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**WASHINGTON** W. Barry Garrett, Editor/200 Maryland Ave., N.E./Washington, D.C. 20002/Telephone (202) 544-4226**Baptist Leaders Hit  
At Prayer Amendment**

WASHINGTON (BP)--Baptists played a prominent role in opposition to the proposed "Dirksen Prayer Amendment" during hearings here conducted by the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments.

In addition to testimony by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs urging that the First Amendment is adequate to protect the free exercise of religion, four other Baptists expressed their views at the hearings. Three of them opposed the amendment and the fourth was not clear in his testimony.

The four were W. Perry Crouch, executive secretary of the North Carolina Baptist State Convention; Dallas West, executive secretary of the Indiana Baptist Convention (American Baptist); Robert S. Alley, associate professor of religion at the University of Richmond, Va.; and Robert Bennett, who said he was minister of the Carmody Hills Baptist Church, Washington, D. C.

Crouch, who was scheduled to testify at the hearing but was hindered by a conflict in his schedule, submitted a written statement opposing the Dirksen Amendment.

He was joined in the statement by E. W. Price, president of the General Board of the North Carolina Convention, and by Adrian Newton, chairman of the North Carolina Baptist Committee on Public Affairs.

The North Carolina spokesmen said, "The court (i.e., Supreme Court) has declared that government agencies should not impose, regulate, or organize religious exercise in schools. With this decision, our Baptist people are in full agreement."

They pointed out that there was "little or no interest or concern" for the Dirksen Amendment among North Carolina Baptists.

Opposing any alteration of the Constitution's protection of religion, the North Carolina group said, "We strongly believe that we have all of the guarantee we need in the First Amendment and the Bill of Rights."

Dallas West, an American Baptist executive, was scheduled to testify, but was prevented from traveling to Washington by the airline strike. He wrote a letter to Sen. Birch Bayh (D., Ind.), chairman of the committee conducting the hearings, expressing opposition to the Dirksen Amendment.

Alley appeared in his capacity as a private citizen at the request of the religious liberty committee of Virginia Baptists. He opposed the Dirksen Amendment because, he said, it would in effect establish some form of religion and that it would limit the protection now existing in the Constitution.

The Virginia professor said that "the proposed amendment would drastically affect future Supreme Court decisions based upon the First Amendment."

He further opposed the proposal because of the widely varying concepts of prayer among the religious groups in the nation. The effort of school officials to provide for prayer would inevitably violate the conscience of many people, he said.

Alley's opposition was further based on the view that the Dirksen Amendment would open the doors to coercion in religion and that the practices authorized would have little effect in inculcating moral values in children.

Bennett, who identified himself as minister of the Carmody Hills Baptist Church, Washington and as an employee of the department of missions of the National Council of Churches working in the student interracial ministry, asked the Congress to "consider those who have not encountered God and give them the opportunity to find him."

His testimony was contradictory to that offered by spokesmen for the National Council of Churches itself. These officials expressed views similar to that of their Baptists in opposition to the Dirksen Amendment.

Prayer Amendment Has  
Little Chance to Pass

By W. Barry Garrett

WASHINGTON (BP)--Now that the hearings on the proposed "Dirksen Prayer Amendment" to the Constitution have concluded, what are the prospects for its passage by the Congress?

Barring unexpected developments, the prospects for this amendment are that it will not pass.

Here are the reasons: In the first place the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments that conducted the hearings has not made up its mind what to recommend to the Senate. Indications are that it will not recommend the Dirksen Amendment, but that it may try to present a resolution to the Senate to "express the mind of the Congress" as to what the Supreme Court decisions on prayer and Bible reading in schools actually said.

In the next place a constitutional amendment must pass by a two-thirds majority. It is exceedingly doubtful that this many votes can be secured.

Senator Dirksen is reportedly still committed to forcing the issue to a vote on the floor of the Senate, regardless of what the Judiciary Committee does. This is expected to come in the very near future.

A staff member of the Judiciary Committee told Baptist Press that if Dirksen forced the issue to the floor of the Senate before the committee has time to make its recommendations, "this will end the matter." In other words, there would be no further recommendation by the committee.

