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SIGNIFICANT MEETING OF THE JOINT CONFERENCE COMMITTEE SEPTEMBER 29

The semi-annual session on this date proved to be the most sustained in interest, united in voting, and satisfactory in the progressive development of the Joint Conference Committee on Public Relations which it has yet held. It was well attended and continued throughout the day. Elsewhere highlights of the Executive Secretary's report are indicated. The feature of this meeting which evoked the deepest concern was the reports from the various subcommittees: Religious Liberty, E. B. Willingham, Chairman; World Situations, Dr. M. T. Rankin, Chairman; Domestic Situations, Dr. E. H. Pruden, Chairman; Cooperation, Dr. J. C. Hazen, Chairman. Some extracts are given from these several reports in another place.

The Committee on Domestic Situations was asked to give further consideration to the draft legislation and such related problems as to the status of conscientious objectors and other aspects of religious liberty, and report at the February meeting. The Executive Secretary was instructed to renew approaches on behalf of the Joint Conference Committee to all other Baptist bodies in the United States inviting them to participate in the work of the Committee, in an effort to be thoroughly representative in actions on behalf of all the Baptists of the United States. Solicitude also was felt for a larger participation by the Negro Baptists of both National Conventions. Dr. Dawson reported enthusiastically his attendance upon the meeting of the National Baptist Convention, Incorporated, in Houston, Texas, where some 15,000 Negroes were present, and the cordial reception given his address. The Committee was authorized to extend its full cooperation with the Baptist World Alliance in behalf of the movement by Baptists in Spain to obtain from the government larger religious liberty.

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HIGHLIGHTS IN EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT

The following quotations are taken from the report from the Executive Secretary, Dr. J. M. Dawson, offered September 29, at the Joint Conference Committee semi-annual session:

"1. Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State. Having instituted this organization, it became necessary for us to direct it until a suitable executive officer could be chosen. Accordingly your Executive Secretary served, without pay from POAU, until September 1, when Dean Glenn Archer of the Washburn University Law School took over. Except for the work of POAU's Treasurer in his office, 524 Colorado Building, all the activities of the organization were carried on in our suite of offices. This involved supervising an office secretary, several stenographers and mailing clerks; holding conferences with interested parties; preparing important literature; and responding to numerous requests for addresses. Our treasurer's report will show that POAU reimbursed us for actual expenditures, and by assuming cost of certain office furnishings paid an equivalent of just rent. I am happy to point out that POAU has met with a most gratifying reception from the American public and is apparently realizing its objectives in a commanding way."

"2. Meetings with the Sustaining Conventions. The Northern Convention in Milwaukee and the Southern Convention in Memphis in connection with programs invited the Secretary to present the work of the Committee, the latter Convention in addition setting apart an hour for an address on religious liberty by Dr. Walter Pope Binns, chairman of the Southern Public Relations group. For the first time the National Baptist Convention Incorporated, invited the Secretary to address its annual session, paying his travel

expenses to and from Houston, Texas. The meeting was in the Sam Houston Coliseum and attended by a reported 15,000 messengers. The Secretary did not find it possible to go to Oakland, California to the meeting of the National Baptist Convention of America which was held the same week."

"3. Enlarged Literature Provisions. From the inception of the Committee, the creation and circulation of suitable and adequate literature bearing specifically on our work and objectives has been mandatory. If this had not been envisioned, the demands both from our Baptist constituency and the general public would have made the need obvious. Fortunately during the past several months the Committee has been able to supply this with only a slight increase in expenditures. The items include the following: (1) additional copies of Report From The Capital, to satisfy the rising call, (2) publication of the Secretary's book, Separate Church and State Now, which came off the press September 8, and has already had at this early date a very encouraging reception by the press and readers. ... (3) The Committee has published in booklet form the notable address on religious liberty delivered by Dr. Binns at Memphis, on which the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board paid half the cost, and for which there have been requests. (4) From time to time we have sent out large numbers of mimeographed copies of pertinent papers, such as that of E. Hilton Jackson's, entitled, 'Some Basic Misconceptions About the Champaign Case'."

"4. Participation in International Matters. Although most organizations like ours sent representatives, in the absence of authorization from the Committee, the Executive Secretary did not feel warranted in attending either the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam or the United Nations Assembly in Paris. We should like to report, however, that we have worked helpfully we trust with many interfaith and non-governmental organizations throughout the year, particularly in conferences invited by the Department of State. We acknowledge a deep interest in the United Nations and in the various agencies of its Social and Economic Council, such as the Commission on Human Rights, a part of whose task it is to present recommendations concerning religious liberty to be adopted by the General Assembly in Paris. We especially commend to our people the effort of cooperating groups to observe October 17-24 as United Nations Week, culminating in United Nations Sunday, October 24."

