

OCT 22 1975

Report from the Capital

September
1975

Senate Panel Rejects Proposed Abortion Amendments

WASHINGTON (BPA)—Anti-abortion and so-called "pro-life" groups were handed a major setback in their campaign to push through Congress a constitutional amendment to overturn the Supreme Court's historic 1973 decision permitting legal abortions.

A U.S. Senate subcommittee voted here not to propose to the Judiciary Committee adoption of such an amendment. Had both the Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments and the full Judiciary Committee approved one of several proposed amendments, the full Senate would have been forced to vote on the measure.

The subcommittee's action comes after 18 months of public hearings during which 84 witnesses were heard and virtually kills

chances in the present Congress for passage of an abortion amendment.

Sen. Birch Bayh (D-Ind.), the panel's chairman, said that he feels it "highly unlikely" that the full Judiciary Committee, of which his subcommittee is a part, would vote to report to the full Senate such an amendment in defiance of the subcommittee action.

The panel's action is in harmony with positions taken by a number of Baptist groups, including the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A., the Southern Baptist Convention, and the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs here.

The American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. went on record at its annual meeting in Boston in 1968 as recognizing "that

abortion should be a matter of responsible personal decision."

The resolution stated further that legislation should be enacted to provide abortion services when the physical or mental health of the woman is endangered, when the fetus has been documented to have physical or mental defect, and when pregnancy results from rape, incest, "or other felonious acts."

The Southern Baptist Convention adopted a resolution at its 1971 meeting in St. Louis urging enactment of 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
(See, ABORTION, page 3)

Snake Handling, Poison Drinking Banned in Church Rites

NASHVILLE—The Tennessee Supreme Court, in a 5-to-0 decision, banned snake handling and the drinking of poison in religious services.

The case involved an injunction barring Pastor Liston Pack of the Holiness Church of God in Jesus Name in Carson Springs, Tenn., from snake handling and the drinking of poison—both of which are practiced as part of the religious services of the church.

In the ruling upholding the lower court injunction, Justice Joe Henry said the state "has the right to guard against the un-

necessary creation of widows and orphans."

Pack's mountain congregation first received public attention in April 1973 when two men drank strychnine as part of the church service and died after refusing medical assistance.

Temporary injunctions were issued by the lower court in Tennessee against both snake handling and the drinking of poison at the Holiness church. But the practice has apparently continued.

In November 1974 the Tennessee Supreme Court refused to uphold an order

banning snake handling, but directed a lower court to draft "safety restrictions" on the practice. Pack and a lay leader were arrested and charged with contempt of court in August 1974, but were released after paying fines.

Pack and lay leader Alfred Bail have maintained that they are not violating Tennessee's law against snake handling in churches because they only endanger themselves. They have vowed they will continue to handle the deadly serpents when they feel they are "anointed."
(RNS)

From the Desk of the Executive Director

Religion and the Body Politic

By James E. Wood, Jr.

Since 1930, and particularly since World War II, practically all the major religious denominations in the United States have established offices in the nation's capital. The forerunner of the National Catholic Welfare Conference established headquarters in Washington in 1917. Branch offices of other denominations followed. These offices were set up in Washington to deal with a variety of concerns: e.g., foreign policy and Christian missions overseas, immigration, religious persecutions and denials of religious liberty abroad, the military chaplaincy, conscientious objection, etc.

During these years the relations of the churches with the federal government have not been restricted to defending and protecting the interests of the churches, but have increasingly focused on matters affecting the general welfare of persons at home and abroad.



Wood

I

Efforts of religious denominations to influence the body politic are not a recent feature of American life. As a matter of fact, the church's involvement in American politics antedates the founding of the republic. It was religion, at least in part, which gave birth to America. "Religious considerations," the Charles A. Beard observed, "entered into the founding of every colony from New England to Georgia."

