

REPORT FROM THE CAPITAL

BAPTIST JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC AFFAIRS



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CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS INVOLVED IN NATIONAL DEFENSE EDUCATION ACT

Serious, but not insurmountable, church-state problems are involved in the proposed National Defense Education Act of 1958, according to an analysis of the bill by Dr. C. Emanuel Carlson, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. This education bill is not the original Elliott bill nor the Administration's bill, both of which have been previously analyzed in the Report From The Capital. This new bill, now pending in the House of Representatives, was submitted by Rep. Carl Elliott (D., Ala.) and is the result of reworking by the House Committee on Education and Labor. The Senate has a similar bill under consideration. Dr. Carlson's analysis as made on July 17 is as follows:

The Education Bill

The House Committee on Education and Labor is recommending for passage H. R. 13247, a 53-page bill consisting of nine titles with various proposals regarding education. The purpose of the bill is "to strengthen the national defense and to encourage and assist in the expansion and improvement of educational programs to meet critical national needs; and for other purposes."

The church-state issues involved in the bill have been given considerable attention in the House Education and Labor Committee. In some of the titles, the bill seeks to recognize the principle of "separation" and thereby to safeguard against undermining the freedom of church schools to continue as church agencies, as well as to protect the free consciences of the taxpayers lest they be required by law to support religious agencies which they do not believe in. This is

generally true of the sections dealing with elementary and secondary education.

Scholarships to Persons

At the college level, Title II proposes "scholarships to persons," with "payments to individuals," selected by "State Commissions." However, the bill makes no stipulations as to who sets up the "State Commissions" or who determines their policies. Apparently this agency can be public, private, or hybrid. The scholarship program begins with \$17½ million for the year ending June 30, 1958 and looks forward to increasing amounts as needed for the next seven years. The scholarships will be usable in any "institution of higher education," which phrase is inclusive of public, private and sectarian schools. While the scholarships are to be known as "National Defense Scholarships," and while the State Commissions are directed to give "special consideration" to people with "superior capacity or preparation in science, mathematics or a foreign language" there are no limitations on the fields of study which may be undertaken. How many candidate ministers, priests, and rabbis would gain their college training in this way remains to be seen.

Student Loan Program

Title III proposes loans to colleges and universities for use in setting up student-loan funds. The proposed ratio is 4/5 government money and 1/5 institutional money. The 1/5 can be raised by earmarking currently existing student-loan funds or, if need be, by a separate loan from the government. These loans are to be available for all "institutions of higher education" on the basis of "agreements between the Commissioner (i.e., U. S. Commissioner of Education) and institutions of higher education.

Insofar as Title III would provide for student-loan programs in schools which are church agencies it would put the government and the churches into the student-loan business on a cooperative basis. In this partnership the Federal government would provide most of the capital and the church agencies would carry the major administrative load.

These cooperative arrangements for "national defense" and "to meet critical national needs" may present problems for schools which seek to remain church agencies. How much government supervision will be necessary in order to carry out the "conditions of agreements," as specified in the bill and as they will be developed in the administration of the bill, is difficult to conjecture but the door is open. Since the bill anticipates the government's recovery of its funds beginning in 1966, and since the amount to be returned to the government depends upon the "balance" in the institution's student-loan fund, a responsible government administration cannot be disinterested or lax in its contacts with the institutions.

Obviously, no school would be required to enter into an agreement with the Commissioner. However, the advantage which accrues to a school which has government funds in its cash register so as to extend to a student an annual \$1000 loan for each of five years is very considerable in comparison with the school which may find it necessary to decline the "agreement." At this point the proposal has the possibility of becoming sectarian aid.

A Problem and a Solution

This part of the bill is clearly an attempt to take the loan principle, as previously accepted by many schools for building dormitories, and to use it for the furtherance of the educational programs of colleges and universities generally, without recognizing the distinctive objectives of many church schools and without properly appraising the differences in administrative relations required. If this title becomes law, church schools will of necessity face the problem of clarifying their relationships and of deciding how far to involve themselves with the government and with its legitimate objectives.

