

REPORT FROM THE CAPITAL

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JUNE, 1953

BAPTIST POPULATION NOW PAST THIRTY MILLION

With the Baptist growth near the highest of any religious body in the United States, it is reasonable to suppose that on the basis of their total "adult", baptized membership the Baptists may be set down for a total population approximating thirty million in the United States.

As is well known, the Baptists do not include infants in their statistics, nor members of their families who are not actually members of their churches, nor related members of the community who either worship in Baptist churches, or prefer those churches. By actual tests in a given state it can be shown that Baptist population figures on the wider basis, as followed by the Roman Catholics, give the Baptist population as twice the number on their rolls, which stands above seventeen million members.

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ROMAN CATHOLICS INVITE FULL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT OF PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS

Father McManus of the National Catholic Welfare Conference is the author of a widely circulated pamphlet on Catholic education, in which he states the world-wide insistence of his church for full government support of parochial schools, but declares that for the present in the United States Catholics must be content with fringe aids from tax funds, such as bus fares and free textbooks.

At a fund-raising dinner given by the Jesuit Seminary Association in New York May 26, those in attendance applauded Controller Lazarus Joseph when he asserted the city should pay for the construction and operation of parochial schools. The speaker failed to state these schools unnecessarily duplicated public schools. He also forgot that for the Roman Catholics to teach their faith in them, to the exclusion of all other faiths, would be contrary to Federal and State constitutions, if supported out of tax funds.

The Catholic Standard, Washington, D. C., in its May 29 issue, features an article on the first page, in which the contention is made by a University of Chicago professor that tax aid to church schools would be legal.

Are we to infer from all this that the irrepressible desire of the Roman Catholics for state support of their schools is entering upon a new phase of aggression?

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CONVENTIONS APPLAUD WORK OF RETIRING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

At Houston, the Southern Baptist Convention, by standing vote, adopted the following resolution offered by Walter Pope Binns, of Liberty, Missouri:

"Seven years ago, Dr. Joseph Martin Dawson accepted the urgent invitation of the Baptists of the United States to leave his happy and historic pastorate of more than thirty-one years at the First Baptist Church, Waco, Texas, to direct the vital and unique ministry of the Joint Committee of Baptists on Public Affairs in Washington, D. C.

"The achievements of Dr. Dawson in this important undertaking have been monumental, as attested by the leaders in the four participating Baptist bodies, and by friends of all the evangelical bodies. His wise and discerning and courageous leadership has elicited warm and hearty commendation by governmental leaders in their expressed appreciation of his ability to define and insist upon a free church in a free state.

"Dr. Dawson has written three notable books within this period of seven years, SEPARATE CHURCH AND STATE NOW, 1947; THE LIBERATION OF LIFE, 1950; and his latest and, perhaps, his greatest book, AMERICA'S WAY IN CHURCH, STATE, AND SOCIETY. We heartily commend these books to our people, along with the numerous brochures and articles which he has produced since going to Washington. His forthright declarations on religious liberty have gained the attention and respect of the entire nation.

"Now that Dr. Dawson has announced his retirement at the end of this year, or as early as his successor may be installed, we, the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in Houston, Texas, this the eighth day of May, 1953, gratefully acknowledge the ministry of Dr. Dawson, in laying wisely and securely the foundations for this service to Baptists in this and every land, and we pledge to him our purpose to support prayerfully and uncompromisingly the principles of religious liberty in our local churches and communities and throughout our beloved nation. We give thanks unto God upon every remembrance of the achievements of this beloved servant of God in these years of his faithful leadership in Washington."

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At Denver, upon a like tribute from E. B. Willingham of Washington, D. C., the American Baptist Convention stood in tribute.

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BAPTIST CONVENTIONS ON RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

Resolutions adopted by Southern Baptist Convention, Houston, Texas, May 9, 1953:

WHEREAS, millions of people throughout the world today are denied the benefits of religious, economic, and political freedom by communism and other forms of tyranny; and

WHEREAS, the denial of these benefits is most conspicuous in those lands, either formerly or now dominated by a state church; and

WHEREAS, in such countries as Italy, Spain, and certain South American states minority religious groups are subjected to persecution by the Roman Catholic hierarchy;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in annual session in Houston, Texas, May 6-10, 1953, extends to all such people our sympathy and the assurance of our prayers.

