

# REPORT FROM THE CAPITAL

March, 1951

## ROMAN CATHOLIC BISHOP GRECO HINTS VIOLENCE

Last November, upon invitation of the Protestant churches of Alexandria, Louisiana, Dr. J. M. Dawson delivered a Reformation Day address on Religious Liberty in the largest auditorium in that city. Among those in attendance was the Roman Catholic Bishop Charles P. Greco and several priests of his faith. In his speech Dr. Dawson made it crystal clear that in attacking certain restrictions on religious liberty by a totalitarian state and a totalitarian church he was not attacking any one's faith, worship or religious practices, but solely infringements on Constitutional, governmental guarantees of freedom. He declared that it required a discriminating mind to make this distinction, but so much do Baptists believe in religious liberty for all, they would fight as valiantly for the rights of Roman Catholics and Jews, and all others, to believe and worship as they wish as they would for Baptist rights. Notwithstanding this clear insistence, Bishop Greco in a radio and newspaper reply declared that if Roman Catholic laymen had been present, undoubtedly there would have been violence.

The Roman Catholic Review, Baltimore and Washington, in its issue of February 16, 1951, contains the following:

"For the second time in the past few months Bishop Charles P. Greco has made a public reply to slurs cast upon the Roman Catholic Church by speakers in his See city. This time the attacker was Bishop Gerault M. Jones of the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana, with residence in New Orleans. Among other things, the Episcopal prelate called the dogma of the Assumption and the banning of Rotary Club membership by priests 'totalitarian' edicts from the Vatican, 'which thinking Roman Catholics were finding difficult to understand'. He intimated these 'edicts' were responsible for the conversion of Roman Catholics to his church. He claimed that 164 of 981 new members of the Episcopal church in Louisiana in 1950 were from the Roman Catholic Church.

"Bishop Greco replied to Bishop Jones in the Alexandria daily, where he had replied to charges made at an anti-Catholic meeting at which the principal speaker was a Baptist clergyman from Washington, D. C."

Bishop Greco recently received a special award from the Pope in a ceremonial in the Vatican, in recognition of his valiant defense of his Church. The disclosure that probable violence, if Roman Catholic laymen had been present at the Reformation Day service addressed by the Baptist preacher in Alexandria, is astounding. Does this warrant the idea that the Bishop, honored by the Pope, would inaugurate the same tactics of suppression of free speech and religious liberty in America as those practiced in dominant Roman Catholic countries, like Italy, Spain, and Latin America? If so, is it not high time for the American public to be warned?

NATIONAL CIVIL DEFENSE RELIGIOUS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Establishment of a Religious Advisory Committee, comprising leaders of major faiths, has been announced by Millard Caldwell, former Governor of Florida, Civil Defense Administrator, Washington, D. C.

Consenting to serve on the committee are Dr. Roswell P. Barnes, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America; the Very Reverend Monsignor Paul F. Tanner, National Catholic Welfare Conference; Dr. Norman Salit, Synagogue Council of America; Dr. J. M. Dawson, nominated by the Southern Baptist Convention, Executive Committee, and the Rev. Oswald C. J. Hoffman, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Three Baptist Conventions, other than Southern Baptist, cooperate with the National Council of Churches, and are represented by Dr. Barnes, and by reason of their support of the Baptist Joint Committee may also use Dr. Dawson.

Initial conference of the Committee was held February 21 in Washington in the offices of Civil Defense Administrator Caldwell, and the following statement of purpose was approved:

"At the request of the Federal Civil Defense Administrator, the Religious Advisory Committee will undertake to advise the Administrator on those aspects of the national civil defense program of particular interest to the public and to religious groups and agencies. Another function of this Advisory Committee will be to set in motion efforts by which the religious groups and agencies of the country, fully informed of the National civil defense program, will undertake such measures as they deem appropriate for the spiritual guidance and maintenance of firm resolution and spiritual composure of their membership in these critical times. The Committee will be known as the Religious Advisory Committee of the Federal Civil Defense Administration."

At a meeting in Washington the National Religious Advisory Committee expressed the hope that advisory committees of a similar nature would be established by the State and local civil defense organizations throughout the country. The National Advisory Committee, it was stated, will suggest to the members of their organizations participation in such State and local committees whenever requested by civil defense authorities on a voluntary basis and without compensation.

Pointing out the need for spiritual leadership and guidance in this emergency period, Mr. Caldwell told the religious leaders that since assuming the post of Civil Defense Administrator he had felt the need for a religious advisory group made up of individuals prominently identified with the principal religious denominations of the Nation.

"Our program", Mr. Caldwell said, "touches the individual and family lives of all citizens, and needs the continuing cooperation of spiritual leadership."

NORTH CAROLINA BAPTIST CONVENTION ON CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS

In a called session of Baptist Convention of North Carolina, when by an overwhelming vote of more than 3,000 messengers against accepting government funds for their hospital, but in favor of raising the necessary funds by voluntary subscriptions, the following was adopted. What do you think of it?

