

REPORT FROM THE CAPITAL

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SEPTEMBER, 1953

A COURAGEOUS PLEA FOR MAINTAINING PRINCIPLE

Dr. Louis D. Newton, who is the cherished champion of Southern Baptist weeklies--continuing Chairman of the Convention's Committee on Circulation--has challenged the supporters of religious freedom among all faiths with the following plea for principle:

"Will Baptists support H.R. bill 6319, now pending in Congress, offered by Congressman Gardner R. Withrow, Wisconsin, which would permit exemption of religious publications from proposed increase in postal rates, allowing an estimated differential of 62 per cent between religious publications and secular publications? I hope not.

"Such exemption would mean that our Baptist papers would receive a substantial subsidy from the Government, and that would further mean that we would be estopped from protesting any instance of breaching the wall separating church and state.

"If it is a violation of the cherished principle of separation of church and state to accept Government money for Baptist hospitals, schools, orphanages, and churches -- and we certainly are agreed on that -- what, may I ask would be the difference in principle of accepting Government aid for our Baptist papers?

"This bill has been referred to the House postoffice committee for study. Meanwhile, I hope Baptists will do some studying themselves, and by studying, I mean thinking."

It may be concluded from the above that Dr. Newton believes consistently in Church-State separation, not separation now and then, here and there, self-interest to the contrary notwithstanding.

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DEPLORABLE IF TRUE, BUT HAPPILY NOT SO

Editor Reuben Alley of the Religious Herald, who invariably thinks clearly and writes courageously, blasts a most presumptuous statement made by Chaplain Bernard Braskamp of the House to the effect that he considers all the Congressmen as his parish. Of course, the Chaplain was speaking figuratively, for neither legally nor actually could his relationship become that of a pastor. We must ever keep alerted to hurtful presumptions which tend to destroy the American principle of Church-State separations.

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JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING OCTOBER 3

The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs will hold its next semi-annual session at the Baptist Headquarters Building, 1628 - 16th Street, Washington, D. C., October 13. The Nominating Committee is called to meet in the same place on September 28.

The usual sub-committees on Domestic Situations, World Issues, Religious Liberty, Cooperation and Budget will convene for breakfast at the Martinique Hotel at 8 O'clock of October 13.

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THE CASE FOR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS AGAIN

The Catholic Digest reports on a national survey made as to how Americans feel about religious education for their children. Its report claims that out of 104 million adult persons, only six per cent, or a little over six million, state they received no religious training. It publishes that seventy-two per cent received their religious training in Sunday Schools, thirty-seven per cent had religious training in the home, and twenty-one per cent in parochial schools. Among Protestants, it reveals, eighty-six per cent have gone to Sunday School, and seventy-eight per cent are satisfied with the religious training they received there.

In view of the declaration of the Digest that Catholics expressed the highest percentage of satisfaction with their religious instruction, received mainly in parochial schools, the non-Catholic wonders just why they are so insistent upon religious instruction being given in the public schools. Remember history proves that the Catholics were the first in America to combat religious instruction in the public schools and constituted the pressure groups which secured ouster of the Bible from these schools because they objected to the version read. Leo Pfeffer, in his monumental CHURCH, STATE, AND FREEDOM (page 287) explains their changed attitude.

"The triumph of the secularization of the public schools was in no small measure due to the persistence of the Roman Church," Pfeffer says. Continuing he asserts that what the Church wants now is either to bring its own dogma into the public schools for the teaching of Catholic children as it was doing in Champaign, Illinois and many other places prior to the McCollum decision of the United States Supreme Court, "or a share of the public school funds for the support of Catholic parochial schools." Roman Catholic usurpation of public schools for teaching their distinctive religion has resulted in court action in certain states, as New Mexico and Missouri.

It is interesting to note that a few Protestant leaders have lent support to the newest Roman Catholic propaganda for religious instruction in the public schools. For example, President Frederick W. Whittaker of the Bangor Theological Seminary writes the Executive Director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs: "While I appreciate your fine contribution to the literature of the Church and the State, and I shall read your new book with much interest, I do not agree that the complete separation of Church and State is best either for the state or for the church.....It is my conviction that there is urgent need for the leaders of church and state to find a way in which religion as a primary force in the whole history of man shall be given its proper emphasis in the textbooks of our public schools."

