

Report from the Capital

OCTOBER
and
NOVEMBER
1973

A Statement of Concern

Believing that separation of church and state does not mean separation of religion from government or politics, nor should it imply the divorce of religion's basic moral and ethical principles from the conduct of public affairs, we voice our concern over some recent developments in public life and reaffirm our commitment to the fundamental principles of democracy.

At a time when there is widespread distrust of government resulting from the abuse of political power, we need to be reminded of the premises upon which our government was constituted. We are gratified that there is today a widespread reaction against this abuse. Indeed, we view this reaction as evidence of the intrinsic strength of our American tradition.

The times call for an affirmation of trust in the basic principles of the American system of democracy. These include: (1) government's powers are derived from the consent of the governed; (2) the harmful potential in any concentration of governmental power makes necessary the distribution of powers among those who make, execute, and interpret law; (3) government is to protect the rights and liberties, and to promote the well-being of all people; and (4) all public officials must be subject to law in both public and private conduct.

In affirming these principles, we express our faith in the ultimate triumph of the right and of the truth in a nation whose citizens are dedicated to justice and righteousness in every aspect of life. In this confidence, we urge our people to exemplify and to require character and integrity in both public and private life, and to discharge responsibly their duties as citizens. Moreover, we encourage our Christian young people to seek for themselves a vocation through which they may make their contribution to government and to society in general.

Approved by Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, October 3, 1973

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From the Desk of the Executive Director

Religion and the Public Schools

By James E. Wood, Jr.

In no area has there been greater misunderstanding and misapprehension in American public affairs than in religion and the public schools. There are those who think that the U.S. Supreme Court has removed religion from the public schools and denied religion any role in American public education. This way of thinking is itself evidence of the appalling ignorance and distortion that surrounds the subject of religion and the public schools.

Recognition of the role of religion in the human family, in both American and world history, is widely recognized as both constitutionally supportable and culturally inescapable. Though long overdue, this recognition is widely manifested today in American public education at all levels.



Wood

I

The role of religion in public education has clearly been recognized by the U.S. Supreme Court. While the Court has ruled out government-sponsored religious education, prayer, and Bible reading in the public schools, and has denied the constitutionality of teaching a particular dogma under the sponsorship of a school board, teacher, or other public official, it has explicitly and rightly disclaimed that it has ruled out the study of the Bible or religion from the public schools.

In fact, the Court has emphasized that teaching about religion is an integral part of secular education. Justice Robert Jackson wrote 25 years ago in the *McCullum* case: "Nearly everything in our culture worthy of transmitting, everything which gives meaning to life, is saturated with the religious influences derived from . . . a large part of the world's peoples."

Justice William O. Douglas wrote in his opinion on the *Zorach* case in 1952: "We are a religious people whose institutions presuppose a Supreme Being." Ten years ago, in *Schempp-Murray*, the Court, while outlawing school-sponsored Bible reading and prayer, categorically declared that the state "may not establish a 'religion of secularism' in the sense of affirmatively opposing or showing hostility to religion." Indeed, the Court continued, "It might well be said that one's education is not complete without a study of . . . religion. . . . Nothing we have said here indicates that such study of the Bible or of reli-

gion, when presented objectively as part of a secular program of education, may not be effected consistent with the First Amendment."

II

During the past few years, as never before, the role of religion in the public schools has received the attention of educators and churchmen as well as private and professional organizations. After World War II, a special committee of the American Council on Education published in its first report the following: "The problem is to find a way in public education to give due recognition to the place of religion in the culture and convictions of our people while at the same time safeguarding the separation of church and state." Failure to recognize the role of religion in public education, the Committee declared, is "sheer cultural madness."

The report of the Commission on Religion in the Public Schools of the American Association of School Administrators is of particular significance. In the final section of its report, "The Curriculum and Our Religious Heritage," the Commission ably expressed itself as follows: "The Commission believes that the public school curriculum must give suitable attention to the religious influences in man's development. A curriculum which ignored religion would itself have serious religious implications. It would seem to proclaim that religion has not been real in men's lives as health or politics or economics. By omission it would appear to deny that religion has been and is important in man's history—a denial of the obvious. In day-by-day practice, the topic can not be avoided. As an integral part of man's culture, it must be included. Whatever else the Supreme Court decisions may or may not have done, they have stimulated the public schools to a search for appropriate means to deal effectively with religion as one of the great influences in man's history. . . ."

