



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



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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.

August 1956

84TH CONGRESS ADJOURNS

"84th Congress Adjourns in Spirit of Compromise", was the Washington Post and Times Herald's headlined morning-after interpretation of that last hectic day. The compromises between partisan interests with an election on the horizon may be to the good, but other compromises will be less congenial to the public mind.

Before adjourning the House and the Senate agreed that the \$8,000,000 war claims pressed in behalf of the Archbishop of Manila should be granted. After the chairman of the Judiciary Committee had sidetracked opposition to the measure by indicating that the bill would not be reported out, it was suddenly thrown on the floor and passed. On July 26 Religious News Service published the story of the bill's death, and on July 27, of its enactment, as follows:

"In a surprise action taken only a few hours before adjournment, Congress agreed to pay more than \$8,000,000 in claims by Roman Catholic schools and religious orders in the Philippine Islands.

"The claims, based on food and services supplied American forces during the 1944 liberation of the islands, had been rejected under the War Claims Act of 1948 because the religious organizations could not prove direct 'affiliation' with the Catholic Church in the United States.

"Only six hours after the Senate Judiciary Committee had announced there was not enough time to consider the House-passed measure before adjournment, Senator James O. Eastland (D.-Miss.), chairman of the committee, obtained the Senate floor and announced that the committee was ready to report the bill.

"Sen. Eastland obtained unanimous consent to suspend the rules and file the report shortly after the Senate convened for its final-day session. The bill was called from the calendar and passed without debate.

"The bill, sponsored by Rep. John W. McCormack (D.-Mass.), had been passed by the House after having been amended to include recommendations made by the interstate and foreign commerce committee.

"A few Protestant and Jewish claims may also be made payable under the legislation, as amended. The deadline for filing claims was

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set at six months after the date the legislation becomes law to enable some Protestant and Jewish groups which did not apply under the previous act to make new claims if the liberalized legislation makes them eligible.

"Rep. McCormack's original measure was amended also to provide that funds must be paid to an organization or representative of the claimant in the United States, and that funds paid for damages to buildings and property be used only to restore such property.

"Representatives of Protestant groups, including the National Council of Churches and the National Association of Evangelicals, had opposed enactment of the legislation, contending that all legitimate claims of American-affiliated religious bodies in the Philippines had already been paid. They argued that the measure constituted largely a grant to the Catholic parochial school system.

"The United States government did not compensate public schools, hospitals, or welfare agencies in the Philippines for services performed for American troops. It confined the claims to private, church-affiliated groups with direct ties to churches in the United States."

The Senate Judiciary Committee, in addition to Senator Eastland as chairman, consists of:

Estes Kefauver (Tenn.)	Alexander Wiley (Wis.)
Olin D. Johnston (S. C.)	William Langer (N. D.)
Thomas C. Hennings, Jr. (Mo.)	William E. Jenner (Ind.)
John L. McClellan (Ark.)	Arthur V. Watkins (Utah)
Price Daniel (Texas)	Everett M. Dirksen (Ill.)
Joseph C. O'Mahoney (Wyo.)	Herman Welker (Idaho)
Matthew M. Neely (W. Va.)	John M. Butler (Md.)

In the same spirit, the House indicated its willingness to buy and hold a Roman Catholic church as part of our national park facilities. H.R. 11123 provided for the amendment of the 1948 legislation in behalf of Independence National Historical Park. The amendment called for the appropriation of \$900,000 with which to acquire the land adjacent to Old St. Joseph's Church in Philadelphia for historical park purposes. The bill contained the following provisions for the use of the church:

"The Secretary shall first enter into an agreement with the proprietor or proprietors of Old St. Joseph's Church property, such agreement to contain the usual and customary provisions for the protection of the property, assuring its physical maintenance, without expense to the United States, as a part of the Independence National Historical Park, and without any limitation or control over its use for customary church purposes."

The bill passed the House with very little debate, but Senator Edward Martin of Pennsylvania, who was expected to sponsor the measure in the Senate, refrained from introducing the bill in the final rush.

Had this measure become law, it would have been interesting to speculate as to how many other old churches would seek to become park property with provisions for continued religious use by the congregation.

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platform in political and economic affairs. Yet this is a facet of the problem to which churchmen must give penetrating study. Are there more "weaklings", more unsatisfied "idealists", or more "hungry" people in Russia, France, and Italy, than in the other countries of the modern world? If so, why? Obviously, the prevailing religious patterns and climates are vitally related to the people's manner of reaction in the face of problems.

