

**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

**BUREAU**BAPTIST SUNDAY SCHOOL BOARD Lynn M. Davis Jr., Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37203,  
Telephone (615) 254-1631News AnalysisReport Bares Soul; Urges  
New Attitudes, New WillBy Beth Hayworth  
Baptist Press Staff Writer

WASHINGTON (BP)--The report of the President's National Commission on Civil Disorders is as much a profile of the soul of America as it is of recent urban riots.

The 250,000-word document, addressed to "the conscience of the nation," is a call to commitment and action to every American, and by implication, to the churches.

As such, its judgment and prophecy will be uncomfortable reading for private citizens who make up the substructure of leadership in churches and communities as well as for top-level decision-makers in all areas of our society.

The report contains no startling truths or unique insights into the causes of urban disturbances. The commission's seven-month investigation documented what many people have been saying all along--that the riots grew out of the segregated, intolerable living conditions of life in the inner city.

It documents these conditions for the ghetto residents: bad housing, poor educational opportunities, unemployment and underemployment, crime, overcrowding, brittle police relations.

Added to these were feelings of being alienated from local government and the mainstream of society, and frustration and powerlessness to do anything about it.

The lengthy report amounts to a judgment on white Americans for creating and maintaining the ghetto. "White racism" was blamed as the "explosive mixture" which has been accumulating in the cities during the last 20 years.

The commissioners recognized that complex factors combined to cause the riots, but it labeled as "the most fundamental" the "racial attitude and behavior of white Americans toward black Americans."

The report said: "What white Americans have never fully understood---but what the Negro can never forget--is that white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto. White institutions created it, white institutions maintain it and white society condones it."

The surprising thing about this condemnation is not that it was said, because it has been said before. This time, however, it was said by a predominately white panel of persons considered by some civil rights leaders as "too moderate" to do a good job of investigating the riots.

The chairman of the commission was Illinois Governor Otto Kerner. A Baptist layman, Herbert Jenkins, chief of police in Atlanta, was on the panel. Jenkins, an ordained deacon, is a member of Morningside Baptist Church in Atlanta.

The vice chairman was Mayor John Lindsey of New York. The two Negroes on the panel were Roy Wilkins, executive director of the NAACP, and Sen. Edward Brooke (R. Mass.). Both Wilkins and Brooke are considered "moderates" in the civil rights movement.

Others on the commission were: Sen. Fred R. Harris (D. Okla.), Rep. James C. Corman (D. Calif.), Rep. William M. McCulloch, (R. Ohio), Charles B. Thornton, chairman of the board, Litton Industries, Inc., I. W. Abel, president, United Steelworkers Union, and Katherine Graham Peden, commissioner of commerce, Kentucky.

One of the myths exploded by the panel's study is that the rioter "is a migrant from the rural South." He was not. The typical rioter was born in a northern state and was a life-long resident of the city in which the riot took place.

The profile shows that he was an unmarried male between the ages of 15 and 24. Most likely, he was a high school drop-out, but better educated than the average inner-city Negro. If he worked at all, it was not full-time and it was at a menial job. The description showed him as extremely hostile to white persons and to middle class Negroes.

When President Johnson appointed the panel last July, he asked them to find out to what extent there had been an organized plan or conspiracy in the riots. The commission answered that they found "no evidence" of such.

Extremists of the Black Power movement came in for sharp criticism, however. Preaching their doctrines of Black Power and violence "helped to create a mood of acceptance and expectation and thus contributed to the eruption of the disorders," the report said.

The commission concluded from its findings that the past riots were not a racial war as such. Instead, they were a "striking out against white authority and white property, and not against white persons."

In a summary statement, the 11-member panel said: "This is our basic conclusion: our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white--separate and unequal."

According to its findings, national reaction to the disorders of 1967 has quickened this movement and deepened the division between the races. If more riots occur, and white retaliation follows, the division could quite conceivably lead to a kind of "urban apartheid", the commission warned.

They urged that the country take as its national goal, "the creation of a single society. . .with a single identification as Americans."

A national commitment that is "compassionate, massive and sustained," will be necessary to correct the destructive environment of the ghetto, the commissioners agreed. The great need is not so much for the government to design new programs as it is for the nation to generate a new will, the commission challenged.

In its recommendations, the commission urged churches and other institutions "to deepen their involvement in the life of the city and their commitment to its revival and welfare."

Some of the programs requested could carry a price tag of an undetermined billions of dollars, or spending on a level with that now going to fight the war in Vietnam.

Other changes called for would not cost money: namely, "new attitudes, new understanding, and above all, a new will."

Among the problems that would not be costly for the government, but depend on attitude and action would be a national policy on open housing that would help break up the ghetto, better relations between the police and ghetto residents, and open channels of communication between local governments and the people.

The program requests for big spending go far beyond those already asked for by the administration and presently being considered by an economy-minded Congress.

Among these, two million new jobs were proposed over the next three years--one million in the public sector and one million in private industry. Six million new housing units are requested within the next five years, beginning with 600,000 in the next year.

The 11-member blue-ribbon panel concluded its report by admitting that there are no simple solutions to the problems of racism and the deterioration of the inner city. This study provides "an honest beginning," they said.

"It is time now to end the destruction and the violence, not only in the streets of the ghetto but in the lives of the people," they challenged.

The Kerner Report underscores some unanswered questions which confront the church again and again. Among these are: To what extent is the church "the conscience of America?" Will local congregations sense the urgency confronting the country and develop policies and programs that demonstrate further their belief in the brotherhood of man and the conviction that the power of God changes both persons and society?

How can the inner city church help bridge the chasm now separating persons in the ghetto from the larger community? Is a new stewardship of influence forthcoming for the church in the city regarding church property, week-day programs and involvement in the community?

Instead of answering all the questions, the report tends to raise some questions that only society can ultimately answer. The big question now is, how will society respond?

Religious Liberty Issues  
Said Confronting Baptists

WASHINGTON (BP)--The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs in semi-annual session here agreed to explore at its October meeting the problems and issues in conscientious objection to military service.

Included in the conscientious objection study will be the plight of those who become objectors to war after they have been inducted into military service.

Another area of conscientious objection has arisen since ministers can now be exempt from participation in Social Security coverage only on grounds of conscience or violation of religious principles.

The committee also investigated church-state and religious liberty issues in tax exemption for churches, the military chaplaincy, housing programs and other areas on the state and local levels.

The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs is an agency representing eight Baptist denominations (including the Southern Baptist Convention) in North America. C. Emanuel Carlson is the executive director.

In another action the Baptist Joint Committee authorized its executive committee "to study the possible advantages and disadvantages related to the use of litigation as a channel of extending our flexibility as a Baptist Joint Committee."

This step was taken after a report by Carlson that increasingly the staff of the Baptist Joint Committee is being asked to file Amicus Curae ("friend of the court") briefs in court cases. The further question of other participation by Baptists in court cases was discussed by the committee.

The possibility of considering a legal department in the Baptist Joint Committee for council and consultation to represent Baptist concerns in litigation was also presented.

The Baptist Joint Committee took no position on the problem of tax exemption for churches. In 1960 the committee sponsored a Religious Liberty Conference on "The Churches and American Tax Policies." Since that time the matter has been under lively discussion in Baptist circles.

Although it cannot be a policy-making body on tax questions, the Baptist Joint Committee will continue to be a resource and consultant agency to help Baptists understand the issues, Carlson said.

A subcommittee of the Baptist Joint Committee gave careful consideration to the religious liberty and church-state issues in the military and other public chaplaincies. The committee recognized that this is an increasingly difficult problem.

As a result of this initial probing the Baptist Joint Committee authorized its staff to "undertake some factual studies about the military chaplaincy and other public chaplaincies consulting with the appropriate leaders in our several Baptist bodies as well as other authorities in the field."

If these studies discover that further consideration should be given to the church-state issues in the chaplaincy, the committee will again take up the problem and make its recommendation.

Another subcommittee explored the church-state issues in low cost housing programs in the nation. It instructed the staff to give serious consideration to a religious liberty conference on the church state facets of housing problems.

Among the problems to be considered in low cost housing would be open housing, the philosophy of programs for individual home ownership and rental housing.

Yet another subcommittee gave attention to the growing church-state and religious liberty problems on the state and local levels. It was pointed out that in years past the focal point of many church-state problems had been on the federal level. Now due to several factors, the burdens of administration and policy making for many public programs have shifted to the states and local communities.

The Baptist Joint Committee took two actions in relation to this shifting locus of church-state issues:

1. A survey will be made of the difficulties that may be met "in achieving responsible involvement of its constituents in affairs of religious liberty and church-state relations in the state and at the local level."

2. The Baptist Joint Committee staff was instructed to "alert state Baptist leadership of the growing importance of responsible action in affairs of religious liberty and church-state relations at the state and local levels."

In another action the Baptist Joint Committee directed its staff to study the program statements of its sponsoring conventions. If any revisions in these statements are found to be needed, the staff is to present suggestions to the Baptist Joint Committee, which in turn will study them and make recommendations to the sponsoring conventions.

In explaining this action, Porter W. Routh, executive secretary of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, pointed out that if all of the sponsoring conventions did not want all of the services of the Baptist Joint Committee, this should not be a point of tension, but should merely be noted in whatever document may be adopted.

-30-

Peterson Returns  
To Teaching

3/8/68

WASHINGTON (BP)--Walfred H. Peterson, director of research services for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs here, has resigned to accept a position at Washington State University, Pullman, Washington.

Peterson has been with the Baptist Committee three years. Prior to that he was on the faculty of Bethel College, St. Paul, Minn., in the political science department.

At Washington State he will be on the undergraduate and graduate faculties in political science. He will begin his new duties at the fall semester 1968.

-30-

Dallas Baptist Receives  
\$500,000 Gift from Collins

3/8/68

DALLAS (BP)--Dallas Baptist College has received a \$500,000 gift from a prominent Texas Baptist philanthropist.

Carr P. Collins, Sr., announced his gift at a March 7 luncheon which officially launched a \$2.5 million development program.

A library-learning center and cultural arts center will be financed by the drive, announced Charles P. Pitts, president.

Pitts said that more than 200 Dallas area community leaders have agreed to serve on the college's board of development and will aid in the campaign.

-30-