N.J.

Helms' language passed the Senate last year after being added as an amendment to S. 450, a bill designed to improve the machinery of federal courts. The bill is expected to die in Rodino's committee.

Before passing the Helms language, the Senate stripped it from another bill calling for the formation of the new Department of Education, a measure which eventually passed both houses of Congress and was signed into law by President Carter.

Crane said he will seek the signatures of 218 members of the House on a discharge petition which would force the issue to the floor for a vote. The parliamentary device is rarely used and even more rarely is it successful.

-30-

Problems of South Carolina
Church Grow More Intense

Baptist Press
1/25/80

CONWAY, S.C. (BP)--Troubles springing from several years of internal strife have become more intense at Hickory Grove Baptist Church, Conway, S.C.

The church received national attention after a county court ordered that 16 members expelled over a church polity conflict be re-admitted to full fellowship.

Now, a Conway man, Kenny Hardee, has sworn out warrants against the pastor of the church, B.C. Pigg, and his son, B.C. Pigg Jr. This action followed a shooting incident early Christmas morning at the pastorium.

The pastor is charged with assault and battery with intent to kill. Bond was set at \$2,000. Bond was set at \$600 for his son, charged with simple assault and malicious damage to personal property.

Hardee alleges that he was shot in the knee during the incident at the pastorium. He is not a member of Hickory Grove Church but has relatives who are members. The incident renewed publicity of the church's problems.

Pigg, pastor of the church for approximately six years, has complained to police about tire slashings, telephone harassment and a cross burning at the pastorium, located about nine miles from Conway.

Emory Young, missions director for Waccamaw Baptist Association, said that various types of harassment directed at Pigg had continued for approximately two years.

The church first attracted attention when it voted to turn out 16 members in a conflict over church polity. The expelled members had disagreed with a recommendation by the deacons and the pastor that the church no longer vote each year on whether to retain the minister.

-more-

Pigg had called the procedure "divisive."

The former members filed suit against the church and a county court, deciding that the congregation had violated its own constitution, ordered that the 16 be restored to full fellowship.

The church now is appealing that ruling before the South Carolina Supreme Court.

Pigg has blamed the mounting problems on "a few people who want me to leave."

Members are upset over their inability to vote on whether to retain or dismiss the pastor.

Young said the church's constitution requires that business matters go to the deacons first before being acted on by the whole congregation, and so attempts by individuals to raise the issue of retaining the pastor are ruled out of order.

Burley McDowell, who had been a member of the church for 32 years, said the congregation wants a vote taken on Pigg, but that the deacons and some members are blocking it.

Meanwhile, the Waccamaw Baptist Ministers Conference has voiced support for Hickory Grove Church in its court fight over the dismissed members.

Its resolution states that while the actions of the church in ousting the members "may have or may not have been tactful or proper," the government, whether federal or state, "must refrain from interfering with the determination of membership as decided by an autonomous local congregation."

This right of the local congregation, says the resolution, is "undisputed." It states that the court's ruling against Hickory Grove Church, if allowed to stand, would represent "a prohibition upon the free exercise of religion and faith as it is practiced in the churches of our nation."

-30-

Baylor Panel
Begins Review

Baptist Press
1/25/80

WACO, Texas (BP)--Milton E. Cunningham said here that the academic affairs committee of the Baylor University board of trustees has begun a study and review of the program of the university's department of religion and will make a full report to the trustees by the end of the semester.

The academic affairs committee, which Cunningham heads, was requested by the department of religion in November to study its program of instruction and make recommendations to help it meet guidelines of Texas Baptists.

The request was prompted by criticism of a textbook, "People of the Covenant," whose co-author, H. Jack Flanders, is chairman-elect of the department of religion.

James W. Draper Jr., pastor of First Baptist Church, Euless, Texas, and a Baylor trustee and former chairman of the academic affairs committee, has charged the book, used in some Baylor classes and by many other Southern Baptist schools, is "liberal."

-more-

Cunningham, pastor of Westbury Baptist Church, Houston, succeeded Draper who remains a committee member, as chairman of the academic affairs committee. He said after the initial meeting of the committee under his chairmanship that he expects its work "will reaffirm the desire of Baylor University to fulfill the purposes and principles upon which the university was founded."

He emphasized a "great spirit of unity" among the members of the committee in spite of a diversity of opinions and ideas. He said he saw the diversity as a "strength."

-30-

Energy Crisis a Mixed
Blessing, Morris Says

By Rex Hammock

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Along with its hardships, a prolonged energy crisis could offer increased opportunities for ministry to Southern Baptists, a denominational planner told representatives of SBC agencies attending a meeting here.

Speaking on the future of travel to church, Orrin Morris, director of research at the convention's Home Mission Board, told members of the SBC Inter-Agency Council that the decade would most likely see an average 15 percent annual increase in gasoline prices.

"Gasoline that now costs 101.9 cents per gallon will cost 204.9 cents by 1985 and 411.9 cents by 1990," Morris said. "This will slow down people's travel but not as drastically as many persons claim."

Morris predicted little change in transportation habits during the first half of the 1980s. "I expect we'll trim our budgets to make room for the purchases of what we value most and freedom of travel to church is very important to most of us."

Morris also predicted that church attendance and financial stewardship will follow current upward trends during the first half of the decade.

He sounded a note of caution for the second half of the '80s, however.

"I expect it will be stormy, tempestuous and socially disturbing until a "big breakthrough" in technology occurs.

