

June, 1950

#### OUR NEW NAME

A change in the name of the Joint Committee office as maintained by the four major Baptist Conventions in the United States is hereby announced. By action of the recent Southern Baptist Convention in Chicago and the Northern Baptist Convention (now the American) meeting in Boston, the title was changed from Public Relations to Public Affairs and will henceforth be called the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, with the supporting Conventions listed under it.

The quota from each participating Convention includes that Convention's president, general secretary and thirteen other representative leaders, making an authorized total of sixty on the Committee. The combined membership of the four cooperating Conventions, which maintain the Joint Committee on Public Affairs in Washington, exceeds sixteen million. The function of the Committee is to make known the common mind of Baptists on public affairs, insofar as agreed upon, notably their contention for complete separation of church and state, with full religious liberty for all individuals and religious groups. The full scope of the Committee's duty is outlined in Article II of its Constitution.

The Committee was, through the efforts of the late Dr. Rufus W. Weaver of Washington, originally instituted in 1939 by formal vote of the Southern Baptist Convention, the Northern Baptist Convention, the National Baptist Convention, U. S. A., Inc., and the National Baptist Convention of America. It is the only Committee functioning jointly among these Baptist bodies in the Nation. Evidence increases to show that the Committee is cordially received by Baptists throughout the Nation as an authentic voice on matters entrusted to it. We confidentially believe that its wholesome influence on the public in general is more and more recognized.

#### LAY EMPLOYEES UNDER SOCIAL SECURITY ACT

In harmony with resolution adopted by the Northern Baptist Convention (now American), at its annual meeting May 19-23, 1947, and with subsequent resolution adopted by the General Council of the Convention, March 9, 1948, the following resolution was adopted by the Convention's General Council December 12, 1949. It is published here for information, as was an excerpt from the testimony of Dr. W. R. Alexander before the Senate Finance Committee published in the March issue of Report From the Capital.

There is now under consideration by Congress a method of providing for compulsory protection under Old Age and Survivors Insurance for lay employees of non-profit organizations, including churches but permitting the employer to elect or reject participation of the system of insurance contributions and benefits for the employee. The House of Representatives has passed a bill containing the above mentioned provision. The House bill is H.R. 6000.

Under this bill, if the employer elects to participate, the employee would be fully covered. If the employer declines to participate, the employee would

receive a lower benefit. Because of the weighting of the formula of benefits in favor of the low income employee, the average employee would receive something in excess of one half of the full coverage.

Therefore, be it resolved that the General Council record itself in favor of the method under the extension of social security benefits to lay employees of non-profit organizations, including the churches, feeling that this action is in accord with our resolution of 1948.

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#### WHAT OF FEDERAL AID AND THE VATICAN?

A former President of the National Education Association recently remarked, "If some one three years ago had said to me that in 1950 there would be no ambassador from the United States to the Vatican and no Federal aid to non-public schools, I could not have believed it."

At the Chicago and Boston Baptist Conventions the Executive Director of this Committee reported, "As of the present we have no ambassador at the Vatican and no Federal aid to parochial schools, but how long this condition will stand up is unpredictable in view of the fact that the Roman Catholics hold the balance of power in American politics."

As regards the Vatican, David Lawrence, in his syndicated column published in many newspapers, comments on the concern of the Vatican -- even keen disappointment -- over the uncerecermonious departure of the Myron Taylor aide from Rome, and at some length painstakingly presents for the Romanists their usual line of argument for an ambassador. Mr. Lawrence seems quite oblivious of the adverse position of Protestants and the known convictions of a vast majority of Americans in respect to what would be a clear violation of the First Amendment if an ambassador to the Vatican were named. He suggests that out of deference to protests against such an obvious violation, but through a recognition of the extreme desirability of the Romanist vote for the Democratic triumph, the President may be waiting until after the Congressional elections to appoint. Will the President, in such an event, have the fairness to ask the Senate to approve, or will he adopt the devious method employed in the appointment of Myron Taylor? It is our earnest insistence that any appointment be submitted to the Senate for ratification, in order that all the people through their chosen representatives may have an opportunity to express themselves.

