

Report from the In Capital

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THE SCHOOL PRAYER ISSUE

By James M. Sapp

Renewed efforts, by well-meaning persons, to use the power of government to provide prayer time and content, surfaces the issue of prayer in public schools once more.

Once again, therefore, the assertion must be made that government is not competent in the area of religion. Prayer by school children or religious exercises in public schools is not an appropriate province of government.

This means that a public school teacher should not be authorized to structure a period requiring pupils to participate in a religious exercise or that a public school board should not be empowered to prescribe the content or the time or the place for a particular prayer or prayers to be said.

The Christian has plenty of room for exercising his own religious faith without the authority of government. He needs only the assistance of the Spirit of God in order to pray. He can pray silently. He can pray with his classmates on the playground. He can join with others of like desire before school begins or at the lunch table or after school adjourns.

The important principle to be observed by the school child or the parent is to refuse to use the power or the authority of government in order to pray. This is following precisely the decision of Jesus when faced with the temptation of Satan in Matthew 4:8-10.

On the other hand, there is an avenue open to school children and administrators which is only beginning to become clear in the light of the Supreme Court decisions of 1962 and 1963. This is the avenue of teaching about religion in the public schools. The High Court proceeded to carefully delineate ways appropriate for the Bible to be taught and other religious values to be examined in public schools:

In addition, it might well be said that one's education is not complete without a study of comparative religion or the history of religion and its relationship to the advancement of civilization. It certainly may be said that

the Bible is worthy of study for its literary and historic qualities. Nothing we have said here indicates that such study of the Bible or of religion, when presented objectively as part of a secular program of education, may not be effected consistent with the First Amendment.*

The holding of the Court plainly does not foreclose teaching about the Holy Scriptures or about the differences between religious sects in classes in literature or history.**

Such teaching is vastly different from teaching or sponsoring particular religious prayers or precepts.

Teaching about religion opens a door wide to learning about the contribution that various religious faiths have made to the development and welfare of our nation.

Teaching about religion is an educational function to be administered by public school authority and financed by public funds.

Teaching about religion can result in cooperative planning by school administrators, religious leaders and parents and should result in an understanding of the proper role of the school, the church and the home in teaching religion.

Indeed, religion is a factor in life and society. Therefore, information about religion is proper for discussion and treatment in public schools. Knowledge about religion and the influence of religious values on American culture and world history is a valuable and indispensable part of a person's total education.

But again, personal or corporate religion is not the function of the public schools. Teaching religion, conducting religious exercises and structuring prayer opportunities is the function of the church and the home.

The voluntary, free exercise of religion by each and every public school pupil and

*Abington School District v. Schempp, Justice Clark, p. 22

**Abington School District v. Schempp, Justice Brennan, p. 72

teacher is guaranteed by the United States Constitution and must be protected by public authorities. A structured time for prayer, written or unwritten, required or sponsored by public school authorities, is not voluntary, free exercise of religion.

Thus, government must remain neutral in matters of personal religious practice or commitment. This is especially true of the of the relationship between a government institution which is charged with dealing with the daily lives of impressionable school children. The government simply must not intrude in anyway into the personal religious lives of public school children.

Baptists have never believed that government is competent in religious matters. Many Baptists throughout history have given their lives in the struggle to prevent government from requiring their citizens to support and participate in religious ceremonies, prayers and services.

A first step toward the establishment of a particular religion is provided when government is granted permission to regulate or provide for religious exercises, prayers or creeds. Once government has been given authority to "permit" or "authorize" or "provide" religious exercises or prayers it is an easy step to favor one religious form or creed over another. Indeed, the prayers in a school district with a wide variety of religious faith could be rewritten or altered each time a school board was elected to reflect the tenants or beliefs of the majority of the school board members, should government be empowered to sponsor school prayers.

Baptists have never developed official prayer books of their own. Among many Baptists there is a reluctance to use written prayers. The people called Baptists have held strongly to the belief that each person has the responsibility and the privilege of access to God for himself without the aid of assistance of a "priest" or "temporal power."

Let us keep it so.

REPORT FROM THE CAPITAL—a bulletin published 16 months during the year by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, 200 Maryland Ave., N. E., Washington, D. C. 20002. The purpose of this bulletin is to report findings on the interrelations between churches and governments in the United States. It affords church leaders a chance to understand developments, policies and trends affecting public policies and it affords public officials a chance to understand church structure, dynamics and positions. It is dedicated to religious liberty, to free and effective democracy and to equitable rights and opportunities for all.

