



REPORT FROM THE CAPITAL

★ RELIGIOUS LIBERTY ★ BAPTIST PRINCIPLES
★ PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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. Berry Garrett, associate director.

September-October 1961

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY CONFERENCE DISCUSSES CHURCH-STATE ISSUES IN MEETING HUMAN NEED

The fifth annual Religious Liberty Conference, sponsored by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, met October 4-6 in Washington, D. C. The 95 participants from 7 national Baptist bodies in the United States and Canada considered the subject, "Church-State Aspects of the Churches' Involvement in Human Need."

The conference was not an "official" meeting nor are the findings binding on any person or group. However, the deliberations represent the considered opinions of some of the Nation's leading Baptists arrived at after careful study and exchange of ideas. The report of the sections will be presented to the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

The conference was divided into four sections with two tables each to consider four general topics. The findings were presented to the conference as a whole and approved as the report of the conference.

This issue of the Report From The Capital is an effort to summarize and interpret the report of the conference. A complete mimeographed copy of the conference report, plus the conference study papers, may be secured for \$1.50 by writing to the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, 1628 16th Street, Washington 9, D. C.

SECTION I - EMERGENCIES

Section I discussed church-state problems involved in meeting emergencies. A "Christian approach" and Biblical principles were sought for the guidance of the churches in meeting people's needs during emergencies. The role of the churches in relation to governmental agencies in times of national disaster and the struggle against communism was considered.

The conference considered the relation of the churches to voluntary secular organizations such as United Givers Fund, Red Cross, etc. What financial, organizational and psychological preparedness for natural disaster are ideal for Baptist purposes? The question of motivation, the problems of "stewardship" versus "taxation," and personal and institutional values were discussed.

Report of Section I

The nature of the church in church-state relations and the Lordship of Christ as related to human needs were recognized as areas needing further study and debate. The group recommended that the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs organize study groups in these areas.

There is no conflict on church-state separation when churches work with voluntary organizations "provided that the churches' 'religious' objectives are not primarily served." Church participation with voluntary agencies should take the course of inculcating the Christian principle of social concern, encouragement of individual support of such agencies, training of individuals for leadership roles, direct participation by the churches during emergencies, and by insistence upon the voluntary aspect of such agencies. Churches should not contribute funds directly to such agencies.

The section recommended that Baptist agencies be requested to make a study directed toward an expansion of organized Baptist work to help meet emergencies, to be implemented possibly through the Baptist World Alliance or through mission agencies. Joint Baptist work in this field on an international level was also suggested.

It is the function of government to take the initiative against national disaster, but churches and denominational agencies should cooperate with the government to meet the needs both of the church membership and of the community. Churches should cooperate in civil defense programs, but the responsibility of the churches should extend no further than the reasonable preparation of its facilities for normal human needs in emergency situations.

In erecting bomb shelters, it is the responsibility of the government to provide the means of protection for the community without involving the church.

The group was definite in its assertion that the churches "should not collaborate with organized agencies in providing an intellectual or ideological barrier to communism." It continued, "As Baptists we have a responsibility to inform the people of the tenets and practices of communism, using all the fe-

cilities at our disposal, being careful, however, to evaluate our information in the light of Christian standards."

SECTION II - DEPENDENTS AND AGING

Section II discussed church-state relations in caring for the needs of dependents and the aging. It faced the problem involved in the shift from the ancient principle of paternal power of life and death over the child to the modern concept of the responsibility of society for the protection and provision for people at public expense. The possibility of cooperation between church and state in many new ways was faced.

The group was asked to translate the Biblical admonitions about care for orphans, widows, parents, the handicapped, etc., into institutional policy for modern society.

The problem of public funds for use by church agencies in these fields was posed. Such items as payment for services rendered, contractual relationships, grants, loans and per diem payments were discussed. The problem of religious ministry for persons in public homes for children and for the aging was faced.

Report of Section II

While the group did not go into Biblical studies in depth it did recognize that Biblical principles "establish responsibility and demand compassion and concern" on the part of Christians. The group agreed that "the churches must carry into social action programs which are designed to meet the needs of dependent children and the aged in response to the motivation of love and demand for justice as set forth in the scriptures."

The problem of church-state relations was seen in providing financial means for institutional care, in determining religious instruction of dependent children, in cooperating with courts in various fields, and in setting up receiving homes in particular.

It was agreed that there are areas in which church and state can share in mutual responsibilities. It is the state's responsibility to set up standards such as basic health requirements for institutional care. There is no violation of separation of church and state in certain short-term services where grants are made to the individual child on a per diem basis. A minority, however, felt that this does violate the principle.

Direct grants or low-interest loans which increase the capital assets of the church at the expense of the taxpayers are to be rejected. Again, a minority indicated that they did not think that loans violate the church-state principle.

