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Christian Life Bulletin

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News of The Commission and Its Work

At the annual meeting of this Commission at Ridgecrest in August, 19 of its 30 members gave four days in a careful study of every phase of its work and to the formulation of its future program. The results of this thorough and intense study may be summarized as follows:

(1) The development of the research function of this Commission to include studies in social trends, social services, and social attitudes.

(2) The development of methods of communication that will enable us to share our source materials and findings with those agencies which may desire them.

(3) The projection of these plans calls for an increase in our staff to include an Associate Secretary with technical training in research science, and a secretary to work with him, with sufficient equipment for both of these workers. The increase in the general work of the office would call for one additional worker as office assistant. These three additional workers, with the two persons who compose its present staff, will form a staff personnel of five workers, for whom additional office space and equipment should be provided.

(4) The Commission authorized its Chairman, Dr. Adiel Moncrief, to appoint a committee on personnel and equipment to study the cost involved in this program advance.

(5) This committee brought its report to the Administrative Committee of the Commission on the evening of December 9. They stated that the additional personnel and equipment needed for the enlarged program of this agency would require an increase of \$18,198.00 in our annual budget. This amount, added to the \$21,000.00 already allocated from Convention funds for 1958, would bring the total budget needs to \$39,198.00 in order to project the kind of program this Commission believes is needed by Southern Baptists.

Dr. Adiel J. Moncrief, Chairman of the Christian Life Commission, represented the Commission in a recent meeting of the Churchmen's Council for Decent Publications at Washington. The permanent organization of this group was completed. Plans were made for extending public education on the widespread and entrenched traffic in obscenity and to strengthen law enforcement in connection with this problem.

The Christian Life Commission received laudable commendation from this group for its conferences at Glorieta in August on this traffic. The full statement adopted by our Glorieta workshop is given on Page 4 of this issue of the *Bulletin*.

The Vice-chairman of the Commission, Paul Sanders, attended meetings of a Churchmen's Seminar on Economic Life on February 4-5. Mr. Sanders was invited to this meeting by John W. Thomas, Executive Director of the Council on Social Progress of the American Baptist Convention. The program dealt with the application of Christian principles to various areas of industrial relationships and economic life.

The Commission is to be represented by its Executive Secretary, A. C. Miller, at the Tenth Annual Conference of POAU to be held at Atlanta on February 10-11. He is on the program to discuss "Sectarian Encroachments on the Public Schools." On February 13-14 he will be on the campus of Southeastern Seminary at Wake Forest for meetings in some of the classes and for a chapel address. On January 14 he attended a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Baptist Joint Committee at Washington, which was called to consider some questions of co-ordination in the work of the Joint Committee with the various state and convention groups charged with similar responsibilities.

"SPEAKING THE TRUTH"

By A. C. I

From time to time the Christian Life Commission receives communications from those who express their disagreement with certain policies and procedures in its work. The right to express one's views is in complete accord with the historic position of Baptists on the freedom of thought and of conscience. No member of this agency or of its staff feels that he is beyond criticism. At the same time we believe that criticism which merits serious consideration should be based on fact.

In order to clarify some of the questions that have been raised and to correct some of the statements that have been made, the Commission wishes to give the following information.

1. **Attitude.** Some have said that this Commission has the attitude that those who differ with its views are not Christian. This idea may grow out of the name—The Christian Life Commission. This name is not meant to convey the idea that those who agree with or represent the Commission are the only Christians, nor that its members are specialists above all others in the Christian life. The name was adopted in order to emphasize the fact that moral and social relationships are a vital part of the Christian's life and responsibility.

Again, it is felt by some that those who represent the Commission presume to speak for Southern Baptists. This idea no doubt grows out of newspaper headlines and news stories written by editors and reporters who do not understand the democratic polity or principles of Baptist churches and the relationship of these churches to their denominational organization. No Baptist or group of Baptists, who accept as this Commission does the New Testament teaching on the freedom in Christ of the individual's thought and conscience, would ever attempt to speak for any other Christian or Christian body.

