

FROM WASHINGTON OFFICE  
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Prayer Amendment Not  
Needed, Says Carlson

WASHINGTON (BP)-- C. Emanuel Carlson, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs here, hit hard in defense of the First Amendment as "the finest part of our American heritage."

Carlson's statements were in response to proposals to "amend the amendment" with reference to the government's role in Bible reading and prayers in public schools. "People who want to pray, to read religious materials, and generally to exercise their religion are not prevented by the absence of government support," he concluded.

The First Amendment is adequate as it stands to protect the religious freedoms of the people, Carlson said. His conclusion is that there is no need for a "prayer amendment" and that present proposals would open doors to more serious religious problems than the nation now faces.

The Baptist executive's views are expressed in a "staff report" which appears in the March issue of "Report From The Capital," a monthly bulletin published by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

The report by Carlson asks, "Should there be a constitutional amendment to provide governmental sponsorship of religion?" His answer is, "No."

Congressman Frank Becker (R., N. Y.), a Roman Catholic, has led a crusade for a constitutional amendment which he says "permits" or "restores" Bible reading and prayers to public schools. Approximately 140 proposals have been made by Congressmen to strike at the Supreme Court rulings concerning public sponsorship of religion in public schools.

Becker has also filed a "discharge petition" which has been signed by 161 Congressmen to force the proposal out of the Judiciary Committee to the floor of the House of Representatives for action without hearings. The rules require 218 signers for such a petition to be effective.

Rep. Emanuel Celler (D., N. Y.) is chairman of the Judiciary Committee. Although opposed to the proposed amendments himself, he has announced hearings on the resolutions beginning April 22.

The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs has defended the position taken by the Supreme Court in both the New York Regents' prayer case and in the Pennsylvania and Maryland Bible reading and Lord's Prayer cases. It is the view of the Committee that the Court restrained government from programs of religion and that it did so in the interest of the "free exercise of religion" by the people.

(The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs is a responsible denominational agency, composed of members elected by eight national Baptist fellowships throughout North America.)

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Carlson's analysis of the three sections of the Becker amendment points out:

1. That section one "proceeds on the erroneous assumption that the Supreme Court opinions in the New York, Maryland and Pennsylvania cases ruled out 'offering' prayers, 'reading' from the Bible, or 'listening' to prayers or Bible reading." Rather, Carlson said, "the Court's decisions restrained governments (federal, state or local) from undertaking the formulation or the promotion of such devotional exercises."

2. That section two "represents a modern trend" to view religion as "American culture and American heritage rather than as religious impact." "Whatever it is," Carlson said, "religion on a government platter has never provided much spiritual nurture for the people nor has it given strength to the nation."

3. That section three is a disclaimer that "makes the 'no establishment' clause of the First Amendment of no effect in this whole field." He concluded, "Thus a proposal that may be motivated by a desire to let the majority in a community impose their ways on the minorities is likely to result in the erosion of the freedom for both the majority and the minority."

The analysis of the supporters of the Becker amendment in Congress reveals that they do not represent any one section of the nation, except that all but 18 are from east of the Mississippi River.

Party politics, however, seems to enter the picture since 64 supporters are Republicans and 46 are Democrats. Carlson said, "This partisan imbalance is substantiated by the action of the House Republican Policy Committee on February 18 in endorsing passage of a constitutional amendment."

A study of the religious affiliation of all Congressmen found that the Becker amendment was supported by 32 per cent of the Baptists, 26 per cent of the Methodists, 36 per cent of the Presbyterians, 18 per cent of the Episcopalians, and 15 per cent of the Roman Catholics.

It was also discovered that members of the "conservative coalition" in Congress are the most aggressive backers of the Becker amendment. The "conservative coalition" is a description of the political combination of Republicans and Democrats to form a power bloc in Congress. These facts were found:

"When 93 sponsors of amendments to the First Amendment were checked in relationship to the Congressional Quarterly 'conservative coalition' for 1963, 66 were found to have voted 50 per cent or more of the time with the coalition and only 27 had voted with the coalition less than 50 per cent of the time. Since 71 per cent were in the upper half and only 29 per cent in the lower half, the relationship can hardly be coincidence."

Carlson says this "represents a misplaced emphasis on American heritage." He explained, "the heritage which has made America great as the land of the free is the heritage of free exercise of religion" as provided by the first amendment in its present form.