The views of writers of material for *Report From The Capital* are not necessarily those of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs or its staff. The bulletin also provides for the sharing of views between leaders of the cooperating conventions and between leaders of various religions and traditions.

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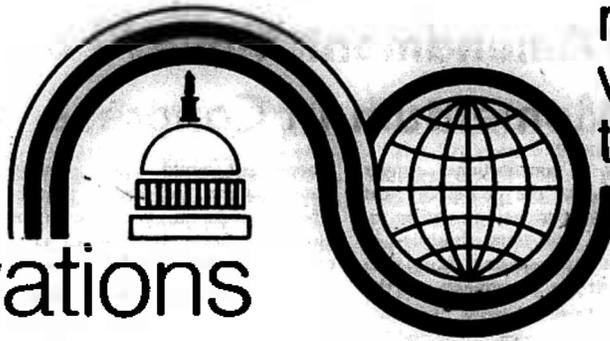
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September 1971 — Volume 26, Number 8

washington observations



news
views
trends

September 1, 1971

PRESIDENT NIXON again warmed the hearts of parochial school educators on August 17 in a speech to the annual convention of the Knights of Columbus, in New York. He was preceded by a speech from Terence Cardinal Cooke who demanded government aid to parochial schools.

"I WANT TO ASSOCIATE MYSELF with the remarks of His Eminence Cardinal Cooke," the President declared. The more than 1,200 persons at the dinner at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel stood and cheered as Mr. Nixon vowed, ". . . and you can count on my help."

THIS, OF COURSE, IS NOTHING NEW because as far back as the Kennedy-Nixon campaign in 1960 Mr. Nixon took a position in favor of public aid to private schools. But since he has been President he has said more and has advocated tax aid for parochial schools more than any President in our memory.

IN HIS EDUCATION MESSAGE to Congress the President called for federal aid to parochial schools. Later he appointed a special Commission to research ways in which such aid could be provided within the limits of the Constitution. Following his speech to the Knights of Columbus Mr. Nixon expressed dissatisfaction with the recent ruling of the U. S. Supreme Court denying the constitutionality of state aid to parochial schools in Pennsylvania and Rhode Island.

WITH ALL OF THIS OPENNESS on the part of the President on a subject that other presidents have avoided studiously one cannot keep from wondering. Is it now politically wise to advocate public aid to nonpublic schools? Is the political climate of the nation now such that because public institutions are in ill-repute a President of the United States may make political "hay" by attacking them? Does the President really believe that the way to provide "the moral, spiritual and religious values" to school children is by the route of private religious schools supported by public funds?

IN THE MEANTIME the public should be aware of the divided opinion between the Roman Catholic hierarchy and portions of the laity on the subject of public aid to their schools. Father C. Albert Koob, president of the National Catholic Educational Association, among many other members of the hierarchy, has bitterly attacked the Supreme Court for its refusal to approve tax aid to religious schools.

BUT THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LAITY and the National Association for Personal Rights in Education, represented by Leo Jordan and Frank Brown respectively, agree with the basic principles of the Supreme Court decisions and attack the bishops for persisting on their ill-advised course. The Catholic laymen contend that as long as the parochial schools are essentially an extension of the church and as long as they are run by the bishops instead of by democratically selected school boards with the interests of the children and the parents uppermost the courts will continue to refuse public funds.

Prayer Amendment Move Gains Momentum In Congress

The move for a constitutional prayer amendment, much like the proverbial "cat with nine lives," is experiencing another revival in Congress. This time observers in and out of Congress, including those who oppose and support the movement, see the prayer amendment as a live issue.

In the House of Representatives, where the powerful Judiciary Committee has succeeded in the past in stopping the movement, a "discharge petition" to bypass the Committee and get a resolution on a prayer amendment to the House Floor is gaining momentum. Rep. Emanuel Celler (D., N.Y.) is chairman of the House Judiciary Committee.

The discharge petition, to date signed by 190 Congressmen, was started by Rep. Chalmers P. Wylie (R., Ohio). The petition needs 218 signers to bring Wylie's resolution past the Judiciary Committee to the House Floor for a vote.

Wylie's resolution is the same as the Dirksen Amendment which was gaining in popularity prior to the death of Sen. Everett Dirksen (R., Ill.) during the previous session of Congress. It reads:

"Nothing contained in this Constitution shall abridge the right of persons lawfully assembled, in any public building which is supported in whole or in part through the expenditure of public funds, to participate in nondenominational prayer."

