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Dirksen Amendment
Set For Hearings

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By Nona Junkin

WASHINGTON (BP)--Religion in the public schools will be aired before the nation again in Senate hearings scheduled here. A Senate judiciary subcommittee will hold ten days of hearings in early August on a "prayer amendment" introduced by Sen. Everett Dirksen (R., Ill.)

In March of this year, the Illinois Senator introduced a proposed Constitutional amendment which he says is designed to provide or permit voluntary prayers in public schools and other public buildings. The measure is said to be "cosponsored" by 47 other senators.

Hearings on the Dirksen "prayer amendment" are scheduled for Aug. 1-5 and 8-10, according to Sen. Birch Bayh, chairman of the Senate judiciary subcommittee on constitutional amendments.

In 1964 seven weeks of hearings were conducted by the House judiciary committee on the so-called "prayer" amendments to the Constitution. Chief among these was the "Becker amendment."

Dirksen's proposal is considered by some to be essentially the same as the Becker amendment though not as comprehensive.

Prior to the 1964 hearings, indications were that the public favored some type of prayer amendment to the Constitution to offset the Supreme Court decisions banning required prayer and Bible reading in the public schools. However, when the issues were fully debated during the hearings, popular sentiment shifted 10-1 against the proposals.

Most of the nation's religious leaders who spoke on the issue opposed any tampering with the First Amendment, which forbids an establishment of religion and prohibits government from interfering with the free exercise of religion. They preferred the original language of the Constitution to the new language Becker proposed.

Dirksen, Senate minority leader, has maintained that his proposed amendment is not the same as the Becker amendment of 1964. Yet he held that Senate hearings on his proposal were not necessary since the issue had already been before the nation in House hearings.

The senator is reported to have tried on two occasions to take the issue out of the subcommittee's hands by bringing it to the full judiciary committee. However, each time the committee was to meet a quorum was not present and no business could be transacted.

Failing to get action by the committee without hearings, Sen. Dirksen has now requested the constitutional amendments subcommittee to hold hearings on the proposal.

At its semi-annual meeting in March the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs responded to the Dirksen amendment by reaffirming its belief that the First Amendment is adequate for the protection of the "free exercise of religion" for the people, including pupils in public schools.

The Baptist Joint Committee, C. Emanuel Carlson, executive director, based its action on resolutions of its sponsoring conventions.

The Southern Baptist Convention, American Baptist Convention, and the North American Baptist General Conference in 1964 passed strong resolutions affirming that the language of the First Amendment should not be changed.

In 1966 both the American and Southern Baptist Conventions reaffirmed the 1964 resolution. Previous findings of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs pointed out that the Supreme Court decisions on prayer and Bible reading in public schools did not deal with restrictions on the free exercise of religion by the people. They restricted government agencies from imposing, regulating or organizing religious exercises in the schools.

No case involving the "free exercise of religion" in public schools has yet been decided by the Supreme Court.

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Washington observers believe that Sen. Dirksen is as determined to push his Prayer amendment as he was to push his Reapportionment amendment. If he fails to get it through the committee, it is anticipated that he will try to force it on the floor of the Senate.

A possible "vehicle" for getting the prayer amendment before the Senate may be a proposal, introduced by Sen. Joseph Tydings (D., Md.), to declare the week of Halloween as National UNICEF week. The Halloween-UNICEF measure is reportedly being prevented from coming to the Senate floor by a "Republican hold" which is presumed to be Dirksen.

Observers believe that the senator may use this measure, as he did the American Legion baseball week proposal for his reapportionment amendment, and offer the prayer amendment as a substitute.

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Puerto Rico Government
Leader Welcomes Baptists

7/13/66

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (BP)--Puerto Rico's secretary of state met with 12 team members of a Baptist sponsored evangelistic crusade here, saying he too desired salvation for his people.

Carlos Lastra, also acting governor of the commonwealth in the absence of the governor, spoke to team members of the Baptist New Life Crusade for some 25 minutes about the tremendous evangelistic opportunities in Puerto Rico, especially in Caguas and Cayey.

Lastra said Puerto Rico would achieve 100 per cent electricity this year, allowing all the people to have a radio where they could hear the Gospel.

