



REPORT FROM THE CAPITAL

★ RELIGIOUS LIBERTY ★ BAPTIST PRINCIPLES
★ PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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March 1960

REPORT OF THE SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BAPTIST JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Religious liberty issues throughout the nation and the world continue with growing acuteness and in larger numbers. Clarity of Christian insight, an understanding of the issues involved and high resolve to live according to principle rather than expediency increasingly challenge the Christian community.

In order to be of assistance to them in the area of church-state relations the Baptists of the United States and Canada maintain the office of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs in Washington, D.C. Each cooperating Convention or Conference appoints its own representatives on the "joint" committee and contributes financially to its program. Thus the BJCPA is a denominational agency with its members elected by the Baptist denominations, with its support coming from the denominational funds, and with its program as a projection of the denominational interest in religious liberty.

The BJCPA meets twice annually to hear reports from its staff, to discuss religious liberty issues, to chart courses of action for the staff, and to take such actions as may be appropriate toward solutions of problems and the projection of programs. An executive committee of the BJCPA is subject to call between regular meetings of the entire committee.

Federal Aid To Education

One of the problems faced by the March, 1960, meeting of the BJCPA was that of religious freedom and public aid to parochial schools. (See the Jan.-Feb. 1960 issue of "Report From The Capital" for a full discussion of this problem in the current Congress.)

In his report to the BJCPA C. Emanuel Carlson, executive director, said, "The linking of sectarian educational aids to every proposal for federal assistance to education was declared as policy by the School Superintendents' Department of the National Catholic Educational Association. As a specific example of this broad policy, Senator Wayne Morse presented his amendment, in line with the lobby efforts of the National Catholic Educational Association leadership."

In the course of his speech to the Senate (Congressional Record, Feb. 4, 1960) Sen. Wayne Morse made extensive use of the Baptist willingness to receive government loans for their hospitals as precedent for

a loan program to parochial schools. Senator Morse placed an interpretation on loans as government "aid" and "welfare" services that has been foreign to the thinking of Baptists in their willingness to negotiate loans at a fair rate of interest for their colleges and hospitals.

With a fresh awareness of the importance of Baptist policy on loans the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs voted to recommend to the several Baptist conventions, their agencies and institutions, "that they explore afresh all the implications involved in the acceptance of loans from the government."

Background For Restudy Of Loans

In commenting on the above action of the BJCPA Dr. Carlson says: "At the close of World War II the colleges faced the problem of giving an education to a backlog of millions of young people who had been sidetracked from their education for several years by the war. The schools lacked the facilities needed. Dormitory space was a tight bottle-neck.

"The government therefore arranged longer term credit than banks ordinarily give so the colleges could build dormitories. This has continued in the face of the rapidly rising demands on the schools.

"Most Baptist schools accepted these loans, knowing that the income from the dormitories would pay up the loans. As long as the interest rate covered the cost of the government's loan they felt that no burden was placed on the taxpayer.

"This emergency precedent was next applied to the building of hospitals, which also can amortize the indebtedness from their income. The same emphasis was placed on interest rates so as to assure that it was a bona fide credit relationship.

"These precedents are now proposed as setting a new pattern by which government 'aid' can be given to sectarian institutions. In topsy-turvy fashion the nation is making new church-state policy without an adequate sense of direction or pattern.

"A farm worker was asked to build a straight fence across an open field. In setting each post he took his direction by looking from behind the last post,

and thus he fenced some gracious curves all over the field.

"The time has come to regain our national and denominational perspectives. Emergencies are here to stay so we must live with them on the basis of principles. It is this long-range view, gained by means of a hard, careful look, which is being requested by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs in addressing Baptist institutions of all kinds."

Churches And Political Campaigns

The report of the executive director to the BJCPA discussed some basic Baptist concepts in the area of political participation. Dr. Carlson said: "Church-state relations have had more discussion in view of the 1960 political campaign than in any recent election. Much of the discussion has been confused, some of it has been unfortunate. Baptists have probably been as much involved as anyone, perhaps more. There are several points that churches and Baptists in particular should be emphasizing, even though these basics do not yield easy answers at the voting booth.

