



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 14th 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.

January 1956

SEASON'S GREETINGS!

"The Word became flesh" says the inspired record. That is heartening truth to all, and not least to those who try to watch the public scene. We are glad that the Word did not become an institution, and we are glad that the Word is still becoming flesh as people become responsive to the Spirit and the will of God.

For all the prayers and encouragements of 1955 we are thankful. We hope that our united efforts in 1956 can be better proof of the reality of the incarnation.

STATEMENT ON BAPTIST POSITIONS ON IMMIGRATION POLICY

The political controversy which has raged regarding the "Refugee Relief Act" and the generous news space given to it are indicative of a rising concern over our immigration policies on the large. This broader interest has already expressed itself in several bills proposing a redoing of our laws. The coming session of Congress will probably attempt some new legislation.

On November 21, 1955 the Senate Subcommittee on Immigration and Naturalization, under the chairmanship of Senator Harley M. Kilgore of West Virginia, began taking testimony in an attempt to gain a comprehensive sample of public opinion. So many facets of immigration involve interests and values sponsored by church groups that the churches were invited to express themselves. A statement was filed by this office, as approved by the Executive Committee of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and by "American Baptist Relief", the relief organization related to the Baptist World Alliance. The statement follows:

"Our constituencies are interested in the nation's immigration policies, and we appreciate the opportunity offered by the Senate Subcommittee on Immigration to give expression to these interests. While our movement focuses on the spiritual commitment of the person, this obviously has broad implications for civic and public policies.

"Our churches and conventions seek to exercise the fullest confidence in the good judgment and the good will of our duly elected representatives in the legislative process, with the result that political defini-

tions are held to a minimum. The interest and awareness of our people, then, far exceed our definitions.

"Several basic principles bear on the matter of immigration policy.

"I. The Baptist movement has in it a strong emphasis on separation of church and state, seeking to maintain a free church in a free state. This means that the church should exercise a maximum of independence from government aid and that the state should be kept free from the church. On this basis we look with disfavor upon all efforts to use immigration policy as a means to institutional ends. Accordingly, we do not seek, and trust that others will not seek, to write immigration policies on the basis of either overt or covert religious or party interests.

"II. Our interest in human well-being leads us to desire that we shall nationally do our utmost for the relief of suffering and for the general welfare of all people. We have watched with dismay the continuing failure to use the Refugee Relief Act for actual relief. We are hopeful that future immigration legislation can contain normative procedures for aid to persons victimized by disaster, oppression, or war. Special legislation seems to be an unsatisfactory manner of handling emergency needs.

"In seeking to care for personal need we do not propose jeopardizing the well-being of many in the attempt to help the individual. Reasonable precautions on communicable diseases and similar criteria should be maintained. Similarly, underdevelopment resulting from cultural or religious patterns should not become a selective factor on which to admit immigrants.

"III. We are interested also in assurance that the principles of equity and justice are applied in our international relations concerning immigration. Since our present quota system is largely based on a western family of nations the new modern international scene would seem to require revision to give Oriental countries equitable status.

"IV. We do not view adjustments in United States immigration policy as being the solution to the population pressures that now exist in some parts of the world. These pressures call for adjustments in the productive economy, in the level of technical skills, and in the culture patterns prevailing. We do not favor unrestricted immigration, but we do favor active assistance to foreign governments in programs of technical assistance, education, loans, and welfare. Organized movements which resist the adjustment of population problems would seem to reduce rather than to increase the validity of their claims to consideration in American policies.

"V. A reasonable flow of population between various parts of the world seems desirable. Human compassion, personal well-being, genetic theory, cultural enrichment, economic development, and amity and understanding among the nations, seem to combine in support of a reasonable opportunity for population shifts."

The following specific resolutions voted by the American Baptist Convention will be of interest:

IMMIGRATION. (May 28, 1954) Since the McCarran-Walter Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1952 is proving a detriment to good will because of its discrimination against a large section of Asia by

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allotting low immigration quotas, we urge our people to support the Administration's effort to secure drastic revision of this act.

Furthermore, since the "Refugee Relief Act" of 1953 is proving difficult to administer because of its technical requirements and rigid measures, we urge Congress to enact legislation necessary to facilitate the entry of the full quota before the emergency law expires in 1956.

