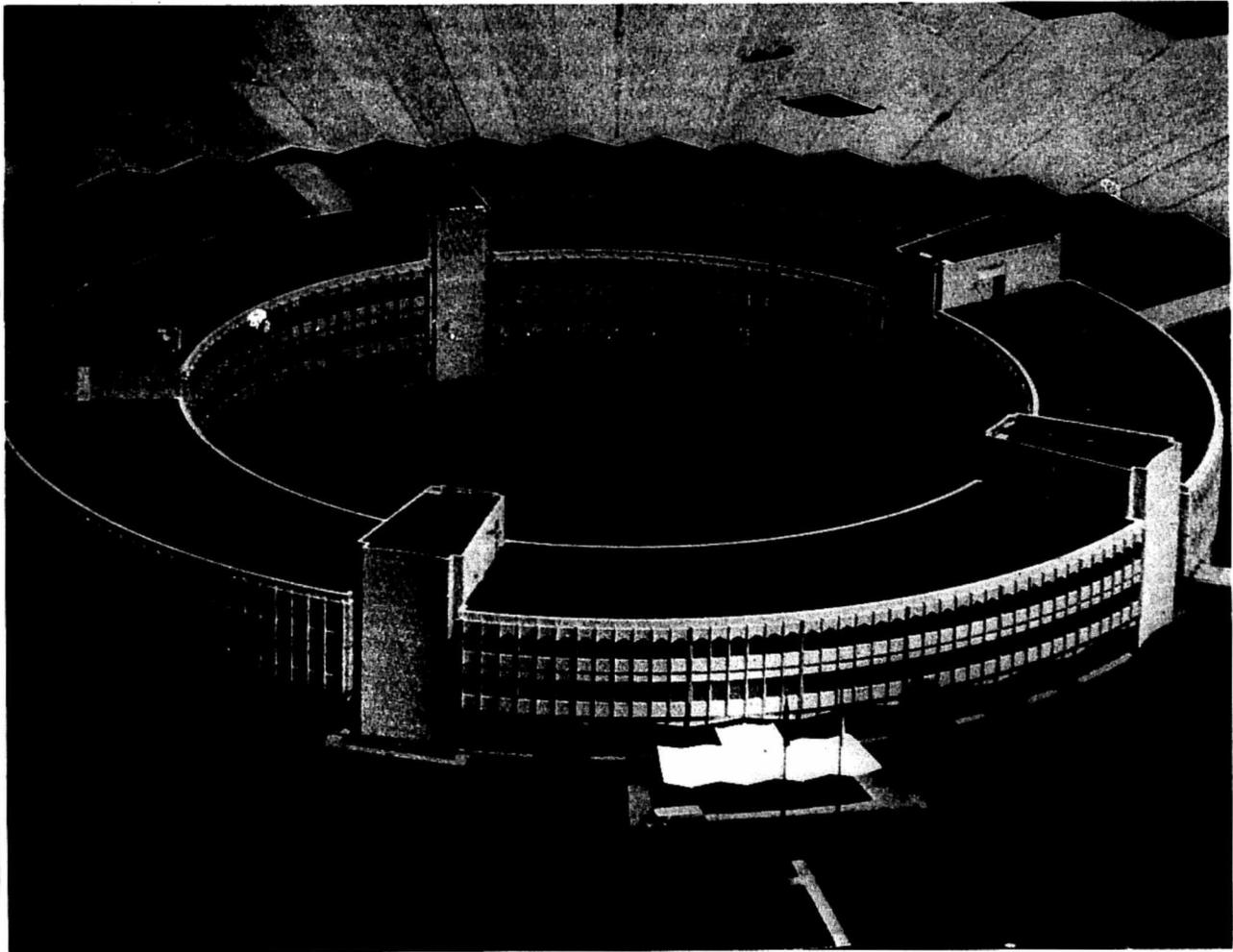


# Report from the Capital

DECEMBER  
1972

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## Religious Liberty and the Pluralistic Society

By James E. Wood, Jr.

In the United States, religious liberty through the separation of church and state rests not only upon the notion and historical reality of America as a secular state, guaranteed by the "no-establishment of religion," but also upon a pluralistic society in which "the free exercise of religion" is assured. As the separation of church and state is to be regarded as the guarantee of religious liberty, so the secular state is the legal basis of the pluralistic society.

