



REPORT FROM THE CAPITAL

★ RELIGIOUS LIBERTY ★ BAPTIST PRINCIPLES
★ PUBLIC AFFAIRS

This monthly newsletter is published by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, 1628 Sixteenth Street, N. W., Washington 2, D. C. Subscription price, \$1.00 per year. C. Emanuel Carlson, executive director; W. Barry Garrett, associate director.

July 1959

AMERICAN BAPTIST CONVENTION NOTES WORK OF BAPTIST JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The American Baptist Convention in annual session at Des Moines, Iowa, June 4-9, on three occasions took special note of the work of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. The ABC Committee on Public Affairs reported on the BJCPA, the resolutions committee called special attention to problems involving privileged communications to ministers and those involving separation of church and state, and the program on American Baptists and their wider fellowship called special attention to the BJCPA as an expression of ABC cooperation with other Baptists.

In its report to the Convention the ABC committee explained the function of the BJCPA. "The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs is the agency through which the Public Affairs Committees of major Baptist groups cooperate in keeping the field of public affairs under continual examination in the light of our Baptist heritage and the demands of Christian conscience. Through a comprehensive program of gathering information, of communication with the Baptist people, and of liaison with denominational, inter-denominational and governmental agencies, the Committee is increasingly gaining a reputation for a positive and reasonable emphasis in the field of church-state thinking."

The ABC report then called attention to an eight-fold summary of the current activities of the BJCPA as outlined by Dr. C. Emanuel Carlson, executive director.

(1) We cultivate people's interest in and concern for religious liberty.

(2) We encourage restudy of the Biblical basis of our Baptist insights.

(3) We analyze the implications of religious liberty for public affairs.

(4) We inform people regarding current actions and trends that affect religious liberty.

(5) We cultivate the understanding and appreciation of non-Baptists for Baptist insights.

(6) We confer with leaders, Baptist, non-Baptist, and political, regarding the wisdom of public policy

proposals touching on church programs.

(7) We help Baptists organize and plan for the extension of liberty in America and abroad.

(8) We maintain a Washington office through which government agencies can get information and make contacts with Baptist conventions and agencies, and through which the conventions and agencies can contact government.

The report to the convention gave considerable space to a definition of separation of church and state as emphasized by Dr. Carlson. These six points have appeared in previous issues of the Report From The Capital, were discussed in the Religious Liberty Conference last September, and were also presented to the Southern Baptist Convention in Louisville, Ky., this year. They are worthy of study by all in view of the confusion now existing concerning church-state relations.

The Committee on Resolutions of the ABC called attention to the problem involved in privileged communications of persons to ministers in seeking spiritual help. The committee pointed out that the BJCPA had done special work in this field and that information on the subject could be secured from the Washington office. It was stated that several states have under consideration legislation on the problem, and it then declared the policy of the ABC as follows:

"The Convention further declares that, whether or not appropriate statutes are enacted, it is a principle with us that any of our number who receives confidential information in the course of responding to a request for spiritual counseling is not morally obliged to disclose it without consent of the other party."

In a further resolution the ABC declared its feeling on the use of public funds for sectarian purposes. The Convention said:

"Recognizing that money collected through taxation is taken from people by government, whether they wish to give it or not, we object to the use of tax money for the benefit of sectarian institutions, including schools and hospitals, and the use of tax concessions for the benefit of church-controlled commercial enterprises. We further object to the effort of

sectarian schools to secure relief from their financial burdens by pressing either for tax relief for parents sending their children to such schools, or for direct subsidization from public funds of the educational expenses of certain students in attendance at these schools. We moreover affirm that no bigotry need be involved in asking candidates for public office to state their views on church-state relations."