Perhaps after President Whittaker has read our newest book he will discover that the United States Supreme Court has already pointed out "the way in which religion as a primary force in the whole history of man shall be given proper emphasis in the textbooks of our public schools." The incontrovertible fact is there is no denial whatsoever of that very thing at the present---there is only the prohibition of sectarian instruction by sectarian forces in the public schools, by commingled organizations of church and state. Instead of seeking such a dubious combination, the theological seminaries had best intensify their efforts to prepare church leaders who will attend to their God-appointed duty of promoting adequate religious instruction in the church and home.

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PRAYER OF A CHRISTIAN UPON UNDERTAKING A WORLD TASK

Upon taking office on July 4 as Director General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, Luther E. Evans, former head of our Library of Congress, and a Jeffersonian lover of freedom, asked the privilege of offering a prayer according to his own faith. Follows the prayer:

"Almighty God, make my art and spirit humble in the face of the mighty tasks which have been placed on my shoulders. Make me realize always that the power man exercises springs, not from himself, but from approval of his fellow men. O, God, make me realize that the work of UNESCO is the work of many men who believe in many different Gods or systems of belief; make me tolerant of all men, and make me respect their right to follow the light shed on their respective prayers by their respective creeds or beliefs. Make me forever observant of the truths which wise and great men have made plain in many ages, that almost without exception the great religions and philosophies of life have much in common, and would if practiced well, lead men forward toward peace and understanding. O God, cleanse my heart of selfishness, pettiness, enmity, revenge, anger and unjustified mistrust, and give me strength, wisdom, and goodness in greater measure than before in order that I may help my fellow men reach Thy goal of peace. Amen."

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CHURCH MEMBERSHIP INCREASE GRATIFYING

According to the Yearbook of American Churches, issued by the National Council of Churches, the total for 251 religious bodies in 1952 climbed to 92,277,129. This represented a 4.1 per cent growth over the previous year and increase two and a half times greater than the country's population advance. Three out of every five Americans are now members of some religious group.

The statistician, Dr. Benson Y. Landis, attributes much of the increase to a larger birth rate, also to inclusion of certain bodies not appearing on previous lists. Again Protestants showed a greater percentage growth than Roman Catholics, or 3.9 per cent as compared to 3.5 per cent, and the percentage of the population 34.7 for the former as compared to 19.3 for the latter. The Southern, the American, and two National Negro Baptist Conventions are among the largest denominations, and their combined strength shows twice as many as any other single group of non-Catholics.

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PLANNING AHEAD FOR BAPTIST WORLD CONGRESS

Following the meeting of the Baptist World Alliance Executive Committee at Green Lake in June, at which plans for the Baptist World Congress to be held in London in 1955 were outlined, a number of the Baptist weeklies have begun urging churches to look ahead with a view to sending their pastors and laymen representatives. The Joint Committee on Public Affairs is deeply interested in the Congress, not alone because of its committeemen's significant part in that program, but strongly because of what the Congress will do to advance the cause of religious liberty throughout the world. It is not too early for Baptists to resolve to make the Ninth World Congress one of the great conferences of all time.

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BOOKS FOR STUDENTS OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

IDEAS OF THE GREAT ECONOMISTS. George Soule. \$3.50. The Viking Press, New York.

Seldom have we recommended a book with more pleasure. This is a must volume for all citizens who would act intelligently in our times.

A HISTORY OF BAPTISTS IN KENTUCKY. Frank M. Masters. Kentucky Baptist Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky.

Among Baptist histories of state bodies this is distinguished. It is carefully written and well documented. A competent scholar has not only recorded historical events in the order of their occurrence, but has given them in true perspective against their backgrounds in a fascinating way.

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AUTOGRAPHED COPIES OF

AMERICA'S WAY IN CHURCH, STATE, AND SOCIETY

Two national organizations have added their boost to our book, AMERICA'S WAY IN CHURCH, STATE, AND SOCIETY. These are the Horace Mann League, which sent out a special newsletter commending it; and the other is The Southern Baptist Brotherhood organization which is conducting a special study of it and allied literature in connection with its lesson series. Prior to this the American Library Association declared it a must book. The volume may be had from this office at \$2.50. Those wishing autographed copies are requested to add 25¢ for postage, handling, and protective mailing.

THE KINSEY REPORT

Scientific research is ever to be prized, but subsequent handling of the results is of equal importance. The Kinsey report smacks of being pseudo-science, both from the method used in obtaining its alleged facts and from lamentable ballyhoo in publication of the findings. Irresponsible submission of such dubious data to the mass mind, which is unacquainted with scientific analysis and subject to frequent erroneous judgments, poses great peril to morality.