



REPORT FROM THE CAPITAL

★ RELIGIOUS LIBERTY ★ BAPTIST PRINCIPLES

★ PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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SHOULD RELIGION BE TAUGHT IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS? BAPTIST PAPER ENTERS DISCUSSION OF ISSUES

The August 6, 1958, issue of the Baptist Standard of Texas, edited by E. B. James, contained two articles on the question, "Should religion be taught in the public schools?" The affirmative position was taken by H. V. Williams, professor of education at Baylor University, Waco, Tex., and the negative was presented by James R. Allen, pastor of the Cockrell Hill Baptist Church, Dallas, Tex. Due to the intense interest in this question throughout the nation the "Report from the Capital" summarizes these two articles by equally conscientious Baptists with the suggestion that the debate ought to continue until Baptists have talked themselves together on the fundamental principles involved.

For Religion in Public Schools

H. V. Williams: Our faith in liberty and democracy is rooted in a spiritual heritage asserting the dignity and value of the human soul as a child of God. The fact that the schools remain neutral on this matter has a determining effect on what our youths consider important. If every phase of life except religion may enter into the curriculum of the school there is indication that it has no importance.

Three approaches are made to the proposition of teaching religion in the public schools.

First, there are certain non-religious concepts, which in reality have a religious foundation, that can be taught in the public schools. To teach these accepted spiritual, moral, and ethical values would not be teaching religion but rather a democratic way of life. These values are expressed through such terms as democracy, sharing, community helpers. Religion in science, history, literature and in the growth of human personalities would be proper areas of instruction, as well as the use of the Bible as a source book. An objective study of the importance of the church and religious life especially as exemplified by the great life ideals and virtues of eminent characters in our national history would also be acceptable. The schools could also teach the practice of charity, tolerance, respect, reverence, meditation and inward harmony.

Second, after-school religious education could be carried on under the direction of an interfaith

committee, with no school credit given, and with the curriculum developed by the committee and the teachers.

Third, accredited courses in Bible emphasizing the literary and historical values could be included in the curriculum.

The first plan recognizes the contributions of religion to our way of human behavior primarily through acceptable spiritual, moral, ethical values; three values are integrated into the activities of the school. The next concerns after-school classes and activities conducted by interfaith committees and which are apart from the supervision of school authorities. The last is the inclusion in the school's curriculum of a study of the development of religion and of the historical and moral and literary values as found in the Bible.

For Church-Centered Religious Education

James R. Allen: The vital question of separation of church and state is being fought out on the battlefield of the public school. This basic tenet of American democracy inculcated in the First Amendment to the Constitution is in greatest jeopardy in the area of education. The campaign of encroachment which is waged by parochially-minded groups is producing a pressure which comes dangerously close to sweeping the principle toward complete oblivion in American life.

Not only are forces at work trying to get tax money for the support of religious schools, but they are attempting to get their voices heard in the public school. Before Baptist voices of protest over such a situation can be heard, there must be a self-examination to eliminate practices which
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NOTE ON UPI ARTICLES ON PAGE 2

The articles on page 2 are reprinted by permission of the United Press International. They were written at the request of UPI and were given national circulation in the Newsfeature section of Oct. 19, 1958. Additional reprints of these two significant articles are available in reasonable quantities from the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

NEWSFEATURES

United Press International

820 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y.

Pros and Cons: Should Government Grant \$ Aid to Parochial Schools?

(Should the government subsidize the education of children who attend parochial schools? Two prominent clergymen debate this sharply controversial question in the following signed dispatches, written for United Press International.)

(The case for government subsidies is presented by a Roman Catholic scholar, the Rev. Virgil C. Blum, S. J., assistant professor of political science at Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wis. The case against subsidies is presented by Dr. C. Emanuel Carlson, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.)

By THE REV. VIRGIL C. BLUM, S. J.
Assistant Professor of Political Science, Marquette University
(Written for United Press International)

The First Amendment guarantees freedom of mind and freedom of religion. These freedoms command the states to distribute educational benefits equally to all children and students regardless of the school attended. Enforced conformity to the philosophical and theological orientation of state schools as a condition for sharing in educational benefits is a serious violation of freedom of thought and belief.