In its emphasis on the wider fellowship of the American Baptist Convention it was declared:

"The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs is the agency through which the Public Affairs Committee of the American Baptist Convention cooperates with similar committees from the Baptist General Conference of America, the National Baptist Convention of America, the National Baptist Convention, U. S. A., Inc., the North American Baptist General Conference and the Southern Baptist Convention in a united witness in the area of Christian social responsibility. The Committee keeps the field of public affairs under continual review in light of our Baptist heritage, the demands of Christian conscience, and the responsibilities of Christian witness. It seeks to be on the alert at all points where Baptist principles are involved in or jeopardized through governmental actions, and it gives particular attention to the safeguarding of religious liberty."

SURVEY OF JUNE LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS REVEALS MANY SERIOUS RELIGIOUS LIBERTY PROBLEMS

The month of June witnessed another flurry of bills introduced in Congress with church-state problems and implications. These bills range all the way from direct special privilege legislation for churches to almost imperceptible implications. All of them, however, are part of a pattern of closer coordination of the work of the churches and the functions of government.

The Report From The Capital has reviewed most of the proposed church-state legislation prior to the month of June.

One of the problems in evaluating these proposals is that in many cases the basic objectives are desirable but the manner in which the churches and church agencies are used to achieve them is open to question. The questions perennially arise: "Should the government use the churches for governmental and political purposes? And should the churches use the government for ecclesiastical objectives?" Another question could be asked, "Can desirable humanitarian objectives be accomplished in other ways without entangling alliances between church and state?"

Without taking a position either for or against any of the proposals, and without claiming that we have discovered all bills introduced in June that contain church-state involvements, we offer these as illustrative of continual developments on Capitol Hill.

Aid To Institutions

Two proposals have been introduced in the House of Representatives (H.R. 7625 and H.R. 7358) which would provide an exemption from the communications and

transportation taxes for amounts paid by churches, church organizations and church-owned institutions. Dating from World War II there has been an excise tax on transportation fares, phone service, telegraph services, etc., which was cut to 10 per cent in 1954. The proposed legislation would provide special privileges for the churches by exempting them from this tax. Educational institutions were exempted by Congress last year.

A bill (S. 2241) has been introduced in the Senate to provide funds for educational purposes by providing increased incentives for private giving through the allowance of a tax credit for charitable contributions to institutions of higher education. This bill would allow a tax credit (better than a deduction) based on a certain formula to persons making gifts to colleges.

Since many colleges are church-owned and operated, and since most people would make gifts to private schools rather than to public institutions, the above bill would give the most aid to private and church colleges.

In a \$300 million bill (S. 2170) to be known as the Health Educational Facilities Construction Act of 1959 it is proposed that \$200 million be authorized to be appropriated for grants for the expansion and improvement of existing schools of medicine, dentistry, and public health, and that \$100 million for grants be authorized for the construction of new schools of medicine, dentistry, or public health.

While all citizens should be interested in the improved health of the Nation, the church-state problem is obvious in this bill in which it is declared to be "the policy of the Congress to provide funds for construction of health educational facilities for our public and nonprofit medical, dental and public health schools." In recent years the expression "nonprofit" has uniformly been ascribed to religious and sectarian institutions as well as to others.

If this legislation passes as it is now written, the churches and church-related institutions will be faced with a realistic problem of whether or not to accept public funds for the improvement or creation of medical, dental or public health schools.

Governmental interest in the care of orphans is seen in H.R. 7905, which would authorize the donation of surplus Federal property to orphanages. Since many orphanages are operated by churches or church-related groups, this proposal is of special significance because it proposes to make such surplus property available "for utilization by any orphanage." Many choice sites could thus be picked up free of charge by church groups for the extension of their orphanage system.

Aid for Services Rendered

A bill has been introduced in the House (H.R. 7760) "to make grants to the States to assist in the provision of facilities and services for the day care of children." The Secretary of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare would be authorized to work out the rules for the administration of these grants according to approved State plans. Special consideration is to be given to Federally

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Impacted areas.

The church-state problem arises from the fact that the benefits of the bill are not limited to public institutions, and conceivably churches and church institutions could develop extensive and influential day nurseries by the funds provided by the Government where State laws permit. Since the "State plans" suggested may include only supervision of programs, the effectiveness of State limitations is not clear at present.