III

The Baptist Joint Committee strongly supports the study of religion as both legitimate and integral to American public education. Through the years the Baptist Joint Committee has expressed its concern for the role of religion in the public schools. In 1966 the annual Religious Liberty Conference of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs had as its theme "The Role of the Christian Through Church and State in Education." The Baptist Joint Committee is a charter member of the National Council on Religion and Public Education, and the executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee serves on the Council's Board of Directors.

Organized in 1971, the National Council on Religion and (See, RELIGION AND SCHOOLS, page 8)

Report From The Capital

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October 19, 1973

BILLY JAMES HARGIS and his **Christian Echoes National Ministry** must now pay taxes if current court rulings are not challenged further. The U. S. Supreme Court refused to hear the Hargis case that was appealed from the Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver. The Appeals Court ruled that Christian Echoes violated Section 501(c) (3) of the U. S. Internal Revenue Code and therefore has its tax exemption status reversed.

THE COMPLICATED CASE arose when the Internal Revenue Service challenged in 1962 the exemption of Christian Echoes on the grounds that the ministry's radio programs and periodicals went beyond the limits of the tax code for exempt groups. District Judge Allen E. Barrow of Tulsa ruled that Christian Echoes was a church within the meaning of the law and entitled to tax exemption. IRS appealed both to the Circuit Court of Appeals and to the U. S. Supreme Court. The Supreme Court remanded the case to the Circuit Court since it was not a case on the constitutionality of the tax code.

IN DECEMBER 1972 the three-judge panel in Denver overturned Judge Barrow's ruling, declaring that the government does have a right to determine for tax purposes when a church's activities are political or religious and that Christian Echoes violated the IRS Code for exemption.

IN SEPTEMBER 1973 the U. S. Supreme Court refused without comment to hear Hargis' appeal from the three-judge Circuit Court of Appeals.

IRS CODE SEC. 501(c) (3) provides in part tax exemption for religious bodies "no substantial part of the activities of which is carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting, to influence legislation, and which does not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distributing of statements), any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office."

NOW THE FAT IS IN THE FIRE about the significance of these rulings in relation to tax exemption for churches, church agencies, ministers, etc. who attempt to influence public policy by legislation or by supporting or opposing candidates. Optimistic views of the Hargis decision are that IRS will not vigorously press its authority and that the Supreme Court will come out on the side of the churches in future cases.

HARGIS SAID: "This is a sad day for all religion. Freedom of speech and freedom to worship God according to the dictates of our conscience ended today." Dean Kelley of the National Council of Churches said the decision gave IRS a "blank check to harass religious groups with unpopular views." He further said the ruling means a church or religious group can "attempt to influence legislation or can be tax exempt, but not both."

IN THE MEANTIME, religious bodies continue to attempt to influence legislation and they continue to receive tax exemption. Future court cases may result in more precise definitions and in clarifying decisions. Also, the Congress may enact legislation relating to lobbying by religious groups.

Bishops Want Religious Education in Public Schools

By John W. Baker

In November 1971 Bishop Joseph L. Bernardin, then General Secretary of the United States Catholic Conference, wrote a letter to members of the United States House of Representatives expressing the opposition of American Catholic bishops to the Wylie Prayer Amendment (H.J. Res. 191) which was pending in the House. Bishop Bernardin's statement helped some Representatives decide to vote against the amendment and was an element in the ultimate defeat of H.J. Res. 191.



Baker

The Wylie amendment stated:

Nothing in this Constitution shall abridge the right of persons lawfully assembled, in any building which is supported in whole or in part through the expenditure of public funds, to participate in nondenominational prayer.

In a statement explaining the Bishops' opposition, Bishop Bernardin said that the proposed amendment "would accomplish nothing on behalf of the goals it purports to serve and would represent a threat to the existing legality of nondenominational prayer." He also said, "Passage of the amendment might lead many to think that something serious had been done about the problem of religious education of public school children. In fact, nothing of any moment would have been achieved."

The difficulty of the state authorizing and writing "nondenominational" prayers which would not be offensive to some Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Muslims, agnostics, atheists, etc., is obvious. But this was not the most crucial problem for the bishops. Nothing was done to insure religious instruction a niche in the educational process. Additionally, Catholic schools, hospitals, and many other public service activities which the church considers a part of its mission receive some public funds in their operation. The possibility that only nondenominational prayers could be said in these institutions and activities is repugnant to the purposes for which they were established.

