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Baptist Agency To Work
On Religion In Schools

WASHINGTON (BP)--The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs took action at its semi-annual meeting here to work toward an educational approach to religion in public schools.

This Baptist agency, of which C. Emanuel Carlson is executive director, takes the position that the Supreme Court was correct in its rulings banning state-sponsored and directed prayers and devotions in public schools.

However, it was pointed out at the meeting of the Baptist Joint Committee that the court's decisions have been so widely misunderstood and misinterpreted that there continue to be demands for a constitutional prayer amendment.

James M. Sapp, correlation director for the Baptist Joint Committee, in a staff report, denied that the Supreme Court "has stripped public schools of all vestiges of the Christian faith" as is so often charged.

"This approach simply does not square with the facts," he said.

"The court proceeded to carefully delineate ways appropriate for the Bible to be taught and other religious values to be examined in public schools," Sapp continued.

He quoted a part of the Supreme Court's decision which said: "The Bible is worthy of study for its literary and historic qualities. Nothing we have said here indicates that such study of the Bible...may not be effected consonant with the First Amendment...One's education is not complete without a study of the Bible."

In order to help correct the misunderstanding of the court's decisions the Baptist Joint Committee:

1. Took steps toward publication of a pamphlet on "Religion in the Public Schools." It would be the purpose of this pamphlet to "set forth the doors left open by the court and the positive approaches" to religion in schools.
2. Began work toward a set of guidelines on religion in public schools.
3. Will consider making a pronouncement next year on religion in schools and possibly some recommendations to the cooperating conventions on the subject.

In another action the Baptist Joint Committee approved the request of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee for a comprehensive study of church-state practices of Baptist agencies.

The committee also reviewed its actions and positions on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. By refusing to alter its course on the Education Act, the Committee in effect restated its approval of the church-state principles incorporated in the legislation and its disapproval of some of the administrative procedures in implementing the act.

It was reported that the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs is making progress toward registering its name as a trademark which cannot be encroached by other committees or organizations.

The Committee deferred consideration of religious questions in the United States census until its meeting in March 1967. It voted to review all the facts relative to this question and examine its findings next year.

In the meantime the Committee expressed the hope that other denominational agencies would withhold decisions on the question until this study is completed.

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CORRECTION

Story mailed 10/5/66, page one, headlined "New Morality Called Challenge to Baptists," please change work "moral" to become "social" in graph 15, line 4. This graph begins: "But Coggins cited three negative aspects," and ends (as corrected), "...and thus fails to produce a social ethic."

Worshop Speakers Charge
Failure To Deal With Sex

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--The hesitancy of the church to deal with ambiguous moral issues in modern society was attacked sharply by six Southern Baptist leaders in addresses to a Christian ethics workshop at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary here.

Speaking on the issues surrounding the so-called "sexual revolution," Southern Seminary Professor Wayne E. Oates said that all too many churches have ignored the sexual revolution completely.

If the church has not ignored the problems altogether, he said, "we have redoubled our efforts to give simple answers to complex problems."

"Having lost touch with the Holy Spirit, we fanatically enforce the old codes of rural and small-town cultures," said Oates, professor of psychology of religion at the seminary.

"In order not to meet women at the well, ...we as Christians have too often joined that group of Jews who cross over the Jordan and get to Jerusalem ourselves without having anything to do with sexual offenders," he said.

Several factors have contributed to the church's failure in dealing with the changing sexual patterns of modern society, Professor Oates said. He listed several:

--the segmentation of "religion" from life as a whole, leading to the settlement of sexual problems outside the framework of the church, as if the Christian faith had no commentary upon them;

--the breakdown of community pressures as urban living permits more and more anonymity for rural and small-town people seeking freedom from the harsh Puritanism of their neighbors and the self-righteousness of many churches;

--the misuse of scientific data on sex, taken out of its original context and applied as a false basis for a secular interpretation of sex which is adopted by the general public and turned into a "sexual revolution."

"The sexual relationship is the most demanding example of all Christian relationships," the professor said. He warned that it should be understood by the church in the forgiving light of the Resurrection rather than the judgement of the Ten Commandments if the church is to be redemptive in its ministry to sex offenders.

The moral problems of business and government were discussed by William M. Dyal of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

"Many people seem to feel that ethical illness both in management and in labor is more unfortunate than it is wrong. Our society often condones or ignores deception, fraud, ruthlessness and undue regard for narrow self-interests," the denominational leader noted.

"Nevertheless," he added, "it should be recognized that ethical, or unethical, conduct in business is always the conduct of people who are making moral choices, whether singly or with others."

