

REPORT FROM THE CAPITAL

October, 1950

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR October 3, 1950

At the end of the six-month period now closing, it is proper to report that evidence accumulates to show that the Joint Committee on Public Affairs has exerted no little influence in the life of the Nation. Its findings have been widely published in the Baptist press, in the press of other religious bodies and in the secular press. The ever-increasing calls for literature have been notable. Two instances will illustrate. First, the office cooperated with the American Baptist Publication Society, through its special number of The Leader devoted to articles on Separation of Church and State, many reprints of which were mailed from our office. Second, the Southern Baptist Training Unions designated Sunday, July 9, for a special program on Separation of Church and State. As a result hundreds of local unions sent postage money for our literature on the subject. In fact, the volume of requests from individuals and churches for specialized literature throughout the country has become so large we are creating a series of pamphlets, each to deal with a particular aspect of the general subject. We are also gradually building up in our office an impressive library of books, magazines and manuscripts which is more and more sought by research students and others concerned with gaining a full knowledge of the subject.

Interest in the Committee is further evidenced by the numerous invitations coming from churches, colleges, clubs and conventions for lectures, speeches, sermons, discussions along the lines of its work. As far as it is in his power to respond to these demands, your Executive Director does so, and those who extend the invitations bear the expenses.

As to the effectiveness of our efforts, it may be pointed out that such labors, combined with those of others holding like convictions, are undoubtedly producing a profound influence on American thought. If in no other sense, they have awakened a popular concern. Witness, first, the place which the question of church-state relations occupies among public issues. Some well-informed publicists have declared that it stands next to labor-management in importance. Next observe that during the year books on the subject have poured from the presses of the country -- commanding books, such as Stokes' three-volume work on the subject, priced at \$25.00, and other books on best-seller lists. The Executive Director's volume, according to the publisher, has already sold nearly 10,000 copies. Finally, note that the Government has been made well aware of the people's thought. As of this date Congress has not voted public appropriations in aid of sectarian schools, and there is no official representative at the Vatican. Let us hope that it may be kept so for all time to come.

Most likely one of the greatest services to be rendered by this Committee lies in the area of clarification -- that is, of the American Constitutional principle of separation of church and state as interpreted by Baptists. The principle has numerous, almost unlimited applications. It applies not alone, for example, to a U. S. Ambassador to the Vatican and to Federal aid to sectarian schools, but wherever there is interlocking of institutional functions. A true and just interpretation of all applications is not easily or readily made. The principle is often involved with perplexing

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marginal matters. Self-interest is always able to rationalize any violations. This means, as we have said in our September newsletter, many actually hold that we should separate church and state now and then, here and there. They refuse to go all out for a loyal, consistent application of the principle.

Your Executive Director sincerely believes that religious liberty in America absolutely depends upon the forthright maintenance of the principle of church-state separation -- that our free churches ultimately cannot survive without just that. To enable any ambitious denomination to utilize government subsidies with which to build gigantic, overshadowing institutions for its promotion constitutes a real threat to all others. The grant of government subsidies to churches has in all lands encouraged clericalism in government. We cannot think to escape that evil if we neglect our cherished principle. A powerful politically-minded sectarian minority can obtain the political balance of power, decide which political party shall run the Government and then demand a price for its favor. In the end that would mean that Baptists and all free churches would lose both their liberties and their prosperity. Where have Baptists anywhere under church-state coalition ever prospered?

Due to the fact that church-state separation is one of our most distinctive and distinguishing doctrines, and to the patent fact that others look to us for leadership in upholding this doctrine, we have a mission to fulfill. We cannot default with such a trust, but must through this Committee endeavor to do our utmost toward performing our high duty in a specialized task. Confronting criticism or indifference we must steadfastly, unwaveringly with intelligence, positiveness and zeal press on; for much ground remaineth to be possessed.