Two research projects were recommended for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs: (1) a study of procedures and of state laws and present practices in determining the religious instruction of displaced persons; and (2) a study of the problem of setting up receiving homes.

The group set forth four principles in the determination of the religious instruction of children in institutions: (1) respect for the freedom of the conscience of the parent; (2) respect for the freedom of the conscience of the child; (3) respect for the spiritual integrity of a man in his own home; and (4) reject the nefarious nature of marriage contracts which violate the freedom of conscience.

The church-state problems in the care for the aged were identified in the areas of (1) providing funds for institutional care, and (2) public homes as a total state responsibility.

Concerning areas of church-state cooperation in care for the aged the group said:

(1) Churches may provide ministry and care and accept funds which individuals have received from government welfare on a personal and individual basis.

(2) The state should establish standards for basic health requirements for institutional care; and short-term services paid for by the state should be acceptable to church-related institutions. (A minority disagreed with this last statement.)

(3) Grants or low-interest loans at the expense of the taxpayer are to be rejected. (Some, however, felt that these should be acceptable.)

Positively, churches should train chaplains and other personnel to serve in public institutions, provide Christian service in public institutions, and develop programs for working with the aged in local churches and in associations.

SECTION III - HUMAN HEALTH

The report of Section III on church-state relations related to human health was made in seven divisions.

1. Christ's concern for health and what he hoped to result from his healings.

Physical healing was only one aspect of Christ's ministry to the whole person. He healed people simply because they were sick. He expected the healed to give God the glory in lives worthy of witness to his power.

2. Comparison of the bases and fruits of present day Baptist hospital and medical work with those of Christ's ministry.

Although the motivation for the establishment of Baptist hospital and medical work was the same as that of Christ's ministry, in many instances "the secularistic and institutional tendencies of our time" have resulted in "no appreciable difference between church-related hospitals and other hospitals." This calls for a continual emphasis on the ideals and purposes of Christ in the healing ministry of the churches.

In order to keep the hospitals conscious of their function "to serve the cause of Christ in society" the Baptist public should become aware of the deci-

sion-making processes followed in their hospitals.

3. Role of the churches in a political community that views health as primarily a public concern.

Four suggestions were made for the ministry of churches in public hospitals: (1) a voluntary pastoral ministry to the sick; (2) cooperative provision for chapel services and devotional periods; (3) encourage Christians to serve on committees, boards, nurses' organizations, etc.; and (4) motivate young people for Christian vocations as doctors, nurses, medical technicians and other health careers.

The church-state problem in church-related institutions arises in the matter of administration and support. Tax funds used to subsidize institutions for "the propagation of a faith" is a violation of the conscience of the taxpayer and of the principle of voluntarism in religion.

Two unreconciled points of view emerged relative to the purpose of Baptist hospitals:

(1) The service performed by a Baptist hospital is the demonstration of practical Christianity through medical work for the community, providing at the same time opportunity for spiritual service; (2) the basic reason for the existence of a Baptist hospital is the same as that for a Baptist church, it is an extension of the healing arm of the church.

The first view could imply acceptance of tax funds in payment for services rendered to the community, while the second view would reject tax funds of any kind.

4. The role of the state in the field of sanitation, public health and preventive medicine.

The expansion of public health services is a valid trend, because the government is often the best, sometimes the only, adequate source of these services.

The reason Baptists cannot finance an adequate research program was illustrated by the fact that \$715 million was spent last year in the U.S. for bio-medical research. This was probably more money than the 91,000 Baptist churches gave during the same period for all causes combined.

The conference agreed that there are "no pat answers" to the complex church-state issues. It said, however, that there must be room for flexibility and latitude in making adjustments in concrete situations.

The conference expressed concern for two principles in dealing with the trend toward greater administrative and financial involvement between government and church-related institutions: (1) "There must be no government interference in the conduct of our institutions," and (2) "Our institutions must render adequate service in return for public tax funds received."

5. Role of church-supported institutions in the field of medical research.

The group recognized the necessity of research for

effective operation of a hospital or medical school. It said that Baptist hospitals not accepting public tax aid are at a serious disadvantage.

Baptist hospitals may perform a distinct research service by: (1) striving for efficiency in the use of funds and facilities, (2) pursuing selective types of research, (3) seeking other than tax support by cultivating financial aid from private foundations, specialized industry, and denominational sources, and (4) providing a "better than usual" environment for research programs as an incentive to scientists.

6. The practice of Christian motivation through public agencies.

God is not limited to organizations and programs under church auspices. The discernment and practice of Christian motivation through public agencies is a clear obligation of the church. A Christian citizen often finds in a public agency the best opportunity to serve God by the meeting of human need.

