

**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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September 27, 1966

**Editorial Says God Not
Banished from Schools**

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--An editorial in the Baptist Messenger, weekly state Baptist paper published here, interpreted the meaning of a recent ruling by the Oklahoma attorney general, saying that the attorney general's opinions "cannot rule God out of the public schools."

The editorial in the official publication of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma came on the heels of a ruling by Oklahoma Attorney General Charles Nesbitt who issued an opinion that voluntary prayer and Bible reading in the public schools of Oklahoma City is unconstitutional.

The attorney general was interpreting, at the request of the state superintendent of public instruction, earlier decisions by the United States Supreme Court concerning required Bible reading and prescribed prayers.

"This opinion from the attorney general shows once again how urgent is the need for a court case concerning the practice of prayer and Bible reading in the schools," said the editorial, written by Editor Jack L. Gritz. "Such a case needs to be carried to the Supreme Court."

"Clarification of the basic issue involved as to whether such practices are within the law if voluntary rather than compulsory can come only from a court case," wrote Gritz.

The Baptist editor said that although the opinion of the state's attorney general concerned Oklahoma City only, it would apply to other school systems in the state permitting voluntary prayer and Bible reading. "The opinion in effect does become law."

"As much as we may dislike the results, the attorney general has merely carried out his duties. He has given his opinion as to what the Supreme Court decided earlier," wrote Gritz.

"Another thing to remember is that the attorney general did not issue his opinion on the basis of his own feelings in the matter," the editorial said. Nesbitt, according to news reports issued at the time of his ruling, said that his opinion was contrary to his personal feelings and to his own interpretations of the Constitution, but he was to the best of his ability interpreting the Supreme Court rulings.

In his editorial, Gritz gave his impressions of the general feeling among Baptists regarding the issue.

"Baptists have always opposed the teaching of sectarian doctrines in the public schools," he wrote. "In the main, they have approved of voluntary prayer and Bible reading."

"The teaching of doctrine is clearly a violation of the First Amendment to the Constitution. Prayer and Bible reading have seemed to be in the tradition of the men who wrote the Constitution and the practice of the Congress," the editorial continued.

"The First Amendment guarantees the 'free exercise' of religion," said Gritz. "The Supreme Court and Attorney General Nesbitt both seem to have forgotten this fact."

Gritz also reminded Oklahoma Baptists of "the primary responsibility of the home and the church for the religious education of our children. We have never thought this was the responsibility of the public schools.

"We should remember that the Supreme Court's decisions or the attorney general's opinion cannot 'rule God out of the public schools,'" Gritz stated.

"The fact that prayer and Bible reading are not permitted in the classrooms does not mean that God is not there," the editorial said. "He will always be present."

"The silent prayer--which may at times be more meaningful than a public prayer--has not been ruled out. The privilege of personal witness is still there. The influence of Christian character cannot be banned.

"Wherever a dedicated man or woman teaches or administers a school, wherever a consecrated Christian boy or girl or young person lives at his best, there the truth of God is being taught," said the editorial. "We all need to be our best for him--at school or elsewhere--each day."

Religious Leaders Urge Action In Poverty War

WASHINGTON (BP)--The Interreligious Committee Against Poverty in its semi-annual meeting here sent President Johnson a telegram urging immediate action in the War on Poverty for 1967.

The Interreligious Committee, organized last January, is made up of Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Jewish agencies.

Southern Baptists do not participate. Some other Baptist groups work with the committee through the National Council of Churches.

The occasion of the telegram to the president is the congressional bog-down in renewing and funding the Economic Opportunity Act for fiscal 1967.

At a press conference following the meeting, the Interreligious Committee emphasized that the churches must provide the impetus and fervor needed to fight the War on Poverty.

Rabbi Richard G. Hirsch, director of the Hebrew Religious Action Center in Washington, said, "Popular acceptance of the War on Poverty is needed to stimulate interest back home.... We must get our people to come into contact with the reality of human existence."

A member of the press asked why the churchmen were looking increasingly to the government to carry out social welfare programs.

Rabbi Seymour Cohen of Chicago, a co-chairman of the Interreligious Committee replied, "We have reached the stage in human development where there must be a harnessing of all forces or we won't get the job done."

