



REPORT FROM THE CAPITAL

★ RELIGIOUS LIBERTY ★ BAPTIST PRINCIPLES
★ PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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August 1959

EXPANDED DONABLE PROPERTY PROGRAM ABROAD WOULD GIVE MILLIONS TO CHURCH AGENCIES

"Any nonprofit charitable, or eleemosynary private organization which carries on health or educational activities" in foreign countries could qualify for free American surplus goods, according to three bills now in the House of Representatives.

At a hearing before a special subcommittee on Donable Property of the House Committee on Government Operations two witnesses testified in favor of the proposals. No opposition was heard. Perkins McGuire, assistant secretary of defense, and Fr. Frederick A. McGuire, executive secretary of the missions secretariat of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, urged passage of the proposal.

The proposed amendment to the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949 makes educational and health organizations in foreign countries, as well as foreign nations, eligible for surplus goods under the Donable Property Program. Testimony indicated that goods valued at \$200 million or more would be available in 1959, but that under the present program only \$4 million will be disposed of.

Throughout the testimony it was emphasized that the foreign Donable Property Program should be administered by the Department of State in the interests of American foreign policy, and that distribution in the various countries should be made in the American national interest.

It was made clear by both those who testified in favor of the proposal and by the subcommittee members that missionary agencies, religious institutions, as well as other nonprofit educational and health organizations were the intended recipients of the donated surplus goods. It was felt that such organizations would make the best impression abroad for the U.S.

In his testimony the Roman Catholic representative stated that such a program would benefit U. S. foreign policy, would provide aid to both Protestant and Catholic educational programs abroad and would create a reservoir of good will toward America. He said that in some countries for which the United States is responsible the Protestant and Catholic agencies are carrying the educational load and that the donation of surplus goods would thus help these institutions.

Rep. John W. McCormack (D., Mass.) in commenting on the testimony of Fr. McGuire said that it was with the religious missionaries and others in mind that the committee wanted to extend the Donable Property Program to foreign countries.

The present law restricts the donation of foreign excess property to that which has no commercial value or the estimated care and handling of which would exceed the estimated proceeds from its sale.

The three bills referred to above are H.R. 8202 by Robert R. Barry (R., N.Y.), H.R. 8209 by John W. McCormack (D., Mass.) and H.R. 8182 by John S. Monagan (D., Conn.). They have been assigned to the House Committee on Government Operations, of which William L. Dawson (D., Ill.) is chairman and to the special subcommittee on Donable Property of which John W. McCormack is chairman. Indications are that the proposal will be favorably reported by the Committee.

RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING NATIONAL INTERFAITH DAY SLIPS THROUGH SENATE, NOW PENDING IN HOUSE

A proposal for a Government sponsored Interfaith Day is bottled up in a House committee, and reliable sources indicate that this may be the end of the matter. However, the cork could be pulled out of the bottle at any time unless public opinion prevents it.

Hardly noticed both by church people and by members of the Senate, the proposal, S.J. Res. 53, which would establish the fourth Sunday in September as Interfaith Day, was whisked through the Senate Committee on the Judiciary and through the Senate itself. It is now pending in the House Committee on the Judiciary of which Emanuel Celler (D., N.Y.) is chairman.

This resolution, encouraging religious unity by government sponsorship, has been introduced regularly the past several years by Kenneth B. Keating (R., N.Y.) This is the first time it has gotten attention.

In a letter to Congressman Celler interpreting possible implications of the resolution, W. Barry Garrett, associate director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, stated that "at first glance this resolution appears to be a harmless move for the promotion of goodwill among the American people, but upon closer observation there are some basic

underlying assumptions that could make it offensive to the church people of the nation."

Mr. Garrett raised the question as to whether or not Congress wanted to step out of the proper sphere of government into the area in which the churches should operate exclusively. He pointed out that such a matter as a national Interfaith Day "must be achieved by the churches themselves and as a result of their own initiative rather than through the pressure of governmental sponsorship." He asked, "Should the government put such pressure on the churches for religious conformity?"

A statement in the resolution that might be offensive to the church people of the nation is the "whereas" that charges that "the fomenting of antagonism between Americans on a basis of sectarian creed is contrary to American traditions and to the spirit of the guarantees of freedom of worship embodied in the Constitution of the United States."

