

FROM WASHINGTON OFFICE
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Baptist Views On
Prayer Put In Record

WASHINGTON (BP)-- Rep. James C. Corman (D., Calif.) told Congress that testimony before the House Judiciary Committee "made it clear that Baptists will not sanction the undermining of our precious heritage of religious freedom."

On separate days Corman put in the Congressional Record the text of testimonies from two Baptist leaders who opposed amendments to the Constitution. These, they claimed, would weaken religious liberty in the United States.

Seven weeks of hearings were conducted by the House Judiciary Committee on the so-called "prayer" amendments to the Constitution. More than 140 amendments were poured into the legislative hopper after the Supreme Court's decision against official prayers and government-sponsored or required devotions in public schools.

These amendments, of which the one proposed by Rep. Frank J. Becker (R., N.Y.) became the most popular, would have opened the schools to government-sponsored religious exercises. According to expert legal witnesses at the hearing, they would have had the effect of either repealing the First Amendment or of altering its meaning.

Corman's first insert in the Congressional Record was the testimony of C. Emanuel Carlson, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, Washington, D. C. It included resolutions from both the American and Southern Baptist Conventions as well as a large number of other Baptist resolutions upholding the Supreme Court's position on religion in schools.

The California Congressman said of these resolutions, "They demonstrate the breadth and depth of religious opposition to the Becker amendment."

The other Baptist testimony used by Corman was that of Edwin H. Tuller, general secretary of the American Baptist Convention. He described Tuller's views as "one of the best statements given to the House Judiciary Committee against the Becker amendment."

On the same day Rep. Robert W. Kastenmeier (D., Wisc.) also inserted Tuller's testimony in the Congressional Record. His introductory remarks indicated that he was seeking to prevent this "religious issue" from being included in the platforms of the political parties for the approaching election.

In another statement put in the Congressional Record by Rep. Thomas P. Gill (D., Hawaii), 63 clergymen of Hawaii opposed the Becker amendment and favored separation of church and state.

Gill in his remarks explained further why he was opposed to any change in the First Amendment. He said, "I am also aware that some of the organized backers of these proposals across the country seem to be using them for the ulterior purpose of attacking both the Constitution and the Supreme Court."

When the hearings on the "prayer amendments" began it was estimated that the House Judiciary Committee would approve some amendment by a narrow majority. During the hearings, however, the volume of mail to the Committee shifted from support of the Becker amendment to opposition. This expression of public opinion indicated a

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10-1 opposition to changes in the First Amendment.

After the hearings were ended it was reported by a reliable source that if a vote were taken by the Judiciary Committee on an amendment, it would be defeated two to one. This was the effect of the hearings and of the public opinion expressed during the seven weeks.

Also it is reported that eight or ten Congressmen have withdrawn their names from the discharge petition sponsored by Congressman Becker. He has led the effort to wrest his amendment from the Judiciary Committee and put it directly on the floor of the House for action.

In spite of the adverse testimony at the hearings, the overwhelming opposition of America's religious bodies, and the expression of public opinion, efforts continue for a Constitutional amendment. Congressman Becker recently charged: "Anyone saying the tide is turning against an amendment to permit prayer and Bible reading in the public schools is out of touch with the people of this country."

Becker, a Roman Catholic, evidently ignores the position of his own church. The legal department of the National Catholic Welfare Conference has advised the bishops of the nation to exercise caution in supporting any move for a change in the First Amendment. The Catholic Press Association expressing the views of the Catholic editors of the country took a strong stand against any Becker type of amendment.

Earlier the Southern Baptist Press Association took similar action.

National religious bodies approving the rulings of the Supreme Court include the Southern Baptist Convention, American Baptist Convention, Baptist General Conference, Lutheran Church in America, United Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., Presbyterian Church, U. S. (Southern), Disciples of Christ, many Methodist annual conferences, and most Jewish bodies.

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Baptist School
Asks Federal Loan

(7-10-64)

WASHINGTON (BP)-- A Baptist school is one of seven church-related institutions applying for college housing loans, according to announcement from the Community Facilities Administration of the Housing and Home Finance Agency here.

The University of Redlands (Calif.), an American Baptist College, applied for a \$500,000 loan. The seven church schools applied for loans totaling \$5,739,500. Besides the Baptist school, these include Protestant Episcopal, Disciples of Christ, two Methodist and two Roman Catholic schools.