In a free society the individual person must be supreme and central. His value, dignity, and worth, his other-world destiny, his sonship of God, demand personal freedom in the things of the mind and spirit. These freedoms our forefathers wisely guaranteed to every individual in the First Amendment. Enforced conformity in the things of the mind and spirit, they knew, destroys the freedom of the individual and of society.

In the distribution of its benefits government must respect the constitutional rights of the individual. It cannot, for example, demand that the needy aged surrender their constitutional right to vote as a condition for sharing in old age assistance benefits.

In the distribution of its educational benefits government must recognize children and students clothed in all their constitutional rights. One of these rights, says the Supreme Court, is the right, based on freedom of mind and religion, to attend the school of their choice. Children and students can not be forced to surrender their right as a condition for sharing in educational benefits. Such a condition is in violation of the First and Fourteenth Amendments.

These constitutional guarantees of freedom of mind and religion in the choice of school were incorporated in the G. I. Bill. Veterans were not forced to attend state colleges as a condition for sharing in public educational benefits. With subsidy in hand, they were free to attend the 474 Protestant, the 265 Catholic, the five Jewish institutions of higher education.

Liberal Americans in increasing numbers are saying that government cannot demand the surrender of freedom of mind and religion in the choice of school as the condition for sharing in educational benefits. Such a condition, like a condition on the right to vote, they say, violates the Bill of Rights.

"It is inconceivable," said the U.S. Supreme Court in denouncing imposed conditions, "that guarantees embedded in the Constitution of the United States may thus be manipulated out of existence." Liberals are disturbed, moreover, by the realization that, as the Court warned, "if the state may compel the surrender of one constitutional right as a condition of its favor, it may, in like manner, compel the surrender of all."

Freedom-conscious citizens, further, reject the idea that a child or student can be forced to conform to the philosophical and theological orientation of public education as a condition for sharing in government educational benefits. It makes no difference whether this orientation is Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, secularist or agnostic. The state cannot force a child or student to conform to it. Enforced conformity violates freedom of mind and freedom of religion. These liberals reject the philosophy of the conformitarians.

In order to protect the constitutional rights of nonconformist children and students, these citizens urge that government subsidize their education directly.

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By THE REV. C. EMANUEL CARLSON, D.D.
Executive Director, Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs
(Written for United Press International)

An educational crisis exists throughout the world these days. New nations are emerging, old nations are seeking renewal, strong nations are seeking to be stronger, and education is involved for all of them.

If America is to develop the strength which represents our heritage we must take care to conserve the fundamental values and insights which have been distinctively ours. In this end I propose a nation-wide aggressive re-study of the values which our Federal and State Constitutions are designed to guard. Many of these values are closely related to our educational system.

Democratic control of general education is one of these values. Dictators have made the schools a major target for their control. General education, democratically controlled by elected leaders, and carried forward by competent professional educators, gives strength to democracy. The public schools must not be permitted to become tools in the hands of special interests. Institutional interests, whether economic, political, religious or racial, ought not to control the general education of the nation.

The Federal and the State governments provide public funds for public education. This is in no sense a welfare dole. On the contrary, public schools are part of the public facilities in a community, in the same way that roads, parks or libraries are. They exist for the community in defense of the civic and personal competence of all people. It would be small help to our nation if churches, labor organizations, chambers of commerce, political parties and fraternal organizations were to be encouraged to recruit the children for their own special schools.

Freedom of the conscience is another value guarded by our American tradition and constitutions. Religious participation must be voluntary. Conformity is not religion.

The use of coercive political powers to enforce prayers, church attendance and creeds would outrage the American public. Our reactions should be the same if the tax collector were to go after funds for religious education. Obviously, all instruction which is formulated for the attainment of religious objectives must be classified as religious education.

Care has been taken not to impose on the conscience of the child or the parents in the public schools. We must also be careful not to coerce taxpayers into a religious participation. Money represents their time and energy.

Freedom of the churches must also be understood and protected. They must be free of political control and of economic dependence. Relying on the commitment and the stewardship of their own people, the churches must have their own sources of income if they are to proclaim freely their highest ideals and prophetic insights. Dependence on public funds exposes them to control by political authorities and to jeopardy by the shifting movements of politics. Most countries which have ignored this principle are now known for low church attendance, anti-clericalism and even communism.