2. **Literature.** The Christian Life Commission has published 27 tracts and booklets on 11 subjects listed alphabetically as follows: the aged; alcohol; Christian citizenship; daily work; family life; gambling; juvenile delinquency; moral problems; pastoral counseling; race relations, and salacious literature.

We have been asked if we distribute these tracts and booklets among our people and their churches without their consent. The facts are: (1) the lit-

erature we publish has been developed in answer to requests for information on these subjects from members of Southern Baptist churches and organizations; and (2) with the exception of the *Christian Life Bulletin* and two other special mailings to pastors and Board members, we send these materials only to those who request them. These requests have come from Southern Baptists in both urban and rural areas throughout the Convention and from missionary stations and military installations abroad.

This procedure for giving information and suggesting interpretations on social issues is in accordance with the program and function of the Christian Life Commission as given it by official action of the Southern Baptist Convention.

3. **Racial Literature.** During the years of 1955 and 1956 a type of literature characterized by false propaganda and sordid caricatures of the Negro people began to flood the South. A survey of this literature clearly shows that most of it was sent into this region from the North and West. Among the main points of origin were New York, New Jersey, (St. Louis) Missouri, Colorado, and the West Coast. Large quantities of this printed poison were periodically shipped to points of racial tension for distribution throughout these areas.

One of these publications was *The White Sentinel*, published by a man who writes in one of his own pamphlets: "I became one of the leaders of the Young Communist Movement. I sat on the inner circle. I was taught how to kill, terrorize, promote strikes, and ridicule religion." In October of 1956 this man was arrested on a morals charge involving a 15-year-old boy, and in February of 1957 he was convicted in court for the offense of sodomy and sentenced to a two-year term in the Missouri state penitentiary.

Other literature of this kind came out of Denver, prepared and distributed by a man who writes thus in his autobiography, *Confession of a Stalin Agent*: "I served the communist party with fanatical zeal for several years."

Another publication called *Common Sense* originated in New Jersey. The House Committee on Un-American Activities stated in a report on December 17, 1954: "*Common Sense* represents itself as 'the nation's anti-communist paper' . . .

TRUTH IN LOVE"

C. MILLER

Such patriotic claims provide poor disguise, however, for some of the most vitriolic hate propaganda ever to come to the attention of this committee." The major portion of one of its issues contained a defense of the late Robert H. Best. Best was an American newsman who broadcast Nazi propaganda in Germany during the war, and who was convicted in the U. S. District Court at Boston for treason and sentenced to life imprisonment.

The spread of this type of printed material fed the flames of racial violence and called for an informative and wholesome literature to counteract it.

4. Special Funds. In view of the urgent demands made upon the Christian Life Commission by the developments described above, and at a time of the greatest moral decline in the history of our nation, the funds allocated to this agency by the Convention were not sufficient to enable it to meet its responsibilities. It was necessary for the Commission to go afield for additional funds.

One of the sources from which the Christian Life Commission solicited and received additional funds for its work was The Fund for the Republic. The widespread propaganda in opposition to this Fund has given rise to some criticism of this Commission. This propaganda, however, is based on several assumptions that have no basis in fact. These false assumptions are given below in italics and followed by the statement of documented facts:

(1) It is claimed that The Fund for the Republic is listed by the Attorney General of the United States as a subversive organization.

The truth is: A letter direct from the office of the Attorney General of the U. S. states that The Fund for the Republic is not now and never has been on the Attorney General's list as a subversive organization.

(2) A second statement repeatedly made in this propaganda is that The Fund for the Republic is listed as a subversive organization by the Congressional Committee on Un-American Activities.

The truth is: In the full listings of subversive organizations and communist fronts as released by the Congressional Committee on Un-American

Activities in House Document No. 226 under date of January 2, 1957, The Fund for the Republic is not listed or even mentioned on any of its 169 pages, including the index.

(3) A third claim made in the propaganda against The Fund for the Republic is that it is a communist front.

The truth is: This claim is not supported by the listing of the Attorney General nor the listings of the published findings of the Congressional Committee on Un-American Activities.