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Baptists Challenged To  
Relate Faith To Life

(3-26-64)

WASHINGTON (BP)-- Baptists attending the Christian Citizenship Seminar here repeatedly heard the challenge to make Christianity relevant to the totality of life.

The three-day seminar, sponsored by the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, Foy Valentine, executive secretary, recognized the need for "pre-informed Baptist leadership" in view of the political interest and activity prior to the 1964 national elections. Denominational leaders, educators and government officials led in the seminar sessions.

It was hoped the meetings would result in "clarifying some of the political issues from our Baptist viewpoint," and in "strengthening of our Baptist witness in the realm of citizenship." A strong point of emphasis throughout the sessions was the relating of Christianity to the problems of our day--race, liquor, war, poverty, church-state separation, general welfare of the people.

Theodore F. Adams, pastor of the First Baptist Church, Richmond, and former

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president of the Baptist World Alliance, told the group that "we have to choose between a culture religion and a religious culture."

"Religion is in danger of becoming just another culture god," Adams said, "unrelated to the deep problems of life."

He warned that there is danger of the church becoming servant of the state in a secondary role "because we do not assert that its functions are primary." Baptists have used "separation of church and state" too long as a symbol, he continued, without recognizing that it does not mean separation of people from religion. "Separation of church and state does not mean that the church cannot be concerned," the Baptist leader stated.

Thomas Mann, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, and a Baptist layman, spoke on the "International Leadership and Its Christian Dimensions." He reminded the group that "as we work together for material progress we must not forget that 'man does not live by bread alone.'" Referring to a passage in Isaiah, Mann said "we must renew our strength, mount up with wings as eagles, run and not be weary--this is our challenge."

Brooks Hays, prominent Baptist layman and former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, pointed out that in all political issues "there must be compassion for people." "This," he said, "is related to our Christian mandate--our doctrine must be accompanied by our willingness to share."

Hays, now professor at Rutgers University and special White House consultant, said 19th century virtues cannot be applied to 20th century problems. He called for a commitment from Southern Baptists in a "resurgence of patriotism."

"Congress cannot do it all," Hays said. "There is still the need for men at the local level to interpret and carry out."

Charging Christians with "naivete in political affairs," William H. Crook president, San Marcos (Tex.) Baptist Academy, said that Christians are a "conditioned people."

"Because we are a conditioned people," Crook said, "we are manipulated by a lot of forces." He said many issues are hidden by use of particular issues--pari mutuel betting, liquor legislation, separation of church and state--to which Christians respond blindly and emotionally.

The average Christian, Crook continued, approaches politics "superficially," and "from a materialistic nature," concentrating on the "glamour in politics" rather than on the grass roots level.

He warned that Christians should not "rush in without a lot of preparation."

"If all we have to take with us in this leavening venture," Crook said, "is a sign or a slogan, we won't get very far. We must have a better product--we must take ourselves as redeemed men and women into this area."

The Baptist group also heard Penrose St. Amant, professor of church history at Southern Baptist Seminary; Daniel R. Grant, political science professor at Vanderbilt University; and John Bennett, president of Union Theological Seminary. There were briefing sessions on areas of government with Rep. Oren Harris (D., Ark.), Sen. Frank Carlson (R., Kans.), and Supreme Court Justice Hugo L. Black.

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LBJ Asks For Baptist  
Civil Rights Support

(3-26-64)

WASHINGTON (BP)-- President Lyndon B. Johnson has challenged Southern Baptists to be as prophetic for the cause of civil rights as they have been for religious liberty.

"No group of Christians has a greater responsibility in civil rights than Southern Baptists," the President declared.

"Your people are part of the power structure in many communities of our land," he continued. "The leaders of States and cities and towns are in your congregations and they sit there on your Board. Their attitudes are confirmed or changed by the

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sermons you preach and by the lessons you write and by the examples you set."

The President spoke to 175 Southern Baptists in the rose garden of the White House. They were in Washington attending the Christian Citizenship Seminar sponsored by the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, of which Foy Valentine is executive secretary.

The appeal for Southern Baptist support was made in the face of the struggle now in progress in the United States Senate. The House of Representatives has already passed the strongest civil rights bill since the War Between the States.