"Moral discipleship in the realm of business and power complexes is concerned with man and his well-being," Dyal continued. "Today, man is easily lost to sight or relegated to an inferior position. In industry he becomes a cog. In education he can become a parrot. In totalitarianism, a puppet. In science, a formula. The old codes of legalism simply leave one half-naked in a cold new world of complexity."

Dyal warned that the Christian will not find "packaged answers" for all of the specifics of life. He said the Christian must not accept blindly the dictates of any political party, economic system, power bloc or social class.

"God transcends communities and their mores and ideals--man is ultimately accountable to Him," he said.

John R. Claypool, pastor of Louisville's Crescent Hill Baptist Church and chairman of the SBC Christian Life Commission, characterized Southern Baptist ethics as:

--individualistic: "Our history as lower middle-class rural people, out of influence, power or prestige, made us to be more concerned with the personal piety of the body than with the problems of community ethics; the tragedy is that we have moved up the sociological ladder and carried a very limited ethical consideration with us to meet more difficult issues."

--simplistic: "Life is paradoxical....there are no absolutes. Our position as activists rather than as intellectuals makes us impatient with ambiguity and suspicious of the man who deals with it."

--suppressive: "We emphasize more the fallenness of man rather than the goodness of creation. Southern Baptists too seldom stress the joy inherent in the will of God, failing to see that morality is simply the practical working-out of reality."

--authoritarian: "We too often are willing simply to exhort rather than to explain; we have fallen back on dogmatism because many of our ethical positions are historically fatigued. We have lost touch with the roots from which they sprang."

Claypool recommended an increased awareness of the work of the Holy Spirit as an ethical guide, the positive nature of creation and redemption, and the benefits of symbolism in conveying meaning and purpose.

"I challenge Southern Baptist pastors to open up their sermons to questions from the people, to let their messages be the first word in a conversation, to bring about dialogue rather than simply monologue," he said.

He further suggested the use of small discussion and prayer groups in the church to share in what he called "the religious pilgrimage of Christian ethics."

Other speakers in the three-day workshop were Foy Valentine, executive secretary of the SBC Christian Life Commission, his associate Ross Coggins, and seminary ethics professor Henlee H. Barnette.

Co-sponsors of the conference were Southern Seminary, the Kentucky Baptist Convention's Christian Life Committee, and the SBC Christian Life Commission.

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Woyke Succeeds Binns As
Public Affairs Chairman

10/6/66

WASHINGTON (BP)--The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, in its semi-annual meeting, elected Frank H. Woyke of Forest Park, Ill., as its new chairman.

Woyke is the executive secretary of the North American Baptist General Conference. He succeeds Walter Pope Binns who has served as chairman of the Baptist Joint Committee for the past three years. Prior to that Binns was vice-chairman 15 years. He has been a member of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs for 23 years. Woyke has been a member since 1948

The North American Baptist General Conference, which Woyke has served for 20 years as executive secretary, has 55,000 members in 340 churches.

"As a smaller body we depend very heavily on the information furnished us by the staff of the Joint Committee," Woyke said. He expressed the hope that the Baptist Public Affairs Committee would continue in the same direction it is presently pursuing.

Woyke was the featured speaker at the conclusion of the Baptist Jubilee Advance in its executive meeting in Nashville, Tenn., in 1963. He has also spoken at Baptist World Congresses in Cleveland, London, and Rio de Janeiro.

The new chairman of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs was born in Russia of German parents. He came with his family to the United States when he was three years old. He is married and is the father of two sons.

Woyke is a graduate of the Hartford Theological Seminary. He earned the master of arts and doctor of philosophy degrees at Yale University.

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Two Baptist Boards Jointly
Produce Audio-Visual Aids

10/6/66

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Sunday School Board and the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention have worked out a cooperative agreement to jointly produce motion pictures, filmstrips, and slide sets prepared as sales and rental items.

The audio-visual materials will be distributed as Broadman Films, produced with the SBC Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Va., and distributed through regular channels.

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Motion pictures will be distributed through the 10 Baptist Film Centers throughout the nation; filmstrips and slide sets through the 49 Baptist Book Stores; and all materials through the Church Audio-Visual Education Plan as well as through trade accounts.

The Sunday School Board and the Foreign Mission Board are cooperating in the audio-visual production and distribution in response to a Southern Baptist Convention directive.

Cooperative arrangements were made by the Broadman Films department of the Sunday School Board, and by the division of audio visual education of the Foreign Mission Board. The agreement went into effect Oct. 1.

Broadman Films plans to release six slide sets, three filmstrips, and one motion picture under this cooperative agreement in 1967.

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