As for Federal aid to education, it is not likely that any bill for aid to public schools will be passed this year. With the passing of John Lesinski, Chairman of the House Committee on Labor and Education, and with Graham Barden as the new Chairman, it is most likely that the decisive battle will be fought on this question next year.

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#### THE SITUATION AS TO GOVERNMENT AID TO HOSPITALS

A suggestion of error has been filed with the Mississippi Supreme Court following its recent bare majority decision in the Mercy Hospital-Street Memorial case coming up from Vicksburg. The final decision is anxiously awaited.

Meantime Baptists in Birmingham, after still another vote in called session, have declined to receive a government grant in aid of their institution, at the same time refusing to surrender it to a self-perpetuating board. Upon complaint from some Baptists, the hospital at Lakeland, operating under the name, SOUTH FLORIDA BAPTIST HOSPITAL, and accepting a government grant, has disclaimed that it is a denominational hospital, being neither owned nor controlled by any denomination, though it has solicited aid specifically from the Baptists.

Regretfully it must be reported that after the Baptists of North Carolina had most emphatically and impressively repudiated government aid for their Wake Forest Hospital in Winston-Salem, the Methodists of the state accepted such aid for their Duke University institution in Durham. In a few other instances Protestant hospitals have accepted government grants. Almost without exception, however, the grants accepted have been by Roman Catholic institutions. In some cases, as reported from Little Rock where the Catholics propose to erect a 5½ million dollar hospital with Federal aid, Protestants have openly assisted the Catholics in drives for funds to qualify for government grants.

Individual citizens in different localities are standing by in readiness to bring to court test the present construction of the Hill-Burton Act under which the administrator is offering government funds to denominations. It may be that the ultimate outcome in Mississippi will contribute something toward decisive procedure.

Unquestionably sooner or later the matter will be brought to conclusion. To this date the Baptist witness has been pronounced, practically unanimous and has challenged national attention, leaving a wholesome effect upon government.

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#### HOW MASTER SECULARISM?

Can we prescribe a course for the mastery of secularism? The Executive Director chose this question for his sermon before the class of 1950 at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville. The sermon in full is to be printed in the Seminary's quarterly magazine, The Review and Expositor. Abbreviated copies of the sermon have already appeared in a number of periodicals and will be printed later in the Christian Century Pulpit. Protestants and Other Americans United For Separation of Church and State has ordered 10,000 copies of a reprint of the sermon for distribution. This office can honor requests for copies, upon payment of postage, after July 1.

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#### A BAPTIST MANIFESTO

Address by Dr. Joseph M. Dawson, Executive Director

The eyes of the past, the present and the future are upon the Baptists in respect to religious liberty.

Upon retiring from the Presidency, Thomas Jefferson wrote the little Virginia Baptist Church at Buck Mountain near his Monticello home, in deep appreciation of their expressed gratitude for what he had done for religious liberty. A year before, Jefferson had written the messengers of six Virginia Baptist Associations convened at Chesterfield, saying:

"In reviewing the history of the times through which we have passed, no portion of it gives greater satisfaction, on reflection, than that which presents the efforts of the friends of religious freedom, and the success with which they were crowned. We have solved by fair experiment, the great and interesting question whether freedom of religion is compatible with order in government, and obedience to the laws."

All the world knows that for the accomplishment of this great end no group in early America worked more valiantly than the Baptists. A Baptist, Roger Williams, first enunciated on these shores the principle of complete separation of church and state with full religious liberty for all. For the first time in history he instituted in Rhode Island a free church and a free state existing side by side in a free society. For this, he

suffered cruel banishment. Later, Baptists in the colonies from Massachusetts to Georgia were whipped, pilloried, jailed and subjected to the most outrageous persecutions at the hands of those who sought to perpetuate union of church and state in this land. Barely seven generations ago the Baptists stood almost alone in advocating complete separation of church and state as it came to be embodied in the First Amendment to the Federal Constitution. Today, thanks be unto God, virtually all Protestants accept it in theory at least, if not always in practice, this principle of church-state separation which is the guarantee of religious liberty for every individual and group in this country.

