

New Address -- 1628 16th Street, N. W.

February 12, 1948.

PROTESTANTS AND OTHER AMERICANS UNITED

Following careful conferences of leading churchmen, gathered from all sections of the United States, PROTESTANTS AND OTHER AMERICANS UNITED FOR SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE has come into being. The first consultation took place in the National Baptist Memorial Church, May 15, 1947, at the call of the Baptist Joint Conference Committee's Executive Secretary. The proposal there received indorsement, and a second consultation, much larger in representation, was held in the Calvary Baptist Church, Washington, October 13, 1947. An adjourned session was conducted in the Methodist Temple, Chicago, November 20, 1947, at which time organization was voted and officers chosen as follows:

President, Edwin McNeill Poteat, President Colgate-Rochester Divinity School

Vice-Presidents: John A. Mackay, President Princeton Theological Seminary;
Bishop G. Bromley, Oxnam, New York; Charles Clayton Morrison,
Former Editor The Christian Century.

Recording Secretary, J. M. Dawson, Washington, D. C.

Treasurer, E. H. DeGroot, Jr., Washington, D. C.

The officers and nine others were named as an Executive Committee, and a National Advisory Council of one hundred and twenty-five was authorized.

On January 12, A Manifesto, signed by the President, the three Vice-Presidents and Dr. Louis D. Newton, President of the Southern Baptist Convention, was released to the press of the Nation. Notwithstanding its great length, consisting of fourteen typewritten pages, many publications, notably the New York Times, The Christian Science Monitor, The Churchman, The Christian Century, carried every word of it. According to Dr. Clyde Miller of Columbia University, University Teacher's College, it received the greatest nationwide press coverage of any religious news event within the last quarter of a century. Immediately hundreds of letters to headquarters began to pour in from all parts of the country, offering moral support and containing generous contributions in money. It is believed now by the officers that the full \$100,000 needed for the first year's operations can be secured. A first edition of 100,000 copies of the Manifesto has been printed, and it is expected to run into a circulation exceeding a million. It is expected that mighty mass meetings, such as the one in the Great Municipal Auditorium, San Antonio, Texas, to be held March 21, and sponsored by the Baptist Churches of that city, to which the Baptist Public Relations Secretary has been invited to speak, will be held all over the country, with a view to informing the people. Legal assistance will be extended local hot-spots, like that in New Mexico. A program of action is contemplated.

INVESTIGATION IN NEW MEXICO

Upon request of Dr. J. B. Rounds, Superintendent of Indian work for the Southern Baptist Convention, the Public Relations Secretary went to New Mexico for conferences involving the freedom of religion in the pueblos, a visit which extended over the week end, February 8. He met our missionaries, and with many of the Indians at the Indian Center in Albuquerque, where he heard numerous complaints of religious discrimination, even of persecution, inflicted by the Roman Catholics. These complaints will be reduced to writing and sworn to. Counsel was offered as to governmental contacts and procedure. The Secretary spoke to an audience of Indian believers, addressed the government's Indian high school, and attended a meeting of nineteen tribal governors. He spent two days in the state capital at Santa Fe in important conferences about public school matters, and in connection with the celebration of the visit of the Freedom Train there, preached on religious liberty in the First Baptist Church, which he organized in 1917. He also preached in the strong First Church, Albuquerque, returning by plane Sunday night.

*

NEW MEXICO SCHOOL SITUATION

Incidental to a denominational visit to New Mexico, the Public Relations Secretary made a searching inquiry into the public-parochial school situation at Dixon, characteristic of twenty odd other places in that state. He did this at the request of PROTESTANTS AND OTHER AMERICANS UNITED FOR SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE. Despite a clear, explicit statute among the laws of New Mexico upholding separation of church and state, almost incredible violations are occurring there under the aggression of the Roman Catholic Church, condoned or tolerated by the state's officials. Schools which are listed in the church's records as parochial schools are entirely supported by public taxation. In many of them textbooks pertaining to the Catholic faith are paid for out of tax funds. Catholic editions of secular textbooks for public schools are paid for by the state. Garbed nuns and priests are the teachers. Religious insignia decorate the walls of the school rooms, Protestant children are graded on the catechism and punished for failure to attend mass. Many other practices on the same order were reported. Steps are being taken to reform these conditions.

INQUIRY IN CINCINNATI

Accepting an invitation to spend a week-end at the University of Cincinnati, preaching and lecturing in the University Christian Mission, the Public Relations Secretary will utilize the visit to the Ohio city to make diligent inquiry into conditions there involving the question of separation of church and state. A recent editorial in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch said:

"Those who think this issue of possible sectarian division is of little consequence need to know the harrowing experience of North College Hill, Ohio, a suburb of Cincinnati. In this once pleasant town of 7500, Catholic and Protestant lines were drawn on support of schools and a parochial school was in and out of the public school system depending on which group had three or five seats on the school board. The tensions, animosities and ill-advised acts were such that the executive committees of the National and Ohio Education Associations at one time described the North College Hill system as 'one in which no professional teacher can carry on his work efficiently and happily.'