The issue of religious liberty, which inevitably involves liberty of conscience and thereby all civil liberties, is crucial to the understanding and maintenance of American democracy as a free society. Indeed the correlative of religious liberty is nothing less than the right of dissent, for as the former Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes stated it, "When we lose the right to be different, we lose the right to be free." A pluralistic society is one in which minority and individual rights are constitutionally guaranteed, and the free exercise of religion—freedom of religion and freedom from religion—is assured. While the theological basis of the secular state is the sovereignty of God, the theological basis of the pluralistic society is the sacredness of persons. Indeed, the conception of man as a child of God is the basis of democracy. As Thomas Jefferson expressed it, "All men are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights."

These inalienable rights include freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of press, the right of assembly, and the right "for a redress of grievances." There is to-



Wood

day, and justifiably so, special concern for "equal justice under the law"—the extension of these rights to prohibit discrimination in all matters pertaining to public institutions, public housing, the political right of franchise, and economic and employment practices.

These constitutional guarantees have no real meaning apart from individual and minority rights, which can only be maintained in the free society. The totalitarian state allows and demands consent only, while the free and pluralistic society guarantees and requires the right of dissent as well as the voluntary consent of the governed. In this regard, it is necessary to realize that minority rights are necessary not only to sustain the principle of freedom, but also to maintain a democratic form of government. Without guaranteed civil liberties there could be actually no democratic rule, even of the majority. "The worth of a State," John Stuart Mill wrote, "... is the worth of the individuals composing it ... a State which dwarfs its men, in order that they may be more docile instruments in its hands even for beneficial purposes—will find that with small men no great things can really be accomplished."

As recognized by the courts, both state and federal, constitutional limitations exist for the protection of minorities, not majorities, who are generally regarded as able to protect themselves. Even democracy needs to be limited and this limitation of the sovereignty of the people is primarily maintained through the courts. Former Justice Felix Frankfurter expressed it this way: "Judicial review is a deliberate check upon democracy through an organ of government not subject to popular control." Liberty, whether civil or religious, is freedom from the tyranny or control of the state, the guaranteed right of dissent, and the freedom to obey one's conscience in so far as it does not infringe upon the rights of others or threaten the stability of the social order. In

religious matters, freedom of religious belief is absolute, although religious practice is subject to the basic laws of the state for the protection of the rights of others.

Religious liberty historically has been integrally related to majority and minority group relations. Toleration in religion has never come easy among the major faiths of mankind. Religious majorities have always found it difficult to grant full freedom to religious dissenters or minorities. Pluralism, though descriptive constitutionally and sociologically of American culture, is by no means an accepted fact among all religious groups in the United States. Inherent in the present tensions between church and state in the United States today is the avowed purpose and felt-need of many to commit this nation to the faith of the "majority" and the "founding fathers." Actually, there is no religious majority in this country, and no reasonably uniform religious faith of the founding fathers is discernible from history.

There are those, for example, who continue to assume, as in the controversy surrounding religion in the public schools, that the constitutional guarantees of religious freedom apply only to Christianity, and that disestablishment in the United States simply means non-preferential treatment of the various Christian denominations and sects. This is to misunderstand the nature of the free and pluralistic society, which requires a state to be uncommitted in matters of faith and religion, and at the same time is, in effect, a denial of the very principle of religious liberty. Generally behind such thinking is the presupposition that majority might should prevail over minority right—that a tyranny of the majority is historically and constitutionally justified. To suggest that in the question of religion in the public schools, as in all other church-state matters, school-sponsored religious exercises should be permitted because we are predominantly a religious people is to ignore both the nature of our free society as a secular state and the rights of those millions of Americans who do not share any commitment to a Judeo-Christian faith.

In recent years voices have been heard expressing the danger of the "tyranny of the minority" and the extreme danger of individual rights being carried too far. To be sure, there is such a danger in the free society, but the point is that a tyranny of the majority is no less in conflict with the free society than a tyranny of the minority.

**REPORT FROM THE CAPITAL**—a bulletin published 10 months during the year by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, 200 Maryland Ave., N. E., Washington, D. C. 20002. The purpose of this bulletin is to report findings on the interrelations between churches and governments in the United States. It affords church leaders a chance to understand developments, policies and trends affecting public policies and it affords public officials a chance to understand church structures, dynamics and positions. It is dedicated to religious liberty, to free and effective democracy and to equitable rights and opportunities for all.