The resolution, if it passes the House and Senate, would have to be ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the States within seven years for it to become an amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, made up of representatives from eight Baptist denominations in the United States, has warned repeatedly against any effort to change the meaning of the First Amendment. A number of Baptist conventions, including the American Baptist Convention, the Baptist General Conference, the North American Baptist General Conference and the Southern Baptist Convention have passed resolutions affirming their support for the concepts and the vocabulary of the First Amendment, and appealing to Congress to let the First Amendment stand as it is "as our guarantee of religious liberty."

John W. Baker, the acting executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee, warned that any new constitutional amendment dealing with religious activity could "circumvent the First Amendment freedom."

Specifically, Baker said that such an

amendment could "alter existing church-state relations, and lead to a series of cases affecting such sensitive areas as aid to religious education, taxation of church property, and forms of religious worship."

The revival of the prayer amendment in the House of Representatives is credited mainly to the zeal of an attractive young mother, Mrs. Ben Ruhlín, from Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio. At the present time Mrs. Ruhlín and a group of 35 are lobbying in Congress for additional members to sign the discharge petition. Mrs. Ruhlín, from Rep. Wylie's home district, is operating out of the Congressman's office in the Longworth House Office Building on Capitol Hill.

In an interview with Baptist Press, Mrs. Ruhlín identified a number of local and state groups who are putting the pressure on their Congressmen to sign the discharge petition. Among the groups named by Mrs. Ruhlín are Veterans and American Legion groups, the Retired Teachers Association, the Back to God Movement, Citizens for Public Reverence, Project Prayer, National Parents for Prayer, the National Association of Republican Women, the National Grange and the National Association of Evangelicals. Also, Mrs. Ruhlín said that "teachers, Jaycees and letter carriers" are involved in each state.

One Congressman who is a direct object of the lobbyists' efforts is Rep. Fred Schwengel (R., Iowa). Schwengel, who describes himself as "an active Christian Baptist," is a lay leader in the North American Baptist General Conference. Schwengel told Baptist Press that when he was approached by one of the lobbyists, he related his convictions on the adequacy of the First Amendment to protect the religious freedom of all citizens. When he finished giving his side of the issue, the lobbyist, Mrs. Virginia Pruitt, a Baptist lay worker from Washington, D.C., said "well, it looks like I am campaigning for the wrong side."

Mrs. Pruitt, a member of the Calvary Baptist Church here, where Congressman Schwengel is also a member, told Baptist Press that she felt she had been "misinformed about the value of the prayer amendment . . . and that she had not understood the Supreme Court decisions" on prayer and Bible reading handed down in 1962 and 1963.

"I think a lot of Baptists are as ill-informed as I was," Mrs. Pruitt said. "I'm not going back to work with that group on Capitol Hill," she declared, referring to Mrs. Ruhlín's Prayer Campaign Committee lobbying among the Congressmen on Capitol Hill.

Proposed Prayer Amendment Would Endanger Religious Liberty, Baptist Leaders Declare

A number of Baptist leaders in the nation have asked Congress not to weaken or repudiate the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution by passing a so-called prayer amendment to permit "nondenominational prayer" in public buildings.

The top executives and elected heads of six Baptist groups, in letters and statements to Congress, declared support for the Supreme Court decisions of 1962 and 1963 which prohibited government-sponsored prayers and devotions in public schools.

W. Hubert Porter, associate general secretary of the American Baptist Convention, in a letter to Cong. Emanuel Celler urged him to do everything in his power "to defeat all efforts to weaken or evade the First Amendment."

"Crusaders for an amendment to cut the heart out of the First Amendment by making constitutional the legislation of religion can make their case sound deeply religious and superbly patriotic," Porter said in a letter entered by Celler into the July 27 issue of the Congressional Record, the official daily journal of Congress.

"They at times make it appear that the steadfast friends of the First Amendment are against God, country, and motherhood, but such an impression is a deception and a delusion," Porter charged.

"The truest friends of religion and the most constructive citizens of the state are those who support those First Amendment guarantees that have made possible in the

United States of America a fuller measure of religious freedom than was previously known in the world," declared the ABC executive.