Bishop Bernardin and the Conference of Bishops received criticisms from Catholics who did not understand why the bish-

ops had taken a position against the prayer amendment. They were unjustly accused of opposing prayer and betraying their responsibilities to the church. In response, Bishop Bernardin asked the general counsel of the United States Catholic Conference (USCC) to suggest wording of an amendment which would achieve the ends which the bishops desired: voluntary prayer in schools and the assertion of a right to religious education for all children.

The Administrative Committee of the USCC, which has the authority to act for all of the bishops in matters such as this, adopted a proposed amendment which, if approved by Congress and the states, would achieve their goals. The proposed amendment states:

Section 1. Nothing in this Constitution shall be construed to (i) forbid prayer in public places or in institutions of the several states, including schools; (ii) forbid religious instruction in public places or in institutions of the several States or of the United States, including schools, if such instruction is provided under private auspices whether or not religious.

Section 2. The right of the people to participate or not to participate in prayer or religious instruction shall never be infringed by the several States or the United States.

This proposal poses some serious problems for those concerned for religious liberty and the separation of church and state. Therefore, it deserves a closer look.

Nothing in this Constitution shall be construed to (i) forbid prayer in public places or in institutions of the several states, including schools. . . .

The bishops contend, as do the leaders of most religious and civil liberty groups, that the Supreme Court did not prohibit prayer in the public schools but that it did forbid state-written and state-sponsored prayer. It can be asserted that the first clause of Section 1 of the proposed amendment reaffirms the Supreme Court's position and that the wording does not authorize state participation in prayers.

If this is a correct interpretation of the clause, it becomes a superfluous restatement in statute form of ruling case law. The courts would be forced to hear substantial litigation to develop a satisfactory interpretation of the clause and, in so doing, might seriously alter the religion clauses of the First Amendment.

It must be noted that this clause avoids both the terms "voluntary" and "nondenominational" in reference to prayer. Could this wording be interpreted as permitting the state or its agents to provide for denominational prayers in the public schools? There is the possibility that only Section 1 would survive the amending process or that a case could arise which applied only to Section 1. In the absence of the word "voluntary," could a court hold that prayers could be made compulsory for all students? Reasonable and prudent men could easily apply such interpretations. The mischief inherent in this clause is very real.

Nothing in this Constitution shall be construed to . . . (ii) forbid religious instruction in public places or in institutions of the several States or of the United States, including schools, if such instruction is provided under private auspices whether or not religious.

The effect of this clause would be to reverse the Supreme Court's decision that the teaching of religion in public schools, as opposed to the teaching about religion, is unconstitutional. It would also reverse the Court's decision in *McCullum v. Board of Education*, 333 U.S. 203 (1948), that it is unconstitutional to release some elementary school children for religious instruction during school hours on school premises. Additionally the proposal would authorize a released time program for all public school students—not just elementary students.

Thus, through released time programs on school premises, public funds would be made available to underwrite sectarian religious instruction. This clause does not specifically exempt those who do not wish to participate in religious instruction and, therefore, could—if taken alone—permit schools to make religious indoctrination compulsory for all students.

This clause has two additional defects. The wording of the clause leaves as an open question whether or not public funds could be used to pay for instructors in religion who are "under private auspices."

A more serious flaw is evident. If sectarian religious instruction is to be given in all public schools, it can be logically argued that public funds may not constitutionally be denied to sectarian parochial schools for the same purposes.

The right of the people to participate or not to participate in prayer or religious (See, BISHOPS, p. 8)

Brethren Take Policy Positions on Issues

Readers of *Report From The Capital* may be interested in positions taken on public affairs or social concerns by a denomination other than Baptist. Ralph E. Smeltzer, Washington Representative and Social Justice Consultant for the Church of the Brethren, has shared some of the policy statements of his church, adopted in June 1973.

A summary of policy statements on six public affairs issues by the Church of the Brethren is as follows:

1. **Amnesty.** Based on the New Testament teaching of reconciliation the Church of the Brethren believes that the United States Government should grant unconditional amnesty to all those who are alienated from their nation because of their personal acts of conscience in relation to war. The church pledges to work toward "unconditional amnesty" and to help those persons who are alienated from their government, their families and their local communities because of their acts of conscience.