The resolution would put Congressional approval upon "the program of the interfaith movement" as a "practicable means for encouraging such mutual understanding."

In his letter to the House Judiciary Committee Garrett shared the concern of Congress for national unity and opposition to Communism, but he asked "if it could not be recognized that the churches can best play their role in the nation by functioning in their own way and by making their own contribution to the thinking of the people through their own ministry without outside interference from the Government."

Upon inquiry about how the resolution slipped through the Senate with so little notice, the explanation was given that the resolution had been introduced in February and that no opposition had been expressed by anybody. Hence it was assumed that all were in favor of it.

The Baptist Press reported the resolution when it was introduced and several Baptist editors wrote editorials against the idea. However, apparently no one thought to take the effective step of communicating with the proper authorities in the Senate.

Those who have an opinion to express on the resolution establishing a legal Interfaith Day may address their communication to The Honorable Emanuel Celler, House Judiciary Committee, House of Representatives Office Building, Washington 25, D. C.

WHAT WILL CONGRESS DO WITH THE FEDERAL AID TO EDUCATION PROPOSALS THIS YEAR?

A federal aid to education bill this year appears doomed to death by the House Rules Committee, unless a compromise measure can be produced which will have some chance of escaping a presidential veto and which will be pleasing to the educators and to the Roman Catholic Church.

The Murray-Metcalf bill (H.R. 22) which provides \$4.4 billion in federal aid to schools over a period of four years was reported favorably by the House Education and Labor Committee on June 8, but it has been bottled up in the House Rules Committee that is dominated by conservatives who have long been against

federal aid for education.

The Murray-Metcalf bill calls for federal grants both for school construction and for teachers' salaries. The proposed aid is for public schools alone and would be administered through the State departments of education. The Administration is opposed to the bill because it is in conflict with the current fiscal (balanced budget) policy of the President and because the Administration favors a bill for school construction and that would authorize the Federal Government starting in 1951 to help school districts and colleges pay off their construction bonds over a 25-to-40-year period. It appears that the President will veto the current education bill if it should pass both the House and the Senate.

Another strong factor against the present bill is the opposition of the Roman Catholic Church. The Education Department of the National Catholic Welfare Conference has taken a position against federal support to education but in favor of federal aid. The difference is that "aid" is of a short-term and temporary nature and that "support" is a permanent arrangement. Like many of the Congressmen who are opposed to federal aid to education on the ground that it will result in federal "control" of education, the Roman Catholic Church does not want to enter into any arrangement that may lead to governmental control of their schools. They are willing to accept any aid that can be given by the government if they are assured of continued control of their own schools.

The Congressional Quarterly (CQ), an authoritative weekly reference on Congress and political developments, says that new pessimism for the chances of the Murray-Metcalf bill "is based partly on the fact that vital support for the bill collapsed once the Catholic church strongly opposed the bill." CQ points out that the support of House Democratic Leader John W. McCormack (D., Mass.) is needed and that he is a Roman Catholic. The NWC opposes support for teachers' salaries but favors aid for school construction.

The latest information is that a new compromise bill has been drafted in the Senate, which is calculated to win the support of the National Education Association and the Roman Catholic Church, and which will be of such a nature that the President cannot afford to veto it.

The position of the Roman Catholic Church is that public education and private education are "partners" and that private education is entitled "to that measure of justice permitted by law and suggested by legislative precedent."

One of the precedents cited by the NWC is the National Defense Education Act of 1958 which makes provision for both public and private education. In fact, one source estimates that one-twelfth, or \$72 million, of the total appropriated under the Education Act of 1958 is ear-marked for private or parochial schools.

The proposed new education bill is reported to call for \$500 million a year for three years to help the States build schools and would authorize federal help to school districts and colleges to pay off their construction bonds. Current strategy is to

push the bill through the Senate, send it to the House where it is assured of considerable support, and then hand it to the President who will have to decide on approval or veto. If the President does not sign the bill, the Democrats see lots of political hay in the veto because he recommended an almost identical proposal in 1957.