The views of writers of material for *Report From The Capital* are not necessarily those of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs or its staff. The bulletin also provides for the sharing of views between leaders of the cooperating conventions and between leaders of various religions and traditions.

The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs is a denominational agency

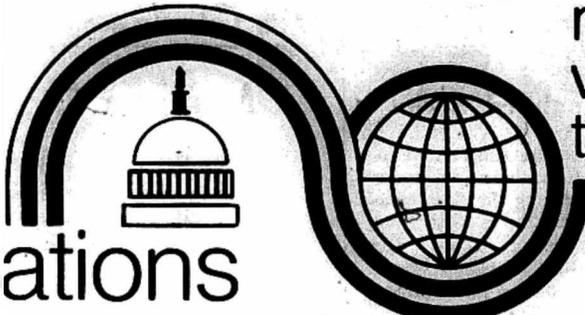
maintained by the American Baptist Convention, Baptist Federation of Canada, Baptist General Conference, National Baptist Convention, National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., North American Baptist General Conference, Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc., Seventh Day Baptist General Conference, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

Executive Staff of the Committee: James E. Wood, Jr., executive director; John W. Baker, associate director in charge of research services; and W. Barry Garrett, associate director in charge of information services and editor of *Report From The Capital*.

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# washington observations



news  
views  
trends

December 8, 1972

DECEMBER IN WASHINGTON is looked upon by many as a dull month, because Congress is not in session. However, December is one of those more significant months of the year. This year it is the period between the 92nd and 93rd Congresses. It is the period between the national election and the beginning of a new Administration. The Supreme Court is in session. The routine functions of the executive branch of government continue.

THIS DECEMBER the Nixon Administration is making many shifts in its power structure. On "The Hill" much "behind-the-scenes" activity is going on. The Democratic party is re-structuring itself. Republicans, likewise, are jockeying for position. Plans are being made for new Congressional committee assignments. Legislative aides are busy at work preparing new and revised bills to be introduced in the 93rd Congress. Lobbying groups are busy realigning their forces and trying to anticipate their courses of action during 1973.

A WASHINGTON OFFICE that is asleep in December will be left behind in January. Things don't just happen in Washington. Most developments are planned well in advance. Many can be easily anticipated if the proper contacts are maintained.

BAPTISTS CAN AND DO INFLUENCE public policy in the states as well as in the nation as a whole. The recent veto of the Pennsylvania anti-abortion bill by Gov. Milton J. Shapp is a good illustration. The bill would have allowed abortions in Pennsylvania only if a panel of three doctors agreed the operation was necessary to save the woman's life.

THE AMERICAN BAPTIST CONVENTION in Boston in 1968 passed a resolution saying that abortion should be performed "at the request of the individual (s) concerned" up to the 12th week of pregnancy. After the 12th week, the resolution cited three criteria for the termination of a pregnancy: (1) when there was a danger to the physical or mental health of the woman; (2) when there was documented evidence that the conceptus had a mental or physical defect; and (3) when there was documented evidence that the pregnancy was the result of rape, incest, or other felonious act.

THIS DENOMINATIONAL RESOLUTION was used by American Baptist Convention leaders and by Pennsylvania state Baptist leaders to reinforce their personal views as they petitioned Gov. Shapp to veto the abortion bill.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND illustrates some of the problems that arise when the church and the state become too closely aligned. For instance, the general synod of the Church of England plans to ask the British Parliament for freedom to control its own liturgy and worship. At present the Church has to ask Parliament for permission each time it wants to change its services or formulate its doctrine. The synod wants to make some changes in the liturgy, but in order to avoid conflict with the Parliament, it is stating in effect that whatever changes might be made at this time, the traditional 1662 Prayer Book will not be scrapped.

## Get Acquainted Series

This article on the American Baptist Convention concludes our series of articles introducing the denominations that sponsor the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. The American Baptist Convention is one of nine Baptist bodies in North America that cooperate in sponsoring a public affairs office in Washington, D. C.

The nine Baptist denominations sponsoring the Baptist Joint Committee are: American Baptist Convention, Baptist Federation of Canada, Baptist General Conference, National Baptist Convention, National Baptist Convention, Inc., North American Baptist General Conference, Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc., Seventh Day Baptist General Conference, and Southern Baptist Convention.

