



-- BAPTIST PRESS

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December 31, 1980

80-205

Carter Signs Act Restoring Missionary Tax Exclusion

WASHINGTON (BP)—President Carter signed into law Dec. 24 a bill restoring an income tax exclusion for missionaries and other charitable workers.

The signing followed months of efforts by the Southern Baptist Convention's Foreign Mission Board and other organizations with charitable workers overseas to convince Congress to restore the \$20,000 tax exclusion which had been in effect prior to passage of the Foreign Earned Income Act of 1978.

Congress completed action on the measure just two days before a twice extended deadline granted by the Internal Revenue Service for payment of 1979 taxes. The tax exclusion cleared Congress as an amendment to H.R. 4968, a bill dealing with real estate investment trusts.

The new law will save the Foreign Mission Board about \$1 million annually. Estimates of savings for all charitable organizations range as high as \$25 million annually.

The signing came as no surprise since President Carter supported the measure. The real question for backers of the measure was whether or not it could be moved through the closing days of the lame duck session of Congress.

The overseas tax exemption is granted to employees of agencies such as the FMB solely because they perform "qualified charitable services" in "lesser developed countries," and is not related to the constitutional requirement for church-staff separation.

In making a case for the restoration of the tax exclusion, the Senate Finance Committee report said "charitable employees in developing countries generally are performing services which the United States has a special interest in supporting."

Most Americans living abroad pay taxes to host governments.

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Cancer Claims Life
Of Seminary Prof

Baptist Press
12-31-80

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—William Oscar Thompson, 45, an assistant professor of evangelism at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, died Dec. 28, in a Fort Worth hospital after a four-year battle with cancer.

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Thompson, who had been on the seminary faculty since 1974, was diagnosed as having multiple myeloma, a type of cancer, in September of 1976. In the ensuing years, he worked actively as a pastoral consultant for both the Cancer Counseling and Research Foundation and the Trinity Valley Hospice Association in Fort Worth.

He spoke regularly to cancer societies, medical schools and religious groups about his own experiences, and last year spoke at Harvard University about his ministry to cancer victims.

The professor, a native of Gonzales, Texas, was pastor in Gonzales, Seguin and Arlington prior to joining the seminary faculty. In recent years, he was interim pastor of MacArthur Boulevard Baptist Church in Irving, and River Oaks Baptist Church in Fort Worth.

Thompson was a graduate of Baylor University and Southwestern Seminary, receiving his doctor of philosophy degree from the seminary in December of 1979.

He is survived by his wife, a daughter and his mother.

The family has requested that memorial gifts be sent to the W. Oscar Thompson Scholarship Fund at Southwestern Seminary.

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Alternatives Names
'Best,' 'Worst' Gifts

Baptist Press
12-31-80

FOREST PARK, Ga. (BP)—A school janitor's gift of money to bring home the son of a friend for Christmas won the second annual "Best Christmas Gift" award sponsored by Alternatives, a group dedicated to simpler lifestyles through alternate celebrations.

Entries for "best gift" were to be particularly meaningful, humane, personal, considerate of the earth and reflective of the deeper meaning of Christmas. Winner Betty McKinney, of Martinsville, Ind., described how her friend, Steve Sanders, who works at the school where she is a cook, gave her the money to get her son Mike home for Christmas after he was in the service in Hawaii for 18 months.

Alternatives also sponsored a "Worst Christmas Gift" competition to point out gifts that are particularly extravagant, tasteless, useless, dangerous, or utterly crass.

A woman in Ohio submitted the "worst" gift. She had worked only three months in the past two years, had major surgery, and been forced to move out of her home to a single room apartment and struggle to survive. Her brother and sister-in-law came by for the second time in 10 years to deliver a Christmas present, a small, gaudy picture frame thick with fake gold and fake jewels--and not even with a picture.

The winners of the "best" and "worst" categories will have \$100 given in their names to the charity of their choice.

Runners-up in the "best" category included a hand-made LOVE (Lots Of Valuable Energy) coupon book to their parents from the children of Henrietta Seiler of Covington, Ky. the book includes coupons good for cleaning out the basement, babysitting and other helpful household chores.

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Another runner-up, Fran Stein in St. Paul, Minn., described the gift of her nephew to his whole family--his decision to enter an alcohol treatment center.

Runners-up in the "worst" gift category included a woman in Colorado who was given four 10-ounce bottles of seasoning condiments, all of which contained salt, despite the fact that the giver knew the woman was on a low sodium diet for high blood pressure.

The other runner-up for "worst" gift was a pair of transparent edible candy under-pants with licorice stick laces up the sides, submitted by a woman in Pennsylvania.

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Politics, Jewish Remarks
Top News Stories Of 1980

By Dan Martin

Baptist Press
12-31-80

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Politics--denominational and secular--and the prayers and noses of Jews headed the Top 10 Baptist Press News stories for 1980.

State Baptist newspaper editors and personnel of the six Baptist Press bureaus from around the United States were polled to determine their selections of the most significant news stories of the year.

Overwhelmingly, the Southern Baptists journalists said denominational politics was the top news making event of the year.

Religious politicking, always present but seldom mentioned, absorbed more attention as the year rolled along. It was heightened before, during and immediately after the 1980 meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in St. Louis, Mo.

Adrian Rogers declined to run for a second term as president of the 13.6 million member denomination, opening the way for Bailey Smith of Del City, Okla., who won the presidency on the first ballot, the second such sweeping victory for organized inerrantists in two years.

Politicking continued "hardball" style with charges Rogers "loaded" the committee on resolutions, committee on committee and committee on boards--those over which he had control--with right-wing conservatives.

