



REPORT FROM THE CAPITAL

JOINT CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC RELATIONS

The Northern Baptist Convention
The Southern Baptist Convention
The National Baptist Convention
The National Baptist Convention, Inc.

J. M. Dawson, *Executive Secretary*



E. HILTON JACKSON, *Chairman*

W. B. LIPPHARD, *Secretary*

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THE CRADLING OF GOD

A Christmas Meditation by J. M. Dawson, Executive Secretary

Let us go even now to Bethlehem - once more - to behold the cradling of God, announced by the caroling angels, born amid stable straw and the starlight, resting in the arms of a tender Virgin Mother, nestling against the shaggy bosoms of Sturdy Shepherds, adored by the far-traveled Wise Men. It is the most beautiful story ever told; it is the most meaningful fact ever known. Does it not remind us how near God is ever to us? How easy it is for us always to draw up close to Him? How the Infinite is forevermore joined with the finite? That God stoops very low to take upon himself the form and fashion of a man but that man rises up very high to be indwelt by God? That God's chosen way to help men is by identifying himself with them, showing us if we would help another we must give ourselves to that one? That God actually enters into human history, works with us, inviting our aid, sharing our defeats but invincibly carrying out His Eternal redemptive purpose, so converting a peasant's life into the life of all men's King, a Cross into a Throne, and a Grave into the Gateway of Life? That he does not come in pomp and splendor but in utter simplicity, to free us from the tyranny of things, to give us back our childlike hope and dreams? That God once stretched forth the hands of a Babe, the Eternal tugged for entrance into our hearts, the Almighty would win us with a caress, bring us Love, make wondrous His righteous Peace among men? Aye, in Jesus Christ, Incarnate God, it is all true!

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SUPREME COURT DECISION AWAITED

The case of Arch R. Everson, appellant, vs. Board of Education of the township of Ewing, Et Al., New Jersey, in regard to state money applied to the transportation of children to parochial schools, was heard by the Supreme Court of the United States early in November. In this case the Joint Conference Committee on Public Relations appeared as amicus curiae and argument was presented by the Honorable E. Hilton Jackson, our Chairman. The decision of the Supreme Court is expected some time in January. When it comes, whatever it may be, it will be a far-reaching one, having much to do with the direction of our government in regard to the interpretation of our Federal Constitution on the matter of separation of church and state.

In the November elections in Wisconsin a proposal to furnish transportation to private (i.e., Catholic) schools at public expense was defeated. In a letter to this office, Mr. Charles R. Bell, Jr., President of the Wisconsin Committee for Religious Liberty, says: "I suppose I should have a sense of security and satisfaction about

what was done but I must confess that I am quite uneasy. We had out of a total 980,000 votes cast a majority of 107,000. In many respects this was an impressive lead but there are some other factors which should certainly be considered. I am convinced we need a national organization very much like our Wisconsin Committee to supervise and guide this fight over the whole nation. We are facing a real menace here and it is one protestantism must be alive to. We found ourselves hemmed in by every kind of unfair and unChristian attitude here in the state. These people mean business and are out to change the American culture to their way of seeing things. Once they get control the arm of the state with its police power it will be used, I think, for carrying out their general purposes. I, for one, am greatly alarmed."

It is the judgment of the Joint Conference Committee that the language of Mr. Bell is none too strong. In the argument of opposing counsel in our case in the United States Supreme Court it was urged that the New Jersey law permitting the appropriation of public tax money for private sectarian schools should stand because fifteen states have enacted similar provision, and it was the evident desire of the people for this arrangement to prevail. In combatting this our counsel replied that there is a way prescribed in the Constitution for amendment, rather than by the method of indirection. Knowing the official pronouncements of the Catholics in respect to church and state, this suggests what many suspect, that it is the aim of the Catholics, to be achieved whenever they reach a majority in the population in this country, to amend the American Constitution in a manner to give them the special privileges which they seek! Believers in the American ideals must become aroused to the peril which confronts our American system.

