

March 1950

### WHY AMERICANS PROFESS BUT DO NOT PRACTICE FREE RELIGION

The Executive Director, in an article submitted to a national magazine, has sought to answer Dr. Arthur E. Sutherland of Cornell, who in the Harvard Law Review declared there has been a great deal of lip-service paid to the principle of separation of church and state in this country and "a surprisingly persistent and widespread practice to the contrary".

Reasons for this obvious contrary practice, cited by the Executive Director, may be summarized as follows:

1. Neglect of adequate instruction concerning the American system. A recent Gallup poll reveals that 52 per cent of the young people think it is all right for the government to aid sectarian schools!
2. Relaxation of the Constitutional principle by office holders, who pledge concessions under pressure of interested churches in order to get elected or remain in.
3. Increasing socialization in government which tends to include financial assistance to church organizations and institutions. In war times, for example, the Government looked on denominational hospitals, calculated it could save the cost of erection, and decided to supplement expansion.
4. Infiltration of the Roman Catholic Medieval, European ideology which demands that the church shall conduct institutions and the government shall pay the bills.
5. Hang-overs in certain Protestants of ideas implanted during times when they were state established churches, or persisting in them because of affiliations with existing state churches of their name. This applies especially to Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Lutherans and Congregationalists. It is significant that the battle for religious liberty and separation of church and state is waged most valiantly by Baptists, Methodists, Disciples, Christian Scientists, Seventh Day Adventists and numerous other smaller churches that have never had any union with the state. This situation largely explains why some Protestants are still complaining about recent Supreme Court decisions which excluded sectarian teaching from the public schools.

### STATUS OF FEDERAL AID TO EDUCATION

As of this date the situation in the House of Representatives in regard to Federal aid to education is that the Committee on Labor and Education remains in executive session for the purpose of considering various bills proposed. Apparently the Thomas bill, S. 246, passed by the Senate, will not be recommended to the House. Mr. Barden, pressing for his new and improved bill, has not too much assurance that it will receive enough votes for recommendation. Bills of more limited support of Federal aid to public education may have a chance. It is highly important that all who oppose appropriation of tax funds, either directly or indirectly, shall make their views known to members of Congress.

A COMMENDABLE PATTERN OF APPEAL

President Harry S. Truman  
White House  
Washington, D. C.

My dear President:

The Ridgecrest Baptist Church in called conference Wednesday evening February 1, 1950, by unanimous vote asked me to convey to you their earnest request that you do not appoint a personal representative to the Vatican in succession to Mr. Myron C. Taylor, recently retired.

We have the deep conviction that one sent from the White House to be received at St. Peter's as an "ambassador" can but violate our basic and beneficent principle of complete separation of church and state.

In our American way of life, the state must allow every citizen entire freedom to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience. That means the liberty of voluntary co-operation without civic control, coercion, or compromise. It permits the privilege of petition without any suggestion of political parley or pressure (as in this letter and as from our persecuted forefathers in Massachusetts and Virginia). It allows and assures each and all religious bodies exactly equal opportunities, from a miniature local church (like ours in a mountain cove) to a magnificent cathedral (like St. Patrick's in New York); from a rural pastor (who is servant and shepherd, but not sovereign) to a metropolitan bishop with manifold and multiform powers; from the Southern Baptist Convention (a democratic body seating messengers from 26,000 independent local churches) to the hierarchy in Rome (internationally interwoven under one ruler and outreaching for yet more temporal power).

Our request therefore is not anti-Catholic but inclusively Christian and profoundly religious, since we claim for each and all alike the same civil rights our fathers suffered and fought for in order that we might be good citizens of our country and of the kingdom of God.

Hoping that you will grant our petition and praying that God will guide and bless you in your earth-wide and age-long responsibilities, I am

Sincerely,

Right C. Moore  
Cecell M. Perry, Pastor  
Mrs. Leonard Biddix, Church Clerk

CC: Senators, Graham  
Hoey

SOUTHERN BAPTISTS OPPOSE INCLUSION FEDERAL SECURITY ACT

Although several religious groups have approved inclusion of their lay workers in the provision of bills for extending Federal Social Security (retirement benefits), Southern Baptists have taken a strong stand against this.