No attempt here is made to itemize the daily requests which come up from Baptist conventions, committees or individuals. The requests are for us to attend to legitimate matters for them with various departments of the Government. We try to give faithful and instant attention to all such matters. In this report we merely suggest organizations with which we have conferred in behalf of the principle to which we are committed -- such as the Baptist World Alliance, the United Nations, the U. S. State Department, the National Education Association and Protestants and Others United for Separation of Church and State. In these and in many others in which the Executive Director has participated the position of this Committee is asked and evaluated. For the creation of proper public opinion, he feels that we should welcome opportunities for the voice of United States Baptists to be heard in such agencies.

In cordial accord with the constitutional plan of the Committee, the Executive Director would rely on the sub-committees to examine current affairs, to analyze their bearings, and to interpret Baptist attitudes. He does not presume to impose his personal findings upon the Committee, or to ask your indorsement of them. The considered findings of the sub-committees will constitute a guide to the office-policies and will be received with respect by our Baptist people.

In closing this report we desire to express deep appreciation of the splendid cooperation which has been given so generously by the members of the Committee and the Baptists throughout the country.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph M. Dawson

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON WORLD ISSUES

M. T. Rankin, Chairman
October 3, 1950

Concerning the Tension Between Christianity and Communism

1. Because political Communism is diametrically opposed to the faith and practice of believing Christians; and because Communist political aggression has aroused passionate emotions in the hearts of Christian people, we recommend that all Christians be careful not to condemn as Communists great masses of people in China, the Balkans or even in Russia who are themselves the victim of Communist tyranny. We remember that many of them are our brothers in Christ. As Christians we will avoid the Communist trick of condemning whole nations. While condemning the leaders of Communist tyranny, we will maintain a sympathy and compassion for the common people avoiding such spurious labels as "Communist China" or "Communist Poland".

2. Believing in the integrity of individual Christians now living in Communist ruled areas, we reaffirm our conviction of their sincerity and faithfulness to Christ. We are confident that God will honor the continuation of their Christian witness, and will continue to extend our Christian love to them by every helpful means.

3. We are chagrined and embarrassed that in the days when Christian European nations ruled their colonial empires, they did so little to change the basic economic and social structure by which the masses of colonial peoples were condemned to starvation levels of existence. As for the work of Christian missionaries and native Christians, we are not surprised that in the face of an age long ruthless culture, they have not been able to effect Christian changes in the social and economic life of the countries. We are proud of the record of the work in education, agriculture, and health which missionaries and native workers have done, and commend this expression of the Gospel.

4. Both as Christians and citizens of the United States we commend the principle enunciated in "Point Four". Such aid to backward peoples we hail as a practical expression of the Christian ethic. We recommend that the U. S. Government continue to give leadership to this program under the United Nations, and that the original appropriation be restored, even if our own standard of living should suffer thereby.

The Genocide Convention

Because the mass slaughter of groups and races is still fresh in our memory and still threatens as a possibility in our work, we urge the ratification by our Government of the United Nations covenant on Genocide. We further urge Christians to live up to their ideal of respect for the soul-value of people in all classes, nations and races, honoring personal individuality and thus building that mutual honor which engenders interracial and international brotherhood.

Our Relation to Fascist Spain

Because the present government in Spain is avowed dictatorial and fascist, denying vital provisions in the charter for Human Rights as drawn up by the U. N.; and because we do not want our Nation to be party to the perpetuation of such fascist rule; we hereby urge the U. S. to rescind the proposed grant of E. C. A. funds to Spain, pending the restoration in that country of the civil and religious rights recognized in the U. N. Charter of Human Rights.

Being acutely conscious of our own sins in perpetuating unChristian race relations in the U.S.A., we nevertheless condemn as diabolical and inequitable the policy of apartheid now promulgated by Premier Mahlan and his party in South Africa. We commend those minority Christian groups in South Africa who have resisted apartheid, and urge our own people to do all in their power toward taking the initiative to wipe out our racial discrimination in our own country.