"If North College Hill is not to be 'a pre-view of divided America', as one writer has described it, this disturbing tendency will have to be halted. Roman Catholics, Protestants, Jews and others will have to join in greater number than ever before in a common effort to protect the religious freedom of all from the involvements, and hence the regulations, of state."

* * *

INVASION OF NEW ENGLAND

On the week-end of February 20-23, the Public Relations Secretary will on Friday evening address the Baptist students in Yale Divinity School, on Sunday preach twice in Dudley Street Baptist Church, Boston; on Monday morning speak to the Baptist pastors of Boston; and on Tuesday address a convocation of the Andover-Newton Theological Seminary. The occasion for this invasion is to discuss the issues of church and state with which the Joint Conference Committee is concerned. There is much evidence to show the interest of New England in these matters is more keen than in any other section of the Nation. This is not to suggest, however, that interest is lacking elsewhere, for the people are becoming aroused from coast to coast.

* * *

REPORTS AT SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING

At the semi-annual meeting on February 17, the following reports will be submitted to the Joint Conference Committee:

1. Executive Committee, E. Hilton Jackson, Chairman: The Committee's brief before the Supreme Court in the Champaign, Illinois case.
2. Treasurer's Report and Audit, W. W. Everett
3. Foreign Affairs, M. T. Rankin, Chairman; Displaced Persons; European Recovery.
4. Domestic Matters, E. H. Pruden, Chairman: UMT and Educational Bills in Congress.
5. Religious Liberty, E. B. Willingham, Chairman: The International Bill of Rights; Protestants and Other Americans United For The Separation of Church and State.
6. Cooperation, J. C. Eazen, Chairman: The Conventions and the Budget; The Joint Conference Committee's report to the Conventions.
7. The Executive Secretary's Report: Activities and Recommendations.

In connection with this meeting a breakfast at the Hotel Mayflower will be arranged on Tuesday morning at a joint conference between representatives of the North-east Baptist Convention's Council on Christian Social Progress and representatives of the Joint Conference Committee, Harold Husted, acting as Chairman, and report of findings will be submitted to the full Joint Conference Committee.

It is felt that the meeting, with these reports, will prove the most significant since organization.

FIRST MEETING IN THE BAPTIST BUILDING

The semi-annual meeting of the Joint Conference Committee, February 17, 1948, marks the first such meeting to be held in the new office. It is likely that members will feel that this office, which has never been outfitted but has existed with borrowed property, (graciously allowed by the office of the Baptist Convention of the District of Columbia) should now be suitably furnished. It will be noted that our office is on the fourth floor, in a suite of three elegant rooms. An elevator has been ordered, and when installed will make this suite most desirable. We feel that a most significant step was taken, when the District Convention, the Baptist World Alliance, and the Joint Conference Committee were housed in this beautiful building on "The Street of the Churches". Baptist prestige in the National Capital has undoubtedly risen to a new high. Come to see us at 1628 Sixteenth Street, Northwest.

RETIREMENT OF TREASURER EVERETT

Mr. W. W. Everett, Chairman of the Northern Baptist Convention's Joint Conference Committee group, who has for a number of years served us most helpfully, is retiring from the management of the Woodward and Lothrop Department Store in Washington and from all business employments. He has offered his resignation as our Treasurer. This honored member of the Calvary Baptist Church, Washington, has richly merited the high esteem of his colleagues on this Committee. They have deeply appreciated his efficient attention of our business affairs, and profoundly regret to lose him from this important service, but hope for his continued work as a member of the Joint Conference Committee. The ministry of able layman has always been cherished by this Committee, and their membership on it will doubtless always be sought.

INTERNATIONAL BILL OF RIGHTS

As is perhaps well known, the Commission on Human Rights acting for the United Nations, is now engaged in drafting an International Bill of Rights to be submitted for adoption by the General Assembly of the United Nations. Dr. Stanley I. Stuber, of our Joint Conference Committee, is Chairman of the Commission on World Crusade for Religious Liberty, appointed by the Baptist World Alliance in Copenhagen. Dr. E. B. Willingham is Chairman of the Joint Conference Committee subcommittee on Religious Liberty. Both have recently made known to Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, Chairman of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Baptist ideas of what should be included in the article guaranteeing religious liberty.

AT LENGTH "THIS FREEDOM NOW"

As heretofore stated in these pages, the Public Relations Secretary, at the request of one of the participating Conventions and upon a rising demand, has prepared the manuscript for a volume to be entitled THIS FREEDOM NOW. Circumstances have delayed the publication up to this time, perhaps fortunately, for developments in the meantime have called for the writing of additional chapters and events have occurred to make the book far more pertinent than at first anticipated. Arrangements have now been perfected whereby the book, which will contain approximately two hundred pages, will be printed in a large initial edition.