



## REPORT FROM THE CAPITAL

### JOINT CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC RELATIONS

The Northern Baptist Convention  
The Southern Baptist Convention  
The National Baptist Convention  
The National Baptist Convention, Inc.

J. M. Dawson, Executive Secretary



E. HILTON JACKSON, Chairman

October, 1946

W. B. LIPPHARD, Secretary

#### OFFICE ESTABLISHED

On May 30, 1946 at a meeting of the Joint Conference Committee on Public Relations representing Northern, Southern and the two National Negro Baptist Conventions it was voted to establish an Executive office in Washington with a paid director in charge. This action was fully authorized by the cooperating Conventions, and was in fulfillment of a long cherished expectation.

J. M. Dawson, pastor of the First Baptist Church, Waco, Texas and Acting President of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee, was elected to fill the newly-created position. After due consideration he accepted, and his work began August 1, 1946, although he did not open the office until September 1.

Throughout August Dr. Dawson was meeting engagements about the country, notably at the Virginia Baptist Assembly at Massanetta Springs, at the Southern Baptist Assembly at Ridgecrest, N. C., and with the First Baptist Church in Washington, D. C. During the month he was fortunate to find a place to live, at 2904 P Street, N. W. Coincidentally he obtained rooms for the office at Baptist Headquarters, 715 Eighth Street, N. W. Arrangements also were made for securing a competent office secretary. Thus on September 1 the work was started on a scale in a measure commensurate with the services to be rendered.

#### WHAT IS ENVISIONED

The full scope of activities of the office has doubtless not yet been fully determined. It will be discerned with developing insights and in the light of actual experience. The existing sub-committees have definite duties assigned to them as follows:

"1. The Executive Committee.

"This Committee shall include the officers of the Joint Conference Committee and the chairmen of other regular committees; shall act upon all matters requiring attention between the sessions of the Joint Conference Committee and shall advise the Executive Director on policies and procedures.

"2. The Finance Committee.

"This Committee shall prepare an annual budget, pass upon expenditures and present to the Joint Conference Committee a statement of financial needs to be brought to the attention of the supporting conventions.

"3. The Committee on Religious Liberty.

"This Committee shall co-operate and advise with the Executive Director on all matters that involve the preservation of religious freedom within our own country and in its extension throughout the world.

"4. The Committee on Domestic Situations.

"This Committee shall assist the Executive Director in the presentation of the Baptist point of view whenever our principles are endangered by proposed legislation, either state or national, and to join in a protest to the proper authorities whenever Baptist principles are being violated by either municipal, state, or national governments.

"5. The Committee on World Issues.

"This Committee shall seek the fullest information upon world situations that have bearing upon the extension of evangelical Christianity, and in association with the Executive Director shall seek to correlate the activities of other religious, fraternal and civic organizations and agencies insofar as these activities coincide with the efforts of the Joint Conference Committee on Public Relations.

"6. The Committee on Nationwide Baptist Co-operation.

"This Committee shall assist the Executive Director in gaining the effective support of all the agencies of the supporting conventions and in the winning of the cooperation of all Baptist bodies not at present represented in the Joint Conference Committee on Public Relations.

"The facilities of the office of the Executive Director shall be made available for the chairmen of the above-named committees."

Comprehensive as the above may seem it does not indicate completely how the Executive Secretary will carry on. Whatever policies may be adopted by the Committee as a whole, or maybe attempted by the Executive Secretary himself, it appears that he will be performing the following duties:

1. The Executive Secretary, or Director as the Joint Conference Committee may choose to call him, will give diligent attention to the duties outlined in Sections 3, 4, 5 and 6 with respect to the work of the Public Relations sub-committees

2. He will place himself at the service of all boards and agencies of eleven million Baptists in our four groups, who in the legitimate performance of their duties in connection with the vast ministries of the denomination must have frequent conferences with different departments of the government. This will save these agents of the denomination great sums of money, exhausting trips and much anxiety. A common office in Washington while acquiring acquaintance and experience in regard to these contacts may thus serve, is most desirable, if not imperative.

3. He will, if within his power and falling within the province of moral and religious welfare work, render service to individual Baptists, who may need to contact the government.

4. He will conduct research into all public questions with which our denomination is directly concerned and make suitable report of his findings. In this con-

nection, it is appropriate to mention the sending forth of an informing publication at intervals to all Baptist editors, Executives and others to whom it should go.

5. He will prepare releases to secular newspapers and news agencies of such actions on the part of this Committee or of cooperating Baptist bodies as in his judgment will advance the objectives which they seek.

6. He will attend such conventions of our people, especially general--Northern, Southwide or National--as will enable him to inform our people on matters related to government about which they are concerned.

