



BAPTIST PRESS

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80-24

Carter Urges Prayer
For Khomeini, Militants

By Stan Hasty

WASHINGTON (BP--President Carter, speaking to more than 3,000 persons at this year's National Prayer Breakfast here, declared that the misapplication of religious beliefs is one of the major sources of violence in the world.

Despite the obvious reference to the religious revolution in Iran, the president went on to say that he prays daily for Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and the militant Muslims holding American hostages in Tehran.

"It's not easy to do this, and I have to force myself sometimes to include someone on my list because I don't want to acknowledge that that person might be worthy of my love," he said. For him, he said, the key to praying for those who persecute is to "list them by name."

Speaking on the subject of growth, Carter cited the civil rights struggle in the South as an instance in recent American history when both individuals and the nation grew.

"We went through a phase in this country, particularly in the South, of separation between blacks and whites in a nation, under God, committed to equality of opportunity," he said. "And it was not easy for me or for others, black or white, to make that change."

Yet, when "the pressures of change were finally accommodated," the South made a "difficult transformation" for which "we all thank God," Carter said.

The other main speaker at the annual prayer breakfast, U.S. Rep. Guy Vander Jagt, R-Mich., expressed the hope that the number one news story of 1980 will be the release of the American hostages and the coming of a spiritual awakening in America.

Noting the nation's spiritual roots, Vander Jagt said that "our declaration of independence is first of all a declaration of dependence on God." The former Presbyterian pastor declared that "the heart of the good news is that life can be miraculously transformed."

The theme of humility, a note which has been struck often at the prayer breakfast in recent years, was spoken to by U.S. Sen. Sam Nunn, D-Ga., a Methodist layman.

Offering the prayer for national leaders against the backdrop of recent allegations of the bribery of several members of Congress, Nunn implored:

--"May we who would be leaders always be aware that we must first be servants.

--"May we who seek to be admired by others remember that when we practice our piety before men in order to be seen by them, we will have no reward in heaven.

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--"May we who have large egos and great ambitions recall that the kingdom of heaven is promised to those who are humble and poor in spirit.

--"May we who depend on publicity as our daily bread recall that when we do a secret kindness our Father who knows all secrets will reward us.

--"May we who compete in the arena of government remember that we are commanded to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us, even those who hold us hostage and threaten us.

--"May the citizens whom we serve as stewards of government be sensitive to the fact that we are humans subject to error and that while we need their critiques, we also desperately need their prayers.

--"May we never forget that the final judgment of our tenure here on earth will not be decided by a majority vote."

Others participating on this year's program included Sen. Mark O. Hatfield, R-Ore., a Conservative Baptist, who presided; Rep. Bill Hefner, D-N.C., a Southern Baptist who led singing; Neil E. Goldschmidt, new secretary of transportation; and U.S. Treasurer Azie Taylor Morton, both of whom read the Scriptures.

-30-

Church Educators Urge
Positive Government Policy

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WASHINGTON (BP) --While "prizing their diversity," representatives of the nation's church-related colleges and universities united in issuing a call for government policy to provide a "positive environment" for church-related education.

The call came during a National Congress on Church-Related Colleges attended by more than 450 educators including 30 representatives of Southern Baptist schools.

The Washington assembly was the closing public meeting of an unprecedented two-year effort by the educators to "review, reaffirm and renew the role of church-related colleges and universities in American culture."

The first portion of the congress was a national meeting at the University of Notre Dame last June which attracted more than 600 educators representing 600 colleges from 23 denominations.

In Washington, the congress delegates heard from Shirley M. Hufstedler, newest member of President Jimmy Carter's Cabinet as secretary of the newly formed Department of Education.

Secretary Hufstedler voiced optimism for the future of church-related schools, urging them to enter the new decade with "flags flying and heads held very high... heirs to a magnificent tradition."

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She warned the educators, however, against "gradual development of dependency" on government funds, "while ignoring their long-term consequences.... Such dependencies can prove exceedingly difficult to break," she added.

She urged the church-related educators to lead the nation to "carefully consider each (government) proposal to determine whether the benefits conveyed are worth the entanglements entailed."

Landrum Bolling, chairman of the Council on Foundations, issued a blunt demand for a "searching nationwide reexamination of the whole issue of separation of church and state."

He charged that "the idea that tax funds could not be used for education provided through schools and colleges connected with churches is an idea that took over in this country only in the last hundred years."

The former college president added: "We need a sustained, comprehensive study of the church and state issue and then a persistent, long-term effort to change the strange situation we have drifted into, in which secularism, nonreligion if you like, has become a legally acceptable kind of established religion, the only government-approved form of religion."

On the last day of the congress, delegates approved eight major "affirmations" for church-related schools. The educators issued a statement which explained that "the Christian faith is the foundation of the purposes and programs of church-related colleges and universities." It said "the Christian perspective and foundation of church-related colleges and universities enriches the educational goals of the institutions."

Ben C. Fisher, retired executive director-treasurer of the Education Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, was program chairman of the congress.

-30-

Ben Fisher Gets Award
From Education Group

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2/8/80

WASHINGTON (BP)--Ben C. Fisher, retired executive director-treasurer of the Education Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, has received the Distinguished Service Award of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities.