Team members present noticed a Bible on Lastra's desk and learned that he is an evangelical and has recently preached to laymen in Panama.

He said the government believes in separation of church and state, but believes the state should provide the environment in which religion can flourish.

The government official asked the team members to pray for him. "It's not easy to be a Christian in politics," he said.

Before the team members left his office, Lastra led the group in prayer. He prayed that Puerto Rico would be an example, not only in economic achievement and social justice, but also in spiritual progress.

Latest reports from the crusade office in San Juan indicate there were 430 professions of faith in the crusade during the 11 days of the two-week crusade. A crusade official predicted 500 such decisions by the end of the campaign.

Before the crusade began July 3, the 13 Baptist churches on the island had only 1,000 members.

The crusade, a joint project of the Baptist General Convention of Texas and the Southern Baptist Convention's Home Mission Board, is using 60 Texas Baptist pastors and laymen as team members.

Each team member made more than 100 contacts a day on this island of 2.5 million persons, the crusade office reported. More than 500,000 pieces of literature were given out.

The crusade was also being conducted on the British West Indies Islands of St. Kitts and Antigua.

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CORRECTION AND NOTE TO EDITORS: On graph 8 of above story (Puerto Rico Government Leader Welcomes Baptists), line 2 should read: "...during the first 11 days of the two-week crusade." The Dallas Regional Office of Baptist Press will provide a wrapup story, including final crusade results, tomorrow.

---Baptist Press

Arizona's Dawson Named To Home Board Staff

ATLANTA (BP)--Irvin Dawson, language missions director for Arizona Southern Baptists, has been named assistant secretary in the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's language missions department.

One of Dawson's major responsibilities will be working with state conventions, associations, and church program organizations to help local churches implement their own ministries to language-culture groups, according to Department Secretary Gerald Palmer.

"He comes to a position of leadership in an area of increasing importance in language missions," Palmer said.

"Many churches have accepted their responsibility to language groups by providing ministries without financial assistance from the mission agency. Dawson will be encouraging this."

Geographically, Dawson will be responsible for administering the entire program of language missions in the state convention territories of Kansas, Colorado, Utah-Idaho, and Oregon-Washington.

The new assistant secretary is a graduate of the University of Richmond in Richmond, Va., and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

Before going to Arizona as language missions director in 1957, he was a missionary to the Spanish-speaking in Sacramento, Calif. He also was pastor of the Knotts Island Baptist Church in Knotts Island, N. C.

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Mississippi Baptists Begin New Building

JACKSON, Miss. (BP)--Contracts were awarded and ground was broken here for a new headquarters building for the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

Three contracts totaling \$1,015,800 were awarded to local contractors by the executive committee of the convention's board just prior to the groundbreaking ceremonies.

Numerous Mississippi Baptist leaders and others were present for the groundbreaking. The new building is to be erected at the corner of North President and Mississippi Streets in downtown Jackson.

W. Douglas Hudgins, Jackson pastor and chairman of the Mississippi Convention Board's executive committee, presided over the groundbreaking ceremony, and called on Chester L. Quarles, Jackson, executive secretary-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, to speak and turn the first shovel of dirt.

Other leaders followed in turning shovels full.

The building will be a modern 4-story structure designed to meet the needs of the convention for the next 20 years or more, said Quarles.

The present State Baptist Building at the corner of Congress and Mississippi has been outgrown because of the growth of the life and work of the convention, Quarles continued.

The new building, scheduled to be completed by early fall in 1967, was authorized by the Mississippi Baptist Convention and the executive committee of the Convention Board was likewise given authority to proceed with plans for the new building.

The Convention now owns most of the block on which the new building will be located, except the Jackson City Library and the Mississippi State Employment Service Building.

Clyde Bryan of Hattiesburg, Miss., has been employed by the executive committee to serve as a building consultant for the construction of the building.

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Carson-Newman, Baylor
Tops in Missionaries

ATLANTA (BP)--A Texas and a Tennessee college each provided 20 of their students to summer missions under the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention this year.

Baylor University at Waco, Texas, and Carson-Newman College at Jefferson City, thus led the 212 colleges represented by the 670 students appointed this year.

The students spent 10 weeks of the summer at mission tasks in the United States, Panama, and Puerto Rico.

