

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



This monthly newsletter is published by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, 1628 Sixteenth Street, N. W., Washington 9, D. C. Subscription price, \$1.00 per year. C. Emanuel Carlson, executive director; W. Barry Garrett, associate director.

July 1958

BAPTISTS REQUEST INFORMATION ABOUT RELIGIOUS LIBERTY ACTIVITY

A flood of requests has come for information about religious liberty and the work of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. Post cards, letters, telegrams and phone calls dumped 127⁴ requests for tracts into the Washington office. From churches large and small, from people who could write legibly and from others who could barely scribble, the requests came.

Some wrote early. Others waited until the last minute and urged prompt attention to their requests. The plea "please rush" was frequently included in their communications. Practically all of them made it clear that they wanted the "free" literature.

Occasion for this sudden manifestation of interest was a Training Union program in the Adult department in Southern Baptist churches. The subject was "A Voice for Baptists," which was a discussion of the Washington office maintained by six national Baptist groups.

In filling the orders from the churches samples of three pieces of information were included. One piece was an analysis of the constitution of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. Another tract contained questions and answers about the work of the Washington office. The third was a copy of the "Report from the Capital."

A grand total of 35,900 pieces was sent to the churches.

In commenting on the rising tide of interest in religious liberty C. Emanuel Carlson, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, says that it indi-

cates that Baptists are again turning their attention to their distinctive area of insight into the nature of Christianity. He said that "our Baptist editors are playing a significant role in alerting the people to the problems involved in religious liberty and separation of church and state."

"When Baptists become fully aware of the significance of their insights, and when these principles are applied to specific situations, a new day for the cause of religious liberty will emerge in our nation and in the whole world," Carlson concluded.

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CATHOLICS WANT WHOLE TRUTH ABOUT PERSECUTION OF PROTESTANTS IN COLOMBIA

Congress has been told that the whole picture about religious persecution in Colombia has not been presented.

Rep. Victor L. Anfuso (D., N. Y.) told the House of Representatives that "occasionally our press will publish letters protesting alleged persecution of non-Catholics in Colombia, South America. Some members of Congress have also received similar letters urging that the United States Government make representations to the Government of Colombia regarding this matter."

Then, "in the interests of good will," Anfuso introduced two recent articles published in America, a National Catholic Weekly Review, concerning the Colombian situation. The articles were printed in the Congressional Record, June 25, 1958, as "a good documentation in the matter."

Anfuso was knighted in 1946 by Pope Pius XII, because of his humanitarian work. He is

also a commander of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre.

The first article in the Congressional Record is "Showdown in Colombia" by Magr. Luigi G. Ligutti, executive director of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, and a frequent visitor to Latin America.

The other article is a letter from Bal-tasar Alvarez Restrepo, Bishop of Pereira, Colombia, and it deals with Protestant activity in the parish of Supia and his dealings with the U. S. diplomatic and consular authorities in Colombia.

Ligutti in 1953 proposed that a team of social scientists be employed to make an objective study of the Colombian situation. He now renews his proposal and says, "The truth never hurts any person or institution, and if we are real Christians we must be ready to face the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

In explaining the Colombian Catholic attitude toward Protestant missionaries Ligutti states that "Catholics consider heresy as the greatest sin." He said that many Colombians think that Protestants are terrible and that "they are persecuting us." They accuse Protestants of insulting the Blessed Virgin and the saints, of speaking disrespectfully of His Holiness, the Pope, and of calling Colombians ignorant.

Ligutti says that "the uncouth conduct of U. S. tourists, the display of riches and their ostentatious spending" has caused much resentment against North Americans.

He further asserted that many Catholics in Latin America firmly believe that Protestant missionaries are supported by the U. S. Government and that the "Protestantizing" of Latin America is but a starting point toward domination from the North.

Ligutti pointed out inconsistencies in the Protestant principle of separation of church and state. He said, "Protestants (including Baptists and Adventists) in British East Africa accept and use Government support for their hospitals and schools. What principle of church-state relations does that imply? Is it principle or local necessity that decides the meaning and sinfulness of taking Government money, or is it wrong only for Catholics and allowable for Anglicans and the Scandinavian Protestant churches?"