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AS TO LOBBYING

The following letter, upon authorization of the Executive Committee has been sent to both the Clerk of the House of Representatives and to the Secretary of the Senate:

"This is to report to you the establishment of the Office of Public Relations for the Baptists of the United States, in which I have the honor to serve as Executive Secretary. After examining the reorganization rules of Congress, it is the judgment of the Joint Conference Committee that we do not need to register. As you will see from the inclosed publications issued by this office, we are essentially a service organization, and have to do with legislation only as now and then we may under the right of petition wish to convey an expression of conviction. We have no funds contributed for lobbying and are not set up for that purpose. We beg you will understand it is our earnest desire to cooperate with the Government at all times and stand ready to comply with any regulations as may apply, but believe this is a faithful statement."

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE CHURCH AND ECONOMIC LIFE

The above named Conference has been called to meet in Pittsburgh, February 18-20, 1947. Plans provide for 400 delegates, to be appointed by the denominations and allied religious bodies. For example, ten are assigned to the Southern Baptist Convention and a proportionate number from the Northern Baptist Convention. Each delegate is expected to bear his own expense or else to have such contributed by the organization which sends him. It is urged that wherever possible laymen be secured, such as teachers of

economics in our Christian Schools, and others interested in the study of an application of Christian principles to our economic order. Do we wish the Kingdom to come and the will of God to be done in the realm of industry?

PRAYER MEETING FOR 80TH CONGRESS

The Washington Federation of Churches is arranging for a great prayer meeting in the interest of divine guidance will be held for the legislators in the 80th Congress on the day of convening. The meeting will be in the Church of the Reformation, on Capitol Hill, at 10:30 A.M. and everybody is invited.

BOOKS ACKNOWLEDGED

CHAMPIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY, by Rufus W. Weaver. Nashville: Broadman Press, cloth 60 cents, paper 40 cents.

YEARBOOK, NORTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION, 1946. Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society. Cloth, \$1.25.

SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION ANNUAL, Nashville: Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee. Paper, \$1.00.

THE ROOSEVELT I KNEW, by Francis Perkins. New York: Viking Press. \$3.75.

THUNDER OUT OF CHINA, by Theodore H. White and Annalee Jacobs. New York: William Sloan Associates, Incorporated.

HIROSHIMA, by John Hersey. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

CONVENTIONS AND THE BUDGET FOR 1947

At the meeting of the General Council of the Northern Baptist Convention held in Columbus, Ohio, January 10, upon recommendation of the Finance Committee the amount requested by the Joint Conference Committee for the sustentation of the work was cordially granted. This represents a substantial increase over the amount of the generous pledge which has been paid for the current year. Next day in Nashville, Tennessee, the Southern Baptist Executive Committee, which has from the first been the larger contributor to the work of the Joint Conference Committee, heard sympathetically the request for additional funds and will give its answer at a meeting called for January 22. The National Baptist Convention, Incorporated, has pledged its response at a meeting of its Executive Committee early in February. Thus it would appear that this pioneer joint service which has been moving toward a secure and stabilized basis of support, is about to be set up on a basis where it can be operated with a sense of assurance. The budget will remain a very modest one, however, until the office, as organized, can present a convincing demonstration of its indispensable character to the Baptists of the United States with a justifiable larger outlay. It is believed that its invaluable service will soon become widely recognized.

RESOLUTION ON THE COAL STRIKE

Upon receipt of a beseeching letter from President J. E. Rushbrooke of the Baptist World Alliance concerning the tragical effects of the American coal strike on the people of Europe, whose acute suffering from shortage of fuel in the bleak winter had been greatly accentuated by cessation of supply from these shores, the Joint Conference Committee, through its Executive Committee, adopted a resolution appealing on Christian principles to the miners and owners to act at once in getting the mines opened. Fortunately before the resolution reached publication, within a few hours after its adoption, the strike had been settled and the mines opened. This had been the first time the Committee had ever attempted to express itself in the field of industry, but the integrity of the government and the needs of the people were so involved it seemed to demand any possible influence exerted on Christian principles and in the Christian spirit.

