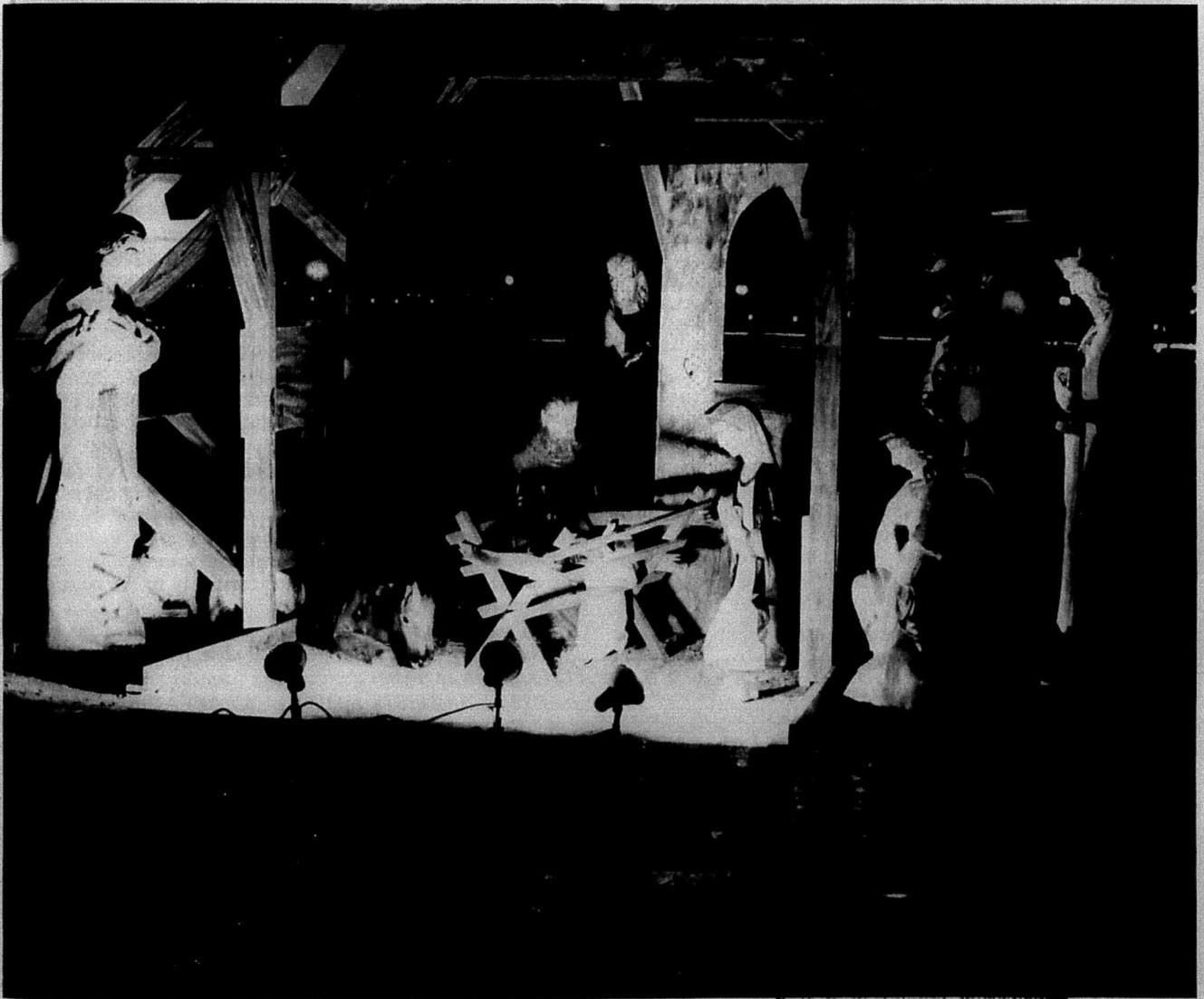


# Report from the Capital

DECEMBER 1973

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# From the Desk of the Executive Director

## Baptists and Public Affairs in 1973

By James E. Wood, Jr.

The mandate given the Baptist Joint Committee, approved by all of its sponsoring Baptist conventions, is clear: "To act in the field of public affairs . . . whenever Baptist principles are involved, or jeopardized through governmental action. . . ." and "to inform Baptist constituencies of governmental measures affecting . . . relations between church and state and the right application of Christianity to the life of the nation."

During the past year the Baptist Joint Committee has performed a variety of services and focused on a variety of concerns on behalf of Baptists. We have continued to provide numerous information services beamed to church and denominational leaders.

Throughout 1973 *Report from the Capital* provided on a monthly basis an up-to-date and reliable coverage of public affairs issues having particular interest to and bearing on Baptists and their agencies, institutions, and churches.