Dr. Duke K. McCall, Executive Secretary, pointed out before the Senate Finance Committee:

"At great expense we have provided security plans for our employees, both lay and ordained, because we do not believe it a part of our basic American principles for our religious bodies to become involved with our governmental agencies. While genuinely appreciative of the humanitarian purposes embodied in House of Representatives Bill Number 6000, we Southern Baptists whose churches extend through 23 states in an arc from Maryland to the state of Washington, numbering 27,286 churches, are gravely concerned over the mandatory inclusion of the lay employees of our churches and religious agencies. We feel that as a minimum the option to enter or not to enter into the benefits of this bill allowed employees of municipal and state governments should be extended to lay employees of the Southern Baptist Convention and similar religious bodies.

"We frankly feel that the exclusion of members of religious orders which thereby exempts lay workers in the Roman Catholic Church without a similar provision for the lay workers of evangelical churches is discrimination sufficient to warrant the most extreme reaction. It is in order to preclude the necessity of violent attacks upon a bill whose purposes are of the highest humanitarian sort that we urgently petition the Senate Finance Committee to make exemption of lay workers of evangelical churches.

"The lay workers of the Southern Baptist Convention in most cases are already included in the plans of the Relief and Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention which actually is more generous than the proposed plan under Federal Social Security. We feel that those who elect to be included in this plan provided by our denomination rather than the plan of the Federal government should be under no coercion in their choice.

In keeping with testimony now offered in statements from other religious bodies, among them the Christian Scientists and Seventh Day Adventists, other officials of the Southern Baptist Convention emphatically reaffirmed positive contentions which they impressively made some years ago when a similar proposal was before Congress.

Dr. Robert G. Lee, Memphis, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, joined Mr. McCall in his protest. He said:

"The inclusion of nearly 600,000 employees of non-profit institutions other than ministers and members of religious orders in House of Representatives Bill 6,000 is of concern to hundreds of thousands of the six and one-half million Baptists who compose the Southern Baptist Convention.

"Hundreds of our laity are participating through the ministers' retirement plan in addition to more than 10,000 pastors of churches. Moreover, thousands of individuals are participating through the Age Security Plan for lay church employees and hospitals, schools, colleges, orphanages, and other denominational agencies. The dues paying members have their dues matched by the employer.

"Our people urge you to give the same consideration to our lay employees as is accorded in the bill to the members of religious orders so that our lay workers shall have the same blanket exemption now granted the Roman Catholic Church. In the administration of our affairs as Southern Baptists the employer has agreed to and is maintaining the matching of the employees' money. This seems to be wise for all."

Dr. Walter R. Alexander, Executive Secretary of the Convention's Relief and Annuity Board, who appeared before the Senate Finance Committee, contended that the proposal would "violate the American principle of separation of Church and State."

"Baptists still believe that the Church is not in the same category as the economic corporation, that it is the voice of God in the world," he declared.

"It should be noted here that H.R. Bill 6000 makes an interesting and appreciated suggestion. It calls for contributions by employees of non-profit organizations on a compulsory basis, permitting contributions made by the employer to be on a voluntary basis. To many people, this provision may appear to keep well defined that line of demarcation between Church and State. In its practical application, however, it remains our conviction this would not be the case. There would soon be brought to bear upon non-participating employers a series of pressures -- pressures that would intensify rather than diminish as the years pass. The demands of employees would be one such pressure; public opinion, another; and, sooner or later, the pressure of governmental authority. Participation upon the part of the employer would cease to be voluntary, except in theory, for such pressure would become practically coercive.

"If and when such pressure upon the employer becomes coercive, the rights of free men, guaranteed under the First Amendment, are abridged. If not coercive, the employer, in the case of our Baptist institutions and agencies, will choose not to pay the employer's share of the tax; thus, the benefits accruing to the employee under the Bill would be reduced one half, for the Bill further stipulates that, 'if the employer does not elect to pay the employer's contribution, only one half of the employee's wages will be credited towards benefits'."

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#### CONCERN FOR THE NATION'S MORALS

Continued reports of immoralities and crimes flourishing in Washington and over the Nation have stirred President Truman and both houses of Congress into expressions of concern for arrest of these evils. The President has said he will make a trip through the country, if necessary, in an effort to arouse public resistance; the Senate has appropriated a large sum of money for a probe into the infamous gambling operations prevalent, and the House is investigating conditions in the District of Columbia.

Certain comments may be in order. One is that as the aftermath of war excessive outbreaks of crime may always be expected, since violence, deception, and other vile passions are characteristic of armed conflict. Another judgment may be entered to the effect that the present wave of crime with legalized liquor tends to give the lie to the nauseating charge, oft repeated by the wets, that the criminalities which followed World War I were due to prohibition. Still another remark is in order, that it is deplorable that the Roman Catholic Church, in violation of the law in many places, fosters gambling in bingo games and lotteries, thus lending the apparent support of the Church to the nefarious gambling practices. This is a sinister fact. One editor with an important word has found his comment reproduced in the Congressional Record:

"Gambling in its various forms, from slot machines and policy games on up to race-track betting, sumptuous poker-palaces and the field of sports in general offers a natural and inviting field for underworld figures. They have moved into it and it has become a highly organized activity, with many ramifications and with many devices for catering to the ever-present gambling spirit.