2. **Noncooperation.** The Church of the Brethren pledges its support to the draft-age member facing conscription who chooses open noncooperation with the system of conscription as a conscientious objector. The church insists that the noncooperation be open and nonviolent and with a willingness to accept the legal consequences of civil disobedience.

3. **Taxation for War.** The Church of the Brethren agrees that "all war is sin and that the gospel calls us to the way of peace." However, the payment of taxes to a government that engages in war presents a dilemma to the church. Although the Brethren cannot agree as to whether tax withholding is proper, they do encourage their members to use the means of dissent which the social order itself recognizes and provides.

4. **Welfare Reform.** The Brethren "recommend enactment of legislation which would provide a basic floor of economic support for all Americans (U.S. residents), be it by a guaranteed annual income, negative income tax, or family allotment, as may be found best after thorough study." They recommend a shift in governmental priorities in order to make possible such programs. They call for a "drastic revision of the welfare system" to eliminate the "punitive and degrading aspects of current welfare practices."

5. **Strip Mining.** The Church of the

Groups Ask Overseas Voting Rights

WASHINGTON—Baptists have joined a number of bipartisan groups in asking Congress to enact a law guaranteeing the right of U.S. citizens living overseas to vote in federal elections.

Some 750,000 Americans living overseas have effectively been prevented from voting because of the variety of state election laws. These citizens include missionaries, teachers, retirees, business men and women, news correspondents and a variety of others.

James E. Wood, Jr., executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, testified before the Senate Subcommittee on Privileges and Elections of which Sen. Claiborne Pell (D., R.I.) is chairman. He asked the Senate to act favorably on S. 2102, a bill to make it possible for overseas citizens to vote in federal elections.

Wood testified on behalf of six Baptist foreign mission boards that requested him to represent their viewpoint before the Senate Committee. These were foreign mission boards of the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A., Baptist General Conference, North American Baptist General Conference, Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc., Seventh Day Baptist General Conference, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

Sen. Charles M. Mathias, Jr. (R., Md.) explained to the subcommittee that the 750,000 citizens abroad were disenfranchised because of many state election

Brethren declares that "strip mining is a desecration of life: the people—the victims, the land—the waste." The church urges Congress to pass legislation: (1) banning both contour and area strip mining, and (2) placing responsibility for enforcing the reclamation of strip-mined lands with the Environmental Protection Agency, to assure just and uniform reclamation.

6. **Health Care.** The Brethren believe "that all persons should receive adequate health care as a basic human right, as a legal right, and as a reflection of the dignity of personhood." To that end they urge Congress to enact legislation that would assure every person, regardless of wealth, social status, or any other condition, access to the best available, comprehensive health care (including physical, dental and mental care) with emphasis placed on prevention as well as treatment and rehabilitation.

laws. Some of these states require a voter's actual presence or maintenance of a home in the state as a requirement for voting. Some raise a doubt of voting eligibility for nonresidents because their return date is uncertain. Some citizens are unsure that they will return to the state of their last residence. Many citizens abroad refrain from voting because of fear that they will then become subject to state income taxes in the state where they vote.

S. 2102 and H. R. 9023 would:

- Allow the otherwise qualified citizen to vote in the state in which he or she had last voted or registered to vote, or if the citizen had not voted or registered, in the last state in which he or she maintained a domicile before departure from the U.S.A.;

- Assure the American citizen overseas that exercising the right to register and vote absentee would not jeopardize tax exemptions from state income tax laws; and

- Recommend that a uniform application form, similar to the Federal Post Card Application, be used for application registration.

Wood stated that Baptist support of S. 2102 is motivated by commitment to three propositions: (1) the right of all citizens to vote in federal elections is a basic right of U.S. citizenship and integral to American democracy; (2) the right of suffrage should be compatible with basic American concepts of equity and justice as applied to all without discrimination between private citizens and those associated with government and military service; and (3) the right of a private citizen to movement and travel (as guaranteed by the 14th Amendment), including the maintenance of a permanent residence overseas for legitimate purposes, should not be the basis of a citizen's disenfranchisement.

In addition to the Baptist spokesman, the National Association of Evangelicals was represented by Floyd Robertson of the NAE office of Public Affairs. He took a similar position to that of the Baptists.