Baptist editors continued to use material from this denominational office under a Washington dateline with the familiar insignia BP (Baptist Press). In addition, we provided BPA (Baptist Public Affairs) throughout the year, much of the time on a weekly basis, to more than 500 communication offices and news outlets.

During this past year two pamphlets, "The Commitment and Witness of Baptists in Public Affairs" and "Religious Liberty and the Bill of Rights," were published and given wide distribution.

In addition to serving Baptist churches and their leaders during the past year, the Baptist Joint Committee has been called upon to provide resources and services for the Baptist World Alliance, American Baptist Ministers and Missionaries Board, Southern Baptist Annuity Board, Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, Southern Baptist Education Commission, Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, Baptist institutions of learning and welfare, and six foreign mission boards of Baptist member bodies.

The Baptist Joint Committee has also exercised an active role in communicating Baptist concerns to the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. Here are a few of these activities.



Wood

1. We gave testimony before the House Ways and Means Committee against proposed legislation for the removal of tax deductions for charitable contributions. We have continued to maintain close contact with the status of this proposed legislation, which we regard as incompatible with the voluntary association principle and a threat to religious liberty in America.

2. We gave testimony before the House Ways and Means Committee in opposition to proposed legislation of tax credits for parents of children in parochial schools. Although vigorously endorsed by the Nixon administration, tax credit legislation now appears extremely unlikely, at least for the 93rd Congress, thanks largely to the 1973 decision of the U. S. Supreme Court.

3. We gave testimony on behalf of Absentee Voting at the request of the foreign mission boards of six of our Baptist member bodies: American Baptist Churches, Baptist General Conference, North American Baptist General Conference, Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc., Seventh Day Baptist General Conference, and Southern Baptist Convention. This request came in response to our initiative in sharing with the mission boards of all of our member bodies information concerning pending legislation aimed at extending voting rights in federal elections to non-government personnel overseas (50,000 American missionaries; 750,000 Americans presently so disenfranchised).

4. We have also been engaged in concerted efforts to oppose the so-called constitutional prayer amendments now before the 93rd Congress. The opposition of the Baptist Joint Committee to these proposed prayer amendments has been reaffirmed because: (1) such legislation is constitutionally unnecessary and spiritually ineffective since prayer by its very nature is voluntary, requiring neither the sanction nor support of the state; (2) such legislation ignores the rights of all citizens by encouraging state prayers and state religious ceremonies; and (3) such legislation means amending the Bill of Rights for the first time in our history.

5. We have filed two amicus briefs with the U. S. Supreme Court during the past year: (1) one in opposition to public funds to parochial schools; and (2) the other in defense of the tax exempt status of a religious organization after it had been declared by federal courts to constitute a church. In the first case the U. S. Supreme Court ruled favorably to the position of the Baptist Joint Committee.

6. We have expressed our vigorous opposition to the guidelines issued by the Department of Labor on Executive Order 11246, which expressly prohibit any form of religious discrimination (See, BAPTISTS and PUBLIC AFFAIRS, p. 5)

### Report From The Capital

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# National Nativity Scene To Be Under Private Auspices

By W. Barry Garrett

Many people in the nation have been upset because they thought that the courts took Christ out of the national Christmas Pageant of Peace on the Ellipse near the White House. They thought, on the basis of inadequate news reports, that the courts prohibited the presence of the nativity scene in connection with the national Christmas tree.

It is easy to draw such conclusions when a person does not have complete information, when sketchy and inadequate news reports or headlines are seen, or when the real issues are not clearly understood.

This article is an effort not to tell everything—it took three federal judges 51 pages to give their opinions—but briefly to set forth the essential facts and issues in the case.

First, there will be a nativity scene adjacent to the annual Christmas Pageant of Peace this year. The big difference between this and previous religious observances around the national Christmas tree is that it will not now be under governmental sponsorship, supervision or financing. It will be under private sponsorship.

Second, the United States Court of Appeals did not prohibit the nativity scene from the Pageant of Peace but it did order the government to extricate itself from "entanglement" in religion as practiced in the Pageant of Peace. The court, in its decision, opened doors for other channels of expression of religion at the annual event.

On September 26 the U. S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia reversed a decision of the U. S. District Court. The case is known as *Allen v. Morton*.

The issue of the nativity scene at the annual Christmas Pageant of Peace arose when a group of District of Columbia residents challenged the practice as a violation of the "establishment clause" of the First Amendment. This clause prohibits an establishment of religion in the United States.

The lower court ruled that "there was neither a religious purpose in the Government's sponsorship of the Pageant, nor was the primary effect of the creche that of substantial religious impact." On the question of purpose, the district judge took note of the fact that the Pageant was intended "to provide a colorful event during the Christmas season which would attract visitors to Washington and thereby increase the business of local merchants."