New England clergy not only took an active part in government, in large measure they were government. Clergymen played a prominent part in the American Revolution, particularly as chaplains and pamphleteers. They also used their pulpits to recruit men to bear arms in the cause of American independence. Clergymen dominated the Continental Congress. The clergy and the churches—even though only a small fraction of the population were church members—constituted an active pressure group during both the American Revolution and the formative years of the New Republic. In spite of a wave of sentiment among the states to bar clergymen from holding public office, particularly as members of the state legislatures, the federal Constitution specifically prescribed that "no religious test" should be applied for anyone seeking public office. Throughout the nineteenth century religion was frequently an active and powerful force in the body politic.

During the latter decades of the nineteenth century, renewed efforts were made to ensure church-state separation and the secular character of American government and public institutions. State governments gradually outlawed state support of church-sponsored educational and welfare institutions. By the end of the century virtually all state constitutions expressly denied the use of state funds to parochial schools and religious education from the public educational system. At the same time, interestingly enough, the churches tended toward greater involvement in

political affairs. Increased demands came from the churches for social reforms, supported by legislative action.

In the twentieth century, the political activities of organized religion have gradually become more inclusive, diffused, and sophisticated. Religious denominations have sought to exert their influence not only on behalf of personal morality, but also on behalf of matters affecting economic and social justice, human rights, and war and peace. Organized social action groups have become widely recognized departments of America's religious denominations.

II

It was against this background that Congress, in 1934, enacted legislation which denied tax exemption to religious and other charitable organizations which devoted a "substantial part" of their activities to "carrying on propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation." Subsequently, the IRS came to define "substantial" generally to mean expenditures of more than five per cent of an organization's total budget. Unfortunately, the IRS was left free to define "substantial" as it pleased and to vary the percentage formula as it saw fit from organization to organization. To compound the problem, there is evidence to suggest that the IRS has also been arbitrary in its selection of organizations which in its opinion should be denied tax exemption because of their political involvements.

The cumulative effect of this legislation and the practices of the IRS has been to pose a potential threat to all religious denominations which are involved in the body politic by the removal of the tax exemption and of the tax deductibility of contributions made to them. This tax policy gives considerable power to the government over the involvement of the churches in the body politic and permits the government to take punitive action against those religious organizations which promote causes in conflict with current government policy, domestic or foreign.

On the basis of the administration of this tax policy, the Christian Echoes National Ministry was denied tax exemption by the IRS, in spite of a ruling from the Tenth Circuit Court which found the organization to be a church and its activities to be solely for religious purposes. The U.S. Supreme Court refused to review the case. The decision of the IRS in this case, as in some others, has serious implications concerning the role of religion in the body politic. The force of present IRS policy is to say that either a denomination can accept tax exemption or it may choose to make a "substantial" (as defined by IRS) effort to influence public policy, but not both. Other religious bodies have been threatened by the IRS with the loss of their tax exemption pending a careful examination of their financial records.

A major effort to provide legislative definition to the word "substantial" in the Internal Revenue Code has been submitted by Congressman Barber B. Conable, Jr. in a bill, H.R. 8021. While religious denominations and organizations are excluded from the bill, its effect would doubtless be the continuation of present IRS policy with regard to the efforts of the churches to influence public policy.

III

The involvement of the religious denominations in the body politic to influence public policy raises many questions for which legislative remedy is yet to be found.

For example, are religious denominations which are directly and substantially involved in the body politic to be regarded as lobbies? With rare exception, namely the Friends Committee on National Legislation, denominational public affairs offices in

Washington have not registered as lobbies. They have not done so for a variety of reasons. One is that these offices carry on various public affairs programs which are educational in nature, such as programs in information services and denominational relations. These are not aimed at influencing legislation but informing constituencies in the area of public affairs. Furthermore, these offices are not by nature self-serving or motivated by the promotion of self-interests, as in the case of powerful lobbies of non-charitable institutions. The defense of human rights and social justice is simply not analogous to the opposition of the National Rifleman's Association to any legislation on gun control.