## Cover Picture

The American Baptist Convention building, located at Valley Forge, Pa., is a "Statement in Stone." It says, "Unity and Strength," according to Architect Vincent G. Kling. When it was occupied, the circular building brought together into one cohesive unit several different denominational boards located in seven buildings in two cities 93 miles apart. It was dedicated May 26, 1962.

General Secretary Edwin H. Tuller declared, "The purpose is not to build a monument but to send the gospel of Jesus Christ to the furthestmost parts of the world through missionary representatives and the printed word."

The Graphic Arts building fans out beside the circular structure and is architecturally designed to contribute to the world mission of the American Baptist churches. It houses the printing, binding, stock and distribution centers of the American Baptist Publication Society.

Strategically located at historic Valley Forge and alongside the Pennsylvania Turnpike the ABC building is a testimony to the dedication of American Baptists to total mission of the gospel of Christ.

# American Baptist Churches In The U.S.A.

By Robert C. Campbell

The constituency of the American Baptist Churches is 6,019 churches with a membership of 1,561,760, located in 45 different states, but concentrated mainly in the northern part of the United States.

In May, 1972 the Convention adopted a major reorganization in the interest of better representation and more effective mission. The new structure can be seen best in historical context. Early in the history of the Triennial Convention (the earliest common name for the American Baptist For-

eign Mission Society), the societal principle won out over the ecclesiastical principle in relation to the American Baptist World Mission, with the result that missions tended to become a function of the mission society rather than of the church. Strict autonomy was guaranteed for the national mission societies as well as for local churches, so a genuine denominational self-consciousness developed slowly. Yet fiscal necessity as well as administrative integrity required a growing measure of cooperation among national missionary organizations that appealed to the same body of churches for support.

Diligent efforts over a period of many years finally enabled the mission leaders to organize the Northern Baptist Convention in 1907, bringing together in a new cooperative relationship such organizations as the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, the oldest Baptist missionary and educational agencies serving in the United States at the national level. All of these organizations had functioned for generations before the Convention itself became the coordinating instrument for the many missionary and educational activities through which the American Baptist churches had expressed their witness in the world.

The denominational name was changed in 1950 to American Baptist Convention, making it consistent with the American Baptist titles of the national agencies that had been brought together in 1907 to function as the program arms of the Convention in achieving its objective "To give expression to the opinions of its constituency upon moral, religious, and denominational matters, and to promote denominational unity and efficiency in efforts for the evangelization of the world."

The Convention functioned as a highly decentralized coordinating body for many years, and it was not until 1950 that the office of the General Secretary was created. Then in 1956 the Convention organized a general staff under the direction of the General Secretary, expanded the administrative budget accordingly, and moved toward development of a unified program to parallel a unified budget. A further reorganization in 1961 saw the national program agencies developing a self-conscious stewardship of a total American Baptist responsibility in their particular areas of mission.

In 1972 the logic of an emerging denominational awareness resulted in a new form of organization which provides a viable means for participation of the American

(See, ABC CHURCHES, page 5)



*Robert C. Campbell is the General Secretary of the American Baptist Churches in the U. S. A. Succeeding Edwin H. Tuller who resigned in 1970 and Frank E. Johnston who retired in 1972, Campbell assumed his new position August 1, 1972.*

*Campbell came to his administrative position from the deanship of the American Baptist Seminary of the West (Covina, Calif). Prior to that he was associate professor of New Testament. Earlier he taught at Eastern Baptist Seminary and Eastern Baptist College, St. Davids, Pa.*

*As General Secretary of the ABC, Dr. Campbell is the principal administrative officer of the convention and of the General Board, under the direction of the General Board. He supervises the work of the staff employed by the convention and the General Board, and acts as coordinator of the various functions of the convention.*



Baldwin



Hensley



Jones



Keucher



Miller



Powell



Sharpe



Shrader



Torbett



Tucker

## Meet The American Baptist Public Affairs Committee Members

The ABC representatives to the Baptist Joint Committee are: Mart G. Baldwin, retired meteorologist, New Cumberland, Pa.; Francis W. Hensley, pastor, First Baptist Church, Vineyard Haven, Massachusetts; Mrs. Donald A. Jones, chairman of the Division of Christian Social Concern of the ABC, Cranston, R. I.; William F. Keucher, pastor, Covenant Baptist Church, Detroit, Mich.; Elizabeth J. Miller, Secretary, Division

of Social Action, Valley Forge, Pa.; Grady W. Powell, pastor, Gillfield Baptist Church, Petersburg, Va.; Roger H. Sharpe, pastor, Woodlawn Church, Flint, Mich.; Mrs. Wesley W. Shrader, New York, N. Y.; Robert G. Torbett, ABC Ecumenical Officer, Valley Forge, Pa.; and Homer J. Tucker, Public Mission Minister, ABC Churches of New Jersey, retired.