(1) "Our Baptist heritage permits no confusion on the subject of religious tests for public office or for public employment. We, perhaps above all others, have led the way to that insight in England, in America, and elsewhere. Now there is danger that we may be hazy on this valid historic principle while our own premises are taken over and turned against us. Is not this the time for Baptists to take credit and advocate our own position?"

(2) "While standing candidly for the elimination of religious tests for public office, another emphasis should be made which clearly recognizes that religious thinking is not divorced from nor irrelevant to political thinking. Public policies do follow from genuine convictions as Baptists, as Quakers, as Mormons, as Catholics. Mere membership in a church, however, cannot be taken as *prima facie* evidence of the person's thinking. While climate has its effects, we must not be guilty of judging by association, or treating large groups as though there were no differences within that group. Here is an important basic insight which people need."

(3) "The survival of democracy during the next couple of decades may well hinge upon the degree of civic involvement on the part of the American people, not least of Protestants. The favorite political devices of oppression include a one party system, political involvement by a minority only, and the use of fear, suspicion, and mob psychology by the use of half-truths or unanalyzed clichés."

"If there is wholeness in the Christian life then political influence becomes part of one's witness. A worthy witness requires intellectual maturity, scope of information, knowledge of social skills and processes, and spiritual commitment and courage. Clericalism does not thrive in this kind of soil."

Candidates And Church-State Separation

Reaffirming faith in the principle that no religious tests should be required for public office or public trust, the BJCPA called on its people to as-

certain from all candidates their position on church-state relations.

Specifically, the BJCPA voted to urge the social action agencies of our Baptist conventions, as well as the men's groups, women's groups, youth groups and any other Baptist organizations that have occasion to deal with these civic issues, to encourage the people to involve themselves in conversation and inquiry with all candidates for public office so as to obtain from these candidates for public office at all levels, state and national, a clarification of their position and views on the issues pertaining to the separation of church and state; and to seek to develop clarity on the issues involved.

Christians And Political Participation

The basic and minimum political participation on the part of all citizens is the exercise of the right to vote. Discussing this matter with the BJCPA Dr. Carlson said: "I am sure that none of us desire to put churches or ministers into politics, or to tell people how to vote, or to vote our religious prejudices. But it would be wonderful if our people would vote, and participate in the democratic processes which select candidates and formulate policies."

Carlson continued: "It would also be desirable if our people would keep their Christian motives intact when they go into these activities, and if they would inform themselves well enough to exercise independent judgments which rise above family or regional traditions. In these areas lies much of the positive defense of freedom. This is how we avoid or bring on the threats to freedom which are the customary starting points for our defense of religious liberty."

Following a report on the voting record of the nation in immediate past elections the BJCPA expressed its concern about the fact that such a small percentage of the national electorate are voting. The Committee voted to "commend the several Baptist agencies or boards whose responsibility it may be, for their activities along the lines of Christian citizenship, and that we urge enlarged efforts in this field."

(Note: A statistical tabulation of the voting record of the states in the 1956 and 1958 elections appears on the back page of this "Report." The source for the figures from which the percentages were computed is the "Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1959" published by the Bureau of the Census, Department of Commerce. A study of this report will reveal that the national voting average in 1956, a presidential election year, was only 60.7 per cent, and in 1958 it was even lower with only 43.8 per cent of the adult population 21 years of age and older participating in the elections. Population figures for Ga. and Ky. include those 18 years and older.)

United Nations And Religious Liberty

The world issues committee of the BJCPA took a look at the work of the United Nations in the field of religious liberty. Mr. Arcot Krishnaswami of India, in behalf of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, over a period of two years has assembled factual data from 86 countries and has proposed a code of rules to guide

March 1960

Page 3

governments in their efforts to eradicate discrimination of "thought, conscience and religion."

As the BJCPA looked at the proposed code it was encouraged by the interest of the United Nations in this field, but it also felt that the code needed continued study and refinement before it is officially approved. The action of the BJCPA is as follows:

"We express approval of the involvement of the United Nations in the problem of religious liberty and encourage further investigation, publicity and discussion. We recommend that the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs call the attention of interested denominational agencies, colleges and seminaries, requesting them to use the means at their disposal to encourage continued work in this area by the United Nations and toward such refinements in the statements as Baptist insights might call for."