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EXECUTIVE SECRETARY TO CONDUCT CHURCH OF THE AIR

The Executive Secretary, Dr. J. M. Dawson, has been invited by the Columbia Broadcasting System to conduct its Church of the Air Service, Sunday, January 26, 1947, from 10:30 - 11:00 A. M. Eastern Standard Time. The broadcast will originate from WTOP, Washington, D. C., and will go out over a nation wide network. The music will be furnished by the choir of the First Baptist Church, Washington, the church were President Truman worships, of which Dr. E. H. Pruden is pastor and Mr. Harwood Hall is the choir director. In some instances there will be a transcription broadcast of this sermon and music on the following Sunday, as in the case of WTOP, Washington, at 8:30 - 9:00 A. M.

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WHAT IN PLACE OF UNHRA?

Your Executive Secretary received an invitation from the Department of State to attend a conference of representatives of national organizations as to what our Government should do in reference to continued food relief to Europe. We had previously addressed a letter to the Acting Secretary, Mr. Dean Acheson, urging our adequate participation in any world plan which might be adopted, recognizing that voluntary aid furnished by groups, as the Baptists, could not possibly satisfy the demand. The Acting Secretary's reply may be of interest:

"The United States has always made, and will continue to make, every effort to aid in the relief of the suffering peoples of the world. This Government believes, however, that the problem can best be handled through the simple and direct method of consultation among those governments that are prepared to assist in meeting the remaining relief needs and with the governments of the countries still needing assistance rather than through the plan proposed by Mr. LaGuardia. There is enclosed a copy of a statement by Mr. C. Tyler Wood on November 28, 1946 which explains in further detail the attitude of this Government."

The conference resulted in no alteration of our Government's plan, which is essentially to use the United Nations Secretariat for each nation to distribute what it decides it can give to relief, but coordinated with all others.

ALCOHOL IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

In the whole wet nation, it is often remarked, the wettest single spot is Washington. Appalling effects are observable on all hands, even reported by the press. A prominent Washington tax attorney was convicted for killing his wife. The testimony showed he and his wife were guilty of prolonged drinking bouts. The fatal shooting occurred after days of drinking in celebration of their wedding anniversary. The sordid affair savored of what is known to characterize multitudes of couples, who do not kill each other but break up their homes or commit distressing wrongs. Now comes Representative F. Edward Hebert (D., La.) with a bill proposing a tax on gross liquor sales in the District, ranging from one to three per cent in order to establish a special clinic for the treatment of alcoholics. (One of the local hospitals treated over 1,700 alcoholics last year.) If this plan were adopted throughout the nation an enormous number of such clinics would spring up. To deplorable highway accidents and other tragical results of drunkenness, must now be added the awful holocaust of burning hotels, as the Winecoff, by disgusting drunks who take their cigarettes to bed with them or toss them into inflammable objects without regard for the lives of innocent inmates of the hotels. When will suitable dealing with liquor begin in this country.

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MILITARY MATTERS

Disarmament

The public is familiar with the hopeful progress being made in the United Nations toward universal disarmament, with international control of the atom bomb. We do not attempt to review the situation here, because agreements have not been concluded, and it changes from day to day, pending a final settlement of the issue. The burden of armaments has become intolerable for all nations. In our own the appropriations for the current fiscal year amount to \$4,119,000,000 for the Navy and \$7,263,000,000 for the Army, or a total of 100 times more than we are spending on the Department of State when it is taking the lead in an attempt to organize the world for peace. Our Nation, with a war debt of \$250,000,000,000, thus trends on toward bankruptcy. After World War I, France could never fight another war. After World War II, Britain is unable to fight again. Only two other nations, Russia and America, are still able to fight. How long before civilization will be completely destroyed? Senator Tydings of Maryland is asking Congress, when it convenes in January, to call for a Conference of all Nations with a view to achieving "world disarmament on land, on sea and in the air by January 1, 1950."