Therefore, the District court ruled that the Pageant of Peace including the nativity scene was not a violation of the First Amendment.

The Court of Appeals, however, ruled that the continuation of the Government's participation in the Pageant of Peace, which includes sponsorship and planning the religious activities, resulted in an excessive entanglement of government in religion. For this reason, the Court of Appeals issued a complicated three-pronged opinion, summarized as follows:

First, the Court said that there will be no further legal problems if the creche is eliminated from the Christmas Pageant of Peace.

Second, if the creche is retained, and if the government terminates sponsorship or connection with the Pageant, appropriate plaques must be erected explaining the relationships.



Garrett

Third, if the creche is retained, and if the government continues connection with the Pageant, new regulations must be prepared to provide for governmental neutrality and nondiscrimination.

As a result of this decision it was widely reported that "Jesus won't be allowed in the Christmas Pageant of Peace this year." Such was neither the intent nor the effect of the Court's ruling.

In spite of the Court's effort at clarity it knew that its ruling would be widely misunderstood. The judges said, "This case, we unhappily surmise, is similarly disposed to perplex, confuse, and even frustrate, so sensitive and complex are the issues it presents."

In accordance with the Court's opinion, the Government has now decided to continue its participation in the Pageant of Peace and to eliminate the nativity scene from the event.

However, a permit has been issued to the American Christian Heritage Association to erect a nativity scene on park property adjacent to the Pageant. This means that there will be a religious activity along with the Christmas Pageant of Peace, but that there will be no official connection between the two, and that the religious activity will be under private sponsorship.

The American Christian Heritage Association was formed by Vaughn Barkdoll for the purpose of having a nativity scene in connection with the national Christmas tree and the Pageant of Peace.

Barkdoll is a member of the First Baptist Church of Riverdale, Md., a suburb of the District of Columbia. This is an independent church not affiliated with the District of Columbia Baptist Convention or with the Baptist Convention of Maryland.

Named as the executive director of the American Christian Heritage Association, Barkdoll is employed full time as a ramp agent at the National Airport and operates a small sports promotion business on the side. He is a former political campaign manager, having worked for Rep. Lawrence J. Hogan (R., Md.).

Tentative plans for the nativity scene called for a display 60 feet long and 26 feet deep. Barkdoll planned to use live animals and static figures of persons. He estimated that the cost would reach \$10,000, which he hopes to receive from donors throughout the United States.

In a separate but concurring opinion in *Allen v. Morton*, Judge Leventhal set forth a brief history of the Pageant and developed the "entanglement" of the government in the religious aspects of the event.

The Christmas Pageant of Peace, Inc. was first organized in 1954. Before that time government involvement with the celebration of Christmas consisted of a presentation to the President of the National Community Christmas Tree, a practice which originated with President Calvin Coolidge in 1923.

Originally, this tree was erected in the Ellipse, where it is today. In 1934, however, the presentation ceremonies were transferred to Lafayette Park. In 1939, the event was again moved to the Ellipse. In the 1941-1954 period, the presentation program was conducted on the Executive Mansion grounds.

From its inception, the Pageant was directed by a coalition of three groups: government, business and clergy. The Government played a pivotal role through the Superintendent of the National Park Service when the Pageant was organized in 1954. He was one of the original incorporators, General Chairman of

(See, NATIVITY SCENE, p. 5)

# Amnesty Question Confronts Nation with Hard Decision

By John W. Baker

In his proclamation of September 7, 1867 granting amnesty to all but a few high ranking politicians and military men in the Confederacy, President Andrew Johnson gave reasons for his action. One of these was: "Whereas a retaliatory or vindictive policy, attended by unnecessary disqualifications, pains, penalties, confiscations, and disfranchisements, now, as always, could only tend to hinder reconciliation among the people and national restoration, while it must seriously embarrass, obstruct, and repress popular energies and national industry and enterprise. . . ."

Amnesty (from the Greek *amnestia*—an overlooking or forgetting) is a concept of public law through which the sovereign voluntarily nullifies certain illegal acts committed against the state by a group of individuals. Almost always these illegal acts are political rather than what we usually call criminal acts.

The granting of amnesty is not foreign to the American scene. The Congress under the Articles of Confederation granted general amnesty and restored all rights to those residents of the United States who had remained loyal to the Crown during the American Revolution. In 1795 George Washington, using his constitutional power to grant pardon (Art. II, sec. 2), issued general amnesties for those who participated in the Whiskey Rebellion. Amnesty was also granted by John Adams in 1800, by James Madison in 1815, by Abraham Lincoln in 1863, by Andrew Johnson in 1865, 1867, and 1868, and by Theodore Roosevelt—to Aguinaldo's followers—in 1902.