Fisher is the first non-governmental leader to receive the award, according to Jim Sullivan, vice-president of NAICU. "No one has done more for private education in America than Ben Fisher," Sullivan said as he made the presentation.

NAICU usually presents the honor to congressional and other governmental leaders who have rendered significant service to private education.

Fisher retired in 1978 after eight years with the Education Commission in Nashville, and 30 years in Christian higher education. He now lives in Murfreesboro, N.C., and teaches at Campbell College in Buies Creek, N.C.

-30-

Extension Centers
Up 12 Percent

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--A record 342 extension centers were registered with the Seminary Extension Department during the first six months of the department's year which began Aug. 1, up 12 percent over the same point the year before.

The figure exceeds the year-end total of 340 recorded at the end of 1977-78. Since most centers tend to follow the school year, however, relatively few centers begin operation in the last half of the year.

Seminary Extension centers are locally based ministry training centers established in cooperation with the Seminary Extension Department, an arm of the six Southern Baptist seminaries. Most SE centers are sponsored by associations of Baptist churches.

-30-

Ralph Phelps Named
President of Howard Payne

DALLAS (BP)--Ralph A. Phelps Jr., former president of Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, Ark., was named president of Howard Payne University in Brownwood, Texas, effective March 1.

Phelps, a 58-year-old native Texan, succeeds Roger L. Brooks who resigned the Baptist school nine months ago to become vice president of graduate studies at Houston Baptist University.

He served at Ouachita, 1953-69, and was named president emeritus when he stepped down from that post at age 48.

Among positions Phelps has held since leaving Ouachita are the vice presidency of a bank in Little Rock, Ark., vice presidencies at Dallas (Texas) Baptist College and Mercer University, Macon, Ga.; and the vice presidency of Leisure and Recreation Concepts, a Dallas architectural and design firm, where he has worked since October 1974.

In 1967, he took a leave of absence from Ouachita and served for six months as southeast regional director of the federal Office of Economic Opportunity, Atlanta. In 1961, he resigned the Ouachita presidency to accept the presidency of Houston Baptist University, but then withdrew his resignation and remained at Ouachita.

Phelps was graduated cum laude from Baylor University, Waco, Texas, and earned master and doctor of theology degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas. He was associate professor of Christian ethics at Southwestern Seminary, 1948-53, and has been pastor of several churches in Texas and Arkansas.

He has served on several denominational committees, including the Education Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, of which he is former chairman, and the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

-30-

(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Dallas bureau of Baptist Press.

Annuity Board Tells Trustees of Growth

DALLAS (BP)--Citing a 10 percent 13th check, retirement benefits in excess of \$18 million and insurance benefits of more than \$16 million, Southern Baptist Annuity Board President Darold H. Morgan called 1979 a year of "significant achievement, ministry and growth" for the board at its annual trustee meeting.

"Despite the incredible pressures of economics, social change and investment variations," said Morgan, in his ninth year as president of the retirement and insurance planning agency, "this is a report of growth in practically every phase of the board's work."

According to Morgan, a key highlight was the mailing of 13th checks amounting to 10 percent of a full year's benefit to most board annuitants in December 1979. The board sends 13th checks in years when investment returns permit.

In 1979 the Annuity Board paid retirement benefits totaling \$18,126,763. Insurance benefits through the agency's church, agency and seminary programs exceeded \$16 million.

Morgan said 602 new churches joined the board's Southern Baptist retirement program in 1979. A total of 2,464 pastors enlisted in the plan and 7,438 members upgraded their programs. He predicted the board would pay benefits to about 20,000 annuitants by the end of the '80s.

Morgan told trustees that maintaining a "sensitivity to service" for the growing agency will be a prime challenge during the 1980s.

"In the face of big growth, the Annuity Board must maintain a sensitivity to the convention's small churches and their ministers and staffs," he remarked.

The trustees gave Morgan their support to do whatever necessary to combat a preliminary ruling last year by the Internal Revenue Service that says the Annuity Board is not an integrated auxiliary of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Such a ruling, if made final, would exclude denominational employees from participation in a church retirement plan, according to board lawyer Gary Nash. Nash said under the IRS definition of church auxiliary, even such an agency as the Executive Committee would not be considered an integrated auxiliary of the Southern Baptist Convention.

An IRS memorandum, a copy of which Nash has filed for under the freedom of information act, says an organization will be considered exclusively religious only if it provides morally or spiritually oriented instruction to the people it serves.

The board will challenge that definition on the grounds that it's too narrow and restrictive and constitutionally doubtful. The board will argue that it's indeed an integral part of the Southern Baptist Convention and that the board meets any reasonable interpretation of the term "exclusively religious."

Funds held in trust (total assets) reached a record \$667,474,987, an increase of \$97.7 million over 1978. Premium income for 1979 totaled \$69.5 million.

At the end of 1979, the board counted 22,879 members in the family benefit section (Plan A) 48,861 in the age security section (Plan B) and 3,941 in the variable benefit fund (Plan C).

D. William Dodson Jr., pastor of First Baptist Church in Martin, Tenn., was re-elected to a second one-year term as chairman.