### ABC Churches . . .

(Continued from page 4)

Baptist people in the decision-making process through a representative government, assures a meaningful opportunity for the coordination of mission responsibilities through an effective administrative structure, and achieves an effective instrument for accountability of related boards and denominational staff. Each of the historic mission societies will function henceforth as a "Related Board" of the "American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.," the Convention's new name.

Through the Board of International Ministries the A.B.C. relates to overseas mission work emphasizing indigenous leadership and local responsibility in Burma, Bengal-Orissa-Bihar, Northeast India, South India, Thailand, Okinawa, Hong Kong, Japan, The Philippines, Malaysia-Singapore, Zaire, El Salvador, Haiti, Mexico, Nicaragua, Puerto

Rico, and several European areas. The Board maintains 58 seminaries, Bible Schools, Colleges, and nurses training schools, as well as 210 other educational institutions, 22 hospitals, and 46 dispensaries. On our overseas fields there are 7,048 churches with 889,966 members.

Through the Board of National Ministries the ABC performs a far-flung service in our own states and cities, and among American Indians and many other minority groups. Service projects include 30 Christian Centers in American cities, 13 homes for children, 54 retirement homes and communities, 12 hospitals and nursing homes in the United States, 2 hospitals in Central America, and the sponsorship and/or management of a nationwide complex of low- and moderate-income housing developments to provide decent living quarters, especially in blighted areas. It also has administrative responsibility for Christian social concerns.

The Board of Educational Ministries coordinates the work of 43 denominationally related schools, colleges, and theological seminaries, provides practical training for about 30,000 persons annually at the American Baptist Assembly, edits and publishes a wide range of curriculum material, produces program resources, provides leadership training, and assists the churches in many ways as they seek to fulfill their educational task. The Board also has administrative responsibility for men's work, women's work, and denominational communications.

Through the Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board God has blessed the ABC with one of the best of denominational pension funds for retired servants of Christ. It also maintains a national salary support program, supports career counselling centers, provides a comprehensive medical

(See, ABC CHURCHES, page 8)

## TAX REFORM SLOWDOWN

WASHINGTON—Both President Nixon and Representative Wilbur D. Mills (D., Ark.), chairman of the House Committee on Ways and Means, have indicated that tax reform will not be a priority item for Congress in 1973.

The President gave two reasons for the slowdown: first, the economy has improved and people are less concerned about reform than last year, and second, he has decided not to propose a tax increase next year.

Mills is reported to have said that the present laws do not need as much changing as many people had thought. This does not mean that there will not be a series of long hearings on taxes next year nor that there will not be some form of tax reform legislation. But it probably means that the drastic tax reform bill that was proposed during the latter part of the 92nd Congress will not be pushed.

This could be good news to the churches, many of whom were worried about the possible loss of certain tax privileges related to church contributions and church-owned property.

## PAROCHIAL AID DRIVE CONTINUES

ANNAPOLIS, Md.—There will be no lessening of efforts to gain some form of state aid to parochial school students in Maryland, even though voters in a state-wide referendum Nov. 7 defeated a proposal that would have given scholarship grants of from \$75 to \$200 each to nonpublic school pupils.

James E. Shaneman, executive director of the Maryland Catholic Conference, said that while the election results were "somewhat disappointing (the measure lost 462,229 to 523,516) there nevertheless does exist . . . a very strong sentiment among the electorate that nonpublic schools in the state deserve some sort of assistance."

Specifically, these types of aids will be sought in the 1973 Maryland legislature: transportation, textbooks, educational aids and shared time. (RNS)

## N.Y. APPEALS TO SUPREME COURT

WASHINGTON—Two New York State aid to nonpublic education programs, declared unconstitutional by a district federal court, were appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court here.

One program, endorsed by President Nixon's Panel on Nonpublic Education,

sought to reimburse low-income families with direct state payments for tuition paid in sending their children to nonpublic schools. The second program authorized state payments for repair and maintenance of nonpublic schools.