BAPTISTS WILL EXPRESS INTEREST IN AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK, NOV. 8-14

American Education Week, Nov. 8-14, has been proclaimed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Pointing to public education as the "primary instrument of democracy" the President called all citizens to "display to the world and to ourselves our pride" in our schools.

"The lessons of today," he said, "emphasize the fact that individual freedom, responsible democracy, and a rising level of living, demand the full strength of a highly trained and dedicated citizenry." He then asked proper observance of American Education Week by "giving our loyal and intelligent support to our schools and to the teachers who have dedicated their lives to the advancement of their students, the children of America."

In commenting on the President's proclamation, C. Emanuel Carlson, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, said that "few if any religious movements have been stauncher friends of public education than the Baptists have been."

"While devoted to a program of religious education through the churches," Carlson continued, "Baptists have uniformly given full support to the cause of general education for the whole community. Rarely, if ever, has a Baptist voice been raised in support of an ecclesiastical power which makes people dependent on the church or the clergy for their knowledge of the three R's, for social competence, or for the skills of leadership."

Carlson suggests that "Baptist ministers and publications will want to respond enthusiastically to the President's proclamation. As the proclamation implies, the failure of public education in the U.S. may well mean the decline of the free way of life which we cherish as Americans."

A religious liberty conference on education will be conducted by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs two months before the American Education Week. The subject of the Baptist conference will be the relation of the churches to the public schools and the place of religion in education.

PROPOSES EXEMPTION FOR CHURCHES, THEIR AGENCIES FROM TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TAX

Shall churches and their agencies be exempt from federal excise taxes on transportation and communications?

Proposals pending in Congress have been offered to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 so as to exempt the churches and their agencies from the 10 per cent tax on transportation tickets, phone calls, telegrams, etc. Last year non-profit educational in-

stitutions were exempted from this tax.

In the recent tax bill passed by Congress, the Senate struck out the transportation and communications tax, but it was included in the House version of the bill. The Senate-House Conference committee compromised by agreeing that on June 30, 1960, these particular taxes shall be reduced by 50 per cent. In the meantime Congress can make exceptions to the current rule, and preferential legislation favoring the churches can be passed if it is found expedient.

Since educational institutions were exempted last year, there has been a rising demand that "religious" persons and institutions also be exempt. The Inter-church Transportation Council of Chicago is urging church people to support House Resolution 7625, introduced by Rep. Burr F. Harrison (D., Va.), and H.R. 7358, introduced by Rep. Sidney R. Yates (D., Ill.). These two measures would give the churches and their agencies special exemptions from the transportation and communications tax.

On the other hand there is another group of churchmen, gradually becoming more vocal, who are urging the churches to restudy the whole problem of tax exemptions for churches and their agencies. They are saying that the churches and religious people should pay their way for services rendered by the public along with the remainder of the citizenry. A recent editorial in a national religious weekly made the plea that the gulf between clergy and laity is already too wide and that it should not be made wider by making special tax exemptions for religious persons and institutions.

Yet others are pointing out that if the entire war-time transportation and communications tax were repealed, there would be no church-state problem and that all groups in the nation would share alike in the relief thus given.

RETIRED FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER RECOMMENDS U.S. CHARGE D'AFFAIRES TO VATICAN

An "unostentatious beginning" of diplomatic relations with the Vatican has been proposed to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, of which J. W. Fulbright (D., Ark.) is chairman.

The proposal is that a permanent Charge d'Affaires be appointed by the State Department, thus requiring no Congressional approval or special allocation of funds. It is recommended that the procedure "function quietly and without attracting too much attention" in order that the "non-Catholic opposition in the United States would lose some of its momentum as it grew accustomed to the fact that we had someone at the Vatican."

The recommendation concludes, "Those who are objecting today might even become convinced with time that U. S. official contacts with the Holy See had nothing whatever to do with religious matters, but were concerned solely with our national security, as, of course, would be the case."

The recommendation is found in a current "Study of United States Foreign Policy, Summary of Views of Retired Foreign Service Officers," prepared for the Committee on Foreign Relations of the United States

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JUST SOME SUGGESTIONS

Baptists have long awaited a responsible and denominationally based information service from the Nation's Capital. The Report From The Capital is one of the answers to that need.