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REPORT ON DOMESTIC SITUATIONS

Walter P. Binns, Chairman
October 3, 1950

Threats To Liberty From Moral Evils

The oft-repeated charge was made in prohibition days that a gangster era under the leadership of such notorious characters as Al Capone then was induced by bootleg liquor. Today under legalized liquor, which flows in unprecedented quantities, the Nation is witnessing an outbreak of gambling, vice and crime every whit as bad. It is possibly worse, if we can believe the testimony of the slain Chicago gambler, James M. Regan, Sr., before he was killed by his gambling associates; or, the alarming evidence uncovered to date by Senator Kefauver's investigating committee.

Your Committee would commend every effort directed by Government forces, whether national, state or municipal, toward curbing the lawless elements. We lament that the Inter-State Commerce Committee of the Senate in the 81st Congress declined to submit the Langer Bill which, if enacted would have mitigated to some extent the enormous liquor consumption induced by false and beguiling advertisements. We hope the citizens will continue to insist on all proper legislation to limit the growth of the liquor business, which has now mounted to more than nine billion dollars annually, or to more than twice the total amount expended on education, and has obtained more openings for the retail sale of liquor than the entire number of churches of all kinds in this country.

We must have laws in restraint of the evils of gambling, vice and excess drinking. We cannot relax such laws any more than we can relax laws against forgeries, larcenies and felonies. But legislation is not enough. The churches must increase their endeavors in respect to temperance instruction for everybody, and particularly moral training for youth. Citizens must give diligent attention to the selection of non-drinkers as teachers for their public schools; they must avoid selection of intemperate men for public office; they should disapprove distribution of intoxicating liquors, including beer, to the armed forces. Christian people, the salt and light, even the life-blood of every community, can and must uphold moral standards everywhere, or our country will suffer more from internal foes than from any conceivable foreign foes.

While this Committee was not constituted specifically as a committee on public morals, the threats to those freedoms which we are enjoined to safeguard, are so numerous and so powerful that we feel it our duty to sound out these notes of warning and appeal.

New Sectarian Offenses In The Public Schools

Although citizens of New Mexico won their suit against offending Roman Catholics who were in sectarian control of some twenty-nine public schools in that state, new and grievous violations have induced renewed legal effort to obtain relief in that

area. Although the Baptist Joint Committee is not actively involved in the pending suits, we feel it is proper to protest against sectarian teaching in the public schools anywhere in the United States, and to express to the Citizens Committee in New Mexico our earnest hope that the abuses which are complained of there may be speedily corrected.

Notice is taken here also of the efforts of the Missouri Citizen's Association for Free Schools to stop the state appropriation of one-third of a million dollars annually toward the maintenance of schools which are listed in the Roman Catholic year-books as parochial schools, but carried in the state government annals as public schools. As in the case of the New Mexico schools, the Baptist Joint Committee is not an active participant in the pending suits. We do feel, however, that in view of the mandate from our supporting Conventions to lend encouragement to all forces in efforts to maintain separation of church and state, we should let the citizens of Missouri know of our cordial sympathy in their endeavor.

Church-State Separation Involved In Many Areas

Your Committee rejoices with all supporters of the American system that to date Congress has passed no act authorizing Federal aid to parochial schools. It appears that opposition to Federal aid to other than public schools has steadily gained. For example, the six important national organizations in the field of public education have pronounced against Federal aid, direct or indirect, to private or parochial schools. These are the National Education Association, composed of 900,000 teachers; the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, with several million members; the American Association of University Women; the National Council of Chief State Officers, the American Association of School Administrators, and the American Federation of Teachers. It may be that a politically minded church holding to a medieval, European concept of church-state relations will continue to press for Federal aid to their parochial schools. In such event, all who believe in the American Constitutional provisions for separation of church and state should be prepared to offer stout resistance to infringements.