"5. Projection For Year Ahead. As we turn to another year, it may be remarked that it is impossible to predict what issues may confront us or what tasks in service await us. We know they will not be slight, that they will be fraught with real meaning to our Baptist people and unquestionably to others. Among other projections, the office will undertake to conduct a thorough research into the religious situation in Washington, D. C., to ascertain and make available the facts as to the actual church membership of all faiths, together with the nature and value of their holding; the institutions and organizations maintained by each; the religious faith of members of Congress and various departments of the government, and such other information as will meet requests constantly received and enable us to make intelligent contacts."

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IS THERE POSSIBILITY OF A CATHOLIC ARMY?

Under the head of a report from the Committee on Domestic Situations, Dr. E. H. Pruden, Chairman, called attention to a news story carried by the New York Times on July 17, 1948, which said an "officer candidate school" to train men in the fight against Communism would be established in Washington at the headquarters of the Catholic War Veterans. According to the Times, experts from the Army, Navy, and other Government Departments, would be supplied in the organization and training of this "army".

Immediately we learned of letters going from people of prominence to President Truman protesting that "whatever its stated purpose, such an army, once it had been allowed to form, might be turned to undeclared aims". One letter from a well known man in New York called attention to the fact that this "army" would be "under auspices of a group at least indirectly associated with a foreign power, the Vatican State, and that the world political program of that foreign power rather than the welfare of the United States of America would be the objective of the private army". Hence the correspondent urged the President to "dissociate the armed forces of the United States and all Government Departments from any connection whatsoever with this possible subversive activity."

A letter to our office from a leading woman in Oklahoma City inclosed copy of a letter she had addressed to General Eisenhower in an appeal that he point out the possible sinister meaning of this movement. She described it as an effort to set up "a sectarian military school."

Dr. Pruden, as reported in the press, declared that the "idea of a Catholic Army was repugnant to all who cherish the ideals of religious freedom and civil liberties."

At once Anthony H. Forbes, National Commander of the Catholic War Veterans, replied in an Associated Press statement that Baptists fears were "absurd", and he sought to minimize the size and significance of the Catholic "army".

But the matter will not down quite that easily. Those well acquainted with conditions in other parts of the world understand under what pretexts private armies are organized and how dangerous liaisons between churches and governments may be in the area of politics. We warn that we have not heard the last of the Catholic War Veterans whose ambitions have prompted applications for even closer authorizations from the Government.

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FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TO THE MAXIMUM

(The following was unanimously adopted by the Joint Conference Committee in its session September 29. In addition, Dr. J. M. Dawson was requested by formal vote to prepare suitable articles for the press expressive of these convictions.)

We are meeting in the midst of Religious Education Week, an observance throughout the United States and Canada, commended by both President Truman and Governor Dewey, and the object of great concern to our churches. This Committee sends forth a ringing appeal to all Baptists not only to recognize the importance of stressing religious education during this week's observance but of rising to an unprecedented effort continuously to promote religious education to the maximum in the churches, in the home, and in all our educational systems wherever consistent with the Constitution as interpreted by the Supreme Court.

Our Committee's efforts to oust sectarian influences from the public schools and to maintain the American Constitutional principle of separation between church and state as the bulwark of religious liberty must not be construed as indifference to religious instruction and training.

It is the position of this office that the Supreme Court decision, startling as it may have seemed to some, constituted a distinct challenge to the people of America to awake to the fact that a mere two million released time pupils out of thirty million school children in the public schools could not possibly meet the demand for religious instruction. The utterly inadequate provisions for religious instruction in the public

schools, under whatever form, especially as utilized by our Protestant people who constitute a minority of those patronizing released time, call for a vigorous arousal to the necessity for a vastly increased effort through the God-appointed agencies of the home and the church. The Supreme Court decision, whatever its effect on religious instruction for all the people, only serves to summon the religious forces of the country to fulfill their specific task.

The palpable drift toward secularism in our land, together with the ominous threat of Communism with its atheism, tremendously accent the call to a free church in a free state to make sure that America strengthens its hold upon the religious element in our culture.

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DR. RANKIN ON TWO FOES TO RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

In his report on World Situations, brought to the Joint Conference Committee in its September session, Dr. M. T. Rankin, Secretary of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, asserted that following his recent extended travels in Europe he felt convinced that the two great foes to religious liberty at the present are communism and clericalism.

His view was confirmed by Dr. Stanley I. Stuber, a Joint Conference Committee member and Chairman of the Baptist World Alliance Commission on Crusade for Religious Freedom. From Paris, where he was detained in his studies of Europe, Dr. Stuber wrote:

"The battle for religious freedom can be lost - either to the Roman Catholics or to the Communists - unless we are ready to battle for our fundamental principles of individual liberty. I thank God I am a Baptist in an hour like this."