The Proposed Code On Religious Liberty

The New York Times (January 9, 1960) summarized the sixteen proposed rules on religious liberty by the United Nations as follows:

1. "Everyone should be free to adhere, or not to adhere, to a religion or belief, in accordance with the dictates of his conscience. Parents should have a prior right to decide upon their child's religion. In the case of children torn from their families, the decision should be made in accordance with the interests of the child, due attention being paid to the expressed or presumed wish of the parents.

2. "Everyone should be free to comply with practices prescribed or authorized by his religion or belief, and free from performing acts incompatible with his religion or belief.

3. "There should be freedom of worship, either alone or in community with others, in public or private. Equal protection should be accorded to all forms, places and objects of worship.

4. "Freedom of pilgrims to journey to sacred places as acts of devotion, whether inside or outside their country, should be assured.

5. "Persons should not be prevented from acquiring or producing articles of ritual. Where the government controls the means of production and distribution, it should make them available.

6. "The observance of the religion or belief of a deceased person should be followed in the disposal of the dead, the display of religious symbols and the performance of funeral or commemorative services. All should be protected from desecration.

7. "The observance of each religion or belief relating to holidays and days of rest should be taken into account, subject to the overriding consideration of the interests of society as a whole.

8. "No one should be prevented from observing the dietary practices prescribed by his religion. Where the government controls the means of production, objects necessary for such observances should be made available.

9. "No one should be prevented from marrying in accordance with his religion or be compelled to undergo a ceremony not in conformity with his religion. The right to a divorce should not be denied to anyone whose convictions admit divorce, solely on the ground that he professes a particular religion or belief.

10. "There should be freedom to disseminate a religion or belief, provided it does not impair the rights of other religions or beliefs.

11. "No group should be prevented from training the personnel required for the performance of practices prescribed by their religion. When such training is available only outside the country, no permanent limitations should be placed upon travel.

12. "No one should be compelled to take an oath contrary to the prescriptions of his religion or belief.

13. "Where the principle of conscientious objection to military service is recognized, exemptions should be granted to genuine objectors in a manner insuring that no adverse distinction based on religion or belief may result.

14. "Where exemptions from participation in public ceremonies are granted on religious grounds, such exemptions should be granted in such a manner that no adverse distinction based upon religion or belief may result.

15. "No cleric who receives information in confidence, in accordance with his religion, should be compelled by public authorities to divulge such information.

16. "Public authorities should refrain from making any adverse distinction against or giving undue preference to individuals or groups with regard to the right of freedom of thought, conscience and religion; and should prevent individuals from making such distinctions or giving such preferences. These duties should be backed up with legal provisions and penal sanctions. The public should be educated to accept the principle of non-discrimination. Freedom to maintain or change religion must be insured and freedom to manifest that belief must be insured as widely as possible. In case of conflict between the requirements of two or more religions, a solution should be found offering the greatest measure of freedom to society as a whole. No adverse distinctions or preferences should be made to religions in the granting of subsidies or exemptions from taxation."

While the BJCPA was highly pleased with the progress of the UN study, the summary reports point to the need of continued work. For instance, the language of Rule 1 could give the parents the prior right to choose religious training, not the religion, of the child. Under Rule 2, the necessary limits to freedom of religious behavior need scrutiny lest these be used to make the rule meaningless. Under Rule 3, freedom and protection of places of worship may not involve freedom to publicize. For Baptists the means of instruction and edification, e.g., Bibles, are more important than articles of ritual (Rule 5). These points merely illustrate the careful study which this project merits.