The programs for aiding low-income families and providing funds for maintenance and repair were enacted by the New York legislature last May and signed by Gov. Nelson Rockefeller. A third program which involved tax credits was not ruled unconstitutional by the lower court panel. (RNS)

## WARREN URGES CHURCH-STATE SEPARATION PRINCIPLES

NEW YORK—Former Chief Justice Earl Warren urged the Jewish Theological Seminary here to take an active role in organizing an inter-religious study on ethical problems.

Speaking at the seminary's 16th annual awards dinner, he said that such an investigation "might bring about mutual understanding among the religious traditions and between religious leaders, on the one hand, and statesmen, businessmen, and academicians on the other."

On church-state relations, Warren said his interpretation of the U. S. Constitution is that "church and state must forever be kept apart in our country." This, he said, was "wisely" put into the Constitution by its framers.

Given the principle of separation, the former Chief Justice declared: "The optimum state of affairs, then, is one in which the state tries to develop an atmosphere which encourages human virtue, thus helping to create good men, while men, inspired by their religious leaders, strive constantly to achieve more perfect political institutions. (RNS)

## DEATH FOR AIR HIJACKERS

NASHVILLE—Gov. Winfield Dunn will ask the Tennessee legislature to enact a mandatory death penalty law applicable to persons convicted of airplane hijacking in the state. The governor will also seek to have the death penalty statutes of Tennessee rewritten to conform with what he believes to be the correct interpretation of recent U. S. Supreme Court rulings.

Dunn's proposal would apply to persons who hijack an airplane which had taken off from a Tennessee airport, or one which lands in Tennessee with hostages aboard.

## RELIGION AND EDUCATION

CHICAGO—Teaching about religion in public schools is not only constitutionally permissible but educationally necessary, some 300 educators were told here at the first national convention of the National Council on Religion and Public Education.

Dr. Robert Michaelson, chairman of the department of religious studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, asserted that religion should be a part of public school curricula because it "is a universal phenomenon; in most cultures it is of massive, if not determinative, importance."

Once the importance and legality of teaching about religion are accepted, he said, "the problem is to find those (materials) which combine scientific or scholarly authenticity with classroom usability." Useful materials along these lines have been prepared by Florida State University for social studies, and at Penn State University for literature courses, Dr. Michaelson said.

The National Council on Religion and Public Education is an umbrella organization of 23 groups that was formed in December 1971 to promote "religion as a constitutionally acceptable and educationally appropriate part of a secular program of public education." (RNS)

## SCHOOLS AND RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

NEW YORK—A 16-page guide for community action on religious holiday observances in public schools has been issued here by the American Jewish Congress.

It is designed to provide a basis for evaluating whether a particular holiday observance in a public school is religious, and to suggest ways of protesting such observances. According to the pamphlet, there is "virtual unanimity in the organized Jewish community in opposition to these sectarian practices." It charges that "Christological" holiday celebrations "introduce tension and divisiveness into public schools and often harass and hurt children of minority faiths."

Although the guide gives major emphasis to Christmas celebrations in public schools, it also discusses problems connected with Easter observances, which it says "present an even more serious problem to the Jewish child." (RNS)

## CHURCH TAXATION IN VIRGINIA

RICHMOND—Religious and charitable organizations here have been exempted from paying a state-authorized service charge by unanimous vote of the Richmond City Council.

The exemption was approved after complaints from several organizations, primarily the Roman Catholic Diocese of Richmond, that the charge was excessive and unfairly applied.

# Report Of Fifteenth Religious Liberty Conference

By John W. Baker

The Fifteenth Religious Liberty Conference attracted more than 80 participants from eight Baptist conventions to Washington for three days last month. The Conference, sponsored by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, had as this year's theme "Religious Liberty and the Bill of Rights."

Laymen, pastors and church staff people, editors, students and student work directors, college and seminary faculty and staff, and state and denominational agency people made an in-depth examination of the Bill of Rights of the United States Constitution. Excluding only the "religion clauses" of the First Amendment, the conferees sought a better understanding of the religious community's stake in claiming and protecting basic rights for itself as well as for others.

James E. Wood, Jr., executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, opened the sessions with an analysis of the historical and theological bases of religious liberty as it has been institutionalized in the Bill of Rights.