The conference warned that "churches should alert themselves to the possibility that legitimate expansions of public health services may be thwarted by pressure groups that are in danger of being influenced more by considerations of vested interests than by the motivations of Christian compassion."

7. If society should succeed in meeting every physical need with reference to health, what would remain for the churches to do in the name of Christ?

"Even if everybody were healed there would yet remain the task of binding up the broken-hearted. There would yet remain a ministry of meaning to the loneliness and mystery of existence. There would yet remain the necessity for men to be led out of lostness to being found in the grace of God. There would yet remain the need to discipline the human spirit in integrity, industry, and initiative so that men may stand tall in dignity and self-respect, not being impoverished by the welfare services which are sure to be ministered increasingly by a society which is leavened in some measure by the compassion of Christ."

SECTION IV - FOREIGN AID AND DEVELOPMENT

Section IV studied church-state relations in programs of foreign assistance and development.

1. New Testament insights relating to national and international need; institutional implications for Christian responses.

No foreign aid and development programs were found in the New Testament, but five approaches to this problem were suggested:

(1) Historical incidents, as the Gentile Christians' offering for the Jewish Christians at Jerusalem; (2) commands of Jesus, as the parable of the Good Samaritan; (3) theological concepts, "God is love;" (4) stewardship, involving time, talents and possessions; and (5) redemption, the Christian's concern for meeting needs regardless of geographic boundaries.

The conference urged Baptists "to seek, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, new solutions to the pressing issues of our changing nation and world." Changing social, economic and political conditions call for fresh applications of the basic principles involved in church-state relationships.

Little was found in the New Testament in the area of institutional implications, but "the group agreed that the New Testament framework is basically that of individual ethics." Institutions are developed to assist the church in its ministry to human need. God is not limited to church-related institutions. Both church and governmental efforts to meet human need are "always in the need of purification of motivation which will reflect the redeeming love of God."

2. Is there a defensible Christian answer to the co-existence of agricultural surpluses in America and famine in India?

The conference said that Christians must be concerned about the starving millions of India through the resources available in America. However, it recognized the problems---social, cultural, political, economic, technological and religious---involved.

Two principles were suggested in seeking solutions: (1) definition of Christian motivation, and (2) what gives greatest aid; public relief or technical assistance?

3. Governmental use of church service or missionary agencies to distribute public aid and/or relief to foreign peoples.

The conference said the church service or missionary agencies should not be available to government to distribute public relief and/or aid to foreign peoples. Sudden national disasters may constitute exceptions, but then only on a temporary basis.

Reasons given were: government should provide its own distribution system; missionaries should not be identified with the foreign policy of the nation; the missionary is a representative of Christ; and he is responsible to the agency which he represents.

4. The Peace Corps and separation of church and state.

Four guide lines were suggested:

(1) Peace Corps personnel should be assigned to institutions, enterprises and projects not sponsored by sectarian interests; (2) religious tests should not be involved in selecting volunteers or projects; (3) proselyting activities should not be permitted of volunteer in his official position; (4) no restraints on the personal freedom of religious practice and witness should be imposed on the volunteer.

The conference reaffirmed the statement of C. Emanuel Carlson before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs (Aug. 16, 1961) and requested the Baptist Joint Committee to work for a revision of the Peace Corps law to provide church-state safeguards.

6. Role of the churches in recruiting members of the Peace Corps.

The Peace Corps is a government agency and should be viewed by the churches as only one aspect of government service that is open for Christians. Churches should not endeavor to organize group projects nor to use the Peace Corps for selfish ecclesiastical ends.

Conventions and churches may assist in recruiting Peace Corps members: (1) as a source of information to church members; (2) to orient the Peace Corps as a commendable contemporary expression of international social concern for Christian youth; (3) to encourage Christian youth to consider it as a commendable medium for personal Christian witness; (4) each convention should maintain a liaison officer between the Peace Corps and the denomination.

The conference cautioned that the short term Peace Corps service should not be a substitute for a life commitment to foreign mission service, that no contacts between the Peace Corps and religious organizations should obligate one to the other, and that the Peace Corps worker should be oriented to the mission program of the denomination from which he comes as well as the Christian work being done in the area where he will serve. The Peace Corpsman should enjoy the continued spiritual ministry of his church.

REPORT FROM THE CAPITAL

Issued by
Baptist Joint Committee
on Public Affairs
1628 16th Street, N.W.
Washington 9, D. C.

Cooperating Conventions

Southern Baptist Convention
American Baptist Convention
National Baptist Convention
of America
National Baptist Convention
U.S.A., Inc.
Baptist General Conference
North American Baptist
General Conference

Bulk Rate
U. S. Postage
2¢ PAID
Washington, D.C.
Permit No. 41353