In the second article reproduced in the Congressional Record, Bishop Alvarez Restrepo tells of the activities of Mrs. Janette Troyer of Chippewa Falls, Wis., a member of the Gospel Mission Union of Kansas City, Mo. She is in Supia, Colombia, as a missionary to that predominantly Catholic community.

The letter from the Pereira bishop reveals the dissatisfaction of the Catholic community with the presence of Mrs. Troyer, her determination to remain in the city, a bombing incident, the efforts to persuade Mrs. Troyer to leave, and the dealings of the bishop with the U. S. Ambassador in trying to ease the situation.

The bishop's letter reveals misunderstandings and misinterpretations both from the viewpoint of Catholic Colombians and of North Americans residing in that country. The letter ended with the fact that Mrs. Troyer remains in Supia, at present is unmolested because the Mayor has received orders to protect her, "but the possibility of further violence seems only too real."

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DO PROTESTANTS REALLY WANT SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE?

The April, 1958, issue of Zion's Herald, a monthly Methodist periodical published in Boston, Mass., printed a guest editorial by Willard Johnson under the title "Protestants and Religious Liberty." Not necessarily with approval of all the suggestions in the editorial, but in order to illustrate what others are thinking about religious liberty, we reproduce this thought-provoking editorial.

"Do Protestants really want full separation of church and state? Do Protestants realize the implications of some of the current drive for separation? Is separation the best or necessary interpretation of religious liberty?

"These are questions of great concern.

"Certainly Protestants outside the USA generally do not favor separation since they have state churches, tax-paid clergy, politically-appointed Bishops, church income from tax collections, etc., etc.

"One wonders also if Protestants want to go all the way on separation in America. If so, it might well mean the following:

"1. End of the military chaplaincy forcing churches themselves to pay chaplains and build chapels.

"2. Elimination of Bible readings, prayers, Christmas and Easter programs, baccalaureate programs, etc., from public schools.

"3. End of grants-in-aid and loans from federal tax funds to church-related colleges and hospitals. (Would this mean the death of these institutions?)

"4. Withdrawal of churches and ministerial groups from group support of laws which derive from a Protestant or Christian point of view; such as, Sunday closing, anti-Bingo laws, prohibition and control of liquor sales, etc.

"5. End of tax exemption of religious property.

"6. Elimination of chaplains and prayers from Congress and state legislatures.

"7. Barring of such benefits as GI payments to theological students.

"There are other examples. Do Protestants really want this kind of separation? Perhaps some do. At least the question should be looked at carefully and Protestants should not be dragged into positions they do not wish to espouse by involvement in certain movements which begin by attacking violations of religious liberty by Roman Catholics, Moslems and others and then discovering that the logic of the position implies something that these Protestants never intended in the beginning.

"Let us hope that Protestants will earnestly study the question of religious liberty in the USA."

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JEWISH STATISTICIAN SAYS CENSUS METHODS HIT RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

The liberties of all religious groups are affected by the methods employed by the Bureau of the Census, according to an analysis by a Jewish statistician.

H. S. Linfield, executive secretary of the Jewish Statistical Bureau, has written a revealing article on "The New Statistics of

Religious Groups," which has been included in the Congressional Record by Rep. Abraham J. Multer (D., N. Y.).

Linfield charges that according to the procedure used in the March, 1957, nationwide sample survey, which was released to the public a year later, "any and all American religious groups, irrespective of their number in the country or residence may be separately enumerated at anytime; separate social and economic statistics released of one or some of them by name; and indeed some statistical data revealed of one or some groups over against other statistical data of other groups--all of these, when, if and as the Census Bureau chooses to do."

This conclusion is in line with action previously taken by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. At its semi-annual meeting in October, 1957, the Committee took action opposing the inclusion of the question, What is your religion, in the 1960 Census. At its meeting in April, 1958, the Committee commended the Bureau of the Census for withdrawing the question, and asked discontinuance of its use in periodic, spot surveys of the population.