In the unexpected event that the Senate approved the Dirksen amendment, it would have to go to the House of Representatives where it would be assigned to the House Judiciary Committee of which Rep. Emanuel Celler (D., N. Y.) is chairman. He is unalterably opposed to any such amendment.

This would call for more House hearings and delay in making a report to the House. By this time Congress would have adjourned, and the legislative process would have to start all over again, both in the Senate and the House when the new Congress convenes next January.

The sum of it all is that there is very little prospect that the Congress will recommend a constitutional prayer amendment this year.

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Two Texas Baptists  
Named to Peace Corps

8/9/66

WASHINGTON (BP)--Two Texas Baptists will be going to Panama and to India as officials in the Peace Corps, according to the Peace Corps office here.

Weston Ware of Dallas, associate secretary of the Christian Life Commission for the Baptist General Convention of Texas, will become deputy representative for the Peace Corps in Panama.

Ken Saunier, of Austin, Tex., Baptist Student Union director at the University of Texas, will become central regional director for the Peace Corps in India.

Ware will be located in Panama City. As the number-two man in Panama he will serve in an administrative and supervisory capacity, overseeing the Peace Corps program for the entire country. He will work closely with the national leadership to set up new programs and projects.

In India, Saunier will serve in Bhopal, capital city of the interior state of Madhya Pradesh.

His primary duties will be (1) relating to the local officials to set up new projects, (2) responsibility for the welfare and actions of the volunteers in his area, and (3) strengthening the image of the Peace Corps.

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Both men are currently participating in a six-weeks language and administrative training period in Washington. They will depart for their respective fields in September for a 30-month tour of service.

Ware, a graduate of Baylor University, Waco, Tex., and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, has served with the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission since 1964. He was director of student work for the Hawaii Baptist Convention from 1961-1964.

Saunier is a graduate of New Mexico State University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth. He served as BSU director on the University of Texas campus for the past four years. Prior to that he was BSU director at Arlington (Tex.) State College.

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Strickland Resigns As  
Dallas College President

8/9/66

DALLAS (BP)--Otis Strickland, president of Dallas Baptist College here since its founding and president of Decatur Baptist College which moved to Dallas to form the new Baptist college, has announced his resignation.

Strickland, 54, said he plans to "return to my first love---evangelism and pastoral ministry."

Trustees of the Baptist school selected a committee to find a new administrator, and appointed Fred White, chairman of the division of Christianity at Dallas Baptist College, as interim administrator.

White had served as chairman of the steering committee which built the campus and moved the junior college to Dallas from Decatur, Tex., last fall.

Decatur Baptist College had been called the oldest junior college in the world. The entire faculty moved about 60 miles from Decatur to Dallas to form the nucleus of the Dallas Baptist College. The school opened in September of 1965, with 1,170 students enrolled.

Strickland's resignation was accepted by the trustees on Aug. 4. He had been head of the institutions for 16 years.

In his prepared statement of resignation, Strickland said:

"The decision to retire from the presidency of Dallas Baptist College was a difficult decision, and it comes after much prayer and the conviction that it is the will of God that I return to my first love---evangelism and pastoral ministry."

Strickland was pastor of Texas Baptist churches for 14 years before becoming president of Decatur Baptist College in 1950.

He graduated from the Decatur school himself in 1936, and earned the bachelor of arts degree from Howard Payne College (Baptist), Brownwood, Tex., in 1939. He also attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, and was awarded an honorary doctorate from Howard Payne in 1951.

Just prior to becoming president of Decatur Baptist College, Strickland was pastor of the First Baptist Church, Cisco, Tex., for four years.

When he became president of the Baptist junior college, it had approximately 80 students. Strickland is credited with having held the school together during its time of low enrollment and nurturing its growth to the present.

Strickland said he expects an enrollment of some 1,500 students this year at Dallas Baptist College, located on a spacious lakeside tract of land in the Oak Cliff section of Dallas.

A committee of seven of the school's 25 trustees will screen applicants for the presidency and make recommendations to the full board of trustees.

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