5. Additional Facts. In reference to some of the criticism directed against the Christian Life Commission, some additional facts need to be given:

(1) The Christian Life Commission has received a total of \$30,000 from The Fund for the Republic—an original grant of \$15,000 received in June of 1956 to be used in 1956-57, and a terminal grant of \$15,000 received in March of 1957 to be used in 1957-58. The Commission solicited and accepted these additional funds to supplement its budget funds for the cultivation of racial understanding and reconciliation in keeping with the Christian conscience and responsibility.

(2) On the basis of our request, The Fund for the Republic gave us financial help. This Fund has never sought to exercise any control over the use of these funds, nor has it sought to direct or influence the Christian Life Commission in any way.

(3) This whole transaction by the Commission has been open, forthright, and aboveboard. The initial news of the acceptance of this money was released through the Baptist Press and printed in 11 state denominational papers. In December of 1956, this announcement was published on the front page of the *Christian Life Bulletin* and sent to above 25,000 active pastors and 500 other leaders over the Southern Baptist Convention.

(4) In soliciting additional funds for its work the Christian Life Commission has done what any other agency is permitted to do in accordance with the Financial Plan of the Southern Baptist Convention. Moreover, the money received from this Fund is just as worthy as the millions of dollars that have been accepted from its parent organization, The Ford Foundation, by Baptist institutions throughout the states affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.

STATEMENT ON THE TRAFFIC IN OBSCENE LITERATURE

The following statement was submitted to and adopted by the Conference on the Traffic in Obscene Literature conducted by the Christian Life Commission at Glorieta, August 8-14, 1957:

"We realize the grave problem that confronts the people of our nation in the high tide of pornographic, obscene, and indecent literature that is published and circulated, openly and secretly, throughout the land.

We recognize that such salacious publications, many of them directed toward children and young people of high school and college age, portraying immorality and glorifying laxity in sex relations, are responsible for much of the increase in juvenile delinquency and crime during recent years.

We recognize that the tide of indecent literature indicates a sickness in society that can be healed only by moral and spiritual forces.

We therefore earnestly recommend that Southern Baptist pastors, church leaders and members in every community unite in a crusade to drive obscene publications from circulation, and to sponsor literature that is clean and wholesome. We recommend that the crusade be carried on in the following areas:

1. In our homes, where Christian principles and character should be constantly exemplified and exalted.

2. In our churches, through all the denominational and local agencies. We urge that our church publications deal more candidly with the sex problems of youth so that they may have guidance that will immunize them to the poison of pornography. We urge our churches to develop wholesome recreation programs for youth as an integral part of their ministry to the community.

3. In our communities, in co-operation with individuals and organizations representing all other religious faiths, and with all groups interested in public decency and community betterment, such as the Parent-Teachers Associations, civic clubs

and social agencies. We urge co-operation with the Churchmen's Council for Decent Publications in efforts toward extending public education and strengthening law enforcement in connection with this problem."

IMPORTANT NEW BOOKS

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age, by a Co-Founder; (Harper & Bros.). Here is an inside and wide-angled view of Alcoholics Anonymous, a movement unique in its spiritual impact and social influence. It is for all who are interested to know the history of how A.A. started, how its principles of Recovery, Unity, and Service were evolved, and by what means this fellowship has grown and spread its message around the world.

The Church Faces the Isms, Arnold B. Rhodes, Editor; (Abingdon Press). What is the true nature of the competing claims on men today? How can the church and its members apply the Christian faith to our modern world of competing allegiances? Christians—especially church leaders—will find this analysis a practical and useful help as they seek to deal fairly and effectively with groups and movements which challenge the larger denominations of Protestantism today.

With All deliberate Speed, Don Shoemaker, Editor; (Harper & Bros.). This is the story—dispassionately told, accurate, and fair—of desegregation as it has proceeded in the South in the turbulent period since the U. S. Supreme Court's decision of 1954. The distinguished writers who tell the story have had a single aim: to measure with facts and objective analysis the degree of compliance or noncompliance with the Court's constitutional decree.

This account reveals in perspective differences between border areas and the deep South, the problems peculiar to both urban and rural localities, how the colleges and universities have faced the problem, and the substance of state legislation bearing on the issue. This book will be of fundamental importance to all who are concerned with the future of America's schools.

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