Other Senators testifying for the bill were Barry Goldwater (R., Ariz.) and William V. Roth, Jr. (R., Del.).

These were joined by William G. Whyte of the Chamber of Commerce of the U.S., Nathan Lewin, former deputy assistant Attorney General of the U.S., Sargent Shriver, former Ambassador to France, and other notable citizens groups.

Baptist Joint Committee Meets Semiannually

(Editor's note: The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs meets twice a year—in March and in October. At these times the officially elected or appointed representatives of the nine denominations sponsoring the agency meet in Washington, D.C. to discuss matters of common concern in various areas of public policy. The Committee is authorized to take positions in harmony with official denominational statements and resolutions. In no case does the Baptist Joint Committee pretend to speak for all Baptists, although it is authorized to represent its constituent bodies or their agencies when requested to do so or when denominational positions are relevant to the public policies under consideration. The following news accounts reflect some of the actions of the Baptist Joint Committee October 1-3.)

Baptists Make Bicentennial Plans

WASHINGTON—Baptists of the United States will jointly observe the nation's Bicentennial in 1976 by a national conference here, according to recommendations approved by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs in its semiannual meeting.

At the request of the North American Baptist Fellowship, the Baptist Joint Committee in its meeting last March accepted the responsibility for sponsoring an observance of the Bicentennial in which all Baptist groups would be invited to participate. James E. Wood, Jr. is the executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee.

An ad hoc committee was appointed by the staff of the Baptist Joint Committee for consultation to plan for the Baptist observance of the Bicentennial.

The three recommendations of the ad hoc committee that were approved by the Baptist Joint Committee are:

1. That a national conference be held in Washington, D.C., January 12-15, 1976 at the Shoreham Hotel;
2. That several regional conferences, possibly on seminary or college campuses, be planned for 1975 looking toward the national conference in 1976; and
3. That each of the Baptist fellowships in the nation be encouraged to engage in its own participation in the Bicentennial in accordance with its own denominational program planning.

Although the national conference in 1976 is sponsored by the Baptist Joint Committee, Wood pointed out that it will be broader in scope and in attendance than the regular religious liberty conferences of the past.

Two guidelines were proposed by Wood: (1) the Baptist observance of the nation's Bicentennial should be independent of the official civil observance, and (2) the Baptist observance should be both appreciative of the nation's history and critical (or prophetic) concerning the nation's life.

The ad hoc committee will continue to work with the staff of the Baptist Joint Committee in developing plans for the national conference and in promoting the regional conferences. In addition to Wood, other members of the Baptist Joint Committee staff are John W. Baker, associate director in charge of research services, and W. Barry Garrett, associate director in charge of information services.

Members of the ad hoc committee are: Frank Woyke, retired executive secretary of the North American Baptist General Conference, Lynn E. May, Jr., executive secretary of the Historical Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, C. C. Goen, professor of church history, Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, D.C., Lorraine Williams, chairman of the Department of History, Howard University, Washington,

D.C., representing the National Baptist Convention, Morgan Patterson, professor of church history, Southern Baptist Seminary, Louisville, Ky., Winthrop Hudson, from the American Baptist Churches, U.S.A., and professor of church history at Colgate-Rochester Divinity School in New York, and E. C. Smith, pastor of the Metropolitan Baptist Church, Washington, D.C., representing the Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.

Opposes Abortion Amendments

WASHINGTON—The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, in semiannual session October 1-3, voted opposition to proposed constitutional amendments that would prohibit abortion. The Committee made it clear, however, that it was taking no stand for or against abortion.

The action of the Baptist Joint Committee was aimed at proposed amendments now in Congress to guarantee that protection of the right to life granted "persons" by the Constitution would be extended to include "unborn offspring at every stage of their biological development. . . ."

In the Senate such an amendment has been introduced by Sens. James L. Buckley (R., N.Y.) and Mark O. Hatfield (R., Ore.). In the House of Representatives a similar proposal is being pushed by Rep. Lawrence J. Hogan (R., Md.). Some other members of Congress are listed as cosponsors of these two measures, or have introduced proposed constitutional amendments which would have the same intent.

The Baptist action was based solely on the principles of civil liberties and religious freedom, according to James E. Wood, Jr., executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee. The Committee has not taken a stand either for or against abortion, although some member bodies have resolutions concerning abortion rights. The discussion during the three-day meeting indicated that there is no consensus among Baptists on the question of abortion.