Could it be that the person who is asked to elevate some institution into a position of an absolute source of truth turns aggressively negative when he experiences disillusionment with that institution? Or, might it be that people tend to fight back when religion rests its hopes of influence on the techniques of social control instead of on strictly voluntary commitments?

The long history of church-state relations, which are prominently involved here, may be viewed as a laboratory in which many findings are already on record. Anti-clericalism and anti-religion merit much more careful historical, psychological, and social study than they have received, for aggressive negativism toward all kinds of religious experience is prevalent in many parts of the world. Such attitudes could easily be organized, by means of a propaganda drive, into a "dialectic."

Surely the true gospel of Christ does not produce "weaklings." Neither does it leave "idealists" seeking a "cause", nor stagnate economic or social advances. And nowhere in all human history do we face a firmer call to feed the hungry and to provide for the well-being of the under-privileged. However, a church that is captive on the human level may lose its prophetic competence and fail to convey the spiritual power needed by the people to do these things.

The brochure raises two questions, "Who are Communists and why?" Both of these are good questions that merit careful study.

HOSPITAL FINANCE

The action of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee with reference to the Hill-Burton Act, taken at Nashville June 20, 1956, was apparently aimed to precipitate a broad discussion of church-state relations in the matter of hospital construction. No one would expect nor desire a quick adjustment of past Congressional policy except as the American people think it over and come to clarity and conviction in the matter.

The Hill-Burton Act was originally passed in 1946, and provided the sum of \$375,000,000 for a five-year period to aid in the construction of public and non-profit hospitals throughout the nation.

Since then several renewals have been enacted by Congress as additional appropriations and revisions have been voted. The basic principles stand unchanged. During its second session, which ended recently, the 84th Congress approved a further expansion of the program of federal grants to aid in hospital construction. For the fiscal year which ended June 30, 1956, \$88,800,000 was provided for this purpose; for the present fiscal year \$102,800,000 was voted, an increase of about 15%. For the new phases of the program, initiated by 1954 amendments to the original Hill-Burton Act, the same amounts were appropriated as for the previous year: \$6,500,000 for hospitals for the chronically ill; \$6,500,000 for diagnostic or treatment centers; \$4,000,000 for rehabilitation facilities; and \$4,000,000 for

nursing homes. In addition, \$1,200,000 was approved for hospital and medical facilities research.

Several things are now clear on the basis of nearly a decade of experience.

First of all, this method of hospital financing does in some instances use the public's tax dollar for the construction of sectarian institutions. Public funds come through to the advancement of sectarian interests. To correct this situation at the local level would call for radical adjustments in hospital administrative policy. As currently operating this presents a legitimate "conscience problem" for a great many people who are being taxed for the advancement of religious positions to which they do not subscribe.

It is also clear now that the Hill-Burton principle is actually discriminatory among religious groups. Through June 30, 1956, the administration office reports the following totals of grants in several categories:

Total of all grants	\$781,421,000
Grants to public institutions	367,412,000
Grants to non-profit institutions	414,009,000
Grants to Roman Catholic institutions	112,039,000
Grants to Jewish institutions	5,899,000
Grants to Protestant institutions	23,119,000
Grants to Baptist institutions	2,000,000

Obviously, Baptists and other groups have refrained from requesting public funds for denominational hospital work. The Baptist adult population is not far below the Roman Catholic adult population; hence the differences in philosophy show up in the differences of funds granted. There has been no charge of discrimination in the administration of the Act, but the principles involved are such as to produce an obvious discrimination.

On the other hand, no one has contested America's need for more hospitals and health facilities. The Public Health Service reports that we still have a national deficit of over 800,000 beds in all categories of hospitals and that the present rate of construction is just about enough to cover the need for 40,000 new beds annually because of the two factors of population increase and obsolescence.

In the face of these facts the Southern Baptist Executive Committee is asking that Baptists and others study the advisability of amending the Hill-Burton principle so as to provide grants only to non-sectarian hospitals. If sectarian institutions were limited to the securing of approved loans bearing interest equal to or above that of government bonds, there would be no allocation of tax funds to these institutions and Protestant groups would feel free to move ahead toward meeting the nation's acute needs equitably with the Roman Catholics.

Colombia. The Evangelical Confederation of Colombia reported on July 30, 1956 that the total number of Protestant churches destroyed by fire or dynamite in that country since 1948 had risen to 47 with the burning of the Baptist church of La Elvecia in Albania (Caldas Department). An unidentified group of men started the fire about 3:00 a.m. on July 16th with the aid of gasoline-soaked mattresses. This congregation of about 45 baptized members and an average attendance of about 100 belongs to the Colombian Baptist Convention, which is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.