Does the state have the right to withhold tax exemption or severely restrict the public affairs activities of those religious bodies which are substantially involved in public affairs in speaking out on public issues and defending human values according to the insights of their own religious tradition? If the involvement of religious denominations in the body politic is regarded as integral to their faith and mission, is the role of religion in the body politic not integral to "the free exercise of religion," as guaranteed by the First Amendment? Legislative remedy must be found to protect and not prohibit the prophetic role of religion in public affairs.

ABORTION

(Continued from p. 1)

likelihood of damage to the emotional, mental, and physical health of the mother."

That position was reaffirmed in 1974 at the convention's annual meeting in Dallas.

The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, refusing to take a moral position for or against abortion as such, did instruct its staff in 1973 to oppose the Buckley proposed constitutional amendment on abortion as well as all similar proposals. The Committee felt that a controversial moral issue such as abortion should not be the subject of a constitutional amendment.

In addition, the Committee felt that civil and religious liberties would be restricted by such proposed amendments to the Constitution.

Hearings before the subcommittee focused on three proposals, two of them in-

roduced last year by Sen. James L. Buckley (Cons-R-N.Y.), the other by Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.). The panel voted 5-2 not to report any of the three to the full Judiciary Committee.

In addition, the panel rejected three separate attempts by Sen. William L. Scott (R-Va.) to report out his own "states' rights" amendment, which would have left policy decisions on abortion to each state legislature. A similar proposal by Sen. Quentin N. Burdick (D-N.D.), the so-called Noonan Amendment, was also turned aside.

Speaking to reporters after the subcommittee reached its decision, Bayh said that "this has been a very difficult period of a year and a half for me." He then said that he had voted against all proposals before the panel to report out an amendment.

He reiterated an often-made statement that his panel had been fair to both sides on the abortion issue. "I defy anybody," he

said, "to say the effort to be even-handed was not made."

Bayh also said that he had "sympathy" for the anti-abortion forces and that "I share their view that we're talking about life." Nevertheless, he said that "to suggest that everybody ought to concur" with that view runs contrary to democratic principles.

Asked whether his position might damage his presidential aspirations, the Indiana senator said, "It's a free country. I've been as fair to those folks as I know how."

Bayh also announced that he is introducing a package of legislation designed to provide what he called an "alternative to abortion." Among his proposals is one which would seek to encourage expectant women wishing to terminate their pregnancies to consider instead having their children and then putting them up for adoption. "A prospective mother," he said, "should be given more than one choice."

House Bill Divides Food, Military Aid

WASHINGTON (BPA)—The House of Representatives passed and sent to the Senate a bill authorizing \$2.9 billion over the next two years for food assistance, agricultural development, population planning, and disaster relief to the world's poorest nations.

In passing the measure, the House for the first time separated humanitarian aspects of foreign aid from military assistance. In the past, foreign aid bills have included both forms of aid, including provisions that most food assistance go to nations where the United States has strong military interests.

The bill, called the International Development and Food Assistance Act of 1975, states that at least 70 percent of U.S. food aid must go to nations "most seriously affected" by food shortages and that

not more than 30 percent may be used for political purposes abroad.

In addition, the food aid section of the measure sets for the first time a minimum distribution of 1.5 million tons of grain annually through the Food for Peace program.

Passed by a vote of 244-155, the measure authorizes nations owing money to the U.S. for past food aid to use those funds for a variety of agricultural and rural development programs. \$200 million in development funds are earmarked specifically for the \$1.25 billion International Agricultural Development Fund proposed at last year's World Food Conference in Rome.

The population planning provision of the bill calls for spending \$5.3 million over the next two years, while \$50 million is targeted for disaster relief.

One important amendment to the bill, designed to forbid aid to countries which engage in a consistent pattern of serious

violations of human rights, was passed during floor debate.

