

**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

460 James Robertson Parkway  
Nashville, Tennessee 37219  
Telephone (615) 244-2355  
W. C. Fields, Director  
Jim Newton, Assistant Director**REGIONAL OFFICES****ATLANTA** Walker L. Knight, Editor/161 Spring Street, N.W./Atlanta, Georgia 30303/Telephone (404) 523-2593  
**DALLAS** R. T. McCartney, Editor/103 Baptist Building/Dallas, Texas 75201/Telephone (214) RI 1-1996  
**WASHINGTON** W. Barry Garrett, Editor/200 Maryland Ave., N.E./Washington, D.C. 20002/Telephone (202) 544-4226

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**Religious Question In  
1970 Census Gets Airing****WASHINGTON (BP)**--Should the 1970 census ask American citizens about their religious affiliation?

This question was discussed at length at hearings here before a subcommittee on census and statistics of the Post Office and Civil Service Committee of the House of Representatives. Rep. Robert N. C. Nix (D., Pa.) is subcommittee chairman.

The answer, according to A. Ross Eckler, head of the Bureau of the Census, is that the religious question probably will not be included in the 1970 census.

When the 1960 census was in preparation the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs opposed the religious question on the grounds that it would be "a violation of religious liberty and the separation of church and state." It later opposed the use of the question in periodic surveys and reports by the Bureau of the Census.

The Baptist Public Affairs Committee has not reviewed its position since 1958, but it will come up for study at its October 1966 meeting, according to C. Emanuel Carlson, executive director.

Further hearings on the plans for the 1970 census will be conducted by the Post Office and Civil Service Committee in the spring of 1967. The purpose of these hearings has not been to enact legislation but to share information and advice with the Bureau of the Census.

The bureau announced earlier this year that it is considering the religious question for the 1970 census but that no exact formulation of the question has been recommended.

Among those pushing for the religious question in the census are the Religious Research Association, the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies, some Protestant home missions groups, the National Catholic Welfare Conference, and a variety of sociologists and business groups.

Among those opposing the question are the American Jewish Committee, the Christian Scientists, and others who are resisting the invasion of the privacy of individuals by government agencies.

Bishop Paul F. Tanner, general secretary of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, in testimony before the House panel argued in favor of a question on religious affiliation in the 1970 census. He said that "statistical information about religious affiliation is helpful to both commercial enterprises and public and private welfare agencies in projecting services to the citizenry."

He said information about the religious makeup of the population is necessary to both public and private agencies conducting health, welfare, education, and anti-poverty programs and permits a more sensible allocation of resources."

The Bishop suggested two questions. They are: "Do you belong to a religious body?" and "If so, to which body?" There is "no reason to go beyond that," he said.

Some who objected to the religious question said they might change their mind if the answer were voluntary rather than mandatory as are other questions on the census.

Jewish objection to the religious question was voiced by Morris B. Abram, president of the American Jewish Committee. He said, "To compel a person to profess his religion or lack of affiliation is to deprive him of religious freedom, in direct violation of the First Amendment."

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Conference for Deaf  
Urges Study of Needs

RIDGECREST, N. C. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Conference of the Deaf, meeting in annual session here, picked a Dallas layman, Lloyd Bridges, as its president and also selected Dallas as its 1967 meeting place next Aug. 6-9.

The more than 200 Baptist deaf asked a committee to study the needs of deaf children which can be met by literature, Vacation Bible School materials, and other ministries.

Carter Bearden of Atlanta, deaf worker with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, was encouraged to continue in evangelism with the deaf of Japan and in the completion of a religious manual sign directory.

Other officers elected were Calvin Hill of Dallas, vice president; Samuel E. Hinson of Atlanta, secretary; and Max Floyd of Midland, Tex., treasurer.

The conference also is investigating affiliation with the National Organization of the Deaf.

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Student Director At  
Texas A & M Dies

8/26/66

COLLEGE STATION, Tex. (BP)--Prentis W. Chunn Jr., Baptist Student Union director at Texas Agricultural and Mechanical (A & M) University here died Aug. 25 in St. Joseph's Hospital, Bryan, Tex., of a heart attack.

Chunn had been in the hospital for two weeks following an earlier attack, but was believed to be improving. The 41-year-old Baptist student worker was to be cremated Aug. 29.

He is survived by his wife, Ruth, two sons, David, 21, now serving with the U. S. Air Force in the Philippines, and Kenny, 11, and a daughter, Marion, 18.

Chunn was a graduate of Baylor University, Waco, Tex., and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort. Worth.

He had served two different times as Baptist student director at Texas A&M--once from 1946-1949, and again from 1963 until his death. Other former positions include associate in the student department of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, Dallas; pastor of several churches in Texas, pastor of a church in Hawaii, and an Army chaplain in the Philippines and in Japan.

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