Dr. Rankin explained that in "clericalism" he distinguished something different from Catholicism as such. He meant the political controls sought by the hierarchy rather than the attitudes held by simple Catholic believers. He asserted that stoutly as he combats Communism's denial of freedoms, he would have to concede that there is more liberty in religious practices in the Russian satellite countries than in Catholic Spain. He stood for the Marshall plan, but lamented that it was tied up so closely with maintaining Roman Catholic regimes in Europe. Many Protestants in Italy, vehemently denying that they were Communists, voted against the so-called Christian Democratic ticket, because they insisted as between Catholic restrictions on religious freedom and Communist administration they would rather risk the latter than the former.

It gives cause for thought to read in a United Press dispatch from Rome, as we write this, that the Pope has bidden his followers to "develop in the souls of children and young people the hierarchical spirit." The hierarchical spirit! On opening the morning mail we read confidential appeals made to the Italian Ambassador in Washington against new and dire persecution directed by the Catholics against religious minorities in Italy under the animus of the hierarchical spirit.

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. WHAT CAN WE EXPECT ABOUT THE AMBASSADOR TO THE VATICAN?

In his report submitted to the September session of the Joint Conference Committee, the Chairman of the Committee on Religious Liberty, Dr. E. B. Willingham, strongly urged prayers for the United Nations Assembly in Paris, particularly for the adoption of the recommendations of the Commission on Human Rights, containing an International Bill of Rights with articles specifying provisions for religious liberty.

Dr. Willingham quoted a release from Dr. W. B. Lippard as president of the Associated Church Press, which gave answers to what is the position of presidential candidates in reference to the withdrawal of Myron C. Taylor from the Vatican. Larston D. Farrar, a Washington correspondent, indicated in his dispatches full agreement with Dr. Lippard's findings, to the effect that President Truman stood pat on his announced plan to retain Taylor until after the peace treaties are signed, Governor Dewey avoided any commitment as to what he would do, and Henry Wallace affirmed opposition to retaining any ambassadorial representative at the Vatican on the grounds that such an arrangement is in violation of our Constitutional policy and principle of separation between church and state.

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CONSIDERATIONS WHICH WARRANT THE ATTENTION OF POLITICAL CANDIDATES

Evidences multiply to prove that the American public is taking a keen interest - an unprecedented interest - in the maintenance of our historic principle of separation between church and state. A Supreme Court Justice has asserted that our country has staked its very existence on the maintenance of this principle. The subject has lately occupied more space in the press than during any similar period within the past twenty-five years. The principle is the basis and guarantee of religious liberty for all, even of good will among all the sects which now enjoy equal rights under the Constitution.

Protestant Churches have uniformly passed resolutions in their national meetings calling loudly upon the President and the Congress to sustain the principle, in the withdrawal of Myron C. Taylor as ambassador from the Vatican and withholding of public funds from sectarian institutions. Such infringements of the principle, with added threatened encroachments upon it, have induced millions of Americans to lift up a cry of protest, notably Protestants, the Jewish Community, Christian Scientists, fraternal orders such as the Masons; and, above all, those concerned with public education, among them hundreds of thousands of public school teachers in respect to education. A strict adherence to this principle on the part of the United States also in its foreign policy is positively demanded, and any departure from it in the present situation may imperil the peace of the world. The Joint Conference Committee is not partisan and does not endorse any candidate, but calls upon every candidate for public office to stand for the historic Americanism.

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EUROPEAN RECOVERY AND CHURCH RECONSTRUCTION

Recently the Baptist Record, Mississippi, carried the following editorial statement: "During our tour of Europe last summer, we were told that most of the money which has been paid by the United States Government for damages in Italy has been paid to Catholic churches and organizations, and that very little had been paid to Protestants."

This office immediately wrote Mr. Douglas Parmentier in charge of E. C. A. as follows:

"Belonging to a group numbering fourteen million in the United States, whose historic principle has been separation of church and state, a question has arisen about which I should like to be able to speak with some authority to them. The enclosed clipping from The Baptist Record published in Jackson, Mississippi will indicate what I mean. I shall very greatly appreciate some specific reply at your earliest convenience."

Mr. Parmentier's reply was as follows:

"I am happy to have this opportunity to provide you with some information on the use of American funds to promote European Recovery.

"The primary purpose of the Economic Cooperation Administration, as outlined by Congress, is to promote industrial and agricultural production, further the restoration or maintenance of the soundness of European currencies and finances and to facilitate and stimulate the growth of international trade of participating countries.