Cohen expressed his concern that the churches provide the moral impetus to prod government legislation. "Personal commitment" is needed within the church to accomplish this.

"We should not expect the government to take on this part of it," Msgr. Lawrence Corcoran of Catholic Charities, added.

Much of the work of the organization, according to Roman Catholic Bishop Gallagher of Lafayette, Ind., is not only to urge Congress to appropriate action, but to mobilize individuals and to educate them in the needs of the nation in the social welfare realm.

The Interreligious Committee is composed of representatives from the National Council of Churches, the National Catholic Welfare Conference, and the Synagogue Council of America in cooperation with other Jewish bodies.

At its meeting the Interreligious Committee named J. Edward Carothers of the National Council of Churches as a new co-chairman to succeed Eugene Carson Blake, general secretary-elect of the World Council of Churches. Five other co-chairmen serve together to make up the executive committee of the group.

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Military Chaplaincy Still Needs Baptists

9/27/66

ATLANTA (BP)--The U. S. military chaplaincy continues to need Baptist ministers ready for immediate commissioning and active duty.

The Southern Baptist Chaplains Commission issued a call here for ministers, the second such call in the last year.

George W. Cummins of Atlanta, director of the Baptist chaplaincy work, said the call was in no sense an emergency but the continued expansion of the military due to the war in Viet Nam has created need for more applicants.

Commenting on the services, he said the Navy had immediate needs and would commission qualified men within 60 to 90 days. The Army needs chaplains for the Reserve, with active duty available in 60 to 90 days.

The Army and Navy have raised their age limits to 39 years, with the applicant accepting a waiver.

In the Air Force, quotas for both initial commissioning and active duty continued to be filled.

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Both Army and Navy requirements for chaplains include an age limit (39 years), 120 semester hours of college study or a degree, and 90 theological hours or a degree from a seminary. Two years full-time or four years part-time pastoral experience is required for active duty assignment.

Ministers interested should contact the Division of Chaplaincy of the SBC Home Mission Board in Atlanta.

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Ouachita Dedicates New
"Rockefeller" Field House

9/27/66

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. (BP)--Ouachita Baptist University here held dedication services for its new \$250,000 Winthrop Rockefeller Field House, hearing an address from the man for whom the facility is named.

Rockefeller, a Republican candidate for governor of Arkansas, called the new field house "proof, in brick and mortar, that Ouachita is seeking to meet the total educational needs of those whose lives it influences so much."

Only brief mention was made of Rockefeller's bid for the governorship. Commenting on the increasing strength of the state's two-party system, Rockefeller said that more people are running on the Republican ticket in 1966 than have run altogether as Republican candidates in all the years before.

Rockefeller also said he was "proud to be associated in this way with Ouachita University" and praised the Baptist school for having an educational program covering "the whold range of human needs . . . intellectual, spiritual and physical."

Ouachita President Ralph Phelps expressed appreciation for Rockefeller's \$50,000 contribution "which made possible the completion of the project."

Phelps praised Rockefeller for his assistance to Arkansas' education program and for his help to Ouachita in particular. "I don't know anyone more deserving of praise than Mr. Rockefeller," Phelps said.

"The manner in which he has continued to fight for progress in this state in spite of personal abuse is evidence of his limitless stature," Phelps said.

The chairman of the Ouachita board of trustee, Marvin Green, cited the resolution of the board in naming the building "Winthrop Rockefeller Field House" in order to "proudly identify the Rockefeller name with this institution."

The new field house will seat 2,000 with folding bleachers to be added later to accommodate an additional 1,000. The gymnasium contains offices and training facilities for the physical education department, plus adjacent tennis courts and a parking lot.

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Belmont College Begins
Auditorium Construction

9/27/66

NASHVILLE (BP)--Belmont College here has broken ground on a new \$900,000 auditorium and fine arts building.

Construction is expected to be completed within about a year on the two-level brick building.

During ground-breaking ceremonies at the Baptist school here, the president of the Southern Baptist Convention, H. Franklin Paschall of Nashville, led the dedicatory prayer, and the chairman of the board of trustees, Fred D. Wright of Nashville, delivered the address.

Wright, owner of the Wright Tool and Die Co., presented to the school a silver-plated shovel used in the ground-breaking ceremonies.

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