Conscription

Despite the effort at universal world disarmament, a drive for peacetime conscription is expected early in the new Congress. Propaganda from interested sources in behalf of this is flooding the country. But education, labor, business, and religion are expected to appeal to common sense in resisting this drive.

Amnesty

Many hundreds of conscientious objectors are being held in federal prisons with sentences which will not expire until 1951. Most religious bodies, with one notable exception, have appealed to President Truman to grant these men amnesty, with restoration of civil rights. Nine Presidents before him previously extended amnesty to such

men after wars. Some thirty-eight countries, with Britain, have offered amnesty. Last October General MacArthur freed a million political prisoners in Japan, including conscientious objectors, and in August Lieutenant General Lucius De Clay, Deputy Military Governor of the American Zone in Germany granted an amnesty to an equal number of young German political offenders. Now that the war is over, it would seem that our country might relax, especially as the amnesty sought is chiefly for members of the historic peace churches, like the Quakers, and for members of the major denominations, such as the Baptists, whose reverence for religious conscience has been traditional.

Venereal Disease

Restoration of punitive measures against offenders in the armed services for contracting venereal disease will be sought in Congress. The increase among our armed forces in occupied countries led one newspaper to cartoon it with the question on the lips of a fallen soldier, "Is this for what we died?" The picture showed our men on the bawdy streets with prostitutes in a drunken revel. It would seem that the interests of society and the laws of God and men, would decry any presumption that such indulgence is to be taken as a normal experience of men, with no inhibitions, only effectual remedies to be sought. As a member of the Civilian Advisory Committee to the Navy, it is our purpose to plead for a more adequate method of dealing with this desperate problem than that which now obtains.

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WHICH-MARYLAND OR RHODE ISLAND?

The Roman Catholics are claiming that since fifty-three per cent of the population of Rhode Island is now Catholic it is time for them to eliminate Roger Williams as a claimant for the honor of initiating religious liberty in this country. Their national newspaper, the Register, would give the honor to Cecil Calvert (Lord Baltimore) in the founding of Maryland. Of course, it is known that in the case of the Catholic founder of Maryland he established no true religious liberty, only religious toleration, a vastly inferior thing to what Baptist Roger Williams inaugurated in Rhode Island. John Fiske in his monumental work, The Dutch and Quaker Colonies in America, has shown this most clearly, as have many other authoritative writers such as Beard. In our address on "Religious Liberty Restated", delivered before the Southern Baptist Historical Society, Ridgecrest, North Carolina, August 29, 1944, we said: "Baltimore could not make a success of his plantation without immigrants. Because the Catholics in England, despite regulations enacted for their restraint, were well-content, they would not undertake the rigors of a new settlement. Accordingly, Baltimore adopted toleration as a paying proposition in order to induce enough Non-Catholics to come over and fill up his plantation. He stipulated that fines should be imposed upon all who bestowed epithets on Mennonites, Moravians, Schwenkfelders, Lutherans, Baptists or any other 'heretic', lest they be deterred from coming. Pennsylvania, settled by William Penn the Quaker, likewise extended toleration to all these sects and for the same reason as Maryland."

It should be pointed out this in no way displaced the Catholic Church, which was subsequently superseded by the Episcopal as the State Church, but only condescended to extend toleration (an insult to self-respecting religionists) and that by no means general, for Jews were expressly excluded. Thus it was only partial and did not recognize equality on principle at all.

CONGRESSIONAL ACTION IN BEHALF OF DISPLACED PERSONS

Unless Congress takes some action in respect to our present immigration laws, the number of displaced persons who can be admitted to this country will be distressingly small. The quotas allowed are exceedingly limited, with the larger ones accorded Britain and other countries, which do not anywhere near claim them to the full. The result is that if other countries with very small quotas claimed theirs in full, the total number of displaced persons admitted would be absurdly few. President Truman has insisted that Congress should either amend or construe the immigration laws more liberally so as to permit a reasonable number of such persons to enter this country. Dr. W. O. Lewis, Secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, who is earnestly trying to assist our Baptist brothers belonging to the displaced persons category in Europe, believes the President's position is correct. Many other groups of the Nation agree with this view and urge all others who sympathize with it to communicate their convictions to President Truman.

