

# REPORT FROM THE CAPITAL

## BAPTIST JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC AFFAIRS



The American Baptist Convention  
The Southern Baptist Convention  
The National Baptist Convention of America  
The National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc.  
The North American Baptist General Conference  
The Baptist General Conference of America



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### THE SPRING MEETING

The committees from the several cooperating conventions that constitute the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs met for their spring meeting in Washington March 7th and 8th at the Baptist Building.

A high point of interest in the agenda of the meeting was a report from a special study committee on the philosophic and Biblical basis of our concern, presented by Dr. Sydnor L. Stealey, President of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina. Dr. Stealey reported that representatives of five Baptist conventions had spent several days in workshop conference on matters of church, state and society in the light of Biblical teaching. Those participating in the workshop conference were the following:

- Dr. Curtis B. Akenson, First Baptist Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota
- Dr. C. Emanuel Carlson, Washington, D. C.
- Dr. Winthrop S. Hudson, Colgate-Rochester Divinity School, Rochester, New York
- Dr. George A. Lang, North American Baptist Seminary, Sioux Falls, South Dakota
- Dr. David O. Moberg, Bethel College, St. Paul, Minnesota
- Dr. William A. Mueller, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky (proxy for Dr. Duke McCall and for Dr. Dale Moody)
- Rev. W. Hubert Porter, First Baptist Church, Nashua, New Hampshire
- Dr. Samuel Proctor, Virginia Union University, Richmond, Virginia
- Dr. Sydnor L. Stealey, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina
- Miss Blanche S. White, Richmond, Virginia

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Dr. Stealey reported that the broad field of discussion had been divided into four general areas of study, each of which was assigned to a sub-committee. These sub-committees are now at work doing research and preparing first drafts which will be shared with the other sub-committees.

Acting on a report from the Committee on Domestic Situations, presented by Dr. Donald B. Cloward of New York, the Committee went on record as follows:

We believe the manpower legislation now under consideration constitutes a further step toward permanent universal peacetime conscription against which our several conventions have repeatedly voiced opposition. We, therefore, oppose this proposal and instruct our Director to draft a suitable statement to be presented at the Congressional hearings on the manpower bill now before the Congress.

The Committee on World Issues, reporting through Dr. William B. Lippard of New York, expressed concern over the limited achievements of the Refugee Relief Act. On the subject the adopted report said:

We commend again the concern manifested by the Baptist World Alliance through its World Relief Committee, by the National Council of Churches through its Church World Service agency, and by all other organizations sponsored by the Christian churches, in the plight of the world's refugees, and the work that these agencies have done in seeking to solve this great humanitarian problem. We continue to deplore the limited achievements thus far reported, whether through minor faults or serious defects in the Refugee Relief Act, or through inefficient administration of the Act.

The World Issues report also commended the President for his handling of the ever present issue of war and peace. The statement adopted by the Joint Committee read as follows:

This Joint Committee has repeatedly expressed its concern over the ever present issue of war and peace and the mounting international tensions that now plague our world. We therefore express again our commendation that the President has reaffirmed confidence in and support of the United Nations as the only existing organized hope for world peace, and we express our gratification that in spite of the existing tensions, by a policy of moderation and of steadfast refusal to embark on unilateral action, he has succeeded in preserving peaceful relations with all the nations of the world.

The Committee noted the absence of one of its members, Dr. W. R. Alexander of the Southern Baptist Convention, who passed away recently. An expression of sympathy was voted to Mrs. Alexander.

## EDUCATION ABOVE PARTY INTERESTS

One of the most effective and forthright voices being raised in behalf of the American public schools is that of Mrs. Agnes Meyer, the wife of the publisher of the Washington Post and Times Herald. Through the columns of the paper, from the platform, and through various organizations, she is actively seeking to stir up an understanding and appreciation of this typically American institution.

In a March 9th editorial in The Christian Century, the editor chose to foreword his article by the following statement from the Washington Post:

"It can be said with certainty that the character of the country will be shaped by the quality of education. If (children) are intellectually undernourished, America will lose its position of leadership in world affairs-- will lose, indeed, the attributes of energy and understanding, of inventiveness and technical know-how, of self-reliance and self-control, which have been the dynamism of its greatness. A self-governing society is directly dependent upon an educated citizenry."

After reviewing the current situation with thousands of children on double or triple shifts, the over-burdened teachers and the teacher shortage, thousands of classes meeting in barracks, churches, garages, and other rented buildings, the editorial said: "In many places in their own country American children are treated worse than some other countries treat refugees from outside their borders", and then presented the estimates for the future and the costs that are involved.

The financial possibilities are well presented in a report, "Financing Public Education in the Decade Ahead", recently published by the National Citizens Commission for the Public Schools. This highly responsible group of American civic leaders have sought to answer the question whether or not we can afford the educational program that is needed to take care of the oncoming generation. This booklet should have wide circulation and careful study by leaders in all walks of life.

In the main, the report concludes:

"In the decade ahead, in the absence of war or other unforeseen natural disasters, the United States will have a greatly expended volume of income available for consumption, investment and savings. Education needs will grow, but relative to the growth of national income the amount involved will not be unmanageable. The money requirements can be financed by allocating to public education a small percentage of the increase in national income and productivity. The financing problem is a problem of policy, not of resources; the problem is to select the best basis

on which to make a small portion of the increased national production and income available for education."

The report is available from the National Citizens Commission for the Public Schools, 2 West 45th Street, New York 36, New York.

The legislative hopper in Congress at present contains a number of suggestions regarding the policies to be followed in facing up to these needs. Among the major questions that have to be settled are the following:

1. Shall we meet the need by federal grants to the states? If so, can this be done while retaining the state control over education which is envisioned by our division of powers between state and federal constitutions?
2. Will we adequately meet the needs of the schools by making loans available from federal funds, thus giving school bonds a guaranteed market? If this is done, will the burden be equitably distributed across the nation?
3. Which political party shall receive credit for having sponsored the legislation?

If we step back from the current entanglement of legislative proposals and seek to discern the principles that seem to be necessitated by Christian motivation, I believe most of us will be agreed on the following:

1. Political advantage for a party, financial advantage for the firms that deal in bonds, or the interests that are aided by ignorance, should not be permitted to thwart our nation's effort to properly care for the oncoming generation. Christian motivation leaves no place for self-advantage at the expense of the young.
2. Throughout our national history the education of the children has been viewed as the proper function of the associated citizens in a given community. This principle has large values to the children, to the citizens, and to the community. It need not, however, be disrupted even though the supporting tax base is shifted in part from local real estate to the earning power of the nation.
3. Much more than money will be needed to do the job that is ahead. A prayerful concern should be cultivated in our churches for community cooperation and appreciation of the values involved, for an adequate supply of teachers with the right attitudes and the right training, and for the wholehearted moral and spiritual support of the homes.