Yes, today most Americans would agree that church-state separation has proved best for the state and best for the church. They would approve, we think, the words Thomas Jefferson addressed to the Danbury, Connecticut Baptist Association in 1802:

"I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should 'make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof', thus building a wall of separation between church and State."

It must be reported, however, that today there is a determined effort upon the part of some to breach that wall. There are not only those who, like termites, work in subtle ways to undermine our Constitution; but those who openly try to subvert it. They diligently seek to set aside the traditional, historical interpretation of the Constitution and to substitute instead an outmoded, European concept of church-state relations. By it, they would make our Constitution mean that a monogamous union of one church and state may be forbidden, but a polygamous union between the state and all the churches was intended by the founding fathers. This they argue in an effort to procure special favors and tax funds from the government for the purpose of strengthening their sectarian institutions. If they succeed in their purpose, they will sound the death knell of religious liberty in the United States.

Some ask nonchalantly: well, what of these attacks? Some questioners may even ridicule our endeavors to cling to the American Constitution. But they know not how serious this matter is. If such people would stop and think, they would begin to realize they do not argue with us. They argue with America's finest patriots. From George Washington to the present our best statesmen have shown how urgently important it is to preserve our Constitution in its integrity. Listen to James Madison in his famous Memorial and Remonstrance:

"It is proper to take alarm at the first experiment on our liberties. We hold this prudent jealousy to be the first duty of citizens, and one of the noblest characteristics of the late revolution. The freemen of America did not wait till usurped power had strengthened itself by exercise, and entangled the question in precedents. They saw all the consequences by denying the principle. We revered this lesson too much soon to forget it. Who does not see that the same authority which can establish Christianity, in exclusion of all other religions, may establish, with the same ease, any particular sect of Christians, in exclusion of all other sects?"

Thomas Jefferson wrote to the Baltimore Baptist Association, "In our early struggles for liberty, religious freedom could not fail to become a primary object." It must remain of primary concern, because it is basic to all other freedoms.

Why should Baptists, doubtless more than all others, cherish this freedom under the American system? Because it has afforded a suitable opportunity to express their faith and perform their ministry -- something they have never known elsewhere. The simple truth is, Baptists have prospered in this land as they have prospered no where else in the world. Actually, no free church can long succeed anywhere except under a free system. If the Federal Constitution and the various state constitutions now in accord with

it should be changed, free churches will perish in this country. Why? Because the taxes paid by ALL the people will, under political pressure brought by a single dominant church group, then be utilized for the upbuilding of its enormous institutions and agencies to overwhelm others.

In proof of this, even now one powerful group -- a minority at that, but grown bold by political success -- is asking the United States Government to single it out for special recognition and favor by appointing an ambassador to its ecclesiastical world headquarters. It would capitalize on the influence and resources of the United States Government to build itself up. That must never happen again!

Let it be emphatically proclaimed, Baptists condemn any and all public support of sectarian interests. Recently in Alabama and North Carolina we have declined huge sums of proffered government funds for denominational hospitals. This has been the consistent policy of the Southern Convention and of the several state conventions. We hold with Thomas Jefferson, "It is a sin and an act of tyranny for a government to use taxes to promote any faith which the taxpayer does not believe in." Think of this: up to March 15, 1950, of the 99 government grants to denominational hospitals under a loose construction of the Hill-Barton Act, 76 of them have been to a single religious body. Fully six-sevenths of the total sum of \$43,264,685 in cash thus allotted to denominations has gone to the ingratiating hospitals of that single religious body. That means that you and I and all the Protestant taxpayers of the country are forced to pay for the promotion of a faith which we, in conscience, cannot accept. Such a religious body in Mississippi has just succeeded in getting the State Supreme Court to uphold this hateful compulsion. Baptists will fight such high-handedness to the last tribunal of appeal.

Yet, it is possible for such a religious group, though a minority, to hold the balance of power politically. By forming an alliance with any of the great political parties, it can decide which party it wishes to give over the national administration and determine whether that party shall stay in possession of the government. That religious minority thus holding the balance of power may well demand as the price for its favor almost any concession it may name. Thus, in a very real and sober sense, this danger is a continual threat in America. Only by a strict adherence to the principle of separation of church and state may a dread clerical menace be averted.

