

April 3, 1963

Europeans Also Face Church-State Problems

RUSCHLIKON-ZURICH, Switzerland (BP)--Baptist leaders in Europe say governments should guarantee the freedom of the churches and of people to serve God according to the dictates of their consciences.

At the same time, they said, Christians should be good citizens and abide by the laws of their countries "as long as these do not demand disobedience to God. The churches," they continued, "should recognize the rights and duties of the state in its own sphere and encourage good citizenship."

A Baptist "declaration on church and state" was issued at the close of the first European Baptist Conference on Church and State at the European Baptist Theological Seminary here. J. D. Hughey, president of the school, took the lead in calling the conference together.

Although the conference was sponsored by the seminary, it was first proposed by members of the Baptist World Alliance commission on religious liberty and human rights. The council of the European Baptist Federation later endorsed the proposal.

Those present at the conference expressed the hope similar discussions could be continued in the future.

Fifty-eight Baptist leaders from 18 nations met for the week-long discussions. They came from countries with various types of government. Some were from western democracies, many of which are welfare states. Some were from Catholic countries. Other parts of Europe were represented, too.

Both the biblical and historical views of church and state were discussed by the group.

The practice in the United States was reported by W. Barry Garrett, associate director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, Washington, D. C. "Communism and Religious Liberty" was discussed by Erik Ruden, European secretary of the Baptist World Alliance.

First-hand reports on church-state practices were given from Germany, Austria, Holland, France, Yugoslavia, Poland, Spain, Portugal, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Great Britain and Italy.

Church-state practices in Europe range all the way from complete freedom in some areas to the severest restrictions in others. European problems in church-state relations arise from (1) the welfare state, (2) the established church in many countries, and (3) the atheistic state in other areas.

Four major problems in the practice of religious liberty were outlined by A. F. Carrillo de Albornoz, a former prominent Roman Catholic priest of Spain, who is now a Protestant and who heads the religious liberty work of the World Council of Churches in Geneva. They are:

1. The protection of minorities in a state that is considered a secular arm of the church;
2. The protection of the religious majority in the face of a state which offers its protection but which protection insists on some authority in religious affairs;
3. The protection of all religious people in the face of an atheistic state which is opposed to all religion generally; and
4. The protection of all citizens in the face of a state which is friendly to religion generally.

Carrillo pointed out two wrong ways in dealing with Roman Catholicism. First, he said, it is wrong always to protest and point out what is wrong, saying nothing about what is good in Roman Catholicism. It is wrong, he said, to charge "lie" as a Roman Catholic principle.

Second, Carrillo said it is wrong to be so friendly with Roman Catholicism as to see only the things that are good and not see the things that are wrong.

He said the only right method of dealing with Roman Catholicism is to take the middle way and speak the complete truth--protest when necessary but commend whenever possible.

In the seven-point declaration on church and state, the European Baptist leaders said "church and state should have separate sources of income, the state levying taxes on its citizens and the church receiving gifts from its members."

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High Church Membership
Found In Lake Charles

(4-3-63)

LAKE CHARLES, La. (BP)--More than 85 per cent of the 44,043 white residents of greater Lake Charles, La., are members of churches or Sunday schools.

This includes children under nine in Sunday school, and more than 2,000 adults who have their church membership outside the area surveyed.

The figures were revealed in a comprehensive door-to-door survey conducted by 585 workers from 30 churches, representing 11 Protestant denominations.

"It's one of the highest percentages of church membership our surveys have revealed," announced William A. Powell of Atlanta, survey specialist from the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Powell directed the week-long survey, using the unique methods of mass canvassing developed by the mission agency. The key to the survey, other than the enlistment of voluntary workers from most denominations, is the printing of a survey card in the newspapers.

"The publication of this card alerts the people to our purpose and helps us get almost total coverage," he said. Only 1.2 per cent contacted refused to give information.

The survey found an unusually high percentage (10.5) of vacant houses in the area, Powell said. The closing of military installations accounted for most of this, local residents indicated.

Catholics are the largest denomination in this Gulf of Mexico area with 15,306 members. Baptists have 7,653; Methodists, 4,748; Presbyterians, 1,268; and Episcopalians, 1,233. All other groups have less than a thousand each. The Negro population was not surveyed.

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Folks and Facts.....

(4-3-63)

.....Trustees of Georgetown College (Baptist) have announced plans for an \$800,000 student union building at the college in Georgetown, Ky. It will house the cafeteria, grill, bookstore, and post office, in addition to recreational facilities and student organization offices. Four bowling lanes will be located on the ground floor. (BP)

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