In voting opposition to the Buckley-Hatfield and similar amendments, the Baptist agency asked its Washington-based staff to "take all available action to oppose" such efforts to amend the Constitution.

Here is the wording of the Buckley-Hatfield amendment: (S. J. Res. 119)

"Section I. With respect to the right to life, the word 'person,' as used in this article and in the fifth and fourteenth articles of amendment to the Constitution of the United States, applies to all human beings, including their unborn offspring at every state of their biological development, irrespective of age, health, function, or condition of dependency.

"Sec. 2. This article shall not apply in an emergency when a

reasonable medical certainty exists that continuation of the pregnancy will cause the death of the mother."

Most of the proposed constitutional amendments would reverse the Supreme Court's decision of last January which said the state could not deny medical services relating to abortion to a woman during the first 12 weeks of her pregnancy. The High Court did not endorse or recommend abortion for anyone.

In 1971 the Southern Baptist Convention adopted a resolution calling "upon Southern Baptists to work for legislation that will allow the possibility of abortion under such conditions as rape, incest, clear evidence of severe fetal deformity, and carefully ascertained evidence of the likelihood of damage to the motional, mental, and physical health of the mother."

The American Baptist Convention, in 1967 and 1968, approved resolutions concerning abortion. The first one was similar to that approved by Southern Baptists in 1971. Later the American Baptist Convention enlarged its position to include the recognition "that abortion should be a matter of responsible personal decision." The resolution called for legislation that would include strict limitations on when and under what conditions a pregnancy could be terminated and the medical safeguards that should prevail for such procedures.

Civil Rights Get Baptist Attention

WASHINGTON—The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs in its semiannual meeting here (Oct. 1-3) gave major attention to religion in schools, civil rights for all people and proposed constitutional prayer amendments.

In an address on "Religion and Public Education," James E. Wood, Jr., executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee, declared that "the purely secular view of education, which ignores the role of religion in the life of man, is neither academically tenable nor historically defensible no matter what one's personal views toward religion may be."

Religion in Schools

He reviewed historic Supreme Court decisions related to religion in schools together with the development of the National Council on Religion and Public Education (NCRPE). The NCRPE is a coalition of organizations for including religion in public school curriculum in accordance with the Supreme Court guidelines.

Wood hailed the work of NCRPE, the American Association of School Administrators, programs developed by a number of universities, and efforts by religious organizations for the inclusion of religion in the curriculum of schools.

So optimistic was the Baptist leader toward these developments that he declared, "Clearly, we are on the threshold of a new day in American public education."

He continued, "Recognition of the rightful role of religion in public education, long overdue, is being increasingly recognized by educators and the citizenry alike. The academic study of religion presages for the future a new dimension in the educational experiences of American youth enrolled in the public schools and provides, at the same time, acknowledgment at long last that the study of religion is essential to the integrity of public education."

Prayer Amendments

At the same time that the Baptist Joint Committee was hearing these developments in educational circles, it stood firm in its opposition to proposed constitutional prayer amend-

ments that are being advocated by other groups in the U. S. Congress. The Committee has been adamant in its opposition to governmentally-written prayers and school board-sponsored religious devotions.

The position of the Baptist Joint Committee is that unless prayer and religious devotion are voluntary it is neither genuine prayer nor true devotion. For this reason the Committee has insisted that the religious life and indoctrination of school children be kept out of the hands of public agencies and retained by the homes and churches of the nation.

A number of proposed constitutional prayer amendments have been introduced both in the U. S. Senate and House of Representatives. Two days of hearings have been held by the Senate Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments on seven proposals before the Senate. Only advocates of these amendments have been heard thus far.

If and when the hearings are continued, the Baptist Joint Committee will be among the leading religious bodies in the nation to oppose these proposed prayer amendments.

The United States Catholic Conference, the action agency of the Catholic bishops, has announced that it intends not only to seek a constitutional prayer amendment but also an amendment that will overthrow all the Supreme Court decisions banning religious instruction and indoctrination in the public schools.

John W. Baker, associate director in charge of research services for the Baptist Joint Committee, is chairman of an ad hoc coalition of religious and civil liberties organizations in Washington to oppose all such proposed changes in the U. S. Constitution relating to religion.