The church schools were among 27 colleges applying for college housing loans totaling \$51,999,800.

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Baptist Study Paper
Challenges Churches

(7-10-64)

WASHINGTON (BP)-- Churches should view recent court decisions regarding religion "not primarily as threats to their freedom, but as opportunities to clarify their own understanding of the meaning of religious liberty," according to a Florida Baptist study group.

In a special study paper, "The Free Exercise of Religion in the Public Schools of Florida," churches are urged to find "new and more effective ways" of communicating values. The study paper was prepared by a seminar group of Florida Baptists for use in the 8th annual Religious Liberty Conference here October 7-9.

The conference, sponsored by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, will deal with "The Meaning of Free Exercise of Religion." Eight seminar groups across the country are preparing study papers on various aspects of the conference theme. Conference participants will include Baptist ministers, educators, theologians and laymen. C. Emanuel Carlson is executive director of the public affairs committee.

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The Florida seminar group did a study of the relationship between religion and the public schools in that state, as an example of the current church-state problems.

Florida's state law requiring Bible reading in the public schools was held unconstitutional by the U. S. Supreme Court in June of this year.

The study paper pointed out several ways in which it said free exercise of religion is expressed in Florida public schools. These are: (1) a moral and spiritual values program, (2) elective courses in religion at the high school and college level, and (3) "religious exercises" in the schools. Some "religious exercises" are "permitted" while not "required" by state law as was the required Bible reading.

The paper lists a number of issues at stake in the question of religion in public schools. Among these it includes conflict with constitutional law, conflict in denominational tradition, preservation of values affecting religion and the state, and majority and minority rights.

The seminar group challenged the Florida court's "moral argument" in upholding the state Bible reading law. Such "instrumental use of the Bible for the state's own end" could cause greater damage to Christianity's total impact than the exclusion of Bible reading, it said.

"We could not produce any argument in support of prayer and Bible reading as religious exercises which seemed satisfactory to us," the group said.

The study paper outlined four suggested approaches to the problem:

1. "The church should accept its own responsibility for evangelizing and educating without depending on the help of the state." Inner reaction to the "progressive removal of religious elements" in public schools could imply exaggeration of the importance of these elements or the fear that the church cannot get along without public assistance, it said.

2. "The church must learn to work together with the state on solutions to the problem of ethical motivation." It cited some form of released or shared time arrangement as one possibility.

3. "The church...should strengthen and help every effort of the home to religiously educate its children."

4. "The church should support public schools and encourage Christians to enter teaching in the public schools as a career."

Members of the Florida seminar group were E. Earl Joiner, Christian ethics, Rollin S. Armour, church history, Ray V. Sowers, education, and Sidney B. Denham, social psychologist, all of Stetson University, DeLand. Richard Pierce, DeLand attorney and school board member was also in the group.

Parks Resigns After
2 Months In Office

MONTGOMERY (BP)--Alva G. Parks, Alabama Baptist state Sunday school secretary for the past two months, has resigned to return to First Baptist Church, Montgomery, as minister of education.

Parks, who was named head of Sunday school work in Alabama, returned to the church he left on May 1. He said: "I came to this position feeling it was God's will for my life. There are some things you cannot know until you have experienced them. I have discovered in these two months that my place of service is in the local church and not in state work. Realizing this, I am doing what I know is right."

He had been minister of education at First Baptist Church in Montgomery for six years before taking the state Sunday school post.

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Walker Named Annuity
Secretary For Kentucky

(7-10-64)

DALLAS (BP)--A. W. Walker, 57, pastor of Carlisle Avenue Baptist Church, Louisville, Ky., has been elected annuity secretary for the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Floyd B. Chaffin, Dallas, associate secretary of the Southern Baptist Annuity Board, said Walker will assume his new duties about Aug. 1.

Walker, who is jointly employed by the Annuity Board and the Kentucky convention, fills the post vacated when Baynard F. Fox joined the Annuity Board staff in Dallas, Chaffin said.

Walker will work with the leadership in Kentucky to promote the Annuity Board's retirement and protection programs.

Before going to Carlisle Avenue Church 21 years ago, Walker had served as pastor of Shively Baptist Church in Louisville for almost 10 years.

Walker is chairman of the Board of Directors of Baptist-sponsored Kentucky Southern College in Louisville, and was one of the early leaders in the formation of the school. He has also served as trustee of Georgetown College (Baptist) in Kentucky.

Walker is a graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.

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