The proposed Food Act of 1959 (S. 2098) would transfer the distribution of surplus agricultural products to the needy in charitable institutions and family units from the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, and would establish a food stamp plan for the distribution of food paid for by the Government. The transfer, however, would not apply to the donation by the Government of food commodities for use in nonprofit school-lunch programs and in nonprofit summer camps for children.

The distribution of food products to needy people under this plan is not confined to public agencies, and it would be possible for the churches to develop extensive relief centers largely paid for by public funds. In addition, persons eligible for food stamps, redeemable at approved food stores, would include "every individual in any nonprofit charitable institution, including hospitals, orphanages, homes for the aged and infirm, and other similar types of institutions." This would be a windfall for many church-related institutions.

American Foreign Relations

Two bills (S. 2135 and S. 2192) have been proposed "to promote the foreign relations of the United States" by providing for educational institutions in foreign countries and for a "Center of Cultural and Technical Interchange Between the East and West in Hawaii."

The Hawaiian bill instructs the Secretary of State to make arrangements with "public, educational, or other nonprofit institutions, or otherwise" for such an institution. It provides grants, fellowships, and other payments to scholars from both the East and West.

The other bill for educational institutions in foreign countries does not restrict such funds to nonsectarian or nonreligious schools. The schools to which American public funds would go would probably depend on the educational policies and practices of the particular countries involved.

The week following the Fourth of July would be designated "Captive Nations Week" by S. J. Res. 111. This resolution sponsored by 19 Senators would call attention to the nations held captive by "the imperialistic policies of Communistic Russia."

The resolution on captive nations states that they look to the United States as the citadel of human freedom, for leadership in bringing about their liberation and independence and in restoring to them the enjoyment of their Christian, Jewish, Moslem, Buddhist, or other religious freedoms, and of their in-

dividual liberties." The particular week would be observed each year "until such time as freedom and independence shall have been achieved for all the captive nations of the world."

The resolution expresses no interest in religious liberty as such and shows no awareness of the situations in which the oppression is engendered by the religious groups themselves.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY NEWS BRIEFS

RELIGION IN SCHOOLS--Washington--The Ten Commandments would do more to improve lagging morals in high schools than courses in sex education, according to Dr. L. Nelson Bell, executive editor of Christianity Today. Defending his proposal for daily Bible reading in schools Bell said, "For that atheistic and godless minority who profess no religion and who would loudly protest against the reading of the Ten Commandments as an infringement of their constitutional rights and those of their children, let their children be excused from the room while the Commandments are being read." (CT)

FREEDOM FILM--Nashville, Tenn.--Early Baptist beginnings in America and the fight they made for religious freedom are portrayed in a new 8-minute film, "The Price of Freedom," released July 1 by the Broadman Films of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board. It presents experiences of three early Baptist leaders -- Shubal Stearns, Daniel Marshall and William Screeven. It is available through Baptist Book Stores at \$3.00 rental. (BSB)

RELIGIOUS ADVISERS--Washington--Protestant, Catholic and Jewish leaders have been appointed to a Consumer Industry Advisory Committee of the Federal Housing Administration. One assignment of this committee is to advise the Federal Housing Commissioner concerning programs for cooperative housing. Other groups concerned with housing are also represented on the committee. (RNS)

GRADUATE FELLOWSHIPS--Washington--Thirteen graduate fellowships in the field of religious studies under the National Defense Education Act have been awarded according to the U. S. Department of Education. Three have gone to Emory University (Methodist), Atlanta, Ga., for Old Testament studies; three to New York University for Hebraic and Judeo-Arabic studies; three to Drexel College (Jewish), Philadelphia, Pa., for comparative religion; and four to Brown University (independent), Providence, R. I., for the Department of Religious Studies to help prepare potential faculty members to teach in the field of social ethics.