After World War I, Wilson pardoned a list of political opponents to the war while refusing pardons to other political opponents (e.g. Eugene V. Debs). Coolidge returned citizenship and civil rights to men who deserted the armed forces between the end of World War I hostilities and the termination of the war. Franklin Roosevelt granted "full pardon" on Christmas of 1933 to all violators of the World War I draft laws and the 1917 espionage act.

After World War II Truman announced that he was considering a general amnesty. Though he appointed what was called an Amnesty Board, it functioned as a special pardon board to hear individual cases. Out of nearly 20,000 men who had been convicted for violating the Selective Service Act, 1,523 were granted individual pardons. In December 1950 he restored citizenship and civil rights to all persons convicted of military desertion from August 1945 to July 1950. There were few resisters during the Korean War and no pardons or amnesties followed its termination.

Thus, in every war, except the last two, in which the United States has been involved, some form of amnesty or pardon has been granted to those who resisted military service. However, all of these moves toward reconciliation aroused opposition.

A debate on amnesty for those who resisted the draft, those who fled the country, or those who deserted the military during the Vietnam War is taking place in Washington and throughout the country. Both sides of the debate maintain their positions with logic and determination.

President Nixon has "made it perfectly clear" that he does not intend to grant amnesty for anti-war and anti-military activities. If anything is done in this field, it will be the result of



Baker

Congressional action which includes overriding an almost certain veto.

Seven bills providing for some type of amnesty are currently pending in the Subcommittee on Courts, Civil Liberties, and the Administration of Justice of the House Committee on the Judiciary. There is also one resolution which provides that no amnesty whatsoever be granted. These pending bills are:

H.R. 236—To exonerate and to provide for a general and unconditional amnesty for certain persons who have violated, or are alleged to have violated laws in the course of protest against the involvement of the U.S. in Indochina, and for other purposes.

H.R. 674—To approve and authorize amnesty or mitigation of punishment for certain persons who have illegally manifested their disapproval of U.S. participation in the Southeast Asia war; and to provide for restoration of civil and political rights that have been lost or impaired by reason of such illegal acts, and for other purposes.

H.R. 675—To amend Title 18, United States Code to conditionally suspend the application of certain penal provisions of law.

H.R. 2167—To offer amnesty under certain conditions to persons who have failed or refused to register for the draft or to be inducted into the Armed Forces of the U.S., and for other purposes.

H.R. 3100—Identical to H.R. 236 above.

H.R. 4238—Identical to H.R. 675 above.

H.R. 5159—To exonerate and to provide for a general and unconditional amnesty for certain persons who have violated laws in the course of protest against the involvement of the U.S. in Indochina, and for other purposes.

H. Con. Res. 144—Expressing the sense of Congress that no pardon, reprieve, or amnesty be given to deserters or draft evaders.

In addition to the bills which are in Judiciary, there is one resolution (that no amnesty be given) which is pending in the Committee on Armed Services:

H. Con. Res. 86—Expressing the sense of Congress with respect to those individuals who refused to register for the draft, refused induction or being a member of the Armed Forces fled to a foreign country to avoid further military service.

Only 15 Congressmen have given their support to bills which would grant unconditional amnesty to those who broke the law in resisting the military during the Vietnam War. Another thirteen Congressmen have indicated a lack of readiness to support unconditional amnesty at this time.

However, a majority of the Representatives are reported to favor bills which grant a much more limited amnesty. The two general plans which are most popular provide for (1) conditional amnesty, with two or three years of the kind of alternative service conscientious objectors performed, for draft evaders only or for both evaders and deserters, and (2) the establishment of a national commission which will review individual cases with the power to grant either conditional or unconditional amnesty where it is deemed appropriate.

The Vietnam War was the longest war the United States has ever fought and, with the exception of the Civil War, the most divisive. As a result the number of war resisters involved has been substantial. *The New York Times*, January 30, 1973, estimated that there are:

10,000 draft resisters and military deserters in civil or military prisons, on probation, or awaiting court action;  
80,000 draft resisters and military deserters who are underground in the United States;  
60,000-100,000 draft resisters or military deserters in exile (largely in Canada);  
388,000 Vietnam veterans with less than honorable discharges.

Christians who oppose amnesty have generally cited Christ's admonition to "Render unto Caesar the things which are Cae-

sar's" (Matt. 22:21; Mark 12:17) and Paul's numerous statements of the Christian's obligation to obey the sovereign. Those who favor amnesty respond with Peter's statement in Acts 5:29, "We must obey God rather than men," and stress that Christ came to bring reconciliation and has entrusted us with that message of reconciliation (II Cor. 5:18-19).