The amendment, proposed by Rep. Thomas R. Harkin (D-Iowa) and passed by a 238-164 margin, does allow the President discretion to send aid to such nations if the funds go directly to needy people instead of being administered through repressive governments.

RELEASED TIME UPHELD

RICHMOND—A federal appeals court has upheld the constitutionality of a "released time" program in Harrisonburg, Va., under which public school students are permitted to attend private religious education classes during school hours. Under the Harrisonburg program, pupils at three elementary schools are allowed to leave each day for religious instruction conducted by the Rockingham Council of Week-Day Religious Education (WRE). (RNS)

RESOLUTION ON RELIGIOUS LIBERTY, HUMAN RIGHTS, WORLD PEACE, AND PUBLIC MORALITY

*Adopted by the 13th Baptist World Congress,
Stockholm, Sweden, July 12, 1975*

Whereas, in the providence of God, religion and life are joined together, and

Whereas, the Bible teaches that God is concerned and leads His people to be concerned about both individuals and society, and

Whereas, during the past five years the BWA has assigned to the Commission on Religious Liberty and Human Rights special responsibilities for study in the areas of religious liberty, human rights, world peace, and public morality, and

Whereas, much time and energy have been devoted to securing and preparing reports, studies, and appraisals of these four subjects which have been dealt with annually by representatives from Baptist bodies from around the world.

Therefore, be it resolved that the following statements of Christian principle be adopted as Christian concerns of the Thirteenth Congress of the Baptist World Alliance:

Religious Liberty

With gratitude for our Baptist heritage of religious liberty and for growing support of it among religious and political leaders of the world, yet mindful of dangers posed by both hostile and friendly governments and by trends within religious communities, including our own, we reaffirm our belief in full religious liberty for all persons.

This freedom includes the following:

- a. Freedom to profess openly and confess one's faith, including baptism, even when this involves a change of religious identity.
- b. Freedom to proclaim one's religious beliefs and experiences.
- c. Freedom to engage in private and corporate worship.
- d. Freedom to teach one's religious beliefs and freedom of parents to provide religious instruction and nurture for their children.
- e. Freedom to advocate greater social justice and social change in the civil order.
- f. Freedom of religious groups to conduct their own affairs without outside control or interference and to have property to use for their needs.

We Baptists of many nations, assembled in Stockholm for the Thirteenth Baptist World Congress, solemnly recommit ourselves:

1. To pray, advocate, and work for effectual religious freedom for all human beings, knowing that many of our brothers and sisters have lost their freedoms and in some cases their lives while resisting government restrictions.

2. To call upon leaders of religious bodies and leaders of national governments to accept, implement, and defend full religious liberty for all persons.

3. To advocate freedom to publish and distribute materials pertaining to one's religious beliefs.

4. To refrain from seeking or accepting from civil governments for religious purposes privileges that would infringe upon the full religious liberty of all citizens.

5. To seek to bring our churches more fully under the sole lordship of Jesus Christ, so that we may truly "obey God rather than men."

Human Rights

We believe that God has made humankind in His own image and that He endows us with certain human rights which Christians are obligated to affirm, defend, and extend:

1. The right to the necessities of life includes the rights of all persons to have access to life, liberty, food, clothing, shelter, health, education, the right to work, and the pursuit of happiness including a quality of life that allows for adequate development of human potentialities. Especially in view of the current crisis related to world hunger, we call on Baptists around the world to share generously, follow a lifestyle of responsible Christian stewardship, and support the development of better food production and distribution systems.

2. The right of all segments of society, including women, youth, the aging, minorities, and the poor, to participate in church and community decision making includes the rights to self determination and economic and social justice. We call on these segments of society, especially women, to recognize their right and responsibility to be involved in the use of power and we call on Baptists to open opportunities to these segments for full participation in church decision making and to support their full participation in community decision making.