Dr. S. Walter Martin, president of Emory, has replied to the charge of violation of separation of church and state that the university does not regard this to be a violation since the students will matriculate in the graduate college and not in the Candler School of Theology. (RNS)

USE OF HOSPITALS--St. Louis, Mo.--The Catholic hospital must be different from all others, as day is from night, Auxiliary Bishop Fulton J. Sheen declared here to the 44th annual convention of the Catholic Hospital Association of the U. S. and Canada. He pleaded for a "new concern for the poor, a use of suffering's

tremendous potential for the salvation of souls, and a recognition that the 'person' was to be seen in the occupant of every bed....In this way the Church's trained investment of men and means in our Catholic hospital system will be justified before God and fruitful for bodies and souls." (RNS)

CHRISTIAN AMENDMENT--Seattle, Wash.--Adoption of the "Christian Amendment" to the U.S. Constitution could lead to the denial of religious liberty of non-Christian Americans, the National Council of Churches' General Board warned here. In support of religious freedom for all people the Board declared that the proposed amendment would confuse the issues involved in church-state separation.

The Christian Amendment provides, "This nation devoutly recognizes the authority and law of Jesus Christ, Saviour and Ruler of Nations, through whom are bestowed the blessings of Almighty God."

Dangers involved in the amendment, according to the Board, are embarrassment of the United States with the non-Christian world, a downgrading of fundamental religious and theological concepts, the denial of liberty and of religious liberty in particular as experienced in previous Christian States," and the elimination of church-state separation by making public funds more accessible to church institutions. (RNS)

PAROCHIAL BUS RIDES--Augusta, Maine--If Maine enacts legislation to authorize rides for parochial school pupils on public school buses, it will be the 20th state to do so. The Maine Supreme Court has ruled unanimously that neither the Maine nor the U. S. Constitution forbids free bus transportation to children attending private schools, but enabling legislation is required before communities can be allowed to make such provisions. In contradictory rulings separate courts in the nation have ruled that such provision is aid to the children and that it is aid to the school. When it has been held to be aid to the child, such private school transportation at public expense is considered to be constitutional, while if it is aid to the school, the practice is unconstitutional.

CHURCHES AND TAXES--Hartford, Conn.--The church and

its institutions should pay taxes like all others, declared a prominent Lutheran layman here in an address at the 100th Annual Synod of the Augustana Lutheran Church. "There is no reason why the church and its institutions should not be paying their fair share of the taxes needed to support our government today," said Morton V. Bjorkquist to 300 lay delegates.

Bjorkquist said he was "horrified" at the willingness of some churchmen to accept discounts on parish construction, church purchases and some of their personal acquisitions. Religious groups make demands for fire and police protection, good roads and other public services. "There is no reason," he continued, "why we should not bear our share of the cost which our demands create." (AP)

AUXILIARY AIDS--Denver, Colo.--The rights of parochial school pupils to auxiliary services provided by public funds was discussed on the House of the Lord program on KLF-TV here on June 21. Panelists included Palmer Burch, Denver school Board member, Father William Jones, archdiocesan superintendent of schools, Joseph A. Craven, Denver attorney, and Mrs. P. G. Cronin of the Catholic Parent-Teacher League.

Granting of auxiliary services such as bus rides, lunches, and milk paid for from public funds to parochial pupils were considered. The panelists explored the rights involved, means of protecting those rights, legal and social implications of the problem, and some of the history of the question. (DCR)

PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS--San Francisco--Parochial schools, both elementary and secondary, were strongly defended by the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod here as providing "a specifically Christian education which the public school cannot supply." At the same time the Synod declared it to be the responsibility of every citizen to support and uphold the public schools.

This declaration differed from the recent report approved by the Augustana Lutheran Church at Hartford, Conn., which said that "there appears to be no need or desire" on the part of the denominational members for parochial high schools. (RNS)

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issued by
Baptist Joint Committee
on Public Affairs
1628 16th Street, N. W.
Washington 9, D. C.

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

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