There is no consensus among Baptists on the subject of amnesty. However, some other mainline denominations feel strongly that amnesty is a Christian act and that the nation should move quickly in the matter.

## Baptists and Public Affairs

(Continued from p. 2)

*ination in the hiring of personnel, teaching or administrative, in church schools which negotiate a federal contract for as much as \$10,000.* The committee views the guidelines as a serious threat to the religious identity and integrity of church schools and as incompatible with the guarantees of the First Amendment. Furthermore, the guidelines fails to recognize any distinction between government contracts for services rendered and the granting of government subsidies.

It is impossible to review a Baptist witness in public affairs in 1973 without taking note of the unprecedented American tragedy through which we are now passing, largely made public as a result of the so-called "Watergate Affair." At the moment we are in the Dark Ages in public affairs in America.

There has been the attempted prostitution of government

power to manipulate the electoral process and to justify lying, illegal spying, and criminal lawlessness on the part of high ranking members of the Administration and federal government agencies in the name of national security, executive privileges, and separation of powers. Ironically, the public enterprise has reached an unprecedented low at a time it is needed most urgently. Dangerous assaults have been made on constitutional liberties, often by those who at the same time they eschew these constitutional liberties mouth "law and order" for the citizenry at large. An official "Statement of Concern" from the Baptist Joint Committee was sent in October to the President and all members of Congress.

This is not the time for the Christian or the church to be fainthearted. The need was never greater for the church's witness in public affairs, and to give that witness at the very citadel of political power in the nation. To this end the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs is firmly committed, and in the exercise of this witness it strives to be forever vigilant!

## Nativity Scene

(Continued from p. 3)

the Executive Committee, Director, and First Vice-President of the Pageant.

Business leaders associated with the Washington Board of Trade also played a central role. Three prominent members of the business community were among the incorporators.

The Washington area Christian clergy were represented in the original organization of the Pageant through the Archbishop of Washington and the Executive Secretary of the Washington Federation of Churches. Other clergymen from the Archdiocese and the Washington Federation of Churches served as co-chairmen of the "Committee for Religious Cooperation."

According to Judge Leventhal, the organizational structure of the Pageant has not changed much since 1954. The 1970 organizational chart, the latest in the record, shows the government officials holding two of the five positions on the Executive Committee. An official of the National Capital Region, U. S. Park Service was a member of the Program Committee and Chairman of the Grounds and Facilities Committee.

Furthermore, Judge Leventhal said, "The entanglement of the Government and organized religion was not confined to the formalism of an organizational chart. The organization of the Pageant required a complicated, and almost inescapable, set of actions and decisions by the Government officials involved in religious matters: guidelines on the organization's principles had to be approved; speeches promoting the Pageant had to be made; conflicting views as to the prominence of the religious motif compromised or placated, and money or services donated to finance the Pageant's activities."

The judge also pointed out that "the role the Government officials played in the Pageant also required them to be involved with allocating space and time to various religious groups who wished to participate in the event." He called attention to a 1967 decision by the Pageant Committee that denied permission for display of a lighted Menorah on the White House lawn and an earlier decision concerning the selection of clergymen to the religious services at the Pageant.

This is enough of the 51-page opinion of the three judges to illustrate how they arrived at their ruling that government entanglement in religion was involved as long as the nativity scene was included in the Christmas Pageant of Peace or as long as the Government continued as sponsor.

It seems to this writer that a happy solution of a difficult problem was reached when it was decided to eliminate the creche from the "official" Pageant but to grant a permit to a private party for the nativity scene.

Whether or not a good decision was made in the selection of the American Christian Heritage Association for this role is a different question.

## Cover Picture

The cover picture this month is a night view of the nativity scene at the Christmas Pageant of Peace in Washington, D. C. as it has appeared in past years. For story see page 4. Photo by W. H. Spradley, National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior.

# Public Affairs . . . and the Churches

## TV Documentary Reveals Baptist Life in Russia

HAMBURG, Germany—A four-part, 30-minute documentary on the problems Baptists face in the USSR is being shown by most West German television stations, according to a report by Rudolph Thaut, president of Hamburg Baptist Seminary.

Thaut, writing for European Baptist Press Service, says one section "is an amateur film" showing a "well-attended worship service" which was held in a forest "since the congregation is not granted official registration and, therefore, has no other meeting place.

"The film shows security forces as they halt and dissolve the meeting and indicate that the church leaders responsible will be called before the courts," Thaut reports.

"Afterwards, the amateur film shows a baptismal service, taking place before sunrise in a river, also because of the registration question," the report continues.

Thaut said another part consists of interviews with emigrants who recently left the USSR. "They report clearly and impressively about discriminations, persecutions and difficulties which believers and churches experience in the country," Thaut said.