7. He will work on high levels with other religious and civic groups, without commitments to organic union or impingement of Baptist principles but when there is a common interest and the desirability of common action. In such cooperation Bishop Oxnam, president of the Federal Council of Churches and Dr. Louis D. Newton, president of the Southern Baptist Convention some time ago were able to mobilize United Protestant sentiment in regard to Myron C. Taylor representing the United States at the Vatican and to secure a promise from President Truman that as soon as the peace is proclaimed Taylor would be removed.

8. He will cooperate with the Baptist World Alliance in matters agreed upon and promote the Baptist principles and interests insofar as the Baptists of the United States have relations with the Baptists of other nations. The Executive Secretary will attend the Baptist World Congress in Copenhagen next July, and has been invited to address the Congress on the subject of the United Nations.

9. He will serve as a representative of the Baptists on any government commission, without pay from the government, where he can do so consistently with the Baptist principles and policies. In line with this purpose, he has accepted appointment by Secretary Forrestal of the United States Navy on the Navy's Civilian Advisory Commission, in company with many distinguished people of the Nation, and with considerable outlay of time, in order to render any humble contribution in the way of morale and welfare, and in the education of reserves and preparation of men for return to civilian life.

Any summary of this list of services to be rendered will doubtless impress everyone with the extent of them and the necessity for an adequate equipment in office for rendering them. Ours is a very modest budget, quite small in comparison with others, but presumably, it is our hope, that upon a convincing demonstration of the value of these services the cooperating agencies will provide sufficient money to perform them.

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#### Personnel of The Committee

The Joint Conference Committee on Public Relations is made up of members appointed by the cooperating Conventions. It is to be regretted that the new members of the two Negro Conventions have not been received in time for publications. The President of the National Baptist Convention, Inc. is Dr. D. V. Jemison, Selma, Ala., who in a recent letter assures cordial support. The President of the National Baptist Convention is Dr. G. L. Prince, Galveston, Texas who has received assurance of our appreciation in respect to the sympathetic cooperation of his constituents.

The members from Southern Baptist Convention are:

Walter P. Binns, Chairman, Liberty Missouri  
E. Hilton Jackson, Suite 626, Woodward Bldg., Washington, D. C.  
Rupert F. Naney, Oklahoma City, Okla.  
E. H. DeGroot, Jr., 923 Colorado Bldg.; Washington, D. C.  
T. L. Holcomb, Nashville, Tenn.  
Rufus W. Weaver, 3900 Connecticut Avenue, Washington, D. C.  
M. T. Rankin, 2037 Monument Avenue, Richmond, Virginia  
N. I. Gressett, Fidelity Bldg., Charles and Lexington, Baltimore, Md.  
Louie D. Newton, Druid Hills Baptist Church, Atlanta, Georgia  
Brooke Hays, Arkansas  
Ellis A. Fuller, Louisville, Kentucky  
J. M. Broughton, North Carolina  
C. O. Johnson, Third Baptist Church, St. Louis 3, Missouri  
L. L. Gwaltney, 515 Chamber of Commerce Bldg., Birmingham, Ala.  
S. F. Lowe, Atlanta, Georgia  
J. B. Lawrence, Atlanta, Georgia  
T. J. Watts, Dallas, Texas

The members of Northern Baptist Convention are:

H. R. Bowler, 152 Madison Avenue, New York 16, N. Y.  
D. B. Cloward, 152 Madison Avenue, New York 16, N. Y.  
C. W. Cranford, Calvary Baptist Church, Washington, D. C.  
W. W. Everett, Woodward and Lathrop, Washington, D. C.  
J. C. Hazen, 152 Madison Avenue, New York 16, N. Y.  
W. B. Lippard, 152 Madison Avenue, New York 16, N. Y.  
Gordon Palmer, Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Lancaster Ave. and City Line,  
Overbrook, Philadelphia, Pa.  
Gordon Poteat, Crozer Theological Seminary, Chester, Pa.  
E. H. Pruden, First Baptist Church, 16th and O Streets, N. W., Washington, D. C.  
I. M. Rose, First Baptist Church, Philadelphia, Pa.  
L. W. Smith, 1701-3 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia 3, Pa.  
M. C. Stith, 715 - 8th St., N. W., Washington, D. C.  
S. I. Stuber, 152 Madison Avenue, New York 16, N. Y.  
E. B. Willingham, 4212 - 18th St., N. W., Washington, D. C.  
J. R. Wilson, 152 Madison Avenue, New York 16, N. Y.

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#### FALL MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE

As this issue of REPORT FROM THE CAPITAL is being sent forth, the regularly scheduled Fall meeting of the Joint Conference Committee is being held at District of Columbia Baptist Headquarters. The agenda calls for organization, election of officers for the new year, introduction of the Executive Secretary and his response unfolding his conception of his task, reports of standing committees, report of Dr. Louie D. Newton on his visit to Russia, report on Hinton Harris' "History of Religious Liberty," report on Baptist World Congress in Copenhagen and other matters of importance. Press releases will later inform our people of the more pertinent actions of the Committee.

