



# BAPTIST PRESS

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80-85

Ethics, Economics United  
In Nashville Consultation

By Norman Jameson

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--A sobering consultation in Nashville reunited ethics and economics with the help of one of America's foremost ethicists and a retired bank president.

Dewey Presley, former president of First National Bank, Dallas, Texas, told the 30 carefully selected participants "the way things are" in energy, inflation and the economic crisis. Philip Wogaman, dean and professor of social ethics at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C., then related the facts to an appropriate Christian response, a relationship he said had long been divorced.

Pessimistic economist Clifton Grubbs made an electronic appearance, via a taped interview on Bill Moyers Journal, an issue-interview television show. Grubbs' contention that there is no way to stop inflation in the United States without a deep, severe depression was countered by Presley who said that federal deficit spending and monetary practices were the culprits and if corrected, could stop inflation.

But he predicted there would be no reduction in inflation and he forecast average increases in the Consumer Price Index of six to 10 percent through 1990. Presley, a member of Park Cities Baptist Church in Dallas, said with an average annual inflation rate of eight percent, a church budget would have to be \$2,159 in 1990 for every \$1,000 in 1980 just to stay even.

Wogaman enumerated several theories of the cause of inflation including deficit federal spending, production shortages, monopoly price control, cost push from labor, international cartels like OPEC, economic policies and military expenditures.

"Regardless of how it got started," he said, "what keeps it going is the expectations of people. No one wants to be a victim of inflation."

To avoid falling victim, people try to insulate themselves in ways Wogaman called morally and economically unsound, such as investments in art, jewelry and real estate which keep money circulating but which do not produce anything.

Morally, Wogaman said inflation is not necessarily worse than recession, a callous tool the government is using to knock the spokes out of the economy. "Which is the frying pan and which is the fire is hard to determine," he said. He felt low, steady inflation is better than large unemployment.

Nashville businessman John Gifford, who is a trustee of the Baptist Sunday School Board and the Southern Baptist Foundation, put some pragmatic meat on the theoretical bones. Gifford, who has had to fire people because of the economic slowdown, said: "As we talk about the mission of the church, the people who are financing it are having one terrible time making ends meet. You can talk about all the theory you want. I'm talking about survival."

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"These are uniquely difficult times," he told the group, which was almost exclusively denominational employees. "If I'm the only one here who represents the outside world, let me tell you, it's tough. We've got to understand what's going on out there. If we don't understand it, our churches and our people are in trouble, real trouble."

Wogaman said Americans face decreased living standards unless they make the rest of the world bear the cost of their energy extravagant way of life. He continually pointed out that, given the interdependence of the global family, Christians should want the world to be on more equal terms. He cautioned against a heightened nationalism.

"What does it mean for people in India and Bangladesh to have to bid for oil resources for their basic fertilizer needs against Americans who want the gas for their pleasure boats, planes and cars?" Wogaman asked.

The task of the church, he said, is to set the standard for wastelessness and for willingness to change lifestyles. "Just how important is it in our ultimate value system to maintain our lifestyle?" he asked. "Are we willing to sacrifice a generation of young people militarily? ... Christians ought to say 'No.'"

Values is what the consultation, sponsored by the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, boiled down to. Or, as Wogaman said, in times of economic crisis, "How do people perceive their faith by allowing it to shape their lives?"

Even to call the current situation a crisis is wholly dependent on the set of values from which it is perceived. Saudi Arabians do not perceive the ten-fold increase in the cost of oil as a crisis.

From the American perspective, "We are in a crisis," Presley confirmed. Presley, who was president of the first bank to lend money using oil in the ground as collateral, said though there is a current glut of oil, it's been stockpiled because everyone is anticipating an interruption in the world supply. It costs \$60,000 to \$70,000 a day to operate an offshore drilling rig, three times what it cost nine months ago.

He said although consumer credit is in the best shape it's been in for 25 years, industry profits are down by half because consumers stopped buying in response to the government's efforts to slow the economy. The United States will import eight million barrels of oil a day in 1980, at a cost of \$87.6 billion, and forecasters predict a 24 to 30 percent prime lending rate by December 1981.

Yet America is the envy of the world, Presley said, because of its natural resources, which include a 500-year reserve of coal. He said the Saudi Arabian finance minister once told him he would trade every barrel of oil Saudi Arabia had in the ground for one American river.

Presley advocated a rearrangement of the energy system to put primary emphasis on nuclear power to produce electricity, coal for large industry, gas for residential heat and for small industry, and oil for transportation.

"We've got to continue praying and working that the tinderbox of the Middle East will not explode before we're ready," he said. "Unfortunately we're seven to 10 years too late in starting because our political leadership would not bite the bullet."

Wogaman planted warning in front of several traps Christians may fall into when dealing with difficult economic situations. Citing as examples such things as congressional studies and Christmas baskets for the poor, he warned against "ritual function," or doing an inconsequential action while pretending to be attacking a major problem.

Finally, he said, Christians must not surrender to helplessness and hopelessness. They must be engaged in the problem, working with the human family toward solutions.

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Sex Film Petition  
Fights Dead Issue

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INDIANAPOLIS (BP)--The increasing number of pastors being asked to sign petitions in protest of the "Jesus Sex Film" which the petitions say was brought into the United States by Modern People News of Franklin Park, Ill., is a misguided effort, according to a spokesman for the agency.

The petition pastors are faced with urges them to support letter writing campaigns to Modern People News to protest its alleged intention to bring a Jesus sex film to the United States.

When Gene Medaris, editor of the Indiana Baptist, called Modern People News, it flatly denied they had any such intention. In fact, the agency answered the phone with, "No, there is no such film!"