If public funds were available for sectarian education they would, of course, be equally available to all groups. Many groups would feel that in self-defense they must open schools. Commitments that are now served by one good public school could soon find themselves with a dozen church schools, which are high

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col. 2)

This can be done by the certificate or tax credit method. The former entails a direct money grant to parents or students to help them pay tuition at the school of their choice. The latter entails a partial tax credit on amounts paid in tuition or fees at the school of their choice. This credit is subtracted from income tax.

A plan of direct subsidies for children and students who attend independent schools has a distinct advantage: It establishes only a government-student (or parent) relationship. It establishes no government-school relationship. This has two important consequences. First, it creates no new basis for government control of independent schools. Secondly, the confused issue of separation of church and state cannot properly be raised.

The certificate or tax credit plan does not give the aid to independent or church-related schools. It aids only the students,

children and their parents.

The college-going G.I. was subsidized, not the school he attended. The President's Committee on Education Beyond High School said: "The Committee does not believe that this assistance to veterans was designed to help, even indirectly, the institutions. Actually, it imposed an enormous burden on them . . ."

Wilbur G. Katz, Chicago University professor of law, declared that "Congress left veterans free as to their choice of school and profession." And he noted pointedly that "not even the most enthusiastic 'separationists' criticized this policy or questioned its constitutionality." Veterans used tax money to pay tuition at New York's Baptist Bible Seminary.

Besides liberals, taxpayers also are giving sober consideration to the certificate and tax credit plans. They are discovering that the adoption of either of these plans would, in a short span of years, save the taxpayer many hundreds of millions of dollars yearly for the education of American youth.

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col. 4)

in cost but low in quality. Buildings, teachers, equipment, transportation would all be inefficiently used.

Such deterioration of general education in America just at the time when the Russians have started the world with the technical power of a government monopolized educational system would drastically influence the whole future of freedom. Our government would have no choice left but to impose strict controls on all schools. The public might demand the end of special interest efforts at general education.

In an enduring competitive situation those groups which find cooperation most difficult would be the hardest hit. In some states the Baptists could be predominant. In several cities the Roman Catholics could predominate. In some areas Protestant alignments would produce cooperative schools. In such areas struggling minorities would be

forced to compromise or to travel great distances to acceptable schools.

This is not the way to solve America's educational problems. On the contrary, I propose a nation-wide re-study of the values guarded by our Constitutions.

America's educational needs are great. Not only are the Russians making tremendous strides, but a new age with new needs for our people has opened before us. As an American people we must attain new educational levels in all fields. Study groups are in order in every community all over the nation seeking the best answers to the conservation and the spreading of the fundamental insights of American democracy.

In this task the churches may well participate. Giving an adequate spiritual understanding is the responsibility of the church and the home. These can give more and better religious education without interfering with the improvement of the general education of our people.

(Cont. from page 1) violate the same principle which we claim to defend. As long as Baptists are teaching Bible in public schools on school property and time, there can be no effective effort to maintain our traditional position on separation of church and state.

Those who would include religion in the public schools are sincere Christians seeking to stop the rising tide of juvenile delinquency by teaching the Word of God in whatever place it can be taught. They also argue that education which ignores the central truth of God's revelation in the world and in history is inadequate.

The question at issue here is the attempt to solve these two problems by moving into the public school system to teach the Bible. There are a number of reasons for avoiding such a program.

(1) It is unconstitutional. The First Amendment prohibits the government from making a law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. The practice of teaching Bible on released time using public school facilities has already been tested in the courts and has been ruled unconstitutional in the McCollum case in 1947.

(2) It is unwise. It is impossible to teach the Bible merely as great literature or as good morality. The sincere Christian must teach it as the book of the unique revelation of God -- a book of religion. In order to teach it adequately, a specific interpretation must be given. Thus the religious interpretation of the majority of the community or the most influential of the community has the advantage of propaganda through the buildings and equipment financed by all of the community.

(3) It is inadequate. The use of public school programs and properties for scriptural instruction is not the panacea which some are claiming it to be.

Most of the enrollees in such instruction are youth already interested in religion. They could be helped just as much through a properly geared church program as through public school instruction.