Further, we reaffirm our historic and traditional adherence to the principles of free men and a free church in a free state, and at the same time again call upon all our Baptist people and all other people of good will to demonstrate such quality of living as is consonant with these principles.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we petition the President of the United States and the State Department to employ such positive measures as may be necessary to relieve these distressing conditions and redress these wrongs.

Resolutions passed by American Baptist Convention, Denver, Colorado, May 26, 1953:

Deplored the publication of unfounded rumors and unsubstantiated opinion to the detriment of character by legislative committees. Asked that subversion be fought within the framework of the Bill of Rights. Called upon American Baptists to stand firm in their belief in, and adherence to, "Their traditional principles of civil and religious rights, and wherever such rights are violated to raise their voices in effective protest."

Asked revision of the McCarran-Walter Immigration Act; the admission of up to 300,000 immigrants per year, and urged American Baptists to sponsor their fair share of refugees in this country.

Pledged continued support of the United Nations, and asked churches to make a special study of the United Nations Charter with a view toward strengthening it.

Opposed the practice of allowing parochial school administrators to hold policy or administrative positions in public schools.

Commended President Eisenhower and the State Department for not appointing an ambassador to the Vatican.

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IMPORTANT BOOKS COMMENDED

THE NEW ANTI-SEMITISM--A SYMPOSIUM ---- The Beacon Press, Boston. Cloth-Bound, \$1.50; paper, 75¢.

THE JEFFERSON HERITAGE ---- By Dumas Malone and co-author. The Beacon Press, Boston. \$3.50.

MEET THE PRESIDENTS ---- By Porter Routh. The Broadman Press, Nashville. Paper, 50¢.

MARY: MOTHER OF JESUS, OR QUEEN OF HEAVEN ---- Island Press, New York. Cloth, \$2.25; Paper, \$1.25.

A steady flow of orders is being received by this office for AMERICA'S WAY IN CHURCH, STATE, AND SOCIETY, by Joseph Martin Dawson, published by the Macmillan Company. Those wishing autographed copies may secure them by sending \$2.75 to J. M. Dawson, 1628 Sixteenth Street, N. W., Washington, D. C. Each will be mailed in a carton.

WHY RELIGION IS MORE VITAL AND DYNAMIC IN AMERICA

Dr. Bredahl Petersen, of Copenhagen, President of the All-European Baptist Congress, charges that in Europe, dominated by state established churches, 75 per cent of the people are pagan. He told the American Baptist Convention in Denver that in a census of his city, which has 1,500,000 population, it was found that only 1 per cent of the people attend church on a given Sunday. He declares the attendance is even lower in England.

Bishop Bo Giertz of Gothenburg, Sweden (Lutheran) thinks he has discovered the reason why we have better church members in America. Religious News Service quotes him as saying in an address at Minneapolis: "Apparently the Free Church system gives the American layman greater interest and responsibility in his church." The State Church system, on the other hand, he pointed out, is more likely to make the layman believe everything is going on pretty well without his help and contributions.

The bishop said he had the impression that America's churches do a better job of ministering to people in the cities than do comparable churches in Sweden.

He said that Dallas and St. Louis -- cities about the same size as Gothenburg -- each have about eight times as many churches as his city.

Dr. Petersen asserts a further explanation of losses in churches united with the State is found in the fact of infant baptism -- administered without the individual's faith and consent -- and the doctrine of sacramental salvation.

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BAPTIST PUBLICATION FIGURES SOAR

Mr. Louie D. Newton, chairman of the Southern Baptist Committee on Circulation of State Baptist papers, felt elated at Houston to report that total figures showed 1,050,429 subscribers. At the same meeting the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board announced that last year 8,638,653 pounds of periodicals were shipped, requiring \$129,500.52 for postage alone. Of paper, 7,755 tons, (equal to 388 carloads), were used in the production of periodicals and books. The big press, which produces most of the Board's periodicals, uses in one year 27,349 miles of paper, enough to go around the world and have 2,490 miles of paper left over.

While no specific figures are available for the American Baptist Convention, its Department of Public Relations reports growing and gratifying circulation for the following periodicals: United News, Baptist Leader, Green Laker, Crusader, Watchman-Examiner. Missions Magazine, Young People, and 18 State Baptist Papers. Of course, the American Baptist Publication Society which issues huge supplies of Sunday School quarterlies and other church magazines, compares favorably with the Southern Board in figures.

Quantities of papers and magazines for the two National Negro Conventions are enormous. To these lists must be added those of other Baptist groups not affiliated with the four major bodies. The combined statement, if made in actual numbers, would be most impressive.

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