

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

1626 16th Street, N.W., Washington 9, D.C. ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ C. EMANUEL CARLSON, Ph.D., Executive Director

This monthly newsletter is sent free to editors, executives, and institutions. In order to cover cost of production and mailing a charge of \$1.00 per year is made to all others.

October 1955

FALL MEETING OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE

The regular fall meeting of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs was held in Washington, October 11, 1955. The following members of the Southern Baptist Convention Committee were present:

Walter Pope Binns	Eldon W. Koch
E. F. Campbell	A. C. Miller
J. Walter Carpenter	R. Alton Reed
Ralph Cole	Porter W. Routh
E. H. DeGroot, Jr.	James L. Sullivan

Expressions of regret at being unable to attend were reported from Dr. C. C. Warren, Dr. Baker J. Cauthen, Mrs. George R. Martin, Dr. Courts Redford, and Mr. George W. Schroeder.

From the American Baptist Convention Committee these were in attendance:

H. R. Bowler	W. Hubert Porter
Mrs. John W. Bradbury	Culbert G. Rutenber
Donald B. Cloward	John W. Thomas
William B. Lippard	Mrs. Carl Tiller
Hugh Q. Morton	Edward B. Willingham

Expressions of regret were reported from Mr. Frank A. Nelson, Dr. Reuben E. Nelson, Dr. Theron Chastain, and Dr. E. A. Fridell.

The National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Incorporated, was represented by:

John H. Hester	James L. Moore
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The North American Baptist General Conference by:

Frank H. Woyke

The Baptist General Conference of America by:

William C. Tapper

The election of officers returned the following to office for a one year term:

Chairman	Edward B. Willingham
Vice-chairman	Walter Pope Binns
Secretary	A. C. Miller
Treasurer	E. H. DeGroot, Jr.
Assistant Treasurer	Ralph Cole

A budget of \$26,400 was approved for 1956, and requests were approved to the several cooperating conventions totaling \$26,400 for the year 1957. A \$3,000 reserve was voted from the current bank balance.

In accordance with action taken at the March 1955 meeting, the Joint Committee gave careful study to the review and revision of its own Constitution. A free and thorough discussion of the Constitution revealed remarkable unanimity among the members of the Joint Committee as to scope and purpose, as well as desirable patterns of organization and work. The revised instrument will find its way through the proper channels to the several cooperating conventions for approval.

The special committee, appointed for the purpose, reported that the plans, previously approved, to share with the family in the hanging of a portrait of Dr. Joseph M. Dawson in the Joint Committee's office, are nearing completion. An unveiling ceremony is being planned for March 1956, at which time it is hoped that Dr. Dawson can be present.

The Director's report reviewed the activities of the office during the past several months and looked toward an increasing clarity and effectiveness of our Baptist witness. Special papers were submitted covering the church-state tensions in the field of education, and in the matter of "refugee relief" immigration. The Director also reported his observations in connection with the Senate Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights' plans for a hearing on religious liberty. Rather than have a comprehensive hearing on this controversial item as a matter of policy the Subcommittee has decided to cancel the hearing on religious liberty.

In reporting for the Committee on World Issues, Dr. Lippherd called attention to the following as items which merit careful study and observation: the apparent change in international climate as a result of attitudes on the part of the Soviet government; restrictions by the Spanish government, including refusal of passports to Baptists who wished to attend the Baptist World Congress in London last July; the United Nations, including the recent dramatic episode of France's withdrawal and the weakening effect this may have on the organization; disarmament; communism.

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GOLDEN JUBILEE DECLARATION ON RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

Baptist World Congress, London, July, 1955

Assembled in London, England, in the Year of Our Lord, 1955, at the Golden Jubilee Congress of the Baptist World Alliance, and gathered from all parts of the world, we are aware not only of our common Chris-

tian heritage as Baptists, but also of the fear, the conflicts, and the tyranny of force which are notable features of our modern world. We who believe in a loving God and belong to the kingdom of Christ, would reaffirm those fundamental Christian principles of freedom which our forefathers proclaimed at great cost, but to the enrichment of civilization and of the church.

The Battle for Freedom

As Baptists we are aware that the battle for religious liberty still goes on. We see at this time a recurrence of persecution, intolerance, and enforced uniformity of conduct and thought. A creeping peril menaces freedom, basic human values, even Christianity itself, and the kind of life rooted in faith in God and regard for man as His child. It meets us from various sides. It comes sometimes from a materialism which denies moral and religious principles.

Intolerant churches and systems of religious organization can be as grave a menace to liberty as governments. We appeal for a larger liberty in thought as well as in action, within all churches, Protestant, Roman Catholic and Orthodox. We appeal for the avoidance of whatever involves privilege and domination for any religion, sect or group.

Since full religious liberty cannot be obtained without freedom of speech and press, association and freedom of movement, we feel led to urge the extension of freedom in secular as well as in religious life. Because such freedoms are being drastically restricted in many places, we call for the elimination of all such barriers to liberty.

Faith and Practice

Baptists, throughout their history, have upheld the cause of freedom and insisted that every man shall be free to worship God as he is led by the Spirit of Truth.

Basing their views on the Scriptures, they have stood for the priesthood of all believers, a regenerate church membership, liberty of utterance, and the responsibility and freedom of the local church.

Baptists as individual believers who have found a new liberty in Christ, have set a new pattern for the world--of free churches in free states.

Historically Baptists have upheld freedom not for themselves alone, or for selfish reasons. They believe that it is universally right and should therefore be shared by all people everywhere.

We believe that civilization cannot afford individual suppression or persecution. It cannot make progress toward social righteousness and world peace on the basis of fear, want, suspicion and spiritual bondage. To have freedom we must not only have the right to be free; we must have the inward experience of emancipation by the Spirit of Christ.

We deplore regimentation and enforced uniformity which hinder the full development of Christian personality in the liberty with which

Christ has made us free. We intend to remain free, and to help others to achieve freedom.

Our Jubilee Declaration

Therefore we declare at this Golden Jubilee Congress:

I. That the right to be free is a gift from God to all men of whatever race. A person is not physically born into a religious faith, but must of his own free will enter upon his inheritance as a child of God.

II. That a man's right to choose or change his faith must be preserved, as well as his liberty to dissent or to make objection because of conscience's sake.

III. That toleration is not enough; that freedom to worship is not enough. As Baptists we seek not to be tolerated, but to be accepted everywhere as equals in Christ, with all the privileges and responsibilities of loyal citizens. What we desire for ourselves we would secure for others, both for Christian believers and non-believers.

IV. That real religious liberty guarantees not only freedom to worship privately and publicly, but the right to teach, preach, publish and advocate, openly and without hindrance, the Gospel of Christ, or other religious convictions.

V. That our churches must be free from the interference of the state; that all our churches should, as far as their principles permit, abide by the laws of the state and loyally co-operate with the civil authorities in helping to create a community in which freedom of the press, speech and assembly and social righteousness, will be assured.

Dedication and Action

We who represent the Baptist churches of the world humbly pray that strength and courage may be given to us to hold fast our heritage of freedom and to carry forward the task committed to us.

We will not rest content until we witness the achievement of religious freedom and individual liberty throughout the world. We believe this is an essential part of our contribution to the thought of the church, as well as to the establishment of Christ's reign on the earth.

Prepared by the Commission on Religious Liberty,
Baptist World Alliance, meeting in the
Alwin Court Hotel, London, July 14, 1955.

Submitted to the Executive Committee on July 15,
by the Chairman, Dr. Stanley I. Stuber.

Presented to the Congress on Thursday morning,
July 21.