Also involved in the political life of the denomination is at least one group which is on the record as "going for the jugular" to control the denomination so it can enforce adherence to its interpretation of biblical inerrancy. The group is led by Paige Patterson, president of Criswell Center for Biblical Studies of Dallas, and Paul Pressler, and appeals court judge from Houston.

However, toward the end of the year, groups of "moderates" and "friends of missions" staged get-togethers of their own in an effort to stifle the right wingers. These groups, led by Asheville, N.C., pastor Cecil Sherman, his brother, Bill, of Nashville, and David Matthews of Greenville, S.C., say the issue is not inerrancy, but power and control. They are mounting an "on to Los Angeles" drive to get opponents of the Pressler-Patterson coalition to the 1981 annual meeting in Los Angeles.

Smith, pastor of the 15,000 member First Southern Baptist Church in Del City, a suburb of Oklahoma City, figured in the second top news story of the year. The controversy surrounded highly-publicized remarks he made concerning Jews.

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In late August, Smith spoke to the National Affairs Briefing in Dallas, a right-wing religious-political meeting sponsored by The Roundtable, headed by two Southern Baptists, Ed McAteer of Memphis, and evangelist James Robison of Hurst, Tex.

During the meeting, Smith remarked that "God Almighty doesn't hear the prayer of a Jew." The remark set off controversy when it was circulated by the Anti Defamation League of B'nai B'rith.

Within a few days, another Smith remark--this one made during a sermon in his church--was publicized. In it, Smith said he didn't know why God chose the Jews, and added he thought they (Jews) "have funny-looking noses."

The two remarks set off criticism within and without the denomination. Two institutions and two state conventions passed resolutions disagreeing with Smith.

The controversy led to a meeting between Southern Baptists--led by Smith--and representatives of the Anti Defamation League in New York City, in which the misunderstandings created by the remarks reportedly were smoothed over and passed by.

The third top news story of the year concerned secular politics. The issue raged around the religious right wing--which involved some Southern Baptists--and their influence in the outcome of the 1980 presidential election in which a Southern Baptist president was defeated for re-election.

Two other political stories--doctrinal strife and the St. Louis meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention--placed fourth and fifth in the balloting for the Top 10 stories. Other top ten stories are:

Six: Baptisms. First Southern Baptist Church in Del City, of which Smith is pastor, became the first church in Southern Baptist history to baptize more than 2,000 converts in a single year. Also, baptisms convention-wide were projected to be up 16.5 per cent over 1979, an increase of more than 60,000 for the year.

Seven: Prayer in the public schools. Controversy surrounded an amendment to the U.S. Constitution offered by U.S. Sen. Jesse Helms. After much wrangling and misunderstanding, the measure died in Congress. And, while it is dead for this term, emotionally it is very much alive.

Eight: Refugees. The influx of refugees from around the globe continued. Indochinese refugees continue to come, as did those from Cuba and Haiti. For some, the golden door was shiny, and Americans--Southern Baptists among them--held out open arms. For others--particularly the Haitians--the door was slammed shut, and one political cartoonist remarked the black, French-speaking refugees were "unfortunately, the wrong kind of huddled masses yearning to breathe free."

Nine: Church and state issues. Southern Baptists--among other groups--became familiar with governmental initials such as ERISA, IRS, EEOC, FCC and others. During the year, battles were fought over income taxes on foreign missionaries and challenges to retirement benefits for denominational employes.

Ten: Inflation. The eroding value of the dollar hurt churches at home and abroad. While offerings are at record amounts, inflation hits before the funds can be used to promote missions, education and evangelism.

The ballots were tabulated according to a statistically weighted system designed for Baptist Press by Martin Bradley, manager of research services for the Baptist Sunday School Board.

Former "Mr. Kentucky"
Has Uplifting Testimony

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)—"The Bible tells us that our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and that we should take care of it," says Mark Dycus, a church music student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary who goes to great pains to keep his body in top condition.

A 26-year-old native of Paducah, Ky., Dycus is a body-builder and a former "Mr. Kentucky." He adds: "Of course (the apostle) Paul tells us that physical exercise is okay but spiritual exercise is much more important. We have to keep this in perspective."

Attending Kentucky's Murray State University, Dycus became very serious about weightlifting because he did not feel comfortable in the "college life social scene," he says. He won the first body-building competition he entered, the "Mr. Kentucky" contest.

"I thought at first that to commit myself to the ministry would mean giving up body-building," Dycus says. "I didn't see that the two could co-exist. Body-building is a self-glorification for far too many, but I believe that the danger is in putting body-building first. Put God first and everything falls into place.

"I see now that there are rare opportunities (to witness) through weightlifting that you would not have otherwise. You have a contact point with certain youth. Some who couldn't be reached otherwise will come to you because you train with weights and they are interested."

"All youths need models," Dycus says, emphasizing that often they choose models that do not deserve their high regard.

Dycus, who plans a career in music and youth ministry, insists that keeping in good physical condition increases self-respect and improves communion with God. "Feeling good about yourself will help you feel good about your relationship to God and your relationship to others," he maintains.

"In athletics a lot of people cross the line of healthy self-respect to just pure egoism," he warns. "You have to have a balance between taking care of yourself, feeling good about yourself, having pride in your own abilities and in realizing that God is most important."

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Baylor Receives
Motel in Kilgore

WACO, Texas (BP)—A motel valued at more than \$3 million, has been donated to Baylor University by Mr. and Mrs. Earl Hollandsworth, Longview, Texas, with proceeds designated for a permanent endowed scholarship fund at Baylor.

The Hollandsworths presented to Baylor officials all outstanding capital stock of Kilgore Community Inn Inc., which owns and operates the motel in Kilgore. Baylor President Abner V. McCall said Baylor will continue to operate the motel with proceeds designated for the "Earl and Patsy Hollandsworth Endowed Scholarship Fund."

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