

February 6, 1965

Church-State Skirmish
Flares In Poverty War

PHILADELPHIA (BP)--Protestants and Other Americans appealed to President Johnson and Congress not to let the "war on poverty" run counter to "constitutional requirements" for separation of church and state.

The appeal was made in a formal statement adopted by the organization's advisory committee following the 17th national conference here.

The statement expressed "concern that current proposals for federal aid to education should not violate or circumvent this country's longtime tradition, the separation of church and state." It said the proposals provide grants "for schools wholly owned and operated by churches" and "such features of otherwise commendable legislation" should be deleted.

"We also ask reconsideration of those proposals which would contravene state constitutional provisions regarding church-state relations," the statement continued. "This conference feels that the laudable objectives of alleviating poverty need not and should not run counter to constitutional requirements that mark relationships between church and state."

The executive director for Protestants and Other Americans United earlier declared President Johnson's "war on poverty" may knock another chip from the wall separating church and state.

Glenn L. Archer, Washington, said proposed grants to pupils in parochial schools and distribution of relief funds through church organizations, "is more of the slow attrition" destroying the separation principle.

Archer also lashed out at "brotherhood at any price and false tolerance" which leads religious leaders to sacrifice principles in effort for the ecumenical. Referring to his agency, he said "there is greater need today than ever for an organization with courage and conviction to speak out."

John Alexander Mackay, president emeritus of Princeton Theological Seminary, appealed to "all churches" that they "maintain complete freedom from state subsidies or control."

"Let them strive to secure that the state shall establish the freedom and seek the welfare of all citizens," Mackay declared. "To this end let churches cooperate with the state in what is a major responsibility of every government, namely, to create conditions in which people can be truly human."

Mackay, one of the organization's founders, received the citation for outstanding service which is awarded annually.

John J. Hurt, Atlanta, editor of the Christian Index, and a reporter at the 1964 Vatican Council, deplored the council's failure to give even a preliminary vote to religious liberty. "We might well ask if there should be any concern for adoption of what was contemplated," he said. "It is so mild it will be worth little."

Hurt said he shared "the disgust and disappointment of the majority of Roman Catholic bishops that the council is still as silent on religious liberty as the catacombs."

Herbert S. Southgate of the Protestant and Other Americans staff, reporting on a world tour last year, returned "convinced that complete separation of church and state is the only real answer to the partisan, aggressive, authoritarian church." He added President Johnson's poverty program would result in a "portion of the budget of every Roman Catholic parish being paid by Protestants and others."

Gaylord Briley, also of the staff in Washington, addressed the conference on "three weeks inside captive schools," reporting on visits to Catholic schools supported by tax funds in Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. He appealed for unity "in calling for an end to these unjust liaisons between church and state, the illegitimate offspring of which always take on the worst traits of both parents."

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C. Stanley Lowell, the organization's associate director, told the conference the President's poverty program contemplates "a new concept of federal aid to parochial schools" and legislation pending "moves toward a union of church and state." He was critical of educational centers which could use church property, library aid to parochial schools and "public school teachers being assigned to parochial schools."

Protestants and Other Americans' general counsel, Franklin C. Salisbury, reviewed litigation in which the organization is seeking to block tax funds from church schools based on this principle: "POAU concentrates on the first clause of the first amendment, on which is based the right of the believer to worship and the non-believer not to be compelled to support the religious activities or institutions of believers."

The conference closed with an appeal to church and state to quit their opposition to birth control. Alan F. Guttmacher, president of Planned Parenthood, said: "The world no longer needs quantity of people, but quality of people. The reproductive goal should be wanted children born to responsible parents."

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Indiana Seeks
Editor For Paper

2-6-65

INDIANAPOLIS (BP)--A combination editor and public relations secretary will be employed by July 1 to serve the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana with offices here.

The new staffer may also have responsibility to promote Baptist student work in the state, according to action of the Indiana executive board.

Employment of the combination editor and public relations secretary will relieve E. Harmon Moore of his duty as editor of the Indiana Baptist. Moore has held the editor's post in addition to serving as executive secretary of the convention.

The Indiana Baptist is expected to go to weekly publication in January, 1966. It comes out semi-monthly now, and has a circulation of about 5800.

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