Religious liberty is a subject that is dear to every Baptist heart. The next several years promise to see more problems in this area than we dreamed could emerge on the American scene. Only by having an intelligent constituency can we effectively solve these problems. Here are some ways you can help us inform our people.

1. Order the "Report" for yourself.
2. Make the "Report" available to church leaders through church libraries, etc.
3. Send a list of names and addresses of persons to whom you suggest we send sample copies.
4. Encourage Brotherhood and WBU groups to take the lead in getting their members to order the Report From The Capital.
5. Training Unions and Youth groups could very easily undertake a program emphasizing the responsibilities of Baptists in matters of public interest.
6. Use information in the Report From The Capital in sermons, newsletters, classes, etc., and encourage your listeners to order.
7. We could furnish flyers" such as this for insertion in church bulletins for the convenience of your members.

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The recommendation is found in a current Study of United States Foreign Policy, Summary of Views of Retired Foreign Service Officers," prepared for the Committee on Foreign Relations of the United States

Senate. Those expressing their views were deliberately kept anonymous, and at points the study was highly critical of current U.S. foreign policy.

In the arguments for a U.S. mission at the Vatican it was asserted that since the United States is the chief champion of peace and stability in the political, economic and social field, and since the Roman Catholic Church "is the implacable foe of atheistic Communism," therefore "the United States has no better ally in its struggle against the Communist ideology and in the preservation of Christianity."

The retired Foreign Service officer stated that since the Vatican directs the moral and religious lives of over 300 million persons, it has developed a system of communications channels and gathers information that could be valuable to the U.S. Government, but which might not otherwise be available.

The furtherance of the good neighbor policy with Latin America was also cited as an argument for establishing diplomatic relations with the Vatican. It was pointed out that when the President formerly had a personal representative at the Vatican, this arrangement was highly pleasing to Latin American representatives. "A permanent U.S. mission to the Holy See," it was claimed, "would tend to renew and increase to our advantage this favorable impression."

Assuming that permanent diplomatic contact with the Vatican should be no longer delayed, the anonymous retired Foreign Service officer proposed his plan for this to be accomplished. He recognized that a full-fledged permanent American ambassador is out of the question at the moment, both because of opposition within the United States and because of dissatisfaction in the Vatican itself with representation of an equivocal or temporary nature.

MORMON UNIVERSITY REFUSES STUDENT LOAN PROGRAM OF NATIONAL DEFENSE EDUCATION ACT

(Note: An editorial in the Mesa Tribune, Mesa, Ariz., July 22, 1959, should be of interest to all who are concerned about the church-state tie-up in the National Defense Education Act of 1958. Under the Education Act the Federal Government provides up to 90 per cent of the student loan fund and the in-

stitution furnishes 10 per cent. If the institution does not have the 10 per cent, the Government will lend it money for its share of the student loan fund. The fund thus established is owned and administered by the institution. An accounting must be made at a later date to the Government. Here is the editorial.)

A Commendable Stand

Brigham Young University, operated by the latter Day Saints Church, has rejected the student loan program set up by the Federal government under the National Defense Education Act and has announced that it will conduct its own loan program.

Dr. Ernest L. Wilkinson, president of BYU, has said that the university's board of trustees, "with full realization of its responsibilities for the education of its students, but being also aware of the principles of good government and the need for fiscal sanity, decided not to participate in the program."

In a statement explaining BYU's stand, it was pointed out that the federal government does not have any money of its own to loan students. It obtains money only by taxes from its citizens. Loans of this nature are, therefore, in reality forced loans from some citizens to others, with the single difference that the loan is repaid to the government, not to the citizen from whom the money was taken. He never gets it back.

Another reason BYU's board refused the loan was that "...to the extent the federal government advances funds for educational purposes there will ultimately be federal control. This...would be unthinkable."

Also, it was felt "that under the extremely liberal terms outlined in the federal legislation, students would be encouraged to go into debt more than they would actually need to finish their college education."

The university and church authorities are to be congratulated upon the stand they have taken and the independence and self-reliance they are determined to maintain. The principles behind such a stand are what have made this nation great and will continue to keep it great.

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