Seven states provided 402 of the 670 students: Texas, Georgia, Tennessee, Mississippi, Arkansas, Alabama, and Louisiana.

Other top schools, with 10 or more students serving, are the following:

Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, Ark.
Hardin-Simmons University (Baptist), Abilene, Tex.
Louisiana Polytechnic Institute, Ruston, La.
Clarke Memorial College (Baptist), Newton, Miss.
Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Ill.
Samford University (Baptist), Birmingham, Ala.
Tift College, Forsyth, Ga.
Southeastern Louisiana College, Hammond, La.
Auburn University, Auburn, Ala.
Louisiana College (Baptist), Pineville, La.

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Seminary, Chicago Baptists
Sponsor Theological Studies

CHICAGO (BP)--A week on "Continuing Theological Studies" sponsored by Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and the Chicago Southern Baptist Association is scheduled here Sept. 26-30.

The program is designed to provide intensive study in three areas: church history, counseling, and Bible study. Pastors and selected laymen in the Chicago area are expected to participate.

Daily lectures and discussion periods will be led by three professors from Southwestern Seminary.

Robert Baker, professor of church history, will present lectures on "Our Baptist Heritage." John W. Drakeford, professor of psychology and counseling, will discuss "The Pastor's Counseling Ministry." W. L. Hendricks, professor of theology, will lead a study of "The Theology of Amos."

All sessions of the meeting will be held at the Chicago Southern Baptist Association office building, Broadview, Ill. There will be only one night meeting on Monday night; other meetings will be held during the day--Tuesday through Friday, Sept. 26-30.

Furman Given 15 Tons
of Science Equipment

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GREENVILLE, S. C. (BP)--Approximately 15 tons of electronic equipment valued at \$75,000 has been given to Furman University here by Fairchild Camera and Instrument Corporation of Clifton, N. J.

The arrival of the equipment coincides with the arrival at Furman of Thomas T. Goldsmith, Jr., for many years a research physicist and research director with Fairchild, who will begin his teaching duties as professor of physics at Furman in the fall.

The van-load of equipment will be part of the new science center in the John Laney Plyler Science building, for the physics, chemistry, and biology departments, as well as of interest also to the mathematics and geology departments.

The Plyler Science Building, to be dedicated in the fall, is being constructed at a contract cost of \$2,121,162. Furman had earlier accepted a Federal grant to help finance the building, but South Carolina Baptists instructed the Baptist school to return the money and pledged to raise the funds to replace the grant.

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Mississippi Baptist
Paper Urges Dry Vote

JACKSON, Miss. (BP)--Two editorials in The Baptist Record, weekly newspaper published here by the Mississippi Baptist Convention, strongly urged the people of Mississippi to vote against the sale of alcoholic beverages in county-wide local option liquor elections.

The eight-page Baptist newspaper also included as a supplement a four-page tabloid insert devoted entirely to the liquor election question, and carried three feature articles and a front-page news story on the liquor question.

Under a new law which went into effect July 1, each county has the right to call an election on the sale of alcoholic beverages. Prohibition, which has been the state law in Mississippi for several decades, will be enforced in all counties which do not approve the sale of liquor.

Already, about two dozen counties have authorized elections in July or August.

The Baptist Record, with the largest circulation of any newspaper in the state, called editorially for "Christian leaders in every county in the state" to "work diligently now to defeat legalization, and to retain prohibition."

Said the editorial, written by Editor Joe T. Odle, "The Baptist Record is against liquor...all liquor...legal and illegal, boot or bootleg."

"We believe that the Bible is against liquor."

"We have seen too much of the fruits of liquor to be able to support it or to relent our opposition to it," said the editorial.

Another editorial urging immediate action said that the task "is to get dry voters to the polls and to convince the undecided voters that they should vote dry."

The Baptist paper commended organizations such as the United Drys, and urged its readers to join such organizations, support them financially and with votes on election day. "If such an organization has not been set up in your county, action to form one should be taken immediately," the editorial said.

Both of the editorials commended the governor, legislature, and liquor control board chairman for saying that they will keep every county which votes dry, boot dry, and for stating that prohibition laws will be enforced in every county which does not legalize liquor.