We have reliable information that Mr. Elliott's original proposal suggested that the student loans be extended, not through the institution, but through state student-loan

agencies. He was voted down in the Committee, but this simple change in the bill could still be made by amendment without losing the valuable aid to education which loan funds can provide.

Title IV is specifically for elementary and secondary "public schools," and provides grants to aid in acquiring equipment for instruction in science, mathematics, and modern foreign languages. The funds would be distributed through "state educational agencies." Accordingly, this part of the bill does not seem to involve church-state problems.

Language Institutes and Centers

Title V, on the other hand, authorizes the Commissioner (U. S. Commissioner of Education) to make contracts with "institutions of higher education" for the holding of institutes on the teaching of modern foreign languages. Such contracts may cover the cost of the institute and pay stipends to the individuals attending, including allowances for dependents and for travel. Similarly, the Commissioner is authorized to contract with "institutions of higher education" for the establishment of "centers" for the study of certain languages and the culture of the areas where those languages are used. The Commissioner may pay up to 50% of the cost of such "centers," including cost of grants to the staff for travel in foreign areas, regions, or countries, and the cost of travel for foreign scholars to such centers to teach or assist in the center. Further, he may pay stipends to individuals undergoing advanced training in preparation for language teaching.

Since some religious movements have wedded themselves to the cultures of certain areas in the world the above provisions are far more intimately related to church interests than would appear at first reading. In fact, one can almost predict that some contracts would involve overt proselyting efforts.

Miscellaneous Provisions

The expansion of Graduate Education, as sought by Title VI, through granting of fellowships to individuals accepted for advanced study likewise makes no differentiation between public, private, or sectarian "institutions of higher education."

The "Guidance, Counseling, Testing" section of the bill is Title VII. It proposes "grants to State educational agencies" to assist in

these aspects of education. Participation will be by means of "State plans" submitted to the Commissioner through the "State Educational agency" "which will operate in the secondary schools of such State." For the training of guidance personnel, however, the Commissioner is again authorized to approve "contracts with institutions of higher education."

Title VIII projects a plan for "grants or contracts" for the furtherance of research in the utilization of such mass media as television, radio, and motion pictures for educational purposes. Title IX consists of miscellaneous administrative provisions, including a system of grants to States for better statistical work in the educational field.

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OFFERS SOLUTION TO SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION PROBLEM IN DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

A problem concerning the transportation of school children (both public and parochial) has arisen in the District of Columbia. At the present time the D. C. Transit Co., as a part of its franchise agreement and for which it receives no other compensation, transports both public and parochial school children at a reduced fare. There is no other public school transportation system, but some private schools provide transportation for their pupils.

Legislation has been introduced into Congress to compensate the D. C. Transit Co. for its losses sustained in carrying school children at reduced fares. One plan provides that the Board of Commissioners of the District of Columbia shall purchase bus tickets at regular fare and shall offer the tickets for sale to school children at a rate not to exceed one-half the price paid for them.

Another plan provides that each common carrier in the District after each school year shall present a bill to the District, based on the difference of regular fare and the reduced rate for all school children carried during the year. The Board of Commissioners is to pay the amount within 30 days after receiving such certification.

Hearings on these bills have been held and action awaits recommendations from the Senate and House Committees on the District of Columbia. Opponents to the legislation say that it violates separation of church and state by aiding church related schools with public funds.

A simple solution to the problem, which eliminates the church-state difficulties and which leaves the parochial and private schools free to work out their transportation problems in their own way with the D. C. Transit Co. or with any other transportation agency, has been proposed by Dr. C. Emanuel Carlson, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

In a letter to the chairman of the District of Columbia Committees of both the House of Representatives and of the Senate Dr. Carlson suggested that Congress include in its appropriation to the public school budget of the District of Columbia funds for the transportation of public school pupils.

The schools could then provide the pupils with cards entitling them to reduced fare considerations from the D. C. Transit Co. Payments could be made periodically by the schools to the D. C. Transit Co. for the reduced rate fares of the school children.

"This plan," Carlson's letter concluded, "seems to meet the need for transportation aid to the pupils of the public schools. The bills which have been offered have met serious objections, particularly since they seem to propose a national precedent."