3. The right to maintain cultural identity includes the rights of racial, ethnic, and national groups to maintain their self-determined identities. We affirm the principles set forth in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

4. The right to dissent includes the right to privacy and the right to obey one's conscience even though it may involve differing with the established order. The responsible exercise of this right keeps social systems from hardening into totalitarian rigidity.

5. The right to personal dignity includes the rights of children, the aging and the sick to care and dignity, and the rejection of torture and inhumane conditions in places of confinement such as prisons and institutions for the mentally disturbed.

World Peace

As Baptists we acknowledge that peace is the gift of God who establishes peace in the lives of believers and then enables them to share it and extend it. God's call to His people is not to strife but to peace. Peace begins in the hearts of people of good will whose lives are in union with the Prince of Peace. Peace extends to nations and races and systems when people are willing to work for the things that make for peace.

We are encouraged by some contemporary improvements in international relations including conferences on arms limitation, control of nuclear weapons, arbitration efforts, and the current detente; yet we deplore the violence and armed conflict persisting in many parts of the world. The forces of greed, economic and political imperialism, aggressive nationalism, cynical betrayals of trust, injustice, and oppression are still at work; and evil passions in men and nations still besiege the cause of world peace.

In the face of world hunger and massive human need on every hand, we call upon governments to abandon the evil acceleration of the fantastically costly armaments race, to turn away from national greed in the sale of armaments, and to cooperate in the removal of economic and political incentives to war.

In the cause of peace, we Baptists pledge ourselves to work with a new sense of urgency for the things that make for peace, remembering the words of Christ, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

Public Morality

The critical state of public morality has taken on a new sense of urgency in the modern world. It has become far more than just a perennial problem of the past that "will always be with us." Modern one-world technology and its miracles of transportation and mass communication

media increasingly have conspired to transform the immorality of individual persons, communities, and nations, into the immorality of the world. We have learned with dismay that no part of the world is safe from: (a) commercial exploitation of human sexuality; (b) the total secularization of the Lord's Day as just another workday; (c) the growth of a kind of religious neutrality by government that becomes in fact moral nihilism; (d) the abandonment of the traditional Christian view of marriage and family relationships; (e) the growth of public opinion and even of official public policy that alcoholism and drug addiction are only medical problems, not moral problems; (f) the cancerous growth of gambling and the philosophy of getting something for nothing; (g) the flagrant violation of principles of honesty and integrity by government officials; and (h) a declining respect for the law.

The most critical dimension of the contemporary public morality crisis is the possibility that Christian people will accept the popular belief that the downward spiral of public morality is inevitable and nothing can be done about it. We believe that in Christ all things are possible, and that Christian people as the salt of the earth can and must exert positive influence for a revitalization of Christian morality in the contemporary world:

We call upon Baptist people in all nations to:

1. Launch a worldwide thrust for public morality, beginning in the individual homes of Christian people with a renewed commitment to Christian standards of righteousness and morality;

2. Become more effective Christian citizens (including becoming officeholders of honesty and integrity) committed to working for enactment and effective enforcement of those laws and policies designed to make communities better places in which to live and to rear children;

3. Work for the kind of mass communication media that will bring information and entertainment into the home that is consistent with the legitimate rights and needs of Christian people;

4. Work for laws, public policies, and effective administration designed to eliminate arbitrary treatment of different groups of people on the basis of race, nationality, sex, or creed; and

5. Work individually and with others to make our churches more sensitive to the ways of working effectively for public morality, and for a renewed commitment to relating prayer, Bible study, world missions, and Christian service to the achievement of public morality in our world.



V. CARNEY HARGROVES, *President 1970-75*

ROBERT S. DENNY, *General Secretary*

BAPTIST WORLD ALLIANCE

Missouri Case Illustrates Litigation Cycle

By John W. Baker, Director of Research Services

When the Supreme Court of the United States hands down a decision in a case it usually leaves a number of issues which require continued litigation. The 1974 decision in *Wheeler v. Barrera* is illustrative of the loose ends which produce new adversary proceedings.