Wood reminded the conferees that for centuries the churches did not take the lead in claiming or protecting the rights of men against state power and generally denounced the concepts of popular government. "Regrettably, in spite of certain eloquent and articulate nonclerical spokesmen within, the churches were not identified with causes affecting the advance of civil and religious liberties."

However, by the Eighteenth Century Protestants began to embrace democratic ideals and to support social reforms, Wood asserted. "The growing alliance of religion and freedom, though still far from complete, was accelerated by the emergence of pluralistic societies resulting from constitutional governments and the shifting of many large ethnic and religious communities." This pluralism demanded that basic rights be guaranteed and that religious liberty be protected. "The concept of full religious liberty, constitutionally or legally guaranteed, is clearly a distinct contribution of the United States."

Wood concluded his analysis of the history and theology of religious liberty with a declaration which set much of the tone for the Conference. "Surely there has never been greater need than today for the

churches to demonstrate their genuine commitment to human rights and their profound concern for human values within the social and political structures of our society. It is fervently hoped that Baptist commitment to the sanctity of human rights may come to be as descriptive of Baptists in our day as was our Baptist commitment to religious liberty in an earlier day."

The Honorable Fred Schwengel, Congressman from Iowa and a Baptist, spoke to a luncheon session on the subject of "Religious Liberty and the First Amendment." Schwengel put emphasis on the clause which guarantees the right of the people to petition government. This, he held, involves the right to speak to congressmen and administrative agencies, to present testimony before congressional committees and to file briefs with the courts.

Schwengel cited the growing congressional opposition to the war in Vietnam and the successful drive to defeat the proposed prayer amendment as examples of the effectiveness of church groups as they have exercised their right to petition. And yet, he charged, too often churches have remained silent on issues when they should have spoken loudly.

The congressman then challenged his audience to be more active in working together to bring Baptist concerns before governments at all levels.

The third address was given by Marvin Braiterman, counsel and co-director of the Union of Hebrew Congregations, Religious Action Center in Washington. Speaking on "Religious Liberty Beyond the First Amendment," Braiterman drew from his own Jewish training and from his secular legal background in his examination of the scope and nature of religious liberty in those parts of the Constitution which are too often not considered relevant to religious liberty. He contended that religious liberty has "... to be treated as part of the larger context of constitutional law, as part of the larger context of constitutional government, as part of the larger context of constitutional values."

Braiterman moved from a brief analysis of religious liberty and constitutional law as it is reflected in Supreme Court decisions, to a description of some of the elements of politics as they relate to constitutional government and religious liberty, to a broad review of those commitments and values of our constitutional system which relate to religious liberty or religious liberation.

While these major addresses served to set both the tone and the direction of the Conference, the conclusions which were arrived at by the Conference through a dialectical process constituted an intermingling and re-

finement of the ideas of all of the participants.

In some ways the process utilized for developing consensus among the conferees was more important than the ultimate conclusions at which they arrived.

The participants were divided into three sections with each assigned a different segment of the Bill of Rights for intensive study. Each section was subdivided into groups. The groups were so constituted that each was as near as possible a cross section of the representatives of the eight conventions. This helped to produce a lively dialogue in the group sessions which continued into the larger meetings when the groups met together as sections.

Ultimately the interaction between the groups led to a report which expressed the consensus of the section and reflected the dissent of the minority. These section reports were presented by the section leaders to a final plenary session of the Conference.

By agreement this final session was not a legislative session. However, the dialogue which had characterized the group and section meetings continued.

The findings of the Conference are advisory to the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and do not necessarily represent its views or those of any of the Baptist conventions. However, they will be given a crucial post-mortem review by the Committee at one of its regularly scheduled meetings.

Illustrative of the section conclusions—some of which were challenged in the plenary session—are the following:

"Freedom of speech is the human liberty to express personal opinions in public or in private, so long as such expression does not infringe upon the liberty of others. The role of the church is to protect freedom of speech for every person."

"We must not allow our churches and theology to be captured by the culture at the sacrifice of basic human right."

"We must encourage concerned followers of Christ to be willing to take risks and pay the costs of speaking out against injustice and in support of liberty."

"... an activist role on the part of churches and Christian leaders in support of procedural limitations upon government... is not only appropriate but a necessary obligation of Christian commitment."

"The churches should prod denominational bodies to speak and act concertedly against any abuse or erosion of rights guaranteed by the Bill of Rights. This would help serve as a protection of religious liberty."