Let us be solemnly warned against the peril to religious liberty even in "fringe", "auxiliary", indirect or concealed grants out of public funds. There is just as much reason for the municipality of Chicago and the state of Illinois to pay for the transportation of children to the Baptist Sunday Schools as there is to furnish free buses to Church day schools. That would be an obnoxious arrangement. Madison remonstrated in these warning words: "Attempts to enforce by legal sanctions acts obnoxious to so great a proportion of citizens, tends to enervate the laws in general, and to slacken the bands of society".

Baptists do not want to dominate others. But just as surely as this is the truth, we do not want other religionists to dominate us - and we will not be dominated either by those of another faith or by those of no faith at all! As we would not be the servants of others, so we would not aspire to be the masters of our brethren. The real meaning of our fight is that we want full religious liberty for everyman, woman, child on this planet, beginning in America!

In this connection, we protest the proposal to turn over religious education to the public schools. That is to accept abject and dismal failure of the home and the church, God's appointed agencies, for religious instruction and nurture. It is more than mischievous - this "escape" proposal can only bring disaster to religion itself. Let us keep our public schools righteous, with a moral culture that produces the good life; let us provide in them universal free education with equal opportunity for all in every state

alike; let us keep these schools completely democratic; keep them as our greatest source of national unity; let us not turn over religious teaching to the government. We must keep our religion vital and dynamic. We can never ignore what James Madison wrote in the Immortal Memorial and Remonstrance:

"To say that [state teaching of religion is requisite for the support of the Christian religion] is a contradiction to the Christian religion itself; for every page of it disavows a dependence on the powers of this world: it is a contradiction to fact; for it is known that this religion both existed and flourished, not only without the support of human laws, but in spite of every opposition from them; and not only during the period of miraculous aid, but long after it had been left to its own evidence, and the ordinary care of Providence. Nay, it is a contradiction in terms; for a religion not invented by human policy must have pre-existed and been supported before it was established by human policy. It is, moreover, to weaken in those who profess this religion a pious confidence in its innate excellence, and the patronage of its author; and to foster in those who still reject it, a suspicion that its friends are too conscious of its fallacies to trust it to its own merits."

This Joint Conference Committee, which is the voice of the four national Baptist Conventions, in which there are more than 16,000,000 members in the United States, would summon our fellow believers of whatever persuasion in the interest of free religion and free conscience, to take an uncompromising stand for the American Constitution.

The Committee would also exhort its constituents. In all the battles for liberty, there has never been recorded a more sublime stand than that taken by Roger Williams in Massachusetts Bay Colony when he was arraigned, tried and banished for his advocacy of separation of church and state. He stood, according to historians, unshaken in the "rockie strength" of his convictions. He said, "I am ready not only to be bound and banished but to die for this principle". He thought of John Huss and Martin Luther, but in his humility he cried, "The Lord Jesus is sounding in me, a poor despised ram's horn, the blast which in his holy season shall cast down the strength of all the inventions of men". In our land today, no one is menaced by martyrdom for this principle, but a courageous testimony is required of all. Baptists no longer stand alone. But they must still prove that they have the same rockie strength of conviction which Roger Williams had and the same readiness to suffer if need be for the freedom of men. Please God, for the sake of our own and our brothers' freedom, we shall try to do that.

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IMPORTANT BOOKS RECOMMENDED

Every library, if up to date in respect to church-state relations, should contain the following new books:

CHURCH AND STATE IN THE UNITED STATES. By Anson Phelps Stokes. Harper and Brothers, 3 volumes, \$25.00.

This monumental work, the most distinguished contribution of the year in its field, will be reviewed at length in our July issue.

JAMES MADISON, FATHER OF THE CONSTITUTION. By Irving Brant. The Bobbs-Merrill Company, New York, \$6.00.

Equal with Thomas Jefferson, patriotic Americans esteem James Madison as the most influential factor in securing the adoption of the First Amendment and the Bill of Rights. No mere reading of the important documents written by him, such as his famous Memorial and Remonstrance, is sufficient, but every advocate of complete separation of church and state should have this invaluable full-sized biography in which both author and publisher have combined to produce a volume to be cherished always.