"ECA has allocated no funds for the rehabilitation or restoration of church properties. No such requests for funds for this purpose have been received by ECA. It is the consensus of ECA officials that if such requests were submitted, they would be rejected as not being within the scope of ECA authority as established by Congress; namely, promoting European economic recovery.

"In regard to the editorial from The Baptist Record, which you enclosed from your letter, it is quite possible that European governments have allocated some of their own funds - not ECA funds - to the rehabilitation or restoration of church properties. However, any such action as this on the part of European governments would be completely outside the jurisdiction of the ECA."

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THE NEW MEXICO PUBLIC SCHOOLS COMMITTEE SUITS

E. Hilton Jackson, Chairman of the Joint Conference Committee on Public Relations, has returned from Santa Fe, New Mexico, where the trial of suits instituted by the Dixon, New Mexico Citizens Committee against violators of the principle of separation of church and state is in progress. He reports that satisfactory progress is being made, and is confident that the defenders of our constitutional principles will win, even though there might be some appeals. He urges that supporters of this valiant effort to maintain both the constitution of New Mexico and the first amendment to the United States Constitution send contributions to the Dixon School Committee headed by Mrs. Lydia C. Zellers, Box 45, Dixon, New Mexico. The response has been encouraging from over the nation, but not sufficient to sustain the exhaustive, expensive and prolonged suits which involve some 375 defendants and require vast work in connection with necessary papers and testimony. We join him in the friendly suggestion that the Dixon School Committee have the generous sympathetic cooperation of friends throughout the country. October 8 dispatches announce the trial judge has decided in our favor.

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PLYMOUTH, ENGLAND BAPTISTS TRYING TO REBUILD CALL ON AMERICAN PLYMOUTHS

Sometime ago Pastor H. D. Hilliard of the George Street Baptist Church, Plymouth, England, wrote a letter to President Truman suggesting that in their effort to rebuild they would appreciate any aid from those dwelling in the twenty-eight American communities named after the English city of Plymouth. The letter was referred to the Department of State and found its way to our office, whereupon we wrote that we should be pleased to contact interested persons and organizations in an effort to comply with the appeal. A release was given to the press which found its way into many newspapers and some responses have already been made.

The Plymouth, England, George Street Baptist Church was founded in 1620, about the same time as the Pilgrim Fathers sailed from Plymouth. The church has had an honorable history. Its beautiful building erected in 1845 was bombed to destruction during the recent war. It is hoped that friends will send offerings of goodwill to this church to the Baptist World Alliance Committee, 1628 Sixteenth Street, Northwest, Washington, D. C. We are able to furnish a very readable illustrated brochure concerning the church. A letter from Dr. Isaac Higginbotham, General Secretary for the Massachusetts' Baptists, says he thinks many people in his state will be interested in making token contributions.

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DATE FIXED FOR NEXT MEETING OF JOINT CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

The next meeting of the Joint Conference Committee will be held at 9:30 a.m., February 8, 1949 in the Baptist Building, Washington, D. C. At this meeting the committee on constitution and by-laws, also charged with nominations for officers and committees, will report. The committee consists of J. C. Hazen, E. A. Fuller, E. H. Pruden, Stanley I. Stuber and W. O. Carver. Pending their report the present officers were requested to continue. They are: E. H. Jackson, Chairman; W. B. Liphard, Recording Secretary; and E. H. DeGroot, Jr., Treasurer.

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ENTHUSIASTIC RECEPTION ACCORDED "SEPARATE CHURCH AND STATE NOW"

Pre-publication and subsequent orders have proved the timeliness of this book by Dr. J. M. Dawson. Reviewers have also given it high praise, as shown in the following:

C. E. Bryant, Publicity Director of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee, Nashville: "The volume is probably the outstanding contribution in the literary realm to the cause of religious liberty in this generation."

The Horace Mann League released a full page in communication of the book to all its members. The League's Secretary-General writes: "On my return from a trip to the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, I wish to write that what I saw and learned while in Puerto Rico makes me all the more convinced that your efforts on behalf of keeping church and state separate are much needed and of the utmost importance."

The Baptist Courier, S. C.: "It is thoroughly documented...alive, up-to-date and challenging. Our people need it."

Scottish Rite News Bulletin, Washington, D. C.: "Catholics, no less than non-Catholics, owe it to themselves to read this book". In a full page article the Bulletin urges the volume on its thousands of readers throughout the Nation.

New York Times: "An outspoken manifesto against any tendency to weaken the provisions of the Constitution of the United States which safeguard the religious liberty of individuals and groups."

Washington Evening Star: "Brings together the arguments for one side in a detailed, provocative and interesting manner. Those concerned in the problem, on either side, will want to read carefully Dr. Dawson's work."

The book may be had in the book stores, or our office will send a copy prepaid for the price, \$2.50.