The front page news story reported that both wet and dry forces are "militantly organizing for action since the Mississippi legislature abolished the state's historic statewide prohibition statute and enacted a new local option liquor law."

"The wets are taking the initiative in getting elections held, while the dry leaders are beginning an education campaign against the evils of legalization," said the front page news story.

The newspaper reprinted an editorial from the Meridian (Miss.) Herald condemning liquor and an article from Home Life magazine by Joe W. Burton of the Baptist Sunday School Board, and list of 18 questions under the caption "Who Will Drink It?"

The four-page tabloid supplement, printed on green paper, was devoted exclusively to the liquor question, and included testimonials from four Baptist pastors in Mississippi, a long article outlining what the Bible says about "drink," and other articles urging Mississippians to vote "dry."

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Crusade Workers Meet
"Embodiment of God"

By C. C. Risenhoover

RIO PIEDRAS, Puerto Rico (BP)--Not far from where Texas Baptists were preaching in the Puerto Rican New Life Crusade is a woman who claims to be the embodiment of God. Her followers outnumber the 1,000 Baptists on the island by thousands.

Crusade team members visited her temple, a large building shaped like a cross, one night.

Earlier in the day while handing out literature in the area, they had noticed people crawling around the temple on their knees and occasionally clapping their hands, calling out "Mita."

The woman who calls herself "Mita" began her unique ministry in 1940. She is a native Puerto Rican, 67 years of age.

More than 3,000 people jammed the auditorium for the late service. Practically all were dressed in white.

"Mita" had two brass bands of 75 instruments each and one string band with 40 instruments.

Following the music several men got up and gave testimonies about what "Mita" had done for them. Then "Mita", dressed in white, spoke to the congregation. She talked in terms of God as "my daddy." She said, "He that has seen me has seen the father."

Then one of her 12 apostles, all men, read a verse of scripture which she applied directly to herself. She talked about the many people that she had healed and blessed. Occasionally people would yell "Glory."

After the service concluded she dismissed the people with a kiss, went out and got into her Cadillac. Though she lives only across the street, her followers surrounded the car until she was escorted safely to her house.

"Mita" owns two complete blocks in the city and several businesses. Some people here estimate her estate at \$6 million.

One team member asked one of her followers if she had written any books. He said, "Mita, like Christ, did not write books but this was the work of her apostles." Though "Mita" used the Bible, the team members did not see any of her followers with a Bible.

A team member tried to give a man some literature but he refused saying "Mita" told them all they needed to know. He said "Mita" is the only one who has all power.

Team members learned that "Mita" owns another temple in Caguas, Puerto Rico.

A team member asked one of the temple guards what would happen if she died. He seemed shocked. "I don't know," he said.

Others said Christ had already done his work and gone back allowing "Mita" to take over.

Some refer to her as the Holy Spirit, others as the second coming of Christ, and still others as God himself.

The crusade which ended July 16 was sponsored by the Baptist General Convention of Texas and the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

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Five Lectures Slated
At Southeastern Seminary

7/18/66

WAKE FOREST, N. C. (BP)--Five prominent religious leaders will lecture at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary during its fall term, President Olin T. Binkley has announced.

James A Martin, Jr., Danforth professor of religion in higher education at Union Theological Seminary in New York, will give the Convocation Lectures, Sept. 8-9.

Rep. Walter H. Judd, Congressman and former medical missionary in China, will speak on Sept. 28.

Blake Smith, pastor of the University Baptist Church in Austin, Tex. will preach daily, Oct. 11-14.

On Oct. 26, the missionary day address will be given by Hugo H. Culpepper, director of division of missions of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board in Atlanta.

Eugene A. Nida, secretary for translations of the American Bible Society and one of the foremost linguists in the United States, will speak on Nov. 30.

All of the lectures will be given at 10:00 a. m. in the seminary chapel and will be open to the public.

GEORGIA EDITOR TO TEXAS: John Jeter Hurt Jr., editor of the Christian Index published by the Georgia Baptist Convention, has been elected the new editor of the Baptist Standard, weekly newspaper of the Baptist General Convention of Texas. Hurt, the first layman and journalist named to the Texas editorship, assumes the post Nov. 1, succeeding E. S. James who is retiring. (BP PHOTO)