### CATHOLICS PROFESS LEADERSHIP AGAINST COMMUNISM

In the present tense World situation, relations between the United States and Russia are sorely strained. Whatever grievances Russia may have against us -- and her complaints are numerous -- the people of the United States are most gravely concerned over Russia's Communism with all it connotes. With Baptists a major anxiety is whether Russia is minded to grant full religious freedom -- freedom not only of worship, but freedom to teach, to mission, and to exercise such freedom of speech as comports with real freedom of conscience.

The Pope has claimed, his followers have loudly repeated, and many Protestants have fallen for the Catholic claim -- some Baptists also -- that the sole hope of defeating the errors and wrongs of Communism lies in the Catholic Church! Considering the record of Catholicism in respect to religious liberty through the ages this is a stupendous claim.

Yet we witness the spectacle of some very prominent evangelicals, including according to current report, Editor Oursler of the Readers Digest -- quitting the church of their life-time faith to join up with the Catholics in credulous confidence in the Catholic claim. One Baptist editor says, badly as he hates Communism, he had rather trust Stalin than the Pope on the issue. But certainly no such alternative choice is demanded. Our people, whatever their political alignment, or preferences for political leaders and theories, would in our judgment do well to study the world situation with a view to ascertaining FACTS and not sustaining PREJUDICES, and in a spirit of courage, honesty, and patience, PRAYING FOR and WORKING FOR a Christian solution of the difficult problem of stable and enduring peace in a World commonly asserted to be menaced with the threat of utterly destructive war. It is rather fatuous, if not mischievous, to be forever crying war, war, no matter how really dire and stubborn the obstacles to peace. We managed to find a way to live in the same world with Russia under the infamous Czaristic regime; surely Christian intelligence, heroically attacking the mountainous troubles of the present, can make a way to stable peace without the sacrifice of priceless values. Were is our faith? Faith in God is ever creative, can turn things hoped for, not seen as yet, into the substance of glorious reality, whereas pessimism and defeatism invariably invite disaster.

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FROM DR. W. O. LEWIS, SECRETARY BAPTIST WORLD ALLIANCE

I am very glad Dr. Dawson has come to Washington. I have known him many years. I have met him at Conventions and Conferences. I have been in his church in Waco. I have read things he has written. But our contact with each other was only fleeting. Although I shall more than likely be away from Washington much of the time from now until the next meeting of the Baptist World Alliance, it is a satisfaction to know that when I am in Washington I can have the pleasure of seeing him often. I like to exchange views with him.

But there is another reason why I am glad he has come which is in a sense less personal. His coming is an indication that the Joint Conference Committee on Public Relations is being put on a more solid basis. This Committee has met from time to time in recent years. But there was not the continuity in its work that such important work demanded. There were investigations to be carried on and reports to be prepared. Much of that work needed to be done in Washington. Few members of the Committee had

the time to do such work. Though imperfectly done, the work of the Committee has been well worth while. The very existence of such a Committee is significant. Representatives of Northern Baptists, of Southern Baptists, and of Negro Baptists came together to discuss matters of public interest in a friendly manner. So far as my knowledge goes, this is the only arrangement the Baptists of the United States have for regular conference with each other. There have always been things we needed to do together and through this Committee we have worked together. We become united more by working at a common task than by any other manner. From now on our working together will be more efficient.

There is one point where the aim of the Committee and that of the Baptist World Alliance coincide. We are both interested in religious liberty. One of the aims of the Alliance is to promote freedom of religion everywhere in the world. Baptists have been among the most persistent and most consistent advocates of freedom of religion in the past. We rejoice that others have also joined with us in the fight for freedom in the past, and others stand with us now. But the battle for full religious liberty is not yet won. Insidious foes to this idea are active. We as Baptists have our testimony to bear. The Alliance will undertake to carry on the struggle in other countries than our own. But this is one world. The Alliance is interested in any encroachment on religious liberty in America. And American Baptists are interested in any effort to bring full freedom to other lands. The Alliance and the Committee can help each other.

I hope that every effort may be made to get a large delegation from all sections of our country to the meeting of the Alliance in Copenhagen July 29 - August 3, 1947. The question of the relation of the Alliance to some of the large interdenominational organizations will be discussed. Relief and rehabilitation will have a place on the program. We shall hear from mission fields all over the world. The young people and the women and other groups will have special conferences. And best of all, we shall meet brethren from whom we have been out off by the war.

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#### FEDERAL MONEY FOR SECTARIAN SCHOOLS

There is coming up from New Jersey a case before the Supreme Court in which decision will be made as to whether state funds may be appropriated for transportation of pupils to parochial schools. Such appropriation is being made in California, we understand. In Texas evangelicals defeated a bill before the legislature which would have provided for parochial schools in the same manner. Baptists are deeply interested in the present instance, because it is likely that a proposal will be made to Congress in which Federal money may be allowed for such transportation.