Baptists should keep constantly in mind that infringements of the Constitutional provisions for church-state separation are not confined to United States representation at the Vatican, to Federal aid to private and parochial schools and to sectarian instruction in the public schools. Other questions have been raised. Baptists in particular, and others also, have lately been much disturbed about the appropriation of government funds to denomination hospitals. Almost, if not absolutely, in all cases Baptists have declined such aid. Earnest desire has been expressed for a court test case as to the validity of this aid. A Roman Catholic hospital in Vicksburg, Mississippi, receiving government aid confronted a court test and won a decision favorable to the grant, both in the lower and highest court of Mississippi. But the case is up for review in the Mississippi Supreme Court, with a strong possibility of reversal. Your Committee would suggest that the final decision of the Mississippi court may afford the precise type of decision needed for light on this problem for our guidance, whether or not it is carried to the United States Supreme Court. Therefore, we may well stand by until we know what comes of the case.

Race Relations

This Joint Committee, composed of white and colored representatives of the Baptists, is a demonstration of the desire of our people to work together for a Christian solution of problems relating to the races. In the outworking of just legislation and in the relaxing of tensions between the races we feel a deep concern. At this time we do not undertake in this brief report to offer recommendations in reference to specific

cases where decisions should be based on exhaustive study by competent Commissions. We do feel that higher than methods for the settlement of questions should be the maintenance of Christian principles and attitudes. We therefore would insist upon the following:

1. All Christians are brothers in Christ.
2. Every member of a racial or minority group is a person and should be treated as such.
3. No racial group because of biological inheritance is superior to any other group.
4. The members of all racial and minority groups should be recognised as citizens, constituting one state under one government, with equal rights.
5. All citizens have the right to equal privileges and treatment in our local, state, and Federal governments.
6. All racial minority groups have a right to be represented by members of their own group on bodies concerned with the general welfare of the community — police, education, courts, elections, etc.
7. Christians should protest injustices and discriminations against any group and strive to promote community goodwill between all groups.
8. The members of every group should eliminate from their speech terms which degrade or show contempt for other groups, especially in the presence of, and in the teaching of children.
9. As Christians, we must believe and teach that prejudice or ill-will toward any group is un-Christian.

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REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

Edward B. Willingham, Chairman
October 3, 1950

The Manifesto on Religious Liberty as adopted at the meeting of the Baptist World Alliance in Cleveland last July may express the Baptist position but, unfortunately, there are people in the world who hold other points of view which would put severe limitations upon the free practice of this principle.

Only partial information seems to be released concerning the war that has been taking place among the people of Burma, but one fact is clear. Missionaries who have worked among the tribes there know that the civil strife is both tribal and religious. Whole villages have been wiped out, and thousands of men, women and children have been slain because they admitted to the crime of being Christians. We have heard of no great outcry against this by the United Nations or by any separate group. Religious Liberty has gone into eclipse in the country where Adoniram Judson gave his life to the cause of missions.

China is experiencing a blackout of religious liberty under the advancing Communist regime. The "Religious News Service" of September 27, 1950, quotes a memorandum addressed to President Truman and Secretary of State Acheson in which more than 300 religious leaders, missionaries, businessmen and others have warned against the recognition of the Communist regime in China by the United Nations. The statement quoted Mao Tze-tung, leader of the Chinese Communists, as saying "A Christian cannot be a member of the Chinese Communist Party; to join one must avow atheism." This is a fair prelude to what may be expected wherever Communist power prevails.

Canada has also shown the blight of intolerance and bigotry, as reported by the "Religious News Service" in several issues about the first of September, in persecution of Baptists in Val d'Or, Quebec. A teacher in the French Protestant School at La Sarre and others were led to jail for conducting a meeting on the street corner. The Board of Social Service and Evangelism of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec issued an appeal for religious freedom in Canada following mob attacks on Baptist evangelists in several Quebec towns. The board expressed wholehearted agreement with Article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as adopted by the United Nations, and said "We appeal to all religious bodies to abandon their discrimination against or persecution of those of other faiths and to unite on an equal basis with all freedom-loving people for the promotion of complete religious liberty."

