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FROM WASHINGTON OFFICE
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Catholic School Aid
Campaign Continues

By W. Barry Garrett
Regional Editor

WASHINGTON--(BP)--Evidence continues to pile up testifying to the power of Catholic action to influence legislation, especially in the interest of securing federal aid to parochial schools.

Recently there was an alert that Catholic Action groups were calling for a nationwide letter campaign to Congressmen demanding aid to parochial schools. The position of the Catholic interests is that if they cannot get aid to parochial schools they will fight the passage of any kind of aid to education bill.

It is known in Washington circles that the three members of the House rules committee, who are members of the Roman Catholic Church, have been besieged by thousands of letters from Roman Catholics demanding aid for their schools. One of them estimated that he had received 15,000 such letters and that the other Catholic members of the committee had received similar mail.

The key position of the House rules committee is seen as it refuses to allow a conference committee to meet with a Senate committee to iron out differences between the education bills already passed by both houses. The majority of the members of both houses of Congress have indicated their desire for an education bill, but the House rules committee refuses to allow the legislation to proceed. A combination of anti-federal aid to education forces, the administration, and Roman Catholic pressure makes this possible.

Although the three Roman Catholic members of the rules committee are recorded as favoring a conference committee, it is impossible to know what has gone on inside the meetings of the rules committee and what deals have been made. It is of highest significance, however, that these three are the ones who have received such an overwhelming amount of mail.

Further indication of the campaign for public aid for parochial schools is found in the Aug. 22 Congressional Record. Three Roman Catholic Congressmen extended their remarks in the appendix section, making various appeals for federal funds.

Rep. Alfred E. Santangelo (D., N. Y.) announced that he had introduced a bill which would "aid taxpayers in their endeavors to provide education for their children and themselves." His proposal is that assistance be given the taxpayer in the form of an income tax deduction to the extent of \$600 paid by him for tuition for each dependent or himself. The deduction would be applicable to taxpayers whose dependents attend private, parochial, secondary schools, college, or university, and who are required to pay tuition.

In arguing for his bill Santangelo said, "My bill will indirectly relieve municipalities of some of their burdens by diverting some of the students to private schools and will reduce to an extent the requirement of increased taxes to finance education."

This proposal is not new, and already there are several similar bills in the legislative hopper. It is significant, however, at this time for its propaganda value and for the purpose of keeping the issue before the public.

The other two items in the Aug. 22 Congressional Record are reprints of articles from Roman Catholic publications. Rep. Thomas J. Lane (D., Mass.) inserted a lengthy article from The Pilot, archdiocesan newspaper of Boston, by Timothy F. O'Leary, superintendent of schools for the archdiocese of Boston. This article is a discussion of "sound bases for federal aid to Catholic schools."

Rep. Frank J. Becker (R., N. Y.) inserted in the Congressional Record both an editorial and an article from The Tablet, Roman Catholic newspaper of Brooklyn, N. Y., and commented favorably that it "pointed out very clearly the arguments that aid to private schools must and should be a part of any federal aid to education legislation for public schools."

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Baptist Press

Thus the propaganda mill grinds. The campaign gains momentum. This is illustrative of what is being said and done throughout the nation.

Unless a similar campaign is engaged in to defend the public schools, to point up the reasons for public funds for public institutions only, and to explain the real meaning of freedom for education, it will not be long until public opinion will be such that Congress will pass legislation for public aid to parochial schools.

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Attention: State Secretaries (non-teletype points)

On Aug. 16, the executive committee of the general board of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina approved a resolution relating to the proclamation by the president of the United States designating Oct. 5 as a day of prayer.

The resolution stated in part:

"Be it resolved that the executive committee of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, the president of the convention, and the general secretary call upon the Baptists of North Carolina to set aside the night of Oct. 5 as a definite time of prayer for God's intervention in the present world strife among men, and call upon every Christian to dedicate himself anew to the purpose of a just and lasting peace for all people.

"Furthermore, be it resolved that each church be encouraged to plan for a special service of supplication and dedication on this day, Oct. 5, 1960, and that they seek the attendance of every member at this service;

"And also be it further resolved that we invite all men everywhere to join with us in this endeavor and to return with us to the ways of our God as we repent of our sins as individuals and as a nation. We realize we must be worthy of the peace for which we pray."

We here in North Carolina are publicizing this action and are urging our pastors to make definite plans to involve each member of the churches in the experience of prayer the evening of Oct. 5. We also are wiring the President of the United States assuring him of our complete support of his proclamation and acquainting him of our efforts to make the proclamation meaningful.

Furthermore, we are communicating with the leaders of other major denominations within our state, inviting them to join in this effort to encourage the lay members of all of our Christian churches to engage in this united time of prayer.

