



REPORT FROM THE CAPITAL

BAPTIST JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The American Baptist Convention
 The Southern Baptist Convention
 The National Baptist Convention of America
 The National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc.
 The North American Baptist General Conference
 The Baptist General Conference of America



1628 16th Street, N.W., Washington 9, D.C. ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ C. EMANUEL CARLSON, Ph.D., Executive Director

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SEPTEMBER MEETING

The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs held its regular fall meeting at the Baptist Building, Washington, D. C., on September 23 and 24. A two day meeting had been planned to give ample time for re-thinking the Committee's program and organization.

The several Baptist conventions which are presently actively supporting the work of the Joint Committee are shown below with a listing of their delegations:

American Baptist Convention

H. R. Bowler	V. Carney Hargroves	Edward H. Pruden
Mrs. John W. Bradbury	Wm. B. Lippard	Culbert G. Rutenber
Theron Chastain	Arthur H. Lofgren	John W. Thomas
Donald B. Cloward	Hugh Q. Morton	Edward B. Willingham
William F. Davison	Reuben E. Nelson	Jesse R. Wilson

Baptist General Conference of America

William C. Tapper

National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc.

W. P. Hayes	James L. Moore, Jr.	M. M. Peace
John H. Hester	C. T. Murray	G. E. Stevenson

North American Baptist General Conference

Frank H. Woyke

Southern Baptist Convention

Walter R. Alexander	Ralph Cole	Courts Redford
Walter Pope Binn	Edward H. DeGroot, Jr.	Porter W. Routh
Ernest F. Campbell	Eldon W. Koch	George W. Schroeder
J. Walter Carpenter	Mrs. George R. Martin	J. W. Storer
Baker J. Canthen	A. Miller	James L. Sullivan

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The annual Yearbook of American Churches is the Committee's official basis for reporting memberships. The 1955 edition, just published, shows the following membership data for the Conventions affiliated in the Joint Committee:

Southern Baptist Convention	7,883,708
National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc.	1,526,847
National Baptist Convention of America	2,606,510
American Baptist Convention	1,557,816
Baptist General Conference of America	49,981
North American Baptist General Conference	45,121
	<hr/> 16,669,983

(The Yearbook lists nineteen other Baptist groups with a total membership of 1,320,630. In other words, there are 17,990,613 Baptists in all the Baptist fellowships in the United States.)

Dr. Edward B. Willingham, pastor of the National Baptist Memorial Church, Washington, D. C., was re-elected chairman of the Committee, with Dr. Walter Pope Binn, President of William Jewell College, Liberty, Missouri, as vice-chairman. Dr. A. C. Miller, Executive Secretary of the Southern Baptist Convention Christian Life Commission, continues to serve as secretary, while Mr. Edward H. DeGroot, Jr. continues as treasurer. Mr. Ralph Cole of Washington, D. C. was elected as assistant treasurer.

The current budget of the Joint Committee provides for income of \$24,000.00 as contributions from the several Convention budgets. The Finance Committee, under the chairmanship of Dr. Ernest F. Campbell, projected expenditures for 1955 based on the above anticipated income.

In order to facilitate objectivity and clarity in the Committee's deliberations the Executive Director's report carried with it considerable factual materials. Included in the envelope were the Convention articles which provide for the delegations, and the Constitution of the Committee which is based on these articles. The scope and purpose of the Committee is shown in the following paragraph from the Constitution:

"The purpose of the Baptist Joint Committee shall be to act in the field of public affairs whenever the interest or rights of the cooperating Conventions which constitute the Committee call for conference or negotiation with the Government of the United States, or with any other Governments, or whenever Baptist principles are endangered through legislative action, or when any of the cooperating Conventions or any of their agencies may refer to the Joint Conference Committee any matter of common interest or concern, for discussion and recommendation. The Baptist Joint Committee shall be empowered to enunciate, defend, and commend

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the historic, traditional Baptist principle of religious freedom with particular application to the separation of church and state as embodied in the Constitution of the United States; to communicate and commend to the President, Congress, Courts and Department of the Federal Government such declarations as Baptists from time to time officially adopt concerning public matters; to make such contacts with the various departments of any government as may be found necessary or desirable in the legitimate transaction of legal or other business between such government and the denomination's agencies or approved representatives; and to inform the Baptist constituencies of governmental movements and measures affecting principles held essential to true relations between church and state and the right application of Christianity to the life of the Nation."

Studies were also made of the Resolutions adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention and by the American Baptist Convention since 1946, for comparison with a chart showing the Joint Committee's work record for the same period. The extracts from the minutes of the Committee, assembling the policy actions, were of special interest because they included the "Ten Year Program", said to have been drafted by Dr. Rufus Weaver, and adopted in 1945. It was an expression of great vision.

COMMITTEE ACTIONS

Probably the most significant action taken by the Joint Committee at the recent meeting was contained in the following motion:

"VOTED: to recommend that the Committee on Public Affairs invite a representative committee, not exceeding twelve in number, of Baptist theologians, New Testament scholars, church historians, social scientists, and others, to formulate a statement of Scriptural teaching concerning the relationship of church and state and society, and to submit such statement to the Committee on Public Affairs for consideration."

This action was taken in response to the Director's desire for "greater clarity with reference to the philosophic first principles, the abiding eternal truth that undergirds our concern for matters in the field of public affairs." A special committee of five was named to select the larger drafting committee from outside the membership of the Joint Committee and to supervise their work. The draft is to be submitted to the Joint Committee for consideration.

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The discussion on this philosophic need was expressive of a desire that together as Baptists we might more clearly discern the meaning of the Scriptures as our authoritative basis for Christian living in relationship to church, state and society.

The Committee also gave consideration to the current efforts being made toward the inclusion of "religion" in the public school curriculum. The discussion brought out that the Baptist emphasis has been on the new birth and the personal acceptance of salvation. Hence, "learning religion" has never been part of our concern. Furthermore, the teaching of religion has never seemed an appropriate activity for a state agency such as the public school. The Executive Director was instructed to continue his study of the movement and the issues involved.

Considerable thought was given to the problem of how best to share information with the large membership of our total Baptist constituency. Since effective informed participation by our people in the total public life of the nation is the best assurance that our Baptist viewpoints will be respected, we must seek the widest possible distribution and discussion of factual materials needed. In response to the Director's request for a clear integration of the channels of communication, the Joint Committee went on record as recommending the organization of committees, commissions, or councils on the part of those Conventions which do not now have such established channels. It was also decided to try to work more closely with the Baptist press, including state and convention-wide publications. Further study will undoubtedly be given to this problem in future meetings.

The meeting heard with interest the reports regarding the closing of a Baptist church in Madrid, Spain by officers of the law. Dr. Baker J. Cauthen, Executive Secretary of the Southern Baptist Convention Foreign Mission Board, and the Executive Director of the Washington office reported that negotiations are currently in progress through the Spanish Embassy in Washington aimed to secure the reopening of the church.

The Joint Committee also reviewed developments to date with reference to universal military training, as a possible result of the new manpower proposals which are being prepared for the next Congress. The Executive Director was instructed to keep the members of the Committee apprised of further developments.

A message of sympathy and condolence was sent to Mrs. G. A. Crawley, whose husband passed away since the last meeting of the Committee. The Rev. G. A. Crawley was a member of the Committee representing the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc.