



# REPORT FROM THE CAPITAL

★ RELIGIOUS LIBERTY ★ BAPTIST PRINCIPLES  
★ PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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## AMERICAN BAPTIST CONVENTION REAFFIRMS BAPTIST POSITION ON RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

The American Baptist Convention, Rochester, N. Y., June 2-7, passed strong resolutions on religious liberty. One resolution commended the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, Washington, D. C., for its work in the field of religious liberty and separation of church and state. Commendation of the independent organization, Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State (POAU), was also expressed.

Three resolutions at the American Baptist Convention dealt with separation of church and state, national elections and religious liberty.

### Positions on Separation

"We reaffirm the Baptist stand for religious freedom and separation of church and state, granting unto all people the right to worship God according to the dictates of one's conscience and maintaining separate control of church and state.

"We express our belief in the principles of public school education and commend to our churches a new and continuing inquiry into the preservation and development of a strong system of public school education, and urge the study of, and action in opposition to, forces that may make this preservation difficult.

"We urge all Baptists to resist encroachment upon tax funds for the support of transportation of pupils, free text books, salaries of teachers, and purchase, building or repair of property of private and parochial schools or other institutions, being very careful not to let this, or any similar practice, infiltrate our own churches or institutions."

### Religious Liberty

"We reaffirm our commitment to freedom of religion. We are opposed to the establishment of any state religion where either church or state can use the other for its advantage. We believe that no religious group should influence a government to deny religious liberty to any minority group.

"As a nation dedicated to the preservation of freedom of worship and assembly, we view with apprehension any denial of the free exercise of con-

science. We would caution those nations in which a resurgence of nationalism may establish a state religion. We urge full religious liberty in any country where society and government may conspire to deny the individual his right to exercise freedom of conscience and to promote and practice his religion."

### National Elections

1. "Recognizing the crucial significance of a presidential election for our country, we call upon all of our people to engage in mature debate and lively public discussion of the important issues, to participate fully in primaries as well as general elections, and to make decisions less upon the basis of personalities, and more upon the public statements and voting records of the various candidates.

2. "As Baptists historically rooted in the belief of freedom of conscience, we affirm the right of individuals to aspire to all public offices, regardless of their race, creed, color or sex.

3. "Believing further that a man's religious belief influences his views on public affairs, we insist that it is not only our right, but our duty to determine how various candidates stand on all issues of American life."

### ANALYSIS OF SENATE VOTE ON MORSE AMENDMENT

When the Senate voted on the Morse amendment to provide loans for parochial schools, every Roman Catholic Senator except John F. Kennedy (D., Mass.) favored the proposal. In the 25 states with the highest percentage of Roman Catholic voters 29 voted "Yes," 3 paired in favor, 15 voted "No," and 2 paired against. From the other states only 8 voted "Yes," 2 paired in favor, 34 voted "No," 2 paired against and 1 announced against.

Although the religious affiliation of a Senator or of his constituents is not the only factor in how he voted, we observe: (1) Roman Catholic Senators vote almost unanimously the sentiment of their church in favor of public aid to sectarian schools; (2) Non-Catholic Senators in states with a large percentage of Roman Catholic constituents tend to vote in favor of federal aid to parochial schools; (3) Many Senators with a large non-Catholic constituency tend to vote against federal aid to parochial schools.

BAPTIST WORLD CONGRESS ISSUES MANIFESTO AND STUDY DOCUMENT ON RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

Following the guidance of the Religious Liberty Commission of the Baptist World Alliance, the 10th Baptist World Congress, meeting in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, June 30 to July 3, approved two significant documents relating to the Baptist witness on religious liberty in the world. The Manifesto is an

official statement of position by the Congress, and the study document is recommended to the Baptist churches throughout the world for careful study. We present both of these documents for the consideration of the readers of the Report From The Capital.

THE MEANING OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY, A STUDY DOCUMENT FOR THE CHURCHES

The fellowship of Christians coming from many lands, and speaking various languages, deepens our sense of the greatness of God's mercy toward us. In gratitude for all that He has done we renew our covenant with Him who is the Lord of Lords and King of Kings.

We are glad that our fellowship is that of voluntary believers, for true Christian faith, hope, and love cannot be imposed upon men.

God created men in His own image that they might have fellowship with Him, and gave them dominion over lesser forms of creation. We are privileged to declare to the world that the grace of God's forgiving love is freely available in Christ through the simple act of personal faith. This faith permeates human life with the presence and the love of God in the person of Jesus Christ.

The Baptist Concern

Our Baptist commitment to religious liberty arises out of God's revelation of Himself and of His way of dealing with men. It comes also out of our understanding of the nature of man and his role in the universe, of true religion as personal and voluntary, and of the Christian church as a fellowship of believers.