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HILL-BURTON ACT EXTENDED, HOSPITAL LOANS NOW AVAILABLE

Two hospital construction bills have passed the Senate here. One is ready for signature by President Eisenhower and the other is referred to a Senate-House Conference Committee to iron out differences before final passage.

One bill extended the Hill-Burton Act that for the past 12 years has provided government grants to hospitals for construction purposes. The House of Representatives voted to extend the Hill-Burton program for three years and the Senate extended it five years.

The other bill was an amendment for the Hill-Burton Act and provides for long-term and low-interest loans to hospitals operated by religious organizations that are conscientiously opposed to acceptance of government grants. The loans are to be made to hospitals that qualify and under the same terms as the grants. Maximum repayment period is 40 years.

The loan bill has now passed all obstacles and awaits only the signature of the President. The other has only minor differences between the Senate and House versions that are to be compromised before final passage.

Common talk around Capitol Hill is that the loan bill was passed because of Baptist reluctance to accept government grants and because of specific requests from Baptist groups. The legislation makes it possible for Baptist hospitals and hospitals of other groups that insist on church-state separation to be eligible for credit from the government.

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PLANS ARE BEING PERFECTED FOR SEPTEMBER CONFERENCES

Three significant Baptist conferences will take place in Washington Sept. 16-19. A Baptist Editors Conference will be held Sept. 16. This meeting is called by the Baptist Jubilee Advance Committee and invitations have been extended to all Baptist editors in the United States and Canada. Primary purpose of the meeting will be to discuss ways and means to publicize the 1959 evangelism emphasis of the Baptist Jubilee Advance. The office of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs has been asked to take the lead in making plans for this editors meeting.

A second Religious Liberty Conference is slated for Sept. 16-18. The first such Conference met last October at the First Baptist Church, Washington, and was composed of Baptist editors, executive secretaries, public affairs committee members (both state and national), and other Baptist leaders who are involved in church-state problems.

At a recent meeting of the executive committee of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs it was decided to continue the Conference as a strictly Baptist meeting. The specific problems to be considered by the Conference will be the application of Baptist insights to church-state relations. A reemphasis on the Baptist witness to religious liberty will also be sought by special discussions on the Biblical basis of religious liberty. The Religious Liberty Conference this year will be at the Calvary Baptist Church of which Dr. Clarence W. Cranford is pastor.

The third meeting of the special week will be the semi-annual meeting of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. Following

immediately on the heels of the Religious Liberty Conference the Committee will consider the findings and recommendations of the Conference, continue its studies on religion and education, consider other current problems in the field of religious liberty, and make plans for recommendations to the cooperating Baptist conventions that maintain the Joint Committee.

A report on these meetings will be published in the Report From The Capital, probably in a delayed September issue or in the October issue.

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COLOMBIA AND SPAIN CONTINUE AS RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION CENTERS

Two recent reports from Dr. Theodore F. Adams, president of the Baptist World Alliance, indicate that Colombia and Spain continue as centers of religious persecution and denial of religious liberty. He visited Colombia in April and Spain in July of this year. His reports were released by the BWA News Service.

Concerning the Colombian situation, Dr. Adams wrote that he was greatly encouraged because the violent persecution of the recent past is on the decline and that there are promising opportunities for Evangelicals there in spite of many restrictions.

According to Dr. Adams the period of "violent persecution in Colombia is apparently about over. He gave three reasons: (1) the new government has a more liberal attitude and furnishes help when local police fail; (2) many rural churches have been destroyed or forced to close, thus accomplishing the purpose of the persecution; (3) many leading Colombians are concerned about the bad name their country has received in the eyes of the world because of religious persecution.

The situation in Spain continues bad, according to Dr. Adams' report. No Baptist chaplains are assigned to an American military base in Spain, the Baptist paper has been forced to suspend publication, closing of churches or denial of permission to use buildings continues, Baptists who were formerly Catholics find it virtually impossible to secure a legal marriage, and many subtle persecutions are endured by the Evangelicals of Spain.

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