Other top Baptist executives urging Congress not to approve the prayer amendment included S. S. Hodges of Washington, D.C., executive secretary of the Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc., G. K. Zimmerman of Forest Park, Ill., the executive secretary of the North American Baptist General Conference, and Warren R. Magnuson, general secretary of the Baptist General Conference, Evanston, Ill.

The president of the Southern Baptist



S. S. HODGES
Executive
Secretary
Progressive
National Baptist
Convention

The people called Baptists have always believed in and contended for the principle of religious liberty for all and the fact that prayer, to be genuine, must be voluntary . . . for prayer is communion with God.

The Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc. adheres to this principle and believes further that prayer should neither be hindered nor compelled by any governmental or ecclesiastical authority.

We believe that the First Amendment to the Constitution which states, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," is a sufficient guarantee of religious liberty for all. The Supreme Court of the United States has rendered decisions which fairly and adequately interpret this amendment.

We believe further that another amendment to the Constitution relative to religion in general and prayer in particular could becloud the clear statement of the First Amendment and afford an opportunity for courts in the future to interpret the First Amendment differently. Therefore, we oppose a prayer amendment to the Constitution.

S. S. Hodges, Executive Secretary
Progressive National Baptist Convention,
Inc.
Washington, D.C.

Convention, Carl E. Bates, of Charlotte, N.C., charged that the proposed prayer amendment "could lead to excessive involvement of the state in religious matters." Bates cited, in a message to Congress, the recent action of the SBC in which the convention reaffirmed its belief in the adequacy of the First Amendment to protect religious liberty.

"A new amendment to the Constitution on the subject of religious liberty could seriously alter church-state relations," Bates declared.

The acting executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, John W. Baker, explained that the proposed amendment to the Constitution "could circumscribe" the First Amendment in ways that would alter its meaning. It "creates ambiguities which do more harm than good for people and institutions," he said.

Baker, a political scientist, explained that the proposal raises several questions. "Does it mean that only nondenominational prayers could be prayed in a denominational or public institution which receives public funds? Who decides for an institution what is a lawful assembly? What problems are raised by the right of persons lawfully assembled? Do others have the same rights? Who determines the content for a nondenominational prayer in a school? The school board, the superintendent, the principal, the teacher?"



WARREN R.
MAGNUSON
General Secretary
Baptist
General Conference

Through the years the First Amendment to the United States Constitution has proved to be a sufficient protection for the religious liberties of the American people. The decisions of the United States Supreme Court in its interpretation of the "establishment" and "free exercise" clauses generally have been sound.

As Americans we now enjoy full privileges and opportunities for the expression of our religious convictions. No additional amendments pertaining to religious liberty are needed now or for the foreseeable future.

Warren R. Magnuson,
General Secretary
Baptist General Conference
Evanston, Illinois

If so, such a prayer becomes a government prescribed prayer," he said.

The Progressive Baptist executive, S. S. Hodges, agreed that a prayer amendment "could becloud the clear statement of the First Amendment and afford an opportunity for courts in the future to interpret the First Amendment differently."

The Supreme Court decision against an "official" prayer "does not hinder individuals from praying or giving other expression of their faith," Zimmerman observed.

"Furthermore, we do not believe that the Court eliminated God from our public life. It simply stated that the establishment of religion has a tendency to destroy government and to degrade religion," Zimmerman declared.

The American Baptist executive in his letter to Cong. Celler noted that "it is understandable that many good people are tempted

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G. K.
ZIMMERMAN
Executive
Secretary
North American
Baptist
General Conference

The decision by the Supreme Court that prayer "composed by government officials as a part of a government program to further religious beliefs" is unconstitutional is in keeping with the position held by our Baptist forefathers who sought religious freedom when they came to America. We continue to concur with the Supreme Court that the Regents' prayer in New York state was an "official" prayer and thus violated the rights of citizens under the First and Fourteenth Amendments. It does not hinder individuals from praying or giving other expression of their faith. Furthermore, we do not believe that the Court eliminated God from our public life. It simply stated that the establishment of religion has a tendency to destroy government and to degrade religion. Also, we believe that governmentally established religion and religious persecution go hand in hand. It is our hope and prayer that the decisions by the Supreme Court remain intact since this is in the best interests of our religious freedom.

G. K. Zimmerman,
Executive Secretary
North American Baptist
General Conference
Forest Park, Illinois

Text Of A Letter From ABC Official To The Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee

Congressman Emanuel Celler, Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary, United States
House of Representatives, Washington, D.C.

