

BAPTIST FEATURES

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Special reports on Baptist programs,
activities, trends, and newsmakers.

FROM WASHINGTON OFFICE
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September 8, 1959

Effectual Prayer Of
Righteous Men Avails

SPECIAL TO BAPTIST STATE EDITORS

By W. Barry Garrett*

WASHINGTON--(BP)--While there is a flurry of excitement to call the nation to prayer during Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev's visit to the United States, there are others who are taking a calmer look at the situation. Questions are beginning to rise about the motives and objectives of prayer when the Soviet leader comes to this country.

A resolution has been introduced in Congress calling for a moment of silent prayer on September 15, the day Khrushchev arrives. Anti-Communist organizations have sounded the alarm to church leaders, and emergency efforts are being made through several denominational groups to organize prayer meetings, specially in the cities to be visited by the Soviet leader. Amidst the plethora of these calls the purpose of the prayers is not always clear.

However, constructive reminders of the nature of prayer and the objectives of prayer are also being sent out in the midst of the excitement. C. Emanuel Carlson, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, writes, "On one thing we must surely be agreed in this matter, namely this, there is a great difference between 'praying for' a foreign visitor and 'praying at' him. A show of our prayers on the occasion of Mr. Khrushchev's visit would be most inappropriate."

Using the current hurry up call to prayer as an occasion to point out some great spiritual truths, Carlson says, "Now is the time to return to the New Testament, to the teachings of Christ, and specifically to the Sermon on the Mount." He points out that an understanding of the true nature of prayer is central in the Baptist heritage and he warns against the use of prayer "as an instrument of international propaganda" as well as a "medium for the expression of self-righteousness."

Prayer "in the name of Christ" for national advantages or "for spiritual conquests that are motivated by our self-interest" are called in question by the Baptist leader.

Expressing faith "in God's competence to hear and to answer in his own way," Carlson concluded that "many have prayed for the rulers and the people of Russia, and many will continue to pray without bugles."

James O. Duncan, editor of the Capital Baptist, weekly publication of the District of Columbia Baptist Convention, reminded his readers in an editorial that "effective prayer must be accompanied by sincerity of action. Let us never think that our hands are thoroughly clean and our labors finished when we arise from prayer," Duncan said.

"We have already told Mr. Khrushchev that we are not going to depend on God in this matter of peace," Duncan concluded, "for while some will be called apart to pray, others will be taking him to see our stockpile of bombs and our great plants of industry which can produce weapons of war." Not only should

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Christians pray for Khrushchev to be an instrument of peace, Duncan said, "but at the same time the Christian must be willing to be used as an instrument of peace also."

The Iowa Yearly Meeting of the Friends (Conservative) on August 15 sent a message to Premier Khrushchev: "As you travel through our land you will see many signs of our wealth;...But we want you to know that there are intangible values which are more important to us than our material goods. One of these is our religious freedom;...Another most important value is our freedom to question and criticize our national policies.

"We hope that during your visit here you will frequently find yourself among those of us who are genuinely interested in world order through the United Nations; who realize that the world's wealth must be distributed more fairly; and who believe that universal disarmament and complete renunciation of war is essential."

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*Mr. Garrett is the Washington, D. C. editor of the Baptist Press.

"When thou prayest . . ."

PRAYER AND FOREIGN RELATIONS

By C. Emanuel Carlson*

If the many calls to prayer which have been issued in recent days are heeded and if they result in prayers that are real, then Mr. Khrushchev's visit to the United States will have produced a phenomenal spiritual experience for the American people.

In recent weeks literally dozens of ideas and suggestions have been offered. Some want a minute of silent prayer when Mr. Khrushchev is here in Washington. Some want a 24-hour prayer vigil during that time. Some want public prayers, others prefer private prayers -- and so the news services move over our desks with a stream of calls to prayer.

Now while this new-found interest is fresh in our minds is probably the time to suggest the importance of keeping our Christian insights clear as to the nature of prayer and its place in Christian experience. Now is the time to return to the New Testament, to the teachings of Christ, and specifically to the Sermon on the Mount.

Very few present day Baptists are aware that this theme is central in our heritage. It was on the subject of the nature of prayer that John Smythe's mind began its trek which made him a Baptist in 17th century England when prayers were prescribed by King and Parliament. It was at this point, also, that the Anabaptist forebears in Switzerland broke with Ulrich Zwingli in 16th century Zurich where the city council prescribed worship. And if one penetrates into the experience of Roger Williams one may well decide that he too began here.

Most, if not all, the current advocates of prayer will agree that we ought not attempt to use prayer as an instrument of international propaganda. At least some seem to show awareness that prayer is not real when it becomes a medium for the expression of self-righteousness. Whether we are free to pray "in the name of Christ" for national advantages, or for spiritual conquests that are motivated by our self-interest may be less clear. And the degree to which it can be called into operation by proclamation is obviously confused.

On one thing we must surely be agreed in this matter, namely this, there is a great difference between "praying for" a foreign visitor and "praying at" him. A show of our prayers on the occasion of Mr. Khrushchev's visit would be most inappropriate. If we believe in the power of prayer we will rest assured in God's competence to hear and to answer in his own way. The important thing is that we check our Christian attitudes to be sure that we pray to God and do not mock him.

Many have prayed for the rulers and the people of Russia, and many will continue to pray without bugles.

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*Dr. Carlson is executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, Washington, D. C. The above editorial appears in the September issue of the Report From The Capital.

Khrushchev And Prayer

By James O. Duncan*

From many different sources comes the suggestion that all Christian people set aside a Day of Prayer for the visit of Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev on his visit to the U.S.A.

For the Christian there is no greater power in the world than that of prayer. This he has been taught from the time he became a Christian and has experienced it, no doubt, many times in his own life. We know that effective prayer must be accompanied by sincerity of action. Simply to pray is not enough. Let us never think that our hands are thoroughly clean and our labors finished when we arise from prayer.

For what shall we pray when Mr. Khrushchev comes? That all people will be free when some of our own citizens are slaves? That all people be given an opportunity to work when some of our neighbors are restricted from employment? Shall we pray that the Russians will cease their drinking while negotiating, and forget that the cocktail is still the first order of business at many official dinners in our Nation's Capital?

Let us not blame God if we do not enter into a period of glorious peace immediately. God's recipe for peace is not in a prayer for Khrushchev. We would do better to remember II Chronicles 7:14, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

In the plans that have been made for Mr. Khrushchev's visit, we have already told him that we are not going to depend on God in this matter of peace, for while some will be called apart to pray, others will be taking him to see our stockpile of bombs and our great plants of industry which can produce weapons of war.

Should we pray for Khrushchev? The answer of a Christian is, "Yes." And the prayer of the Christian can be that God will use Mr. Khrushchev as an instrument of peace, but at the same time the Christian must be willing to be used as an instrument of peace also.

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*Mr. Duncan is editor of the Capital Baptist. The above editorial appeared in the September 3 issue.

Washington, D.C.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Washington, D.C. (AP) - The House of Representatives today passed a bill to provide for the construction of a new federal building in Washington, D.C.

The bill, which was introduced by Rep. [Name], provides for the construction of a new federal building in Washington, D.C. The building is to be located on the site of the old [Name] building.

The bill also provides for the construction of a new federal building in [Location]. The building is to be located on the site of the old [Name] building.

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