God did not choose the state or the public educational system as his plan for propagating the gospel. He refused to depend upon such coercive institutions. He chose the local church as his institution. While the churches may seem inadequate in the eyes of men for the gigantic task, it is deemed adequate in the eyes of God who formulated the plan.

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PLANS DEVELOP FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY CONFERENCE ON THE CHURCHES AND EDUCATION NEXT SEPTEMBER

The relation of the churches to the public schools and the place of religion in education will be the subject of the third annual religious liberty conference next fall. The date has been set by the executive committee of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs as September 15-17, 1959.

Two religious liberty conferences have already been held on the subject of the use of public funds by church agencies and institutions. Due to the increasing national concern on problems of education in relation to religious instruction this third conference has been projected. These conferences are not for the purpose of arriving at an "official" Baptist position, but they are for exchange of ideas and discussion of the principles involved. As a result of the conferences it is hoped that Baptist thinking and convictions will be stimulated and that Christian answers can be found to the rising complexity of problems that confront the nation in the area of religious liberty.

Four major areas of discussion will occupy the attention of the conference next September. The suggested problems for discussion are: (1) What precautionary policies are needed, in view of

national educational policies, to safeguard the freedom and independence of the institutions of higher learning on which our Baptist movement depends for its leadership? (2) What institutional patterns can be approved or created for giving the rising generation a more adequate Christian instruction than the one-day-per-week programs can achieve? (3) What can and should be done by way of adult church education to enable our Baptist people to respond to public issues as Christians and as Baptists with a realistic appreciation of the insights that give us coherence and consensus? (4) What principles and procedures must be recognized in the public schools in order to properly safeguard the religious freedom of all families in the community, and in order for us to have a consistent Baptist witness in all parts of our nation?

Introductory papers on topics related to these problems will be prepared in advance for distribution to the participants of the conference.

The meeting will remain a "Baptist" conference and will be attended by representative persons throughout the nation who have interests and concerns with the subject matter under discussion. Members of Baptist public affairs committees, Baptist educators, public school administrators, pastors and parents will be invited to the conference.

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FOREIGN MISSION BOARD JOURNAL APPEALS FOR PRACTICE OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY AMONG BAPTISTS

An appeal for the practice of religious liberty was made in the Nov., 1958, issue of *The Commission*, foreign mission publication of the Southern Baptist Convention. In an editorial *The Commission* declared, "Because the issues related to religious liberty are complex, the whole concept of religious liberty needs more than declaration. It needs definition and implication."

The editorial then called for an examination of the biblical basis for religious liberty and stated that "every Christian should exemplify the principles of religious liberty in his thoughts,

enunciations and actions.

In reinforcing its appeal for restudy of the biblical basis of religious liberty *The Commission* quoted from an article by Clifton J. Allen, editorial secretary of the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, and a special committee of scholars for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. It said that "although the doctrine of religious liberty does not rest on proof texts, the Bible contains truth that bears on this theme and provides abundant teaching that validates it." Principles involving religious liberty were set forth as follows: (1) Religious liberty is grounded in the nature of man. (2) Religious liberty must be exercised in the social order. (3) Religious liberty for the Christian is both controlled and motivated by Christian love. (4) Religious liberty for the Christian involves acceptance of the responsibility and consequences of Christian discipleship. (5) Religious liberty for the Christian will find its full realization in the freedom and under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Speaking of the Bible as a moral guide in the relationships of men, *The Commission* said that "any curb, legal, social, or religious, on the proclamation and demonstration of the moral responsibilities demanded of us by the Bible becomes immediately an infringement upon religious liberty."

"In times when crime is on the increase, alcoholism is so calamitous to life and morals, and racial conflict is raging, let us seek and follow principles laid down in the Scriptures in all our efforts to cope with these dangers. And let us grant full religious liberty to God's servants, whether they be laymen or preachers.

"It could well be tragic that in many Baptist circles and pulpits there is no religious liberty to speak on these moral, and therefore religious, issues. And it could be that, as in the past, God's judgment and retribution will be visited upon us for lack of vision, courage, and declaration in an hour when what God wills, and not what man thinks, is the solution so urgently needed."

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