Dear Congressman Celler:

The purpose of this letter is to thank you for the valiant fight which you have waged against efforts to legislate religion in the United States and to encourage you in your current efforts to prevent the weakening of the First Amendment. The founding fathers of our nation had good reason to affirm "that Congress shall make no laws respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Their reasons for such an absolute prohibition include a fresh remembrance of horrible persecutions which tore out men's tongues and cut off their ears as governments sought to enforce prescribed religious views and practices in the Old World.

Crusaders for an amendment to cut the heart out of the First Amendment by making constitutional the legislation of religion can make their case sound deeply religious and superbly patriotic. They at times make it appear that the steadfast friends of the First Amendment are against God, country, and motherhood, but such an impression is a deception and a delusion. The truest friends of religion and the most constructive citizens of the state are those who support those First Amendment guarantees that have made possible in the United States of America a fuller measure of religious freedom than was previously known in the world.

It is understandable that many good people are tempted to yield to the idea that the church "has it made" when Congress puts God's name in the Pledge of Allegiance or prints His name on postage stamps and engraves it on coin or perhaps supports a "Christian amendment," but such a hope is really deceptive. The idea of evangelism by legislation is nothing short of a dangerous illusion. Actually, religion has been most vital where it has been most free from governmental sponsorship or governmental interference. The difference between the progress and influence of organized religion in the United States of America and that in European countries which have maintained established religions for centuries should be highly instructive. In such a comparison I believe there is no evidence whatever to support the contention that the cause of

religion could be furthered by legislative action.

Moreover, it is quite clearly impossible for government to legislate religion without violating the rights of many citizens. If we get into the business of imposing governmentally sponsored and governmentally required devotions on captive audiences in publicly supported schools, whose religion will it be? Will it be Buddhism in the State of Hawaii? Or Mormonism in the State of Utah? Or a Baptist-oriented Protestantism in the State of Georgia? Or Roman Catholicism in the State of Massachusetts? Or Judaism in New York City? How could such different emphases state by state be avoided in the light of the dominant religious forces in the respective states? Manifestly the welfare of religion in a pluralistic society like ours must lean heavily upon a strict interpretation of the First Amendment. Without such an interpretation I believe that there can be no adequate protection of the rights of the many varieties of Christians, as well as Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Mormons, and people of no religious affiliation or faith at all. Each must have the same right as all the others and none must be compelled by law to attend school and then as part of a captive audience be subjected to devotional exercises reflecting the view of the dominant religious group in the community.

The founding fathers wisely established our republic in the firm confidence that religious freedom would best be served if church and state were kept separate and if political authorities did not involve themselves in the promotion of religious practices. The late Supreme Court Justice Robert H. Jackson stated the matter eloquently in the case involving the West Virginia Board of Education in 1943, known as the *Barnet Case*, when he said, "The very purpose of a Bill of Rights was to withdraw certain subjects from the vicissitudes of political controversy, to place them beyond the reach of majorities and officials and establish them as legal principles to be applied by the courts. One's right to . . . freedom of worship . . . and other fundamental rights may not be submitted to vote. They depend upon the outcome of no elections."

There is a great deal of history to confirm

the wisdom of Mr. Justice Jackson's viewpoint. That history includes the Spanish Inquisition in which multitudes of Jews were tortured, imprisoned, or put to death in the effort to make them conform to certain kinds of Christian beliefs and practices. A somewhat similar history was repeated in Massachusetts when the established church of the 17th Century used the government as an instrument to force Roger Williams to conform and then drove him out of the colony when he refused to surrender his conscience. John Bunyan spent twelve years in Bedford Jail for a similar reason, and Obadiah Holmes was flogged unmercifully in Massachusetts for a like cause. Likewise a number of Free Church preachers in Virginia were imprisoned and brutally maltreated when they objected to the coercive pressures of the established church which used agencies of government to impose religious regulations and practices in violation of their consciences. It is not too much to say that the pages of history are red with the blood of valiant souls who resisted the efforts of government to invade the realm of the spirit and then paid the price of persecution, oppression, imprisonment, and martyrdom. We must not allow this history to be obscured by the well meaning people who crusade in support of prayer by legislation.