The telecast, produced by NDR (North German Radio and TV), "gives a very clear picture of the actual situation of churches in the Soviet Union. It shows the opportunities which churches have to assemble but also elaborates the limitations and persecutions which churches and individuals must face," Thaut continues.

He said an interview, made in Hamburg with four Moscow-based members of the All-Union Baptist Council, including the union's general secretary, Alexei Bichkov, reports on the possibilities of church work, the training of pastors and the very limited scope of Christian education for children."

The documentary is narrated by Erik Ruden of Stockholm, former general secretary of the European Baptist Federation. (BP)

## Romanian Evangelicals Look for Greater Measures of Freedom

BUCHAREST—Evangelicals in Romania are pinning their hopes for greater measures of freedom on the efforts of a Bucharest evangelist who is spearheading a drive to gain constitutional rights for churches.

Josef Ton, Oxford-trained preacher and the son of a Romanian peasant, has delivered a doctrinal paper to the Baptist Union and the Ministry of Cults, taking a stand like Martin Luther before the Wittenburg Door.

Ton charges that the Department in 1955 began dictating to the Baptist Union what leaders they could elect, who could be baptized, and what pastors would be allowed to have churches.

"The Ministry of Cults conceived a way of weakening the Baptist churches and eventually of annihilating them," Ton stated. "The officials of the Ministry came with the . . . idea that the Baptist churches were having too many meetings each week, leaving too little time for social development. Following this, the union was infiltrated by disloyal members."

The Baptist Union was told that its reduction of church services and activities should not appear as something imposed by the state, Ton declares, but as something desired by the Union and imposed by it on the local churches. He said this lie has been compounded until the churches have become frozen by fear, afraid to take the liberties that the Romanian constitution guarantees them.

Fifteen years ago, Ton said, Romania had 540 Baptist ministers. Three years later 400 were sacked by the Union, leaving 140. Fifty of these men, representing the top leadership, have signed Ton's petition which accompanied his declaration of independence.

At present, Ton pointed out, the Department of Cults decides who can be baptized, where ministers shall serve, and whether or not a local church can remain open.

"Do you understand now what is the situation of our Baptist churches?" Ton stated in a specially prepared message. "The church should elect its pastor and lay leaders under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, but here in Romania it is . . . the Inspector of Cults who decides who should and who should not be a pastor and a lay leader."

"The laws of our country are marvelous," he stressed. "We only want them to be observed. I do not believe in underground action. I must state openly what I believe, openly sound the trumpet . . . and then bear whatever consequences might follow."

He said Romania never experienced the Reformation of the 16th century, but that widespread spiritual renewal could follow the hoped-for liberation guaranteed by the Romanian constitution. (EP)

## Catholics, NCC May Reach Consensus on Private School Aid

NEW YORK—Roman Catholics and Protestants, who have frequently differed on their approaches to education, may be reaching a new consensus based on a disillusionment with America's public schools.

Changing Protestant attitudes that may help to foster such a new alignment were brought out at the first meeting on education ever sponsored by the National Council of Churches that had the participation of Roman Catholics and Protestants.

At the two-day session, held here some time ago by the NCC's Division of Education and Ministry, representatives of the Catholic Church and 15 Protestant denominations made initial plans for a study of the "common ground" that Protestants and Catholics share with regard to education.

Dr. Edward A. Powers of the United Church of Christ, who heads the six-member committee that is planning the study, commented: "The particular concern is for an update review of general policy directions of the NCC and related bodies."

Illustrating the shift in Protestant attitudes toward public education, Dr. Powers said, "It's interesting to read NCC documents dating from the early '60s and see the rather general assumption that the public schools are good, desirable, humane, ideal, and that the role of the Churches related to the Council is to support them."

"It's striking," he said, "to put that against the kind of critique which many of us would make today of public education: the increasing monolithic quality of much of public education; the lack of tolerance for diversity; the fundamental commitment to the status quo instead of triggering imagination to think about new possibilities for the full development of persons; the lack of tolerance or provision for diversity and strength."

According to Dr. Powers, many Protestants are now expressing agreement with Catholics that "values which the public schools convey are alien to much of what we value most highly," and are seeking ways to develop alternatives to public-school education.

Father David Bowman, S.J., who is a liaison member of the NCC staff with the U.S. Catholic bishops, reported that there was a "virtual consensus" at the meeting on four specific areas—"1) the need for alternatives to public schools, 2) that all Churches should have a major concern in

the transmission of the faith through education, 3) that there is a need for immediate mutual support for alternatives, and 4) that Churches must support any public-school attempts to teach moral values."