In his analysis of the Census Bureau's Current Population Report No. 79, Linfield pointed out that the classification of religious groups and the choice of facts upon which to report or not report was done on an arbitrary and discriminatory basis. Statistical data were revealed for some groups but not published for others.

In a cynical mood Linfield said, "We shall assume that the detailed statistics published for Catholics, Jews, and atheists are instructive and necessary, while the similar statistical information for Baptists, Lutherans, Methodists, etc., were rightly evaluated by the Census Bureau as uninformative and unnecessary, and hence not revealed."

Further objecting to the method of publication of the statistics Linfield said, "The Census Bureau maintains that it has the authority not only to ask persons to declare their religion in any sample population survey that it decides to conduct, but also that it could do so at any time it so chooses, whether on a national or local basis."

Linfield's article does not discuss the propriety of the Government asking of its

citizens, What is your religion, but it illustrates how such information can be used in a discriminatory way and how the seeds for pressures are found in such religious statistics.

In commenting on Lanfield's analysis of the Census Bureau's report, C. Emanuel Carlson, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, said that this illustrates the fears and dangers originally felt by the Baptist Committee.

"The gathering, analyzing and publishing of religious statistics by government," Carlson continued, "open the door to many evils of racial and religious discrimination and tensions which we in this country have carefully guarded against."

Carlson reports that in the near future he anticipates a conference with Robert W. Burgess, director of the Bureau of the Census, to discuss the whole problem of the religion question in the census.

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BAPTISTS AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

At the recent Cincinnati meeting of the American Baptist Convention Dr. C. Emanuel Carlson delivered a major address on the subject, "The Baptist Genius in Today's World." The key thought developed in this speech was that the Baptist genius is very closely related to religious liberty.

Carlson asked these questions. How account for the Baptist movement? What is its coherence? What does it have to offer? How is it related to the needs of mankind in these days of our space age?

He answered, "We will find it (the Baptist genius) related to an understanding of the gospel which sees the person as called of God in Christ to a life of responsiveness and obedience to the mind of God, which in turn sends him into service as a free man...Our message has been a declaration that God enters personally and directly into the experiences of men in response to our faith...In this experience man finds freedom, and the basis for free institutions both ecclesiastical and political."

Explaining the Baptist concern in the field of church-state relations Carlson said that it is primarily a concern for religious

liberty as an understanding of the gospel. He asserted, "The separation of church and state is an institutional sequel which must be constantly studied and analyzed so as to advance the values and guard the freedoms called for by our spiritual insights."

"The Baptist genius, then, lies in the insight that man is created and redeemed to live as a free spiritual being under God. Our distinctive understanding of salvation lies in our grasp of the truth that man cannot be viewed as a child of God unless he is responsive to God.

"The new birth means that that which was dead to God becomes alive to Him. Similarly our distinctive understanding of baptism lies in our recognition that an involuntary coercive act imposed upon a person does not, in the plan of God, impose a newness of life.

"Our distinctive understanding of the church lies in the awareness that to be the church of Christ it must consist of people who actually believe in Him and who accept Him as Saviour and Lord, i.e., those who are actually responsive to God.

"Our understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit finds its focus in the awareness of the supra-institutional presence of God in person making insight, guidance and devotion available to the person beyond and above the powers and limitations of ecclesiastical institutions.

"To Baptists the purpose of God is that men shall be spiritually free beings, free to live their religious lives and have their ultimate being under the Lordship of Christ. This freedom is real only if these same people are free not to be responsive to God, or to respond in such manner as seems right to them."

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HILL-BURTON AMENDMENT

H. R. 12694, which is an amendment of the Hill-Burton Act to make government money available to hospitals as loans, has been passed by the House of Representatives and has been referred to the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare of which Sen. Lister Hill (D., Ala.) is chairman. The bill is projected largely because Baptists have refused to accept government grants for their hospitals. (See the June, 1958, Report from the Capital for a discussion of H. R. 12694.)