STATISTICAL REPORT ON THE VOTING RECORD OF THE STATES IN THE 1956 AND 1958 ELECTIONS

| State | Civilian Pop. | | | Civilian Pop. | | |
|----------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| | 21 & over-1956 (in thousands) | Votes Cast 1956 (in thousands) | Percentage Voting 1956 | 21 & over-1958 (in thousands) | Votes Cast 1958 (in thousands) | Percentage Voting 1958 |
| Ala. | 1742 | 971 | 56.5 | 1800 | 237 | 13.2 |
| Ariz. | 583 | 290 | 49.7 | 607 | 278 | 45.8 |
| Ark. | 1019 | 407 | 39.9 | 1021 | 60 | 5.9 |
| Calif. | 8412 | 5466 | 65.0 | 8716 | 4954 | 56.8 |
| Colo. | 953 | 663 | 69.6 | 997 | 933 | 59.5 |
| Conn. | 1458 | 1117 | 76.6 | 1464 | 968 | 66.1 |
| Del. | 249 | 178 | 71.5 | 271 | 153 | 56.5 |
| Fla. | 2327 | 1124 | 48.3 | 2725 | 1494 | 51.1 |
| Ga. | 2202 | 669 | 30.4 | 2242 | 159 | 7.1 |
| Idaho | 353 | 273 | 77.3 | 376 | 239 | 63.6 |
| Ill. | 6082 | 4407 | 72.2 | 6238 | 3230 | 51.8 |
| Ind. | 2729 | 1975 | 72.4 | 2766 | 1721 | 62.2 |
| Iowa | 1666 | 1235 | 74.1 | 1730 | 830 | 48.0 |
| Kan. | 1280 | 866 | 67.7 | 1263 | 718 | 56.8 |
| Ky. | 1858 | 1054 | 56.7 | 1883 | 476 | 25.3 |
| La. | 1659 | 618 | 37.3 | 1707 | 182 | 10.7 |
| Maine | 545 | 352 | 64.6 | 567 | 275 | 48.5 |
| Md. | 1700 | 932 | 54.8 | 1741 | 712 | 40.9 |
| Mass. | 3118 | 2349 | 75.3 | 3099 | 1778 | 57.4 |
| Mich. | 4593 | 3080 | 67.1 | 4662 | 2254 | 48.3 |
| Minn. | 1977 | 1340 | 67.8 | 2018 | 1131 | 56.0 |
| Miss. | 1123 | 248 | 22.1 | 1181 | 61 | 5.2 |
| Mo. | 2717 | 1833 | 67.5 | 2670 | 1167 | 43.7 |
| Mont. | 375 | 271 | 72.3 | 399 | 228 | 57.1 |
| Neb. | 876 | 577 | 65.9 | 894 | 416 | 46.5 |
| Nev. | 150 | 97 | 64.7 | 154 | 82 | 53.2 |
| N. H. | 355 | 267 | 75.2 | 361 | 198 | 54.8 |
| N. J. | 3546 | 2484 | 70.1 | 3660 | 1906 | 52.1 |
| N. M. | 409 | 254 | 62.1 | 414 | 198 | 47.8 |
| N. Y. | 10832 | 7093 | 65.5 | 10984 | 5523 | 52.2 |
| N. C. | 2447 | 1166 | 47.7 | 2517 | 609 | 24.2 |
| N. D. | 379 | 254 | 67.3 | 373 | 197 | 52.8 |
| Ohio | 5704 | 3702 | 64.9 | 5693 | 3111 | 54.6 |
| Oklahoma | 1342 | 859 | 64.0 | 1382 | 530 | 38.4 |
| Ore. | 1075 | 736 | 68.5 | 1084 | 595 | 54.9 |
| Pa. | 7046 | 4577 | 65.0 | 7028 | 3961 | 56.4 |
| R. I. | 520 | 388 | 74.6 | 542 | 341 | 63.0 |
| S. C. | 1222 | 301 | 24.6 | 1257 | 77 | 6.1 |
| S. D. | 407 | 294 | 72.2 | 401 | 258 | 64.3 |
| Tenn. | 2042 | 939 | 46.0 | 2038 | 372 | 18.3 |
| Texas | 5235 | 1955 | 38.1 | 5298 | 769 | 14.5 |
| Utah | 439 | 334 | 76.1 | 458 | 286 | 62.4 |
| Vt. | 223 | 153 | 68.6 | 221 | 123 | 55.7 |
| Va. | 2043 | 698 | 34.2 | 2186 | 432 | 19.8 |
| Wash. | 1611 | 1151 | 71.4 | 1642 | 877 | 53.4 |
| W. Va. | 1147 | 831 | 72.4 | 1163 | 616 | 53.0 |
| Wis. | 2328 | 1551 | 66.6 | 2387 | 1181 | 49.5 |
| Wyo. | 180 | 124 | 68.9 | 183 | 112 | 61.2 |
| | 102179 | 62027 | 60.7 | 104062 | 45606 | 43.8 |

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