The study group was scheduled to meet in New York Dec. 6. (RNS)

#### BAPTISTS FIGHT APARTHEID

LONDON—Britain's Baptists will not withdraw church investments in companies with interests in South Africa—they will use them to help relieve or prevent the exploitation of black workers.

The decision was made at a meeting of the Council of the British Union of Great Britain and Ireland. It brought the Baptists alongside Anglicans and Methodists in new and concerted action by major denominations opposing apartheid.

One observer noted, with the exception of the Roman Catholic Church, which has yet to act on the issue, the British churches have reached a rare degree of unanimity.

Not one has endorsed the World Council of Churches' view that churches should use their power as institutional investors to persuade British companies to pull out of South Africa. (RNS)

#### PRESS GROUPS COLLABORATE

WASHINGTON—An appeal to stop scheduled postal increases was sounded in testimony before the Cost of Living Council here by the executive director of the Catholic Press Association.

James A. Boyle made the presentation on behalf of his own organization and three other groups—Associated Church Press, which includes Protestant and Orthodox publications, the Evangelical Press Association, and the American Jewish Press Association.

Increased rates requested by the Postal Service to go into effect Jan. 5 would have a "clearly damaging effect" on the religious nonprofit press, he said.

Calling the increases "crushing", Doyle said the nonprofit publications were "least able to pass along to their advertisers and readers these heavy increases because their advertising rates and volume are the lowest in the circulation market available to them." (RNS)

#### RELIGION COURSE IN HIGH SCHOOL

ST. LOUIS PARK, Minn.—A federally-financed course in religion will be offered students at St. Louis Park High School here beginning in January.

School officials believe the course, "Religion in Human Culture," is the first of its kind to be a part of a public high school's regular curriculum.

Lee Smith and Wes Bodin, social studies teachers, developed the course with the aid of a \$65,118 grant from the U. S. Office of Education. The course's concept had been

approved last year by the St. Louis Park Board of Education.

The idea of a religion course was first recommended by the community's Religion and School Committee, a citizens' group organized to resolve a dispute between the community's large Jewish population and the school system over the observance of religious holidays and the use of Christian symbols in the schools at Christmas time.

The aim of the course will be to help students understand the role of religion in society. In addition to religious symbolism and a comparative study of various religions, the course will include contemporary issues bearing on religion such as "religion and cultural change" and "religion and public policy," including the Constitution and public education. (RNS)

#### CHURCH-STATE RIFT IN SPAIN

MADRID—Against a background of recent events that have brought into sharp relief a widening rift between church and state in Spain, Cardinal Vicente Enrique y Tarancón of Madrid declared here that the church "cannot remain silent and neutral out of love for an imaginary peace."

"It is only by speaking with severity—although always with serenity, prudence, and charity—that we can become the true instruments of reconciliation, even if sometimes our words and our attitude can appear irksome," said the Cardinal at the opening session (Nov. 26) of the 19th plenary assembly of Spanish bishops. (RNS)

#### CHURCH HOSPITALS AND LABOR DISPUTES

NEW ORLEANS—A United Methodist agency favors placement of nonprofit hospitals under the collective bargaining provisions of the Taft-Hartley law.

The Division of Health and Welfare Ministries supported passage of a bill before the U. S. Senate that would end the exemption of nonprofit hospitals from federal labor provisions on union recognition.

Under existing law, church-related and other nonprofit hospitals cannot be required to recognize and bargain with unions. Many do, and the United Methodist Church encourages 350 health and welfare institutions to bargain collectively. (RNS)

#### RELEASED TIME IN WISCONSIN

MADISON—The Wisconsin legislature approved and sent to Gov. Patrick J. Lucey a bill that will allow public school students to take up to three hours a week away from classes to attend religious instruction.

This "released time" program was made possible by a state constitutional referendum approved by voters in the 1972 Wisconsin primary. The bill gives local school boards the authority to make released time arrangements at their option. It would limit the time of such classes to not less than

one hour and not more than three hours each week. (RNS)

#### URGES POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

MIAMI BEACH—Gov. Reubin Askew said here that America is facing "a crisis of the spirit" and urged churches and synagogues to lead the nation in "a revival of political courage."

Too many citizens, dismayed over events in Washington and elsewhere, have dropped out of political involvement, the Florida governor told the 26th annual assembly of the Florida Council of Churches here.

Gov. Askew, a Democrat, is an elder in the First Presbyterian church of Pensacola, a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. (Southern). A one-time Sunday school teacher, he is serving this year as chairman of the Governor's Committee for National Bible Week.

The "democratic way of government is deeply rooted in our Judeo-Christian tradition," the governor told church leaders. He held that "it is not the system that has gone wrong, but some few people in it who have tried to manipulate it to serve their own needs."