C. B. Deane, the president of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, is communicating with the president of your convention. It is our prayerful hope that you brethren will confer concerning this matter and that the Lord will lead you to take definite action in encouraging its promotion within your state.

May divine blessings rest upon you in every way.---Douglas M. Branch, general sec.-treasurer, Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

NOTE: The above message went over SBC teletype service Aug. 23. Raleigh asked that it be relayed to you.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION FROM THE OFFICE OF THE BAPTIST JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC AFFAIRS,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

NOTE: Due to the national attention that has been given to the "Jess Moody Incident" we are sending for your information two articles, which will speak for themselves. Mr. Moody has been in contact with our office and he is mailing a statement to present his viewpoint. If it does not arrive in time to be included in this mailing, we will send it in the next release.

W. Barry Garrett

From The New York Times, August 31, 1960:

Let the Reader Beware
From Now On

By James Reston

WASHINGTON, Aug. 30--Sometimes a small incident tells more about what is happening in the politics of the nation than all the contrived propaganda of both parties. Here is a little story that illustrates both the cunning and the weakness of the anti-Catholic campaign against Senator Kennedy.

Last week Senator John J. Sparkman of Alabama received a copy of a Baptist paper from Alvin H. Hopson, preacher of the First Baptist Church of Huntsville, Ala. This paper, called the Messenger, carried an article by Jess Moody of the First Baptist Church of Owensboro, Ky., entitled, "Thomas Jefferson, the Bigot."

The article read as follows:

"Perhaps the most widely quoted statement by Thomas Jefferson--'I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man'--needs to be quoted in its full context.

"They who stand on political rostrums this fall should be aware as to whom Jefferson was referring when he wrote the words.

"Writing to a Dr. Rush in 1800, Jefferson said: 'They (the Boston Catholic clergy) believe that any portion of power confided to me will be exerted in opposition to their schemes. And they believe rightly: for I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man. But this is all they have to fear from me, and enough too, in their opinion.'"

Dr. Moody's article then concludes by saying:

"Thomas Jefferson, the founder of the Democratic party, had nothing but hostility for the Boston Catholic clergy. The present day Democratic party just nominated the Boston Catholic leadership as the candidate for the position of Commander in Chief of the Government of the United States. Times do change, don't they?"

The Cropped Quotation

Of course, the only thing wrong with this quotation is that Mr. Jefferson did not mention "the Boston Catholic clergy" in his letter to Dr. Rush. The letter was written to Dr. Benjamin Rush from Monticello on Sept. 23, 1800. He was arguing against the establishment of a national church which would give any denomination a favored position over any other, and in no way suggested anything about the Roman Catholic church.

On the contrary, he singled out "the Episcopalians and the Congregationalists" for censure, all of which was omitted from the Moody article quoted above.

Incidentally, Dr. Moody was not in his study at the First Baptist Church of Owensboro, Ky., today. He was in the office of Senator Thruston Morton, the Republican National Chairman, here in Washington, and explained that he got the quotation out of a book by Saul K. Padover.

"To be honest," he said, "I have not read the complete letter from Mr. Jefferson. If you knew me, you would know I am not attempting to create any division.

I certainly don't want to do that. In fact, I am spearheading a project to soft-pedal this bigotry, for I fear it will backlash against Mr. Nixon."

Dr. Moody, who is staying at the Texas Gas suite in the Shoreham Hotel, said he came here at his own expense to discuss some ideas he sent to Mr. Nixon, he said, on the subject of religion.

That 'Oath' Again

Nevertheless, this illustrates what is going on. Today's mail brings one more printed copy of the bogus and infamous "Oath of the Knights of Columbus" described as a "Roman Catholic secret order." To give it authenticity, the "oath" is presented as coming from the Congressional Record of Feb. 15, 1913.

Like the Moody quote from Jefferson, however, this one fails to mention that it was put in the Congressional Record as an example of "false and libelous" campaigning and described in the Record as "spurious."

Fortunately, the anti-Catholic campaign is now so widespread and so savage that it is beginning to boomerang. There is a law of politics, similar to the law of dynamics, that every pressure creates a counter pressure, and that is now beginning to happen.

For this kind of thing affronts fair-minded people in the South as it does in the North, and while it may help the Vice President in some areas of the South, it could easily solidify Kennedy's strength in the large states of the North, where the election will undoubtedly be won or lost.

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From the Washington Post, September 1, 1960:

Minister Apologizes For His Error In Quoting Jefferson On Catholics

By Carroll Kilpatrick

A Southern Baptist minister who circulated an anti-Catholic statement falsely attributed to Thomas Jefferson yesterday apologized when confronted with evidence of his mistake.