Some hold that religious liberty is merely a practical adjustment of religious differences. This conception is inadequate. So also is the type of tolerance which is based on a skeptical view of all religions or which regards them as of less importance than other values in society.

Man's relationship to God is God-given. It is not subject to human legislation or administration. It lies beyond the scope of state authority.

Whenever religious beliefs and practices are prescribed by law or otherwise imposed, men are called upon to conform regardless of personal conviction. Submission to such a demand undermines both true religion and true character. Furthermore, wherever a state places obstacles in the way of religious faith and practice it hinders the development and expression of human personality.

Religious liberty is anchored in fundamental human rights which nations are not free to transgress without incurring great loss to themselves and to their people. Accordingly, nations which wish to be in harmony with the divine will of our sovereign God must safeguard these rights by means of their instruments of government and their judicial codes and procedures.

The Contemporary Challenge to Religious Liberty

These fundamental spiritual insights must be applied anew by every generation as the institutions of social and political life continually change. With the development of mass media for communication, the opportunities for centralized control of knowledge and propaganda have increased. New international tensions have placed new strains on the bonds of fellowship of those who claim Christ as Lord.

Nationalism sometimes brings prejudice against religions regarded as foreign. Materialistic philosophies and their ideologies attempt to claim the highest loyalties and thereby to make themselves substitutes for religion. As the functions of modern states are extended in a welfare direction the tendencies to underwrite and to control church activities also increase. All such developments call for alertness on the part of churches and their leaders, lest the churches come to rely upon the support of the state and gradually become subject to its control.

The modern world, therefore, presents a new challenge to Christians everywhere to hold high their banner, "Loyalty to Christ." In the exercise of this loyalty Christ's place must not be preempted by social, political, or religious institutions. For the furtherance of true freedom under God, we urge that prayerful study be given to the meaning of the free conscience and to the importance of free churches.

Personal Freedom

The Christian conscience is enlightened and guided by awareness of dependence upon a creative and loving God, by response to redemption in Christ, and by the constant ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Bible is our recognized guide for faith and life.

Christian revelation confronts us with a God who does not coerce people to respond to His love. Christ consistently rejected all forms of force in His ministry to the spiritual needs of people. We desire to emulate our Lord in the refusal to use such coercion, giving ourselves zealously to the Christian life and witness in full reliance upon the Holy Spirit.

We uphold the freedom of all to worship or not to worship; to determine their own beliefs, joining a church of their own choice; and to change such allegiance without hindrance. Parents and guardians of children must be free to nurture their faith and to choose spiritual instruction for them. People should be free to express their faith and their convictions, associating themselves with others for corporate re-

religious objectives, with freedom of movement and travel, with freedom to use their own homes for religious purposes, with due regard for public order, and with freedom to construct buildings for worship and teaching. Support of religious activities and institutions should be by voluntary stewardship, whether time, energy, or money is involved. People should be permitted freedom to make judgments on moral and public issues, having free access to pertinent information.

#### The Freedom of Churches

No Christian person can live adequately in spiritual isolation. The Christian life has always called for a community experience with fellow believers. Just as individuals must be free in matters of religion, so also must churches and other spiritual fellowships.

This means that such corporate bodies must have freedom to plan and order their public worship, to formulate their own doctrines, and to determine their own polity. They must be free to set standards and qualifications for membership and for leadership, and to plan and provide the religious instruction judged necessary. They should have the maximum freedom to express their corporate witness in acts of charity and service, in missionary outreach, and in the use of publication and other mass media, all at their own expense. They should be independent in their formulation of moral positions, as should all other groups and peoples, and they should be able freely to express the meaning of their insights for the various institutions of society.

Since the character of churches is different from that of governments, they should be separately organized. While sharing the time of the people, the terrain of the community, the interests of the participants, and the events which make up history, each should respect the sphere of the other. This calls for a difference of methods and for separation of the administrations, sources of revenue, and programs. Churches and church-sponsored institutions should care for their own expenses and should not look to the state for subsidies.

#### The Welfare of the Nations

It is becoming increasingly clear that no nation can rightly claim to be Christian merely on the basis of a Christian tradition and culture. The presence of real Christianity depends upon the active, personal faith of the people. We regret, however, that some nations still continue to declare some particular religion or philosophy as part of their public policy.

Our Baptist concern for the nations continues to express itself in evangelism, missions, and education. We claim religious freedom for ourselves, and we gladly use our influence to win it for others. Our deep desire is that all men may freely worship the true living God in spirit and in truth, recognizing that He has provided redemption for all men in Christ. Christian discipleship leads to sacrificial, dependable, and loyal citizenship.

Good government is essential for the welfare of people, and it has divine approval. Accordingly, to

the full extent permitted by the claims of Christ, we commend patriotic living to our fellow believers. It is in well ordered social life that the rights and freedoms of men can be protected so as to permit the fulfillment of divine purposes in their lives. We pledge our prayers for those in positions of national and international responsibility, for we believe that "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

#### MANIFESTO ON RELIGIOUS LIBERTY ADOPTED BY THE 11TH BAPTIST WORLD CONGRESS IN RIO

##### We believe:

1. That God created man in His own image and endowed him with freedom to respond to His redemptive love;
2. That man is responsible to God for his religious belief and practice;
3. That religious faith and participation must be voluntary in order to be real.

##### We rejoice:

1. That God gives grace to endure oppression and to use freedom;
2. That friends of religious liberty are found in all Christian communions;
3. That recent legislation in several countries is favorable to religious liberty.

##### We earnestly desire:

1. That all forms of discrimination against religious minorities shall cease;
2. That all religious bodies shall make an unequivocal commitment to full religious liberty for all people;
3. That all nations shall guarantee the right of all citizens to believe, to worship, to teach, to evangelize, to change their religious affiliation, and to serve their God as their consciences dictate.

##### We solemnly covenant:

1. To study and proclaim the freedom men have in Jesus Christ, the Lord;
2. To show Christian understanding and love towards those whose beliefs and practices are different from our own;
3. To pray and use our influence for the preservation and extension of religious liberty for all men.

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It is hoped that Baptist publishing houses everywhere will distribute the Manifesto to the churches. It is designed to encourage conviction on the Biblical basis of religious liberty and to stimulate application of its meaning for the churches and for their worldwide witness.

**BAPTIST GENERAL CONFERENCE SAYS CANDIDATE'S  
RELIGION IS AN IMPORTANT ELECTION ISSUE**

Delegates to the 81st annual meeting of the Baptist General Conference in Long Beach, Calif., June 25-29, adopted a resolution stressing that a political candidate's religion must be regarded as an important election issue, according to a Religious News Service report. The General Conference is one of the co-operating groups sponsoring the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

The resolution said religion is "only one characteristic among many...factors in a candidate's fitness for office." It emphasized, however, that "when a public official is committed to a temporal authority by the dogma and demands of his church, he cannot logically divorce himself from these demands."

"Thus, any implications secular and religious of a candidate's commitments are of vital importance to the electorate of any country and must take precedence in any election," it said.

"Gathering and publishing information about the religious beliefs, church affiliations, and church-state opinions of candidates for public office," the statement said, "is not an act of bigotry, but is of great importance in an election year."

Reaffirming the traditional Baptist stand for church-state separation, the resolution urged voters to "seek guidance of the Holy Spirit when making citizenship decisions."

**BAPTISTS IN MANITOBA, CANADA, ARE CONCERNED  
ABOUT STATE AID TO PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS**

Canadian Baptists in Manitoba Province are bestirring themselves over a proposal that State aid be given to private and parochial schools, according to an article on the editorial page of the Canadian Baptist. The Baptist Federation of Canada is one of the co-operating bodies working through the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, Washington, D. C.

Rev. G. P. Smith of Winnipeg, writing on the report of the MacFarlane Royal Commission on Education in Manitoba, affirmed Baptist support of efforts to improve public education. However, he said, "there is one aspect about the report which does give us

considerable concern and about which our position must be stated and our voice heard."

According to the proposal grants from government funds would be paid to private and parochial schools. The program would be administered by a Private Schools Grant Commission, composed of the Chancellor of the University of Manitoba, the chairman of the Public Utilities Board, a justice of the Supreme Court, one of whom should be a Roman Catholic and one a Protestant.

Some provinces in Canada maintain both public schools and "separate" schools. A separate school is one privately owned and operated but which receives support from public funds. This arrangement does not prevail in Manitoba, which has only public schools and private and parochial schools.

The Manitoba proposal was opposed by Smith on the grounds that it would disrupt the arrangement of a free church in a free state, that it would engender serious religious strife and that it would pose a "segregation" problem for the children of Manitoba.

The article said that "it is one of the fundamental duties of the state to provide an educational system for all its citizens." It also said that "it is the prerogative of the home and the churches to impart the full Christian heritage and it is the price we must pay for freedom."

Referring to many letters in the public press over the issue of public aid for parochial schools, Smith said that such an action would "create religious strife such as has not been experienced in Manitoba for at least 70 years." He pointed out that relations between Roman Catholics and Protestants in Manitoba are now in a very healthy condition.

Manitoba is composed of many races and religions, according to Smith, and if a separate school system were established there would develop serious problems of segregated groups using many languages.

The problem of governmental control of parochial schools was mentioned by Smith. "It is inconceivable that the Government could systematically make grants to private schools from public funds, without retaining control over the expenditure of the monies granted. To do otherwise would be a breach of trust."

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