"To claim to be a Christian or a Jew who loves God and neighbor and not to take an active part in the formulation of social policies affecting those neighbors would seem to deny complete fulfillment of one's faith," Gov. Askew said. (RNS)

#### 20,000 HIT ABORTION RULE

ST. LOUIS—Missouri's Attorney General, the state's junior U. S. Senator and more than 20,000 persons rallied here to condemn the Supreme Court's ruling on abortion and to promote legal protection for the unborn—including a constitutional amendment, if necessary.

The rally was sponsored by Missouri Citizens for Life, a non-sectarian anti-abortion group, and was heavily promoted by Catholic groups.

Missouri's U. S. Senator Thomas F. Eagleton, a Roman Catholic, linked the Dred Scott and abortion rulings, and gave strong backing to efforts to reverse the high court by constitutional amendment. (RNS)

#### VICE PRESIDENT ON RELIGION

WASHINGTON—Vice President Gerald Ford, nominated by President Nixon to fill former Vice President Agnew's unexpired term in the nation's second highest post, favors federal aid to parochial schools, voluntary prayers in public schools and the death penalty for certain crimes.

His positions on these issues have been stated in regular news letters he mailed to his constituents while a Congressman from Michigan and restated in several radio broadcasts in his district. (RNS)

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# Public Affairs . . . and the Churches

### DISCIPLES ENDORSE AMNESTY

CINCINNATI—Amnesty for draft resisters of the Indo-China war period was endorsed here by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

The denomination's biennial General Assembly urged amnesty for all persons "in legal jeopardy for acts of non-violent resistance to civil or military law because of opposition to, or forced participation in, the Indo-China war, except those convicted of acts of violence, and even here we recommend that these cases be reviewed on an individual basis." (RNS)

### HITS PAYMENTS "IN LIEU" OF TAXES

NEW YORK—A group of Episcopal lawyers and clergy in the New York diocese has recommended that churches not make voluntary tax payments to offset "guilty" feelings about their exempt status, and has cautioned whether religious institutions should be exempt from such fees as water charges and sewer rents.

In a 37-page report on churches and taxation, the Guild of St. Ives also recommends that church groups be required to file information returns on property holdings and investments, and that clergy residences not be given tax exemptions. (RNS)

### UN GETS VATICAN FREEDOM DOCUMENT

UNITED NATIONS, N. Y.—The Vatican has urged the United Nations to re-

view a proposed declaration on religious freedom to place a greater emphasis on public worship and on the freedom of religious groups as well as individuals.

As one of 26 states responding to a draft Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Religious Intolerance, the Holy See told Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim that it would also prefer that the document be a binding convention rather than a declaration. (RNS)

### UN DUCKS FREEDOM ISSUE

UNITED NATIONS, N. Y.—The United Nations has postponed action on a declaration covering religious intolerance—again!

After having been instructed by the General Assembly last year to take up such a declaration as a matter of priority, the Assembly's Social Humanitarian and Cultural Committee unanimously adopted a proposal to defer action.

Instead, at the suggestion of Bulgaria and Guinea, the committee sent its documentation to the Human Rights Commission with instructions to prepare a new proposal on religious freedom which would then be debated by the Assembly, presumably sometime in 1974. (RNS)

### EVANGELICAL SOCIAL CONCERN

CHICAGO—Fifty evangelical Christian leaders from a wide variety of backgrounds from all parts of the country met in Chicago over the Thanksgiving weekend to explore the importance of social concern

for contemporary biblical faith, according to a news release from Messiah College.

After three days of lively debate and prayer, they adopted a major document in which they stated their conviction that biblical faith and social concern are inseparable.

Signers of the document, "A Declaration of Evangelical Social Concern," included such prominent evangelical leaders as Carl F. H. Henry, former editor of *Christianity Today*, Frank Gabelein, Headmaster Emeritus of the Stoneybrook School, and Paul Rees, Vice-President-at-Large of World Vision, and Sen. Mark Hatfield (R., Ore.).

### JEW'S SUPPORT AMNESTY

NEW YORK—Reform Judaism's congregational body, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, has called on Congress to grant unconditional amnesty to young men who refused to serve in the military during the Vietnam war.

By a vote of 407 to 268, delegates to the UAHC's centennial convention here adopted a statement linking amnesty with the cease-fire in Vietnam. "As we make peace with our enemies," the resolution said, "let us also make peace with these, our youth."

### SUPPLEMENTAL SOCIAL SECURITY

BALTIMORE—The Social Security Administration invites churches to help locate elderly, blind and disabled persons who may be eligible for financial assistance in the form of Supplemental Security Income payments. Thousands of persons have not yet signed up because they don't know they are eligible. Persons willing to help should contact the nearest chapter of the American Red Cross. (BP)