Baker

# American Baptist Churches In The U.S.A.

(Continued from page 5)

plan and special death benefits, supports the Ministers Council, and serves in many ways for the better maintenance of the ministry.

The ABC is experiencing modest gains in the financial support of its missionary program. The Finance Committee reports that contributions for the American Baptist Mission Budget in 1971 were \$390,607 in excess of the record for any previous year. The current budget is \$16,288,000. Contributions to the Basic Mission Program, Institutional Support, specifics, and campaigns, supplemented by program income from investments, legacies, matured annuities, and other sources enable the ABC and its national missionary and educational agencies to devote approximately \$25,000,000 annually to the support of the denominational program.

With respect to attitudes and relationships, it should be said that the viewpoints held generally among American Baptists are maintained in common with those of other Baptist conventions and conferences. However, from the perspective of overall policy and program it should be said that the ABC differs substantially from some Baptist organizations with respect to such basic matters as ecumenical commitment, open communion, and race relations.

## Ecumenical Commitment

The ABC is marked by an ecumenical attitude and spirit. It not only cooperates with fellow Baptist groups in the Baptist World Alliance and the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, but it has held membership in the National Council of the Church of Christ in the USA and the World Council of Churches since the beginning of these organizations. For many years prior to the formation of the councils, the agencies of the ABC participated in such national interdenominational organizations as the International Council of Religious Education, the Foreign Missions Conference of North America, and the Home Missions Council of North America, because such ecumenical participation provided the denomination not only with many strategic opportunities for an effective Christian witness, but also with means of Christian service not otherwise available in an equally effective way.

\* The ABC sees part of its evangelical task as the obligation to bear witness to such historic principles as believer's baptism, a regenerate church membership, soul liberty, the priesthood of all believers, and the independence of the local church within a framework of cooperative Protestantism. The Christ who made us free, also made us one.

The ecumenical commitment of the ABC rests on the fact that the Baptist fellowship

is just one of the folds into which the Good Shepherd gathers his flock. We are not the whole flock. We hope to maintain an appropriate place in the Body of Christ in fellowship with those embraced in other folds as part of the gathered church. Wherever loyal souls are gathered out of a multitude of worldly allegiances into a single devotion to Jesus Christ, there is the Holy Catholic Church, as so properly expressed in the earliest Baptist confessions of faith.

Our American Baptist experience validates the conviction that within the free church tradition it is possible to achieve a great content of faith without official creedalism, independence of life and thought without denominational isolationism, church order without ecclesiastical authoritarianism, and reverence in worship without prescribed ritualism.

## Open Communion

For many years, open communion has been virtually universal among American Baptists. This rests upon the view that the communion table is the Lord's, not ours. He is the Divine Host. His disciples are the invited guests, and it is not the prerogative of one guest to say who the other guests will be. Since the Lord is the Host, the table must be open to all who respond in loving obedience to his call.

## Racial Brotherhood

While no denomination can claim to have achieved Christian standards of justice and brotherhood in relation to minority groups, it can nonetheless be said that the official stance of the ABC has placed it in the vanguard of the movement for equal rights and opportunities for minority groups in church membership, employment, housing, education, voting rights, and public accommodations. In spite of failures and shortcomings in these matters, the ABC has been on record for many years as regarding all forms of segregation based on race, color, or national origin as contrary to the gospel of Christ and as incompatible with the Christian doctrine of man and the nature of the church.

In these days of growing concern for the rights of women we should not close a description of the American Baptist Convention without recalling that Hele Barrett Montgomery was elected President of the Convention in 1921, the first of five women who have been honored with that office.

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## Former BJCPA Chairman Dies, Victim of Cancer

NEW YORK—Dr. Edward B. Willingham, (73), general secretary of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society from 1956 to 1965, died here November 16 at St. Luke's Hospital, a victim of cancer.

A staunch leader in the field of religious liberty, Willingham served seven years as chairman of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs in the nation's capital.

Willingham was a leader in both the Southern Baptist Convention and in the American Baptist Convention. His father, the late Dr. R. J. Willingham, was secretary of the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention for 20 years.

The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs joins the family of Dr. Willingham in grieving for the loss of this Christian statesman, whose life was dedicated to the mission of Christ and whose ministry encompassed a concern for the total Baptist and Christian fellowships.



Willingham

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