Southern Senators are leading a filibuster against the bill with the avowed intent of killing it or of watering it down with crippling amendments. But, Johnson declared, "We are going to pass the civil rights bill."

The President pointed out that "some of our strongest allies are religious leaders who are encouraging elected officials to do what is right."

He then appealed to Southern Baptists, "Help us to pass this civil rights bill and establish a foundation upon which we can build a house of freedom where all can dwell."

Recognizing the long struggle for religious liberty in which "Baptists have been prophets," the President said, "your forebears have suffered as few others have suffered, and their suffering was not in vain."

"This cause, too," he continued, "this cause of human rights demands prophets in our time, men of compassion and truth, unafraid of the consequences of fulfilling their faith."

The President paid tribute to the role Baptists have played in the separation of church and state. However, he said, "the separation of church and state does not mean the divorce of spiritual values from secular affairs."

He appealed to the Baptists to apply their faith to the "great questions of war and peace, of civil rights and education, the elimination of poverty at home and abroad." "This principle, the identity of private morality and public conscience, is as deeply rooted in our tradition and Constitution as the principle of legal separation," he said.

The President reported that "my own heritage is heavily weighed with Baptist influence." His great grandfather, George Washington Baines, Sr. was a Baptist minister who ministered in the early part of the 19th century in Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas. He was the editor of the first Baptist paper in Texas and was the second president of Baylor University. Johnson is a member of the Disciples of Christ.

The President read a letter that hangs on the wall of his office. It is a letter from General Sam Houston to his pastor, the President's great grandfather. It dealt with the renewal of a note for \$300 which "Brother Baines" owed the General.

In his letter General Houston got off some of his philosophy about the financial support church members should give to the church. He said, "I allude to plain, old-fashioned honesty of paying what they subscribe. They ought to know that paper currency will not pass in heaven. It must be the coin which is only issued from an honest heart. Cotton fields and cotton bolls will find no market in Paradise."

Following his speech the President stepped out into the crowd, to the consternation of the Secret Service body guards, and spent 15 minutes shaking hands with nearly everyone present. He then announced that he had given orders for the White House guides to conduct the group on a private tour of the White House.

Inside the White House the President made another sudden appearance. He said that he had run across his 16-year old daughter, Luci and he wanted the group to meet her. Luci was clad in blue jeans cut off above the knees, and an old shirt that was not tucked in. She was barefooted. She said that she hoped that the next time the group would find her more appropriately dressed.

Baptists Chided To Be  
Active In Politics

WASHINGTON (BP)-- One hundred and seventy-five Southern Baptists at a Christian Citizenship Seminar here severely examined the role of Baptists in politics. They were chided to more active and intelligent participation in public life by nearly every speaker.

The Seminar was sponsored by the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. Foy Valentine is the executive secretary. Participants included Baptist college and seminary presidents and professors, pastors, laymen and representatives of denominational agencies.

Jimmy R. Allen, executive secretary of the Texas Christian Life Commission, outlined goals, barriers, means and strategies for Southern Baptists to have a "Christian impact in politics."

"A narcissus-like absorption with ourselves, our organized functions, our statistical increases has plagued us with a strange political paralysis," Allen said.

"We have sinned against our heritage....While we have been flexing our muscles and advancing our strength, we have left to others the undramatic and wearying tasks of bringing Christian insights to bear on our political world," he concluded.

"I vote for the Southern Baptists politically to join the human race," Allen dramatically concluded.

James Ralph Scales, president of Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, reviewed the actions of Southern Baptists in the 1960 campaign when John F. Kennedy, a Roman Catholic, was running for President.

"Although many of us did a lot of growing up during that period," he said, "there is little evidence that 1964 would present a different picture," if Kennedy had lived to run again.

As he looked forward to the 1964 election Scales said that two issues loom large - the race issue, and a rising anarchy against the federal government. He deplored the "rising fear across the nation against the federal government and that people somehow feel that the government is their enemy."

John Fisher, a prominent public relations consultant in Washington, discussed the civil rights bill before Congress as "a tremendous moral challenge" to the religious forces of America.

"The voice of the churches will be the effective and deciding factor in the civil rights fight," Fisher said. "Never have churches been so vocal, so eloquent and so effective as in the current issues," he said.