Morris warned, however, against expecting a quick triumph by technology over the energy crisis. "I believe...in 'Yankee Ingenuity'. However, my dates for such a solution are after the turn of the century."

If such a breakthrough does not take place by mid-decade, Morris predicts that there will be some form of gas rationing.

Such rationing, he predicted, will cause church members "who drive long distances to church to start looking for churches that are nearby." Downtown churches, transitional churches and regional churches will start experiencing declines, he said.

Yet Morris added, "The congregation that has a caring warm fellowship, that supplies spiritual sustenance, that is faithful to God's purpose of redemption and ministry will be able to entice commuters to travel great distances. But those with discord and unclear commitments probably will experience sudden and severe declines."

-more-

Morris also predicted that churches will develop more Sunday bus routes as supplements to mass transit systems. Other churches, he said, "will start having 'cottage services' to provide various educational and worship services in homes, apartments and institutions in close proximity to persons with special travel restrictions."

Another development which might enhance a church's opportunity for ministry, explained Morris, is that "people will be less likely to drive off on weekend visits."

Whether more people will be in church in the future is still uncertain, he said, "but it is more likely that they will be in town."

-30-

State of the Union Message
Speaks to Moral Issues

By Stan Hasteley

Baptist Press
1/25/80

WASHINGTON (BP)--Although President Carter's 30-minute State of the Union address to a joint session of Congress, Jan. 23, dealt largely with his response to the twin crises of Iran and Afghanistan, his longer and formal message to the lawmakers spoke to numerous issues of interest and concern to the religious community.

On the international scene the issues included nuclear weapons, world hunger, refugee legislation, human rights concerns, and Carter's Commission on the Holocaust.

Issues of domestic concern to religious leaders and others included the role of women and the Equal Rights Amendment, families and the aged, privacy, fair housing, and lobby reform.

The president, aware that the tone of his speech to the nation amounted to a call to arms, nevertheless emphasized in the longer message that he remains committed to the mutual slow-down of the nuclear arms race.

"All that humankind has achieved to date, all that we are seeking to accomplish, and human existence itself can be undone in an instant" by nuclear war, Carter warned in renewing his pledge to seek eventual ratification of the SALT II treaty in the Senate. Before that can happen, he acknowledged, both he and Congress must first deal with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

On the question of world hunger, the president vowed to wage "war," especially in the developing countries. He said that U.S. foreign aid, both bilateral and multilateral, will be "geared increasingly" toward fighting hunger.

"The goal of freeing the world from hunger by the year 2000 should command the full support of all countries," he declared.

Regarding his proposal to Congress last year that U.S. refugee policy be liberalized, Carter said he regarded the measure's passage in 1980 a "high priority." His proposal marks the first comprehensive effort in the last 28 years, he argued, to reform the system of admitting refugees to the U.S. He predicted that if passed, it "will bring common sense and cohesion to an unnecessarily fragmented approach" to refugee resettlement.

-more-

Carter also promised to maintain his emphasis on human rights overseas--calling "freedom for ourselves and...others" the "ultimate aim of our foreign policy." He specifically asked the Senate to ratify five pending human rights covenants.

On another of his foreign priorities, the president said he will soon appoint a council of "distinguished Americans" who will have the task of implementing recommendations from his Commission on the Holocaust. He promised to work closely with Congress in establishing "an appropriate memorial" to the six million Jews and other victims of Nazi extermination during World War II.

On the domestic front, Carter renewed his pledge to seek final ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. Although 35 state legislatures have ratified the measure over the past eight years, three more are required before it becomes part of the Constitution. A handful of ratifying states have since rescinded their earlier action and have asked the courts to uphold them. The question is still unresolved.

"We cannot stand tall as a nation seeking to enhance human rights...so long as we deny it to American women here at home," he declared.

On other women's issues, the president said the Congress and his administration should continue to fight discrimination in education and employment, seek to improve health problems relating to pregnancy, and seek passage of legislation on domestic violence and shelters for battered spouses.

To strengthen family life, Carter noted the formation last year of an office of families in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. He also said this year's White House Conference on Families "will help focus public attention on the problems affecting families and on the means needed to solve or avoid those problems."

On problems facing the aged, the president pointed to progress in the areas of strengthening Social Security trust funds, a new public law prohibiting forced retirement before age 70 and general improvements in housing, social services, food delivery and employment programs during his administration. He said that among matters still needing attention in federal budgeting for the aged are increased funding for nutrition, senior centers, and home health care.

Carter said that because Americans' privacy is more threatened all the time by technological advances, Congress should pass a package of five bills designed to protect citizens' right to be left alone. The measures would establish privacy safeguards for medical, research, bank, insurance, and credit records.

He also asked Congress to go along with another privacy bill, this one limiting police searches of newsrooms. The legislation is needed, he said, "to deal with the problems created by the Supreme Court's "Stanford Daily" decision.

Also needed, Carter emphasized, is new legislation putting teeth into the section of the Civil Rights Act guaranteeing fair housing to all citizens. Enforcement of the law against housing discrimination has proved difficult, he noted, adding that the Department of Housing and Urban Development should be given such power. Fair housing, the president said, "will continue to be my highest legislative priority in the civil rights area."

In the only church-state issue addressed in the message, Carter said he will continue to push for lobby reform legislation. The religious community has lobbied against inclusion of churches in such a law, an effort which has apparently succeeded. The prime sponsor of lobby legislation in the U.S. Senate, Sen. Lawton Chiles, D-Fla., recently introduced a revised version of his bill which eliminates the churches from coverage.