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PASTOR PRUDEN SPEAKS UP

Dr. E. H. Pruden, distinguished pastor of the First Baptist Church, Washington, D. C., in his tenth anniversary sermon pleaded for a more devoted enlistment in Washington Churches by men in public life. He urged that no one--be he Senator, Representative, Supreme Court Judge, or Government official--could contend he was too busy, since the President found time to attend worship. The pastor cited case after case of prominent Baptist men who were active in their churches back home, who showed no disposition whatever to honor a church in the Capital. The losses to the Washington Christian forces is immeasurable. Sometime, he said, he purposed to write an article on how Christian men in public life are helping to paganize the National Capital. Perhaps if the folks back home knew just how serious this is, it might influence their votes.

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JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

The Department of Justice was so much interested in the prevention of juvenile delinquency that it held a great National Conference in Washington during November on the subject. The gravity of juvenile delinquency has been dramatically emphasized in the National Capital by daily occurrences of the most appalling character. Probably the most revolting crime ever known here was the killing of a father, mother and sister by a thirteen year old boy. Another most startling one was the killing of a policeman by a fourteen year old boy. Lack of proper oversight in each instance appeared obvious, though crime stories in books and films may have been contributory factors. In the vast majority of cases broken homes--the most aggravated social evil of our time--must be set down as the worst iniquity in the gruesome list of causes. Whatever the Government may be able to do in arresting this sinister development in America, the churches must do even more, and their supreme task in the present is to reconstruct the home.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE DISCLAIMS REFLECTION

Upon complaint from the Baptist Pastor's Association of New Orleans, this office contacted the American Brotherhood, The National Conference of Christians and Jews, concerning a recent broadcast in which it was felt the speaker reflected on the Baptists.

Mr. Sterling W. Brown, assistant to the president of the organization, replied insisting that no reflection was intended, merely a rebuke of the wrong spirit in an individual who happened to use the Baptist name. The reference in the script as quoted was to Boneville, Mississippi, and as he reports it was: "An eighteen year old girl and her two parents who recently moved to this southern resort city from Baton Rouge were forced to move again. Half a dozen anonymous notes together with rocks thrown through windows and various other threats were climaxed by the burning of the family automobile. The cause of this bigoted vandalism was a date which the girl had with one of the local youths. After the family was driven from Boneville, the truth crept out. Said one of the Boneville's bravados:

"What was she doing here? She's Catholic!"

"Said another: 'This is Baptist country. We don't go for the Pope in these parts!'"

We would comment that while Catholics, wherever in the majority are guilty of worse bigotry and repression of religious minorities, responsible Baptists would in no wise be guilty of such tactics, and New Orleans did not relish an inference that they would.

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BAPTISTS, BEWARE!

Baptists are engaged in waging an all out battle for full religious liberty in this country, as well as everywhere else in the world. It behooves us, therefore, to think clearly, discriminatingly, and to act consistently, with scrupulous regard for according to others, from whom we may decidedly differ, the exercise of complete liberty of conscience. We commend the words of the celebrated author: "I don't believe in one word you say, but I would die for your right to say it."

On another matter we must be entirely consistent, even if it costs great sacrifice. That is, while decrying the use of public money for sectarian purposes, as sought by others, we must scrupulously refrain from seeking tax money for our own denominational uses!

MEETING OF JOINT COMMITTEE

The next meeting of the Joint Conference Committee will be held at the Washington Office, 715 Eighth Street, N. W. at ten o'clock A. M., Tuesday, February 11. This is to be an unusually important session, and a full attendance is expected. Provisions for Executive Committee meetings will also be made at that time.