He pointed out that the fact that 10 million Southern Baptists have not been vocal on civil rights raises the question in the minds of many Congressmen. "Whom haven't we heard from?" they ask. Fisher said that widespread silence on the part of Baptists can be very persuasive on the attitudes of their Representatives and Senators.

Mrs. Luigi Petrullo from the League of Women Voters appealed to Southern Baptists to a larger participation in political life.

She emphasized two ideas that the League of Women Voters tries to convey to the public: (1) government, and therefore politics, is a part of every citizen's daily life, whether they choose it to be so or not, and (2) the quality of government is directly related to the quality of officials. This, she said, is directly related to the quality of support they get from the citizens.

Mrs. Petrullo cautioned against rushing into issues without first having all the facts. She said that before the League of Women Voters takes a position on an issue a thorough job of study and research is done.

One of the most effective citizens organizations in the Nation, the League of Women Voters has only 135,000 members. Mrs. Petrullo pointed out that this illustrates the effectiveness of organization. She invited Southern Baptists to participate in the work of the League as one way of letting their Christian influence be felt.

In his appeal for a "Christian impact in politics" Allen warned against the idea of developing a "Baptist political power bloc." He spoke out against a Baptist political party and against organizing evangelical Christians into such a "mechanism."

"To become such a power bloc would mean degenerating into a self-interest group. It would ultimately make a religious test for public office and a political test for religious fellowship," he said.

Allen challenged the churches to an effective training program in Christian citizenship. He pointed out that the preachers and the editors of denominational papers have an opportunity and responsibility in this field.

Reviewing the election of a Roman Catholic as President, Scales said that this experience was educational for Baptists. He said that it demonstrated that a Catholic can resist Catholic pressures better than a Protestant, and that the candidate's personal opinion on church and state issues is more important than his church membership.

The analyses studied by Scales proved that there was no "Baptist vote" in the 1960 election in spite of the efforts of many leading Southern Baptists against Sen. Kennedy. Although he recognized that the "religious issue" affected many Baptist voters, he pointed out that if Kennedy had not carried some States where Baptists are strongest he could not have been elected.

The Oklahoma educator said that the political analysts have concluded that the "religious issue" resulted in more gains for Kennedy than losses. It solidified the Catholic vote and won support from others who revolted against the attack of Kennedy's religion.

Fisher, in discussing civil rights legislation said that "street demonstrations are beginning steadily to lose their effects on Congress." "They have been overdone," he said.

However, he paid high tribute to the March on Washington in 1963. He said that it had "an enormous effect." The reason he gave for this was "the manner in which it was done."

In exercising influence on Congressmen, Fisher said, it is not the amount of mail that the Congressman gets. Rather, he said, "it is the sense of it." He appealed for intelligent and informed communications with members of Congress.

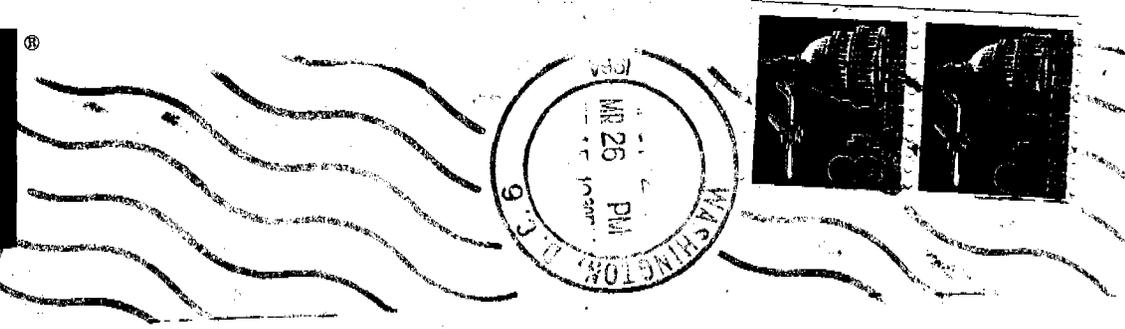
Fisher predicted that "cloture" (the shutting off of debate by a two-thirds vote of the Senators present and voting) would not be invoked in the Senate to end the filibuster on civil rights. Rather, he said that the probability is that after long weeks of stalemate, "compromises" will be reached and that a civil rights bill will be passed.

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