"First of all, let me stress we have no such plans and have printed this fact," said Elaine Shpak of the agency. "About three years ago we ran a brief article about the proposed film's entrance into the U.S. market. We found it was in error and ran retractions of the article. Someone must have found this old news item and failed to check the date on the paper. When mail first began to arrive, we didn't keep it. Then our vice president realized its value, for most of the letters were in protest. For the past six weeks, we have kept the mail and have over 100,000 letters. This morning we received seven more mail sacks in protest. But there is no film to my knowledge."

Another spokesman from the agency said, "The mail is coming from all over the U.S., but primarily from the south, at least there seems to be a heavier concentration from the south. If you can do anything to assure the people and stop this deluge, it will be helpful."

No determination has been made by the agency if this is a hoax being played on churches or misguided efforts of well-meaning people, but all efforts are futile since no problem exists, says Medaris.

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Uganda Calm After Coup;  
Churches Draw Crowds

Baptist Press  
5/27/80

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Conditions in Uganda appeared calm and the spirit of the churches was at an all-time high despite some uncertainty about future elections, said Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board officials who were in the country when the Ugandan army deposed of President Godfrey Binaisa May 12.

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John R. Cheyne, the board's associate consultant for relief ministries, and Earl C. Davis, pastor of First Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn., were in Uganda when the coup occurred. They were there to investigate the possibility of a "total impact" project, which would use Tennessee volunteers for evangelism, relief and development.

Although surface conditions appeared calm, Cheyne said there was a feeling of tension and uncertainty in the country as it prepared for elections sometime in the next three months. Food shortages, which have existed since former president Idi Amin was deposed in April 1979, may soon be over for most of the country, he said. If rains and good crop conditions continue in the south, the first harvest should be within four weeks. Northeastern Uganda is still plagued by drought and famine.

Cheyne and Davis visited Mbale, Soroti, villages north of Soroti, and Jinja, and attended three church meetings, where Cheyne said he saw a great deal of excitement and readiness to respond to opportunities for Christian growth. Cheyne estimated that about 1,000 attended a meeting held jointly by seven churches about 50 miles north of Soroti.

Although churches were eager for the volunteer development and evangelism project, the Baptist Mission (organization of Southern Baptist missionaries) decided that the timing is inappropriate for a major project. They do expect, Cheyne said, to continue requesting individual volunteers.

Three Southern Baptist missionary couples and two volunteers are stationed in the country: Webster and Betty Carroll of West Virginia and Florida, Jim and Linda Rice of Virginia and Harry and Doris Garvin of Texas, and Twyla Martin of Georgia and Kent Malthaner of Oklahoma.

Because the Uganda mission decided not to undertake the volunteer project, Cheyne and Davis cut their visit short after two days and traveled to Upper Volta to investigate the possibility of a similar project there.

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Bold Mission Thrust  
Defined Mathematically

By Dan Martin

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ATLANTA (BP)—What does Bold Mission Thrust really mean?

Avery Willis, supervisor of the adult section of the church training department at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, defined the full implications of the Baptist goal to tell everyone in the world about Christ by the year 2000 at a religious educators conference sponsored by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

"By the year 2000 A.D., the population of the world is predicted to be 6 billion people," Willis said. "If we are going to reach the world for Christ, that means that we will have to witness to 300 million people—more than the population of the United States—every year for the next 20 years."

"Southern Baptists now don't reach (baptize) but about a half million people each year around the world. That's counting about 400,000 in the United States and 100,000 on all of the other mission fields," said the former missionary to Indonesia.

He said simple mathematics show that every one of the 13.4 million Southern Baptists would be responsible for 305 persons but added that "If we are realistic and count only the Baptists who are in church on Sunday, that figure would jump to more than 800 a piece in the next 20 years.

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Willis said that even if we were to experience another Pentecost every day, it would take 5,479 years to reach the six billion people.

"Look at it this way," he added. "If it had started back with Abraham and he won 3,000 people a day, and that rate had continued unabated, it would take to 3000 A.D. to reach 6 billion."

"I am not pessimistic about our ability to reach the world for Christ," he said. "I believe it will only happen by a movement of God; I believe he intends it to happen, but whether it does depends on whether we are willing to let God work through us."

He said his figures were based on addition, but if they were based on geometrical progression—two plus two equals four, then eight, then 16, and so on—the world's population could be reached in  $16\frac{1}{2}$  years.

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Christian Coach  
Uses Influence

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DENVER (BP)—Two years ago, Colorado Women's College Basketball was nowhere.

Then Jim Forkum, a Southern Baptist layman, arrived as athletic director, assistant director of admissions, and most importantly, head basketball coach. He led the team to an impressive 24 — 9 record for the season just ended last year. Before Forkum took the coaching job, the team was 4 — 15.

In fact the team was so impressive this year, the coach was nominated for Coach of the Year by the Stayfree Corporation, and is awaiting word on the winner.

The coach feels his role as a Christian and coach is "not necessarily to be a preacher to the Colorado Women's College students, but to be a good example to them."

"Athletics," he says, "is a good way to demonstrate the Christian life. I think you come into situations almost daily to demonstrate how Christianity works. I am an influence on these students, probably more than any other person they come into contact with in the school."

Forkum isn't bashful about being a Christian. He realizes many coaches don't take the responsibility of their influence seriously. "And it's sometimes hard to draw the line on how important it is to win and in other areas," he says.

"It's too easy in the win-at-all-cost philosophy," Forkum observes, especially when coaches are pressured to produce top programs.

Forkum believes the development of skills, social relationships, and self-determination, among other things, are justification for a school's efforts to build a "model" woman through sports who will function positively in society.

"We're teaching these women that they can work with someone even though they might not like their lifestyle or even their looks," he says.

That relates to the Christian lifestyle. The influence of Jesus Christ on the young women is important to Forkum, and he makes no apology for that.

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