"Probably it can be broken up, by united action on the part of law enforcement agencies, before it becomes too hateful. The public conscience, however, must be more fully aroused on the subject before anything effective can be done."

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HOSPITAL TEST CASE LIKELY TO COME

At least six places in the Nation have indicated an interest in bringing a test case to show validity of appropriations to denominational hospitals under the Hill-Burton Act. For the prosecution of such a case special funds have been promised. We feel authorized to state that in all probability such a test case will be instituted soon by taxpayers and with the cooperation of POAU. It will be understood that the utmost care is being exercised to prepare the suit properly and to select the most advantageous locality for its setup. This action will be of great service to those states which are now much disturbed over what they should do in respect to receiving funds available from the government for church hospitals.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S CALENDAR THROUGH ANNUAL CONVENTIONS

- March 6. - Luncheon, Conference on Federal Aid to Public Education, Hotel Statler, New York.
- March 12. - Address, Reilly Class, Chevy Chase, Maryland, Presbyterian Church
- March 13-14. - Joint Conference Committee on Public Relations
- March 15. - Address, National Disciples Social Action Conference, Washington, D. C.
- March 31. - Deadline Article for The Teacher on "Dangerous Trends"
- April 9. - Easter Sermon, Scottish Rite Temple, Washington, D. C.
- April 18. - Mecklenburg Commemoration Address, Charlotte, North Carolina
- April 30. - Sermon, First Baptist Church, New Brunswick, New Jersey
- May 3. - Baccalaureate Sermon, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky
- May 4. - New Jersey Baptist Pastors' Retreat, near Trenton
- May 10. - Address, Southern Baptist Convention, Chicago
- May 22. - Attendance on Northern Baptist Convention, Boston

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Since the above schedule was made up, the Executive Director has accepted a number of other engagements for March and April, such as the address at the ground-breaking of the new First Baptist Church, Silver Spring, Maryland, a flourishing suburb of Washington. At all of these appointments the work of this Committee finds expression.

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BOOKS RECOMMENDED

The Old Time Religion. By Archie Robertson. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston. \$3.50.

Enlivened with delightful humor but dependable in its facts, the book contains curious, even shocking reports of the doings of the "old time religion", with which Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians and Congregationalists are identified along with many other groups. The author shows that all these, however much they are unlike, are bound together with a common insistence on religious liberty and separation of church and state.

A Protestant Primer on Roman Catholicism. By A. di Domenico, D.D., 1414 Castle Avenue, Philadelphia 45, Pennsylvania, from whom the book may be secured. \$2.00.

This book which has received prior favorable notice in these columns is again commended as a most excellent treatment. It continues to have a good circulation and deserves the utmost.

Call To Christian Action. By D. R. Sharpe. Harper and Brothers, New York. \$1.50.

These lectures on the Rauschenbusch Foundation at the Colgate-Rochester Divinity School under the general theme, "God and the Giant": A Strategy for Urban Churches" are meant to challenge Protestantism to apply religion to life. Separation of church and state, he believes, is a factor in the present divorce of religion from life; but he says: "It is important for the Protestant churches to maintain the principle. While this principle is independent in matters of conscience, it does not by any means imply that the state is supreme in all secular matters....Nor is it to be construed to mean a hands-off policy by the church in political matters....The church is to be blamed for doing so little with its independence for the social redemption of society."

I'll Meet You In The Lobby. By Olga Moore. J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia. \$3.00.

This is Olga Moore's own life story -- what she found in one of the most specialized jobs in the world. She confides: "It always startles people when you say you're a lobbyist. They stare at you with a sort of embarrassed horror as if you'd just made a shocking confession, as if you'd said, 'I'm really illegitimate', or 'I've just eaten five children'". But her story convinces one that there is a place for an honest, courageous person who fulfils the true function of a rightful lobbyist. It is a pity everyone does not read this book.

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NOTICE TO STATE EXECUTIVES

In response to our request a year ago every state Executive Secretary kindly sent us their 1948 State Convention Annals. To date a few 1949 annals have been received. We would appreciate 1949 annals from all the states. These annals are needed in order to answer requests for information that constantly come to our office.