We recommend the following statement of principle and interpretation be adopted as the Convention's position on these matters:

"Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's."

"The Congress shall make no laws respecting an establishment of religion; nor in prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

So reads the New Testament and the Constitution of the United States. Congress has no right to levy taxes to support any church or any institution of the church in whole or in part. The Supreme Court has ruled that an institution owned, controlled, and supported by a church is a part of the church and therefore tax-free. Likewise it has no right to deny the voluntary principle in religion or to prohibit the free exercise of religion. In providing that no church property shall be taxed the state is neither prohibiting nor aiding in the free exercise of religion, it is rather tacitly recognizing that in the area of religion the state has no right either to tax or to control. Consequently, it has no right to tax all the people, including those who belong to the various communions or to no communion, and then to distribute such taxes to aid any particular communion or all the communions. "The power to tax is the power to destroy" is an axiom generally accepted; and it seems equally true that control by the government of necessity ought to follow support by the government. The Supreme Court has ruled that "it is hardly lack of due process for the government to regulate that which it subsidizes." Therefore, "a free church and a free state" or a "free church in a free state" must mean that there must be neither financial support nor control by the state over the church nor by the church over the state. A departure from this principle leads in the direction of a totalitarian state. In either case freedom is limited and perhaps at length lost.

Separation, then means no control and no support except as each, the church and the state, in the exercise of its own freedom accords to the other the right to maintain its own existence free and untrammled. In such exercise each supplies moral support to the other, and, within certain limits, the state supplies to the church legal support in that it protects the property of the church. Beyond that point support should not extend; support beyond that point leads to control, and when and where there is control, freedom and separation cannot exist.

Since then the state cannot be supported or controlled by the church nor the church by the state, the question may well be asked: Are there any areas of service, or are there any activities involving an exchange of values in which cooperation may occur between church and state or the agencies of either, especially since most individuals owe allegiance to both? Without any surrender of the principles stated above cooperation is possible provided the following conditions are met:

- A. In any cooperative exchange of services or property such exchange must be completely free of any control direct or implied;
- B. Any such exchange must be definite and specific, and represent a genuine exchange of values mutually agreed upon and so stated in a contract;
- C. Any such exchange must be consummated within a reasonable period of time, but in no event to exceed a period of two years;
- D. Any such exchange must be reported annually to the Convention by the trustees of the institutions or agencies.

### FLORIDA BAPTISTS STRESS "HEARTS AFIRE FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM"

From March 4 to 9, the Executive Director joined Secretary John Maguire of the Florida Baptists in an itinerary of addresses on church-state relations. In Jacksonville, Green Cove, Umatilla, Orlando, Plant City, Fort Myers, and Fort Lauderdale largely attended regional rallies were conducted on several subjects which stress timely interests of some 300,000 Baptists of the orange blossom state. Under the general theme, "Hearts Afire For Religious Freedom", the Executive Director discussed seven different aspects of the question and in each instance conducted a thirty minute forum. As always, the forums proved so lively there was never a chance to answer all the questions asked. The tour, it is felt, afforded an exceptional opportunity to inform the people on a distinctive Baptist principle.

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### MIXED ACTION IN NEW MEXICO

According to press reports, the New Mexico State Legislature has passed a bill whereby parochial school pupils may be transported on public buses. This happened in a state where Roman Catholics are predominant, and over published statements in a Santa Fe newspaper to the effect that this act transcends a definite prohibition in the State Constitution and will be nullified by the State's Supreme Court. The New Mexico Legislature's action is in strong contrast to that of the Legislature in the State of Washington and that of the Legislature of Indiana which killed proposals to furnish free buses to parochial school pupils.

In one area at least New Mexicans are striving to uphold separation of church and state. The State Board of Education has passed this resolution:

"It is hereby resolved and adopted as the policy of this board that all nuns, brothers, or priests of the Catholic Church, or members of any other sectarian religious group, wearing clothing of religious significance, should be removed from the public schools throughout the state as expeditiously as circumstances in each locality allows; and, it is further adopted as the policy of this board that insofar as possible no property owned by religious groups shall be leased or rented by the state from such religious or sectarian organizations unless exceptional circumstances require such action."

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### IMPORTANT BOOKS CITED

Moral and Spiritual Values in the Public Schools. By Educational Policies Commission. National Education Association, Washington, D. C. \$1.00.

No publication since the McCollum decision has a wider appeal to those interested in religious instruction and the public schools. This may not be the complete answer, but surely it is a long step toward it. So far, no one has undertaken to refute its findings.

Church Lobbying in the Nation's Capital. By Luke Ebersole. Macmillan, New York. \$2.75.

No author is quite infallible, but those in the know will pronounce this book a fair and intelligent effort to present the facts about denominational offices in the Nation's capital, including the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.