REFUGEE RELIEF. (May 24, 1955) We register our concern that the Refugee Relief Act of 1953 authorizing the issuance of 209,000 non-quota visas over a three year period, which is due to terminate December 31, 1956, has, after almost two years of operation, brought to our shores a relatively small number of refugees. We urge a larger and continued effort to get sponsors for the 1,000 families American Baptists have pledged to resettle.

We recognize that the act is not accomplishing its intended purpose and petition those charged with its administration to give it sympathetic interpretation and to press for needed statutory amendments to remove unnecessarily stringent requirements.

IMMIGRATION. (May 24, 1955) Since the present immigration law (the McCarran-Walter Act) is restrictive for many groups included within the scope of our foreign mission concern and since its limitations are to a great extent detrimental to the relations of the United States Government, we urge adoption of legislation which will more definitely move toward the objectives of equity and justice endorsed by the administration, than does the present law.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN OUR TREATIES

In the stack of materials now piling up for Senate consideration when Congress meets in January is a treaty of friendship, commerce and navigation with Haiti. This treaty is one more in a long series. It was negotiated by the State Department during the past year. Apparently it is about half-a-century since we had such a treaty with Haiti.

The friends of religious liberty are interested in this treaty because it breaks a tradition by omitting the customary guarantees of religious liberty to our citizens who may be resident abroad under it. Since Haiti has a provision for religious liberty in her constitution there should be no reason for omitting it from our treaty, but if Haiti were disposed to or pressured into challenging the principle we would certainly want our State Department to defend our American principles even in preference to dollar trade.

If we should forego the principle in this treaty, our State Department will have less valid ground on which to stand when negotiating with countries where religious liberty is neither understood nor wanted. It is not difficult to think of areas in which we would make life abroad most undesirable for the majority of our citizens without this kind of treaty protection.

When you study the provisions of this treaty in comparison with the customary pattern, e.g. the Danish treaty, it would seem that the Senate

would do well either to suggest some redrafting or to stipulate that this pattern is not to be precedent for future treaties. (Following analysis by courtesy of Washington office of the N.C.C.C.)

Standard Form (Denmark)

Article II

2. Nationals of either Party, within the territories of the other Party, shall be permitted: (a) to travel therein freely, and to reside at places of their choice; (b) to enjoy liberty of conscience; (c) to hold both private and public religious services,* (d) to gather and to transmit material for dissemination to the public abroad; and (e) to communicate with other persons inside and outside such territories by mail, telegraph and other means open to general public use.

Article VII

1. Nationals and companies of either Party shall be accorded, within the territories of the other Party, national treatment with respect to engaging in commercial, manufacturing, processing, financial, construction, publishing, scientific, educational, religious,* and philanthropic activities.

Article VIII

1. Nationals and companies of either Party shall be accorded within the territories of the other Party the right to constitute companies for engaging in commercial, manufacturing, processing, financial, construction, mining, publishing, scientific, educational, religious,* and philanthropic activities, and to control and manage enterprises which they have been permitted to establish or acquire within such territories for the foregoing and other purposes.

* Underlined language is omitted from proposed treaty with Haiti.

Corresponding Paragraphs in Proposed Treaty with Haiti

Article II

2. Nationals of either Party, within the territories of the other Party, shall be permitted: (a) to travel therein freely, and to reside at places of their choice; (b) to gather and to transmit material for dissemination to the public abroad; and (c) to communicate with other persons inside and outside such territories by mail, telegraph and other means open to general public use.

(No mention of liberty of conscience or of religious services.)

Article VII

1. Nationals and companies of either Party shall be accorded national treatment with respect to engaging in all types of commercial, industrial, financial and other activity for profit (business activities) within the territories of the other Party, whether directly or by agent or through the medium of any form of lawful juridical entity....

(No mention of religious activities.)

Article VIII

2. Nationals and companies of either Party shall be accorded national treatment and most-favored-nation treatment with respect to engaging in scientific, educational and philanthropic activities within the territories of the other Party, and shall be accorded the right to form associations for that purpose under the laws of such other Party. Nothing in the present Treaty shall be deemed to grant or imply any right to engage in political activities.

(No mention of religious activities.)