



**BAPTIST PRESS**  
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

**NATIONAL OFFICE**  
460 James Robertson Parkway  
Nashville, Tennessee 37219  
Telephone (615) 244-2355  
W. C. Fields, Director  
Jim Newton, Assistant Director

**BUREAUS**

**ATLANTA** Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041  
**DALLAS** Billy Keith, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996  
**NASHVILLE** (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lynn M. Davis, Jr., Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37203, Telephone (615) 254-1631  
**RICHMOND** Jesse C. Fletcher, Acting Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (703) 353-0151  
**WASHINGTON** W. Barry Garrett, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

April 30, 1970

**California Board Rejects  
Staff Report on "Crisis"**

FRESNO, Calif. (BP)--The Executive Board of the Southern Baptist General Convention of California rejected completely a two-year staff study on eight specific aspects of the "Crisis in the Nation," tabling the study and forbidding its release to the public.

The 66-page report, prepared by the staff in response to action by the state convention in 1968 adopting the Southern Baptist Convention-approved "Statement Concerning the Crisis in our Nation," was tabled indefinitely until the board's total program committee might choose to release it.

In other actions, the convention board adopted a 1971 Cooperative Program goal of \$1.39 million, an increase of \$40,000 over the 1970 goal. Final approval must come from the state convention itself.

Hottest issue to come before the board, however, was the staff study on the "Crisis in the Nation." When the state convention adopted the "Crisis" statement in 1968, it explicitly directed that such studies be made as part of a five-year program of emphases.

The staff study, according to officials, included eight sections dealing with the theological basis for the dignity and work of man, human rights, legal rights, racism, discrimination, poverty, revolution and inclusive church ministries.

In preparing the two-year report, the convention staff studied a large amount of inclusive literature on a Christian approach to social problems, conducted a series of Bible studies as the basis for action and understanding; and consulted theologians, sociologists, legal experts, educators, black leaders from both conservative and radical groups, and churchmen in an attempt to gain insights into the problems and how churches and Christian people can relate to them, a spokesman said.

After a six-page summary of what California Southern Baptist agencies and churches are presently doing to deal with social issues, the study concluded with a list of general suggestions for the involvement of Southern Baptists in California in finding solutions to the issues.

Specific recommendations for programs or actions, based on the general suggestions included in the report, were to have been brought to the Executive Board at a later time, the board was told.

About two weeks prior to the board meeting, the 66-page study was mailed to all board members for their study. During the meeting, the board referred the study to the convention's total program committee.

The committee was asked to study the report, amend it as they thought wise, and recommend adoption of the report as a general statement of principle out of which specific recommendations would be brought at a later time, according to a report on the board meeting in the California Southern Baptist official weekly newspaper of the convention.

In its first session, the committee heard a brief explanation of the staff report from Ralph E. Longshore, assistant executive secretary, but postponed action until the next day, saying some committee members had not read it.

Going into executive session, the committee excluded all staff members and visitors while it discussed the report. Neither Robert Hughes, convention executive secretary, nor any of his staff was given further opportunity to interpret or explain the report.

When it came out of its closed session, the committee announced "basic disagreement with the overall emphasis of the study and with many of the approaches suggested therein."

The full Executive Board, in later consideration, adopted a carefully-phrased resolution expressing appreciation to the staff "for diligent effort in making this study."

Though the board-adopted resolution acknowledged concern for "the social and physical needs of our fellow man," it expressed belief that "ministry to the total man can best be accomplished through a vigorous program of evangelism which would include social ministries."

There was one dissenting vote on the action, cast by a layman who pleaded that if Southern Baptists do not meet the needs of people today, they soon will not have a field for evangelism.

In extended debate on the action, the report was both praised and denounced. A few speakers pleaded for adoption of the statement, while others strongly denounced it, one calling sections of it "pure socialism."

The \$1.39 million Cooperative Program goal is an increase of \$40,000 over the current goal. Previously, as part of a five-year program of Cooperative Program advance, the convention had authorized annual increases of \$60,000