

REPORT FROM THE CAPITAL

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MARCH 1952

UMT DEFEATED IN THE HOUSE

The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs meeting in Washington March 4, 1952 urged the Congress to defeat the UMT proposal. On the same day the House by a vote of 236 to 162, voted to recommit the Bill, H.R. 5904.

"Baptists, along with many other Protestant bodies, have during recent years repeatedly voiced opposition to peacetime military conscription as unnecessary and as constituting a clear and dangerous departure from the time tested American practice of using conscription only in a national crisis and never as a permanent policy", reported Chairman D. B. Cloward of the Committee on Domestic Situations.

The Joint Committee as a whole sent telegrams to the Speaker of the House, Honorable Sam Rayburn and to Floor Leader, Honorable John McCormack, and Minority Floor Leader, Honorable Joseph Martin, as follows:

"Representing millions of United States Baptists, we earnestly petition you to use your great influence to defeat UMT in the House. United States Baptists have repeatedly voiced opposition to any program of universal peacetime military conscription."

"Dr. Edward Willingham, Chairman
Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs"

Chairman Vinson of the House Armed Services Committee, after the above vote, announced that he regarded the measure as virtually dead for this session of Congress. The press generally attributed the defeat to the opposition of religious, farm, labor and educational groups.

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AMERICAN TRENDS CHALLENGED

Excerpts from Report of Committee on World Issues
March 4, 1952

The Chairman, Dr. M. T. Rankin, Executive Secretary of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, submitted the report on World Issues. He arraigned three trends of thinking in the United States:

"1. In our urgency to defend ourselves against Communism and its advance, we are in constant danger of failing to comprehend the significance of the upsurge of human hungers of the large majority of the peoples of the world.

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"2. In our foreign policies and relationships, we are under evaluating the relative importance of the areas of the world in which live most of these hungry, seeking peoples, and are thereby making the impression on them that we do not have an effective appreciation of their aspirations.

"3. In our national strategy, we are depending on the might of armed force as our primary strategy, and on spiritual and moral forces only as a secondary strategy, to which we give small place in our national positions on world issues."

In a strong commendation of the United Nations he declared: "We cannot afford to allow technical and legal difficulties to weaken our support of the United Nations. The importance of safeguarding our national sovereignty cannot safely be divorced from the sovereignty of the moral demands which the world's human hungers place upon us in this day. Unless national sovereignty is reconciled with moral sovereignty, the time may come when national sovereignty, by taking precedence over moral sovereignty, will wreck the United Nations, and, in the end wreck itself.

The Committee voted to support the Genocide Convention. "Whatever technical and legal difficulties may exist in the texts of these conventions, the fact that such declarations have been adopted by the United Nations is of tremendous significance for the world."

Columbian Religious Persecution

Dr. Rankin's Committee also reported: "In Bogota, Colombia, a Roman Catholic priest led mob attacked and stoned a Baptist church during the dedicatory service of their new building. Despite the prompt and vigorous protest made personally by the United States Ambassador Capus M. Waynick on the day of this outrage, the attack on the church was renewed the following day at the instigation of priests. So far as we know, no action has been taken by the Colombian authorities to prevent further violations of this kind nor has there been any evidence that the Roman Catholic church disapproves in any way of such crimes against religious liberty."

THE VATICAN ISSUE TO DATE

By Religious Liberty Committee Report,
March 4, 1952

Upon the announcement of President Truman's appointment, in response to many inquiries as to the Baptist attitude toward it, Chairman E. B. Willingham and the Executive Director at once formulated a tentative statement. Later, after conference with members, it seemed wise to call a special meeting of this Committee to adopt a more considered statement. The paper adopted has already been widely circulated.

This Sub-committee on Religious Liberty would now call attention to certain important developments which have thrown much light on the issue since.

1. Contrary to some predictions that opposition to the appointment would soon subside, protests have steadily mounted. Striking proof of this has been the almost unanimous opposition of Protestant groups, which has afforded a remarkable demonstration of unity among them. But Protestants have not stood alone in this. Many Roman Catholic laymen have spoken out against the proposal. Other groups, differing in creeds and practices, such as the Jews, Christian Scientists, and fraternal orders have been equally emphatic. Citizens, irrespective of religious belief, have been insistent against the proposal as revealed in the unprecedented mail received by members of the Senate,

several of whom have reported more than 50,000 separate appeals to vote against ratification. Indeed, the disapproval of the public has been so evident that General Mark W. Clark, the President's nominee, felt that he should withdraw his name from consideration, and Chairman McKinney of the National Democratic Party has suggested that the President withdraw the nomination of a full ambassador and instead appoint a personal representative, a suggestion which in our judgment would not be regarded with favor by those opposing. The same forces which oppose an ambassador disapproved the appointment of Myron C. Taylor as a personal representative. If the President, in the face of such an avalanche of public protest against a full ambassador, after months have intervened since the resignation of Taylor, and following the report that the Department of State saw no need of renewing a personal appointment, now appointed a personal representative, it would undoubtedly create strong resentment.