In *Wheeler* the basic controversy centered around Missouri's interpretation and application of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. That Act provided money to the states to use, among other things, to provide special programs for educationally deprived children in both public and private schools.

Federal funds were sent to the states where they were to be expended by the Board of Education on the authorization of the state legislature. Missouri's Constitution specifically prohibits the expenditure of public funds to support religious nonpublic schools. The Constitution does not prevent the use of public funds to aid the education of children who attend religious nonpublic schools after school hours or on weekends or summers if the aid is not provided on the premises of the religious nonpublic school.

Missouri religious nonpublic schools took the position that Title I required that the state furnish on premises programs for educationally deprived students which were identical to those furnished to similar students in public schools. The Commissioner of Education for Missouri took the position that the state Constitution prohibited identical programs. The issue was of deep concern to both sides and a court of proper jurisdiction was the only way to settle the disagreement.

Ultimately the case reached the Supreme Court of the United States. Oral argument was conducted on January 16, 1974 and the decision was handed down on June 10, 1974. In brief the Court held that:

1. At this stage of judicial proceedings it could not decide whether Title I requires the assignment of publicly employed teachers to nonpublic schools to provide on premises remedial instruction during regular school hours.
2. The state does not have to submit and approve plans that employ Title I teachers on private school premises during regular school hours.

3. The state is obligated to provide "comparable" but not "identical" programs for educationally deprived children in public and in nonpublic schools.

4. The question of whether federal aid is money "donated to any state fund for public school purposes" within the meaning of the Missouri Constitution is purely a question of state law rather than federal law and must be decided in the state courts under state laws.

5. The issue of the constitutionality of granting Title I funds to religious nonpublic schools was not at that time ripe for review.

Clearly, at some future time the issue of the constitutionality of Title I will be ripe for review and the Court will be forced to decide. In the meantime the other elements of the Court's *Wheeler* decision are being litigated.

On September 2, 1975 Judge Sprinkle in the Circuit Court of Jackson County, Missouri issued a decision in *Mallory v. Barrera* (No. 782847, Division No. 2). This began the process of determining whether under Missouri's Constitution and laws the money sent by the federal government under Title I becomes general public funds which can be spent only under the strictures of Missouri's Constitution and laws. Judge Sprinkle held that Title I funds became general funds of Missouri and that the state's laws do not permit or require the sending of public school personnel, paid with funds under Title I, onto the premises of private sectarian and nonsectarian schools during regular school hours.

Judge Sprinkle's decision faces an almost certain challenge on appeal to the higher state courts in Missouri.

In the meantime adversary proceedings had continued on the federal court level in an attempt to clarify some elements of the Supreme Court's decision in *Wheeler v. Barrera*.

After that decision the Missouri State Board of Education adopted a new state plan for the administration of Title I funds to provide services to nonpublic school children which was comparable to those provided to public school children. After nearly a year of legal actions and a clarification of its *Wheeler* decision by the Su-

preme Court the Federal District Court for the Western District of Missouri acted on August 14, 1975.

Judge William R. Collison approved a proposal by the Missouri Board of Education which forbids Title I teachers from going to nonpublic schools during regular classroom hours but permitted them on premises after hours or on weekends. An attempt to stay Judge Collinson's order was denied by him. His decision was appealed to the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit with a plea that his order be stayed. The nonpublic schools argued that with the school year almost ready to begin the Education Board's proposal would do irreparable damage to the school's educational programs.

On September 11, 1975 the Court of Appeals denied Barrera's motion for a stay of Judge Collinson's approval of the Missouri Board of Education's Title I proposal. This too, will no doubt be appealed.

Thus the decisions and the litigation goes on. When and if either of these actions reaches the Supreme Court, that Court will probably reach another decision which has more loose ends. Then the litigation cycle will begin again.