Enclosures to supplement this letter include three documents which were issued several years ago in relation to the matter of governmentally prescribed devotions but these documents are as relevant today as when issued. They include an editorial entitled "The Court Decides Wisely" from the July 3, 1963 issue of *The Christian Century*; a news release under date of June 19, 1963 by Dr. Richard Hoiland, formerly the Executive Secretary of the American Baptist Board of Education and Publication; and a statement made by Dr. Edwin H. Tuller, the then General Secretary of the American Baptist Convention, in testimony before the Committee on the Judiciary of the United States House of Representatives on April 29, 1964. In that statement, Dr. Tuller called attention to the following resolution which was adopted by the American Baptist Convention at Detroit, Michigan, in 1963:

"In the light of the recent Supreme Court decisions, we affirm our historic Baptist belief that religion should not be a matter of compulsion and that prayers and religious practices should not be prescribed by law or by a teacher or public school official."

That resolution is still in effect and it is consistent with the stand which the Convention has taken many times in support of religious freedom.

The profound arguments that were embraced in the three massive volumes of testimony taken by the Judiciary Committee in 1964 with respect to "School Prayers" should put to rest permanently the illusion

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**Proposed Prayer Amendment
Would Endanger Religious Liberty**
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to yield to the idea that the church 'has it made' when Congress puts God's name in the Pledge of Allegiance or prints His name on postage stamps and engraves it on coin or perhaps supports a 'Christian amendment.'

"But such a hope is really deceptive," W. Hubert Porter declared. "The idea of evangelism by legislation is nothing short of a dangerous illusion.

Moreover, Porter continued, "it is quite clearly impossible for government to legislate religion without violating the rights of many citizens." If government gets into the business of sponsoring devotions on captive audiences, Porter wondered, whose religion it be?

"Will it be Buddhism in the state of Hawaii? Or Mormonism in the state of Utah? Or a Baptist-oriented Protestantism in the state of Georgia? Or Roman Catholicism in the state of Massachusetts? Or Judaism in New York City?" Porter asked. He declared that the welfare of religion in a pluralistic society "must lean heavily upon a strict interpretation of the First Amendment."

Another staff member of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, James M. Sapp, said he believed that "once the American people gain an understanding of the

difference between true voluntary prayer on the part of an individual or group, and official, prescribed prayers, they will reject the idea of government assistance to engage in prayer or religious exercises.

"The need for government assistance for a person to pray is unthinkable," Sapp declared.

"Prayer, as we understand it, is not prayer unless it is voluntary," Sapp continued. "Such voluntarism denies to government the power to control the time, place or content of prayer . . . and government should never be given the authority 'to permit' or 'not to permit' prayer in the true meaning of the word," Sapp said. He noted that the Supreme Court had not, "and indeed could not," rule against voluntary prayer where "the individual has direct access to God.

"What the Supreme Court did," Sapp pointed out, "was to deny state authorities the power to organize and promote religious exercises.

"In the light of our best insights into the biblical basis for voluntarism, this seems to be the best hope for religious freedom for all in this country," the spokesman for the Baptist Joint Committee said.

Sapp said further that he was confident that the majority of the Congressmen would, after thoughtful consideration, "refrain from deliberately injecting a personal, religious issue into the political arena."

**Nixon Draws Criticism For
Knights of Columbus Speech**

The American Jewish Congress criticized President Nixon's pledge of government support for parochial schools and called on him to "uphold the Constitution instead of promising prohibited government aid to sectarian institutions."

In a statement commenting on the President's remarks August 17 before the Knights of Columbus, the Jewish Congress said Mr. Nixon's support of government aid represented "a turning aside from his constitutional responsibility and from the nation's commitment to equal opportunity for disadvantaged children."

The statement, issued by Will Maslow, executive director of the Congress, declared:

"The primary and proper purpose of parochial schools is to propagate the faith. The government has no obligation to assist in that aim and is constitutionally prohibited from doing so.

"Just as we have called on the Jewish community to provide adequate support for Jewish day schools—without tainting their independence or infringing on the rights of

Text of Letter From ABC Official
(Continued from page 6)

that the cause of religion could be advanced in our nation by weakening or repudiating the First Amendment.

I believe that I am keeping faith with resolutions adopted by the American Baptist Convention as well as with the historic commitment of the Baptist people to the principle of free and uncoerced religion when I express the hope that you will do everything in your power to defeat all efforts to weaken or evade the First Amendment.

Thanking you again for your distinguished achievements in the safeguarding of our liberties and trusting that you will have equal success in your current efforts to protect the foundations of our freedom, I remain

Sincerely yours,
s/W. Hubert Porter
Associate General Secretary

others by seeking public funds for religious education—so do we respectfully suggest that the Catholic community provide the support its parochial schools require.