2. The assertion that the appointment was no violation of separation of church and state has been abundantly disproved. That the appointment was to the Holy See, to the Pope as the head of the Roman Catholic Church, or it is nothing, was stated by Ann O'Hare McCormick in an editorial in the New York Times. No other nation sends any kind of an envoy to the so-called Vatican City State, and if the United States did so, it would be the only nation to thus recognize the Vatican City State. It is believed that the public to a large extent has come to see that the appointment, as contended from the first, would manifestly be discriminatory in that it would single out one church for special recognition and advantage in obvious violation of the American system.

3. The reason at first most emphasized by proponents of the appointment, that the United States needs to avail itself of the Vatican as a "listening post", will not bear scrutiny, and it is most objectionable. No evidence has been produced to prove that Myron C. Taylor was able to obtain any information not readily available to our Government through its own regular channels. His mission must be regarded as having been unnecessary. If the Vatican was ever at any time an invaluable source of information, it is no longer so, handicapped as it is in the very places where otherwise it might conceivably be helpful. If it were true that the Vatican's information system is yet indispensable to us, that would impose tragic hardship upon Roman Catholics. First, it would tend to confirm the Communist allegations that they are spies and so expose them to added sufferings and persecutions behind the Iron Curtain. Again, it would tend to make all the Pope's appointees in the United States suspect and result in widespread efforts to require them to register as agents of a foreign power.

4. The oft-repeated argument that for the United States to win the battle against Communism requires our country to form an official connection with the Pope, has in new ways been thoroughly refuted. We believe that representation at the Vatican in the eyes of the world would be tantamount to endorsing un-American policies and would embarrass our country in its world-wide fight against totalitarianism.

While the favorable progress made in opposing the appointment of an Ambassador to the Vatican is a matter of encouragement, alertness in watching developments is necessary. The various "broad and strict" constructions put upon the Constitution have brought out dangers of interpretation. For instance, the insistence that the Executive Department of our government is not limited by the principle of separation of church and state safeguarded in the First Amendment. If this interpretation should prevail, the Senate could only deal with the qualifications of an ambassador and not upon the basic question as to whether or not an embassy should be established.

In view of these clear-cut developments since the last of October, and in view of the President's announced purpose to renominate some one to the vatican, the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, in the interest of the American system of church-state separation, which guarantees religious liberty for all, must continue its vigorous opposition to any envoy to the Vatican.

A YEAR OF PROGRESS

Shown in Annual Report of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs
To Be Submitted to Sustaining Conventions

The year past has marked a distinct advance in the work of this Committee. Evidences accumulate to show that the Committee has met with increasing favor among its supporting Conventions and has attained to higher standing in public recognition.

To the four national Conventions which in 1941 established the Committee, have now come the North American Baptist General Conference and the Baptist General Conference of America wishing to be admitted to membership. These will be warmly welcomed, as would be any others among the smaller Baptist bodies in the United States.

A token of the deepening appreciation of the sustaining Conventions is the grant of better financial support in the way of some enlargement of funds allotted to the Committee's slender budget, which showed receipts during the year amounting to \$18,046.48. This included an increase from the Southern Baptist Convention, a gift of \$1,500 from the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board for the publication of 100,000 copies of the Executive Director's booklet on the Vatican Ambassadorship, a number of small gifts from persons throughout the nation and \$100 each from Mr. William Fleming, Ft. Worth, Texas; Mr. J. N. Mitchell, Waco, Texas; and Riverside Baptist Church, Miami, Florida. A gift of \$149.95 was received from the Nashville Baptist Association and \$25.00 from the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference. Because free copies of the monthly newsletter, REPORT FROM THE CAPITAL, had become a too heavy burden, the Committee asked a price of one dollar per year for all except the press, Baptist executives and institutions. The response has relieved no little. It should ever be kept in mind by our people that if this Committee is worthy to perform the great and responsible task assigned to it, a more adequate financial support must be acquired.

By vote of the September 25, 1951 meeting the administrative officers were instructed to inquire into the feasibility of employing a competent person to make a scientific research into all violations of church-state separation in Washington and in the states, and to continue, if possible, in other needed capacities. We are today submitting a recommendation to invite C. E. Bryant of Baylor University to undertake the task during July and August of this year. Only the Executive Director and the Office Secretary compose the staff, and extra help in line with the vote of the Committee is desirable, but not advisable if debt should be incurred. Baylor will grant Mr. Bryant leave of absence to do this work and partly finance him.

The most significant accomplishment of the year has been the extraordinary dissemination of requested information. For the unprecedented quantities of literature distributed, postage has usually been sent. By far the greatest demand has been for the booklet, "The Battle For America", which in the Committee's printing and in reprinting forms has approached a half million copies. The Vatican issue, however, has not been the only one about which the people have sought information. A daily stream of applications for information concerning Religious Liberty in all its phases flows into the office. Special movements, as a Religious Liberty Sunday observed last July by 12,000 local church Southern Baptist Training Unions, made heavy requisitions. The American Baptist Publication Society devoted its January issue of their chief publication, The Leader, to the subject of church-state separation and the work of this Committee, and this evoked much interest. A week of Conference under the auspices of the Committee with the Social Service Commission at Ridgecrest Assembly in August 1951 on church-state matters elicited widespread notice, especially in the findings as reviewed in national publications, many of them outside the ranks of Baptists.