BLACKS WANT REPENTANCE

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J.—The 14th annual meeting of the Progressive National Baptist Convention recommended here that black Americans join in celebrating the U.S. bicentennial, provided that celebration is a "call for repentance."

A serious controversy is raging in the black community over whether the bicentennial should be observed, according to George Lawrence, press officer of the 500,000-member denomination.

Signers of the Declaration of Independence in 1776 and drafters of the Constitution in 1778 "did not give a damn about black people . . . because they were slaves," said Mr. Lawrence.

The convention voted to participate in the nation's 200th anniversary celebrations after Nelson H. Smith of Birmingham, the convention's president, said, "It is my considered judgment that this is a wise course to follow, provided it (the observance) is a call to repentance. (RNS)

STATE AID FOR SEMINARIES

TORONTO, Ont.—The Ontario government is "playing sugar daddy" to 14 colleges educating students for the priesthood and ministry with \$2,200,000 of the taxpayers' money, Professor Leslie K. Tarr charged here.

Professor of communications at Central Baptist Seminary, Tarr said the government is doubling its per-capita operating grants and 12 of the 14 colleges will now receive \$1,700 per student. The other two will get \$850. In this way, he said, the \$2,200,000 will be diverted this year to train clergy for the Roman Catholic, Anglican, United Presbyterian, Lutheran and Convention Baptist churches.

In addition to pointing out the injustice of giving larger student grants to the seminaries that showed the larger growth, Tarr emphatically stated, "I'm not pleading for per-capita operating grants to more schools. Quite the reverse. I believe that there should be government grants to no theological schools."

"Is it the business of the state to tax all citizens to train professional clergy for mainline denominations?" Tarr asked. "Are we instituting a modified system of state churches, in which the state will serve as the collection agency for approved churches?" (RNS)

GEORGI VINS' BOOK

ELGIN, Ill.—Two major documents written by Georgi Vins, leader of the group of dissident Soviet Baptists, will be published in a book by David C. Cook Publishing Co. in October. Under the title, *Georgi Vins: Testament from Prison*, the book will contain a family chronicle describing how Vins' father died in a labor camp and his mother served a three-year prison term, and a group of short biographies of leading Soviet Baptists.

Early this year, Vins was sentenced to five years in prison to be followed by five years in exile on a charge of damaging the interests of Soviet citizens under the "pre-text" of religious work. (RNS)

TAX EXEMPTION FOR TUITION

WASHINGTON—U.S. Senator James L. Buckley (C, R-N.Y.) has introduced a bill in Congress which would allow tuition paid at private and parochial schools to qualify as federal tax exemptions. The measure would permit taxpayers to receive tax exemptions up to a maximum of \$1,000 for each student's tuition paid at a nonpublic elementary, secondary, or post-secondary school. (RNS)

BAPTISTS AND THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

A National Bicentennial Convocation

January 12-15, 1976
Shoreham Americana Hotel
Washington, D.C.

At the request of the North American Baptist Fellowship, the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs has involved representatives of the various Baptist bodies in America in planning a special event for the USA Bicentennial year. Plans have been developed for a National Baptist Convocation to include all Baptist groups in America. The Convocation will examine the past, present, and future role of Baptists in the life of the nation.

Five plenary sessions will deal with these themes:

1. *Baptists, Liberty, and the American Revolution*
2. *Baptists and Human Rights in the American Experience*
3. *The Interaction of Church and Nation at Home and Abroad*
4. *Religious Liberty and Public Policy*
5. *Out of Many, One: Baptist Pluralism and Unity*

Outstanding Speakers Include:

The Honorable Barbara C. Jordan, Member of Congress
Winthrop S. Hudson, Colgate Rochester Divinity School
Edwin S. Gaustad, University of California
Gardner Taylor, Concord Baptist Church, Brooklyn, N.Y.
W. Morgan Patterson, Southern Baptist Seminary
James Ralph Scales, Wake Forest University
Penrose St. Amant, Baptist Seminary, Ruschlikon

Register Now

The advance registration fee (\$45.00) includes the opening banquet, Monday evening. Spouses and students can register for a reduced fee (\$25.00). Clip and mail coupon.

Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs
200 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002

Dear Sirs:

I would like to plan to attend the National Bicentennial Baptist Convocation, January 12-15, 1976. Please send me information and a registration form for the Convocation.

Name _____

Address _____

Public Affairs . . . and the Churches

BILLY GRAHAM CRUSADE

Christianity Today on August 29 carried the following news item: "A *New York Times* story on church-state legal conflicts reported that the Jackson, Mississippi city council donated \$1,000 to city funds to help sponsor this year's Billy Graham crusade there. Also, National Guard general E.A. Beby Turnage wrote a letter on official stationery to all Guard troops inviting them to attend the crusade. The crusade committee returned the city's money after the American Civil Liberties Union threatened to sue, but the general's letter went unchallenged."

SUPPORTS GUN CONTROL

NASHVILLE, (BP)—The Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, in the aftermath of the second presidential assassination attempt, has urged government leaders to support strong hand gun legislation.

The plea came in a letter mailed to the president and vice president of the United States, the majority and minority leaders of the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives and Tennessee senators Howard Baker and Bill Brock. Commission executive secretary Foy Valentine, who signed the letter, read it during a meeting of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee here.

AID TO PRIVATE SCHOOLS

CINCINNATI, Ohio—The Secretary for Education of the United States Catholic Conference is calling for a new organization that could effectively lobby in defense of private schools in this country.

Msgr. Olin J. Murdick envisions the new national group as being "a broadly based coalition, professionally equipped for an effective, on-going public relations task" on behalf of nonpublic schools and the concept of the parent's right to freely choose an education for their children.

Murdick made his proposal while speaking before the members of the Ohio Catholic Education Association here. (RNS)

DISSIDENTS IN RUSSIA

KESTON, Eng.—A dissident Russian Baptist congregation in Kiev has received permission to function legally without agreeing to restrictions usually imposed by the Soviet government, the Centre for the

Study of Religion and Communism reported here.

The group of about 500 has been meeting in a forest because it was not registered, as Soviet law requires of religious groups allowed to exist legally. Registration has now been accomplished without condition, according to the agency, located in Keston College. The dissidents were said to have a building that they are renovating.

If the report is factual, the development represents a departure from general Soviet policy on those Russian Baptists who refuse to cooperate with the recognized All Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists. (RNS)

COURT UPHOLDS BOND SALES

ST. PAUL, Minn.—The Minnesota Supreme Court has upheld the constitutionality of state bond sales to finance construction projects at private church-related colleges. Justice Lawrence Yetka approved the bond sales in ruling on a test case involving proposed bonds for the College of St. Teresa and St. Mary's College, both Roman Catholic schools in Winona, and Bethel College, a Baptist General Conference school in Arden Hills.

The ruling said the bonding arrangement does not involve spending of state funds, and even if it did the bond sales would be constitutional because the schools are "secular institutions." Its description of the three institutions was based on the fact that they do not discriminate on religious grounds in accepting teachers or students, and do not have compulsory chapel services. (RNS)

HUMAN RIGHTS IN CHILE

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y.—The U.N. Subcommittee on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities expressed its "serious distress" following Chile's decision not to admit a U.N. fact finding group to investigate charges of violations of human rights in Chile.

The resolution, passed in Geneva, was adopted by a vote of 18-to-10 with five abstentions. It expresses the subcommittee's utmost concern regarding the "numerous and serious reports on the continuing flagrant and widespread violations of basic human rights and freedoms in Chile, and its particular concern as to the fate of large numbers of people reported to be missing. (RNS)

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