Discrimination, intolerance and persecution continue to be shown towards Protestants in Italy, Spain, Bolivia and other Latin American countries. The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights recognizes the right of every individual to change his religion and to be identified with any or no church. We urge our people to support through their prayers the ideal which has been set forth in the statement on Human Rights and to encourage public sentiment toward the realization of the principle among all nations of the earth.

Dr. Glenn L. Archer has recently called the attention of all freedom-loving Americans to the crisis facing our own nation with threats to religious liberty as we have known it. He mentions: (1) the Pope's demand for the President to appoint an ambassador to the Vatican in Rome; (2) the efforts of religious orders in more than 30 states to collect millions from tax-payers while teaching doctrinal religion in public schools, (3) the great influence exerted to have almost every federal appropriation bill carry a "rider" to benefit an ecclesiastical group.

It is to be regretted that there are those who misinterpret warnings of this nature and accuse those who call attention to dangers in the Roman Catholic hierarchy as being anti-Catholic. It is our duty to give warning regardless of the source of the danger. A disarming proof that there is a sinister spirit opposing the principle of Religious Freedom may be found in an article by Father F. Cavalli, S. J., entitled "The Condition of Protestants in Spain" and published in the Italian Jesuit review "La Civiltà Cattolica" April 3, 1948: "The Catholic Church being convinced, by reason of her divine prerogatives, that she is the one true church, claims for herself alone the right to freedom, for this right may only be possessed by truth, and never by error. Where the other religions are concerned, she will not take up the sword against them, but she will ask that, by lawful means worthy of the human creature, they shall not be allowed to propagate false doctrines. Consequently, in a State where the majority of the people are Catholic, the Church asks that error shall not be accorded a legal existence, and that if religious minorities exist they shall have a de facto existence only, not the opportunity of spreading their beliefs. Where material circumstances -- whether the hostility of a Government or the numerical strength of the dissenting factions -- do not allow this principle being applied in its entirety,

the Church requires that she shall have all possible concessions, confining herself to accepting as the least of all evils the de jure toleration of other forms of worship. In other countries, the Catholics are obliged themselves to ask for full liberty for all, resigning themselves to living together where they alone had the right to live. The Church does not in this way give up her thesis, which remains the most imperative of all laws, but adapts herself to the hypothesis, which must be taken into account on the material plane. Hence extreme horror on the part of the Protestants, who hold it up against the Catholics that they withhold freedom, indeed de facto toleration, from others when they are in the majority, and on the other hand demand it as a right when they are in the minority.

"The Catholic Church would be betraying her mission if she were to proclaim, either in theory or in practice, that error can have the same rights as truth, especially when the highest duties and interests of man are at stake. The Church can feel no shame of her intransigence as she asserts it in principle and carries it out in practice, though the areopagus of the nations of today may smile pityingly or rage against it as tyrannical."

Thus, you see, that a recognized leader of the Roman Church admits that Protestants are to be tolerated only so long as they may be in the majority. After that, the Roman Catholic church expects to do all it can to limit and restrict the activities of those who differ from it. The members of the Society of Jesus, for which the article quoted was written, are recognized as expressing the normal attitude of the Roman Catholic church.

Usually the indifference and lethargy toward warnings concerning religious liberty can be explained. There are those who fear to speak out for principle because they question what reprisals might threaten their business security. Some are silent because they think it is politically expedient. A third group assumes an intellectual reserve but upon close scrutiny they often have a background related to state churches in other lands. Then, of course, there is the factor of sheer ignorance.

Your Committee recommends that:

We reaffirm our previous opposition to the establishment of any official relationship between our government and the Vatican or any other religious group.

We again remind President Truman, the Secretary of State, and members of both houses of Congress of repeated expressions of Baptist bodies in opposition to any proposal looking toward the establishment of an ambassador or any other official relationship with the Vatican or other church group as a breach of the principle of separation of church and state.

We call upon our pastors to acquaint their congregations with all dangers threatening religious liberty. Special attention should be given to totalitarianism inherent in both the communist regime and the Roman Catholic hierarchy.