Expressing "deep regret and humility," the minister told the Washington Post that "we Southern Baptists did not intend to come out on this (religious) issue as strongly as we have."

He charged that "big businessmen who have an economic interest in Nixon's election are using Southern Baptist preachers. They (the businessmen) may even defeat Nixon."

The Rev. Jess Moody, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Owensboro, Ky., came to Washington Tuesday to confer with Republican National Chairman Thruston B. Morton about a registration scheme he thinks will help the Nixon-Lodge ticket.

Religious Talk Denied

Both said, however, they did not talk about the religious issue, and Morton deplored the circulation by the minister of the spurious anti-Catholic statement attributed to Jefferson.

While in Washington Mr. Moody stayed in the Shoreman Hotel suite of the Texas Gas Transmission Co., which has headquarters at Owensboro. He said there were "no political implications at all" in the fact that he was offered the company's hotel suite. The minister returned to Kentucky yesterday.

A letter from Mr. Moody, published in various Southern Baptist publications, said that Jefferson's famous declaration swearing eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man was directed against "the Boston Catholic clergy."

Actually, Jefferson was writing about the clergy in general. He did not mention the Catholics. He did single out the Episcopal and Congregationalist clergy for criticism.

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Morton Attacks Smears

Ironically, shortly before the minister acknowledged his error in an interview with The Post, Morton told a press conference that "a lot of people who have nothing to do with either party become active every two years and develop" smear literature. This often backfires, Morton said.

Sen. John J. Sparkman (D-Ala.) first spotted the Moody statement in The Messenger, a publication of the First Baptist Church of Huntsville, Ala., and gave it to The New York Times, which yesterday printed Mr. Moody's version and the correct Jefferson letter.

"Perhaps the most widely quoted statement by Thomas Jefferson...needs to be quoted in its full context," the Moody letter said. "They who stand on political rostrums this fall should be aware as to whom Jefferson was referring when he wrote the words.

"Writing to a Dr. Rush in 1800, Jefferson said: 'They (the Boston Catholic clergy) believe that any portion of power confided to me will be exerted in opposition to their schemes. And they believe rightly: for I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man. But this is all they have to fear from me, and enough too in their opinion.'

"Thomas Jefferson, the founder of the Democratic Party, had nothing but hostility for the Boston Catholic clergy.

"The present day Democratic Party just nominated the Boston Catholic leadership as the candidate for the position of commander-in-chief of the Government of the United States.

"Times do change, don't they?"

Jefferson's letter, written to Dr. Benjamin Rush on Sept. 23, 1800, complained that various sects, "especially the Episcopalians and Congregationalists," were trying to obtain an established church in America. But Jefferson said the "good sense of our country threatens abortion to their hopes," and that he was opposed to their schemes.

Admits His Error

"I made the journalistic mistake of quoting the quote without checking it," the Owensboro minister told The Post.

"I'm definitely writing a retraction and sending it to every publication that carried my article."

Mr. Moody said he was in an "embarrassing and untenable position."

"I am a moderate among Southern Baptists and think both sides go too far," he said. "Now I am one of the culprits. I want to moderate this issue."

"Only a small section" of the Baptist clergy is putting out "a large amount" of anti-Catholic material, the minister said.

"Our concern was over the large number of Wisconsin Catholics who voted for Sen. Kennedy in the primary.

"I fear the Catholic approach to tax money. I decry the use of a church, Catholic or Protestant, to push for political ends."

The 35-year-old minister's plan for a registration program was described by Morton as "good but too expensive." Morton, the junior Senator from Kentucky, said he wasn't sure of the minister's party affiliation but had met him several times.

Mr. Moody said he was for Vice President Richard M. Nixon and had voted twice for President Eisenhower.

Statement By Jess Moody, Pastor, First Baptist Church, Owensboro, Ky.:

"When one writes to meet a deadline, the possibility of error is a nagging eventuality.

"Recently I wrote a series of articles under the title, 'Thomas Jefferson, the Bigot,' in which I quoted Mr. Jefferson more than two dozen times.

"In one of the articles I inadvertently credited the founder of the Democratic party with condemning the Catholic church for its desire to become a national church. I later discovered a complete copy of Mr. Jefferson's letter which revealed that he was not referring to Catholics only, but to all who aspire to become a national church.

"I am deeply grateful to Mr. James Reston, famous New York Times columnist, for calling this to my attention.

"I regret this error and sincerely request charitable understanding and treatment at the hands of Catholics and Protestants alike.

"Those who know me best realize that I deplore misrepresentation--therefore, I am happy to correct the false impression I have caused to come into being.

"After 17 years of journalistic effort, this is the first time I have had to be corrected on my authentication, and I accept it in all good grace.

"Did you ever slip on a banana peeling with 180 million people looking on?"