"Any claim that government failure to support parochial schools represents a denial of constitutional rights to Catholic parents can only result from a misreading of the Constitution.

"The First Amendment charges government with keeping hands off religion, neither aiding it nor hindering it. It is a negative command. To say that government must support parochial schools lest Catholic parents be hindered in their 'freedom of choice' is like saying that the elementary human right to travel abroad is not freely exercised unless government pays the passage." Commenting on President Nixon's statement that private and parochial schools were closing "at the rate of one a day," Mr. Maslow declared:

"In fact, Catholic schools are actually increasing in numbers, according to the 1970-71 report of the National Catholic Education Association's Data Bank.

"It states, 'The continued increase in the number of interparochial schools offers some evidence of elementary school consolidations.'

"And it observes that 'Catholic educators at times take pride in a decline in the number of Catholic schools when this statistic reflects the successful consolidations of smaller, less adequate schools into larger and more effective units.'"

On the call by Terence Cardinal Cooke for government funds which precipitated the President's affirmative response, the American Jewish Congress said it "deeply regrets" the Cardinal's statement and wished he had urged "private Catholic support of private Catholic schools rather than a government subsidy."

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School Prayer Literature

The following materials are available on the school prayer issue. The six tracts offer a comprehensive literature for those who wish to study the facts and factors involved in this issue which has come alive once more on the American scene.

Is A Constitutional Amendment Necessary?

A discussion of the value of the First Amendment in the light of proposed constitutional amendments.

The Case For Voluntary Prayer

Voluntarism as a tested precept is examined as it relates to prayer and government.

The American Tradition and Baptist Insights

The American tradition of separation is discussed in relation to church-state relations and current church-state problems.

Premises of the Supreme Court Retaining Government Regarding Devotions

An examination of the Supreme Court decisions with selections from the text of the Court decisions.

Questions and Answers On The Supreme Court And Public School Religion

Twenty-two questions and answers relating to the Court decisions on Bible reading and prayer in the public schools.

Religion and Public Education

Some suggested guidelines for discussion regarding the proper place of religion in the public schools.

Single copies of each of the above pamphlets are free upon request to the Baptist Joint Committee. Quantity prices will be quoted upon request.

100th Anniversary For Bethel

Bethel College and Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota, commemorated its 100th anniversary by breaking ground for its new campus on Lake Valentine in suburban Arden Hills.

According to Dr. Lundquist, president, the ground-breaking marks the physical start of the first phase of a \$20 million project, which will result in the mass relocation of Bethel College from its present St. Paul location. Bethel Seminary is already on the 214-acre site.

The institutions are owned and operated by the Baptist General Conference. Rev. Warren Magnuson is the General Secretary of the conference and presently serves as Chairman of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

STAFF REPORT

"THE COURT ON CHURCH TAX EXEMPTIONS"

An expanded rationale for church-state relations on the question of tax exemption of church property.

Single copies—20 cents each.

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"DISSENT IN CHURCH AND STATE"

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Portuguese Assembly Approves Bill On Religious Freedom

The Portuguese Assembly has approved a draft bill guaranteeing religious freedom to all "state-recognized" religious in Portugal.

For a religious denomination to qualify for recognition by the state its leader must be able to furnish proof that it has at least 500 adherents, resident in the country.

The measure, sponsored by the government, is designed to end reported "deficiencies in treatment" for religions other than Roman Catholicism which, since establishment of the Portuguese-Vatican Concordat of 1940, has been the official religion.

For decades, Protestants and other non-Catholic groups have complained of discrimination in Portugal and its overseas territories.

Alleged abuses included the inability of non-Catholics to qualify for official positions in the government, forced religious training of their children in Catholic doctrine, and restrictions on missionary activities.

The new law specifically forbids religious discrimination in employment or career assignments.

The law continues the practice of teaching Catholic doctrine in the public schools, but it makes allowance for parental objection. (EBPS)

Cover Picture

The Rayburn House Office Building, as seen from the south porch of the U.S. Capitol, houses the Washington offices of 169 of the 435 United States Representatives. The other 266 Congressmen maintain offices in the Cannon or Longworth House Office Buildings.

Congress reconvenes on September 7. If business runs true to the pattern of recent years, the first session of the 92nd Congress will not adjourn until sometime in December.