

AlbertMohler.com

# President Carter Responds to My Commentary

Monday, November 14, 2005

Former President Jimmy Carter has responded to my commentary on his book, *Our Endangered Values: America's Moral Crisis*. I stand by my review, but out of respect for Mr. Carter, I will gladly publish his response in full:

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I read Albert Mohler's column on *The Christian Post* about my book, "Our Endangered Values, America's Moral Crisis," and found it difficult to relate his distorted comments with the actual text that was published.

Mr. Mohler writes: "*After tracing a series of crises faced by the United States and the larger world, Mr. Carter places the blame squarely upon conservative Christians.*"

The primary world crises I describe are unwarranted and unjust conflicts, violations of American civil liberties and the torture of prisoners, extreme favoritism of the rich at the expense of poor and working families, violation of international agreements to control nuclear weapons, and a derogation of protection of the environment. These are, as I explain, due to radical and unprecedented changes in our government's basic policies, as contrasted to policies of all previous administrations including those of Dwight Eisenhower, Gerald Ford, Ronald Reagan, George H. W. Bush, as well as Democratic presidents. In none of them do I implicate "conservative Christians" – a group of whom I consider myself to be a member.

As clearly as possible, I describe my own views regarding abortion, gay marriage, the death penalty, and other contentious social issues. Mr. Mohler writes, "As he sees it, America is being ripped apart by the fundamentalists who push their concerns about abortion, marriage, homosexuality, and other issues in the public square." Anyone who reads my book will find this statement to be completely wrong. In fact, I believe that most Christians will agree with my assessments and may find some ideas useful in reducing the sharp divisions among us that threaten our global work as evangelicals.

One other statement of Mr. Mohler deserves correction:

*"Understandably, Mr. Carter blames conservative evangelicals in general - and the leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention in particular - for his devastating loss to Ronald Reagan in the 1980 presidential election."*

I have never believed such a thing, nor expressed this opinion. The American hostages being held in Iran, extremely high inflation rates, and a divided Democratic party were some of the important factors, and the only ones I have ever discussed publicly.

Mr. Mohler is correct in describing my concerns about the changes that have taken place in the Southern Baptist Convention, including the mandatory imposition of the rigid creed that he says he helped draft, the subjugation of women, withdrawal from the Baptist World Alliance and exclusion of others who express slight differences, and the increasingly overt decisions to break down the historic barrier between church and state.

I define the extreme form of fundamentalism that I deplore, which has been adopted by just a very small number of Baptist leaders and has resulted in a severe schism within our denomination.

My book's primary expression of hope is for reconciliation of all Christians so that we can work as brothers and sisters in Christ. As Paul admonished the Galatians, we should remember that we are saved by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ, and not permit the insertion of contentious social issues to separate us from one another.

On a more personal note, I have not met Mr. Mohler but delivered the graduation address at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary prior to his becoming president. I am sure that he and I agree on more religious and political issues than is indicated by this brief exchange of views.

Jimmy Carter

39th President of the United States of America

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Mr. Carter was gracious when he closed by saying, "I am sure that he and I agree on more religious and political issues than is indicated by this brief exchange of views." He is surely correct, and I am thankful for that. It's a place to start.

Mr. Carter's response was submitted to *The Christian Post*, which had also published my commentary: See [my commentary](#) and [President Carter's response](#).

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