Civil Rights for All

In the area of civil rights for all people, the Baptist Joint Committee instructed its staff to continue working with such groups as the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, whenever the concerns of the Leadership Conference and the concerns of the Baptist Joint Committee are the same.

The Leadership Conference on Civil Rights is a voluntary, nonpartisan association of more than 120 national civil rights, religious, labor, civic, professional and fraternal organizations seeking to advance civil rights for all Americans through government action. While some of the Baptist bodies that sponsor the Baptist Joint Committee are members of the Leadership Conference, others are not. The Baptist Joint Committee itself is not a member, although many times the interests of both bodies overlap.

In other actions by the Baptist Joint Committee it re-elected its officers for another year, paid tribute to its first executive director, J. M. Dawson, who died in July, and took steps to include young people as visitors in the next March meeting of the Committee.

The officers of the Baptist Joint Committee are: Alton L. Wheeler, general secretary of the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference, chairman; William F. Keucher, pastor of the Covenant Baptist Church, Detroit, Mich., first vice chairman; S. S. Hodges, executive secretary of the Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc., second vice chairman; Gerald L. Borchert, academic vice president of the North American Baptist Seminary, Sioux Falls, S. D., recording secretary; James E. Wood, Jr., treasurer; and Miss Ina Lintz of the Baptist Joint Committee staff, assistant treasurer and assistant recording secretary.

We Regret to Announce

Subscription Rate Increase in 1974

Report From the Capital has never raised its subscription rates, but inflation has finally overtaken us. Increased costs of paper, printing, postage and personnel have forced an increase in prices.

Our new rates are not yet high enough. However, in an effort to serve a maximum number of people we are trying to hold the rates at a minimum figure.

Subscribers wishing to take advantage of present rates must do so before the end of 1973. The new rates take effect January 1, 1974.

New Subscription Schedule

Individual subscription	\$2.50 each per year
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Bishops Want Religious Education . . .

(Continued from Page 4)

instruction shall never be infringed by the several States or the United States. (emphasis added)

On the surface this section does not alter anything. At present the First Amendment, which was made applicable to the states by the Fourteenth Amendment, forbids all governments to force participation or nonparticipation in religious instruction. The thrust of this section of the proposed amendment seems to be in an entirely different direction.

The right to participate in individual

voluntary prayer has never been questioned by the Supreme Court. However, this section elevates participation in religious instruction to the level of a constitutional right which cannot be infringed upon by any government. It would then be logical to argue that parochial schools, parents of children in parochial schools, or children who attend parochial schools have a constitutionally guaranteed right to public aid in their quest for religious instruction.

The net effect of this section would be to reverse the precedents which have been developed over the years prohibiting direct or indirect public aid to private and

parochial schools which include the teaching of religion in their curriculum or program.

This proposed amendment has many facets which run contrary to the principle of religious liberty and the separation of church and state. Therefore, it must be watched carefully and Baptists should be prepared to share their feelings about it with their representatives in Congress.

Religion and Schools

(Continued from page 2)

Public Education has stated that its purpose is "to provide a forum and means for cooperation among organizations and institutions concerned with those ways of studying religion which are educationally appropriate and constitutionally acceptable to a secular program of public education."

The functions of the National Council on Religion and Public Education are: (1) to create public and professional awareness and support for the objective study of religion in the public schools; (2) to establish liaison with other professional and lay educational, religious, and civic organizations; (3) to provide a forum for continuing dialogue on issues, programs, and projects which deal with the academic study of religion in public education; and (4) to serve as a referral center for information about resource persons, programs, projects, curriculum materials, teacher education opportunities, and legal decisions related to religion and public education.

Specific significance may be seen in the program planned for the annual meeting of the American Association of School Administrators, planned for December 10-12, 1973, in St. Louis, which will focus this year on "Religion: Education's 4th R." Meanwhile, the second annual meeting of the National Council on Religion and Public Education is scheduled to convene immediately after the AASA annual meeting, December 12-14, thereby affording an opportunity for members of these two organizations to attend both meetings if they choose to do so and to benefit from periods of sharing together in matters of common concern.

Clearly we are on the threshold of a new day in American public education. Recognition of the rightful role of religion in public education, long overdue, is growing among educators and the citizenry alike. This recognition is an acknowledgment that the purely secular view of education, which ignores the role of religion in the life of man, is neither academically tenable nor historically defensible no matter what one's personal views toward religion may be.