

December 30, 1949

127 Ninth Avenue, North Nashville, Tennessee

FEDERAL AID TO CHURCH-OWNED HOSPITALS
VIOLATION OF CONSTITUTION, SAYS DAWSON

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—(BP)—Is it constitutional for church-owned hospitals to receive money from Federal or State governments? Dr. Joseph M. Dawson, director, Southern Baptist Public Affairs Commission, Washington, D. C., does not think so. He believes that the Hill-Burton Act is a clear violation of the First Amendment of the Constitution and that no church hospital, including Baptist, should receive Federal funds.

He made this statement to the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee here. To support his conclusion he cited the opinion of two Washington attorneys, E. Hilton Jackson and Wade B. Hampton.

The lawyers said, "It is our opinion, after careful consideration of the decisions of the Supreme Court, that a grant, gift, or allocation of tax funds by a State or by the Federal government, to a hospital owned, controlled, and operated by a sectarian religious organization... is a clear violation of the provision of the First Amendment...."

They cited the recent U.S. Supreme Court findings in connection with the famed McCollum case, "No tax in any amount, large or small, can be levied to support any religious activities or institutions, whatever they may be called, or whatever form they may adapt to teach or practice religion. Neither a State nor the Federal government can, openly or secretly, participate in the affairs of any religious organizations or groups and vice versa."

Mr. Jackson and Mr. Hampton thought that the church-owned hospital is a definite "religious activity." They said that the hospital is one of the "most persuasive and effective means of propagating faith."

Dr. Dawson, in making this report, predicted that if the Hill-Burton Act is challenged, the Supreme Court, in line with its previous decisions, will hold the law to be in violation of the First Amendment and, therefore, unconstitutional. The report was received into the records of the Executive Committee.

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DR. MOORE STOPS IN MIAMI

MIAMI, Fla.—(BP)—Dr. Merrill D. Moore, Director of Promotion, SBC Executive Committee, and Merrill D. Moore, Jr., stopped here briefly between flights en route to a tour of South American mission fields.

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VIRGINIA PASTOR BEGINS
42ND YEAR WITH CHURCH

NORFOLK, Va.—BP—The Rev. Sparks W. Melton, D.D., has begun his 42nd year as pastor of Norfolk's Freemason Street Baptist Church.

Dr. Melton began his pastorate here in December, 1908, coming from the First Baptist Church of Augusta, Ga. Until quite recent years he had seldom taken a vacation which would take him from his pulpit for more than one Sunday.

No other living minister has served so long in one pastorate in Norfolk, and there is no definite record of any other minister in the city's history who has served one pulpit longer than 40 years.

Six years ago Dr. Melton was designated as Norfolk's First Citizen, an annual award by the Cosmopolitan Club. In many respects he has been generally regarded as Norfolk's first citizen for many years. He is a graduate of Richmond College, (now the University of Richmond) and Crozer Seminary. He is vice-rector of the University of Richmond, and has long been active in Crozer's affairs.

Dr. Melton's church celebrated its 100th anniversary last year. He has never had an assistant pastor, though his church, a downtown church, has grown to an active membership of about 1,150.

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AGED PROFESSOR PAYS HONOR DEBT; BANK
GIVES MONEY TO CUMBERLAND UNIVERSITY

LEBANON, Tenn.—(BP)—In the years before the depression Jacob E. Boethius taught foreign languages in Cumberland University in Lebanon. Came the bank failures and age, and Professor Boethius had to leave Cumberland owing a note at the Lebanon Bank and Trust Company for \$250.

Then he really fell upon hard times. Although the professor could teach nine languages, there were a lot of language teachers around and he was well over fifty. Professor Boethius got a job as an attendant in an insane asylum to pay his way back to his native Sweden. And there he tutored students for a living until his eyesight went back on him.

At long last he fell back on a small pension in his native Sweden. But all through the years since 1929 Professor Boethius has insisted on paying back the money he owed the Lebanon bank. He was told that the note had been written off. But that made no difference to the professor. He kept paying until the other day he paid the last dollar with interest. The bank decided it was a banker's turn to show good faith. President O. W. Stephens wrote the professor that the \$250 had been turned over to Cumberland University for its second century expansion program.

Cumberland, formerly a Presbyterian school, now belongs to Tennessee Baptists.

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1952 CONVENTION INVITATIONS
REQUESTED BEFORE MAY MEETING

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—(BP)—Invitations for the 1952 Southern Baptist Convention should be made now. They should be sent to the Committee on Time, Place and Preacher in care of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, Nashville, Tennessee. This is the recommendation of the Convention Arrangements Committee, a subcommittee of the Executive Committee.

"The Convention Arrangements Committee has no disposition to attempt to determine where the Convention will meet," according to Dr. Duke K. McCall, executive secretary for the Executive Committee, "It is imperative, however, that information about the facilities available be in the hands of the Convention when it determines where it will meet. Otherwise, the Convention Arrangements Committee could be greatly embarrassed by not having available adequate facilities or having them available only at a prohibitive cost."

Invitations for meetings of the Convention should include information about the number of hotel rooms available, the procedure for handling reservations, the distance of hotels from the Convention auditorium, and also information about the size of the auditorium, rental cost, available exhibit space, and committee and press rooms.

If invitations are transmitted through the Convention Arrangements Committee, it will see that adequate information is contained in the invitation and transmit the invitation to the Committee on Time, Place, and Preacher without any recommendation.

At the present time invitations for the 1952 session of the Southern Baptist Convention may be addressed to the Committee on Convention Arrangements, Southern Baptist Convention, 127 Ninth Avenue North, Nashville 3, Tennessee.

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DR. DUKE K. MCCALL EXTENDS NEW YEAR'S
GREETINGS TO PROTESTANTS AND CATHOLICS

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—(BP)—Calling for spiritual upsurge in keeping with mankind's scientific advance, Dr. Duke K. McCall, executive-secretary, Executive Committee, Southern Baptist Convention, extended New Year's salutations to Protestants and Roman Catholics around the world. He said, "Mankind now has the technology to realize its fondest dreams of peace and plenty for all. We look down the corridor of tomorrows with uncertainty and fear only because we are uncertain of our moral adequacy to control and use wisely the creations of our brains."

To fellow evangelical Christians he said, "We deplore the divisions of Christianity but rejoice that God has been able to use our denominational differences even to make us 'provoke one another to good works.' We entreat you to hold fast to the faith of your fathers, not because we desire the perpetuation of our differences, but because we believe truth will ultimately triumph in an atmosphere of sincerity as it never will where expediency and compromise rule."

Dr. McCall's word to Roman Catholics was, "We petition for you God's guidance as you set aside 1950 as a Holy Year. We honor your loyalty to your church and your unwavering opposition to Godless communism. We hope in 1950 God will give you fresh spiritual insight into that which you hold to be the truth so that you may trust truth to triumph in the open forum of the democratic process without the oppression of those evangelicals who differ with you as in Spain today. Try to understand the vigor of our opposition to some of your programs in the light of the fate of our forefathers and some of our contemporaries who have suffered in lands dominated by your church. On the world's scale your church has given us cause to fear you. Still, we would deny nothing in the way of favors in and from our government to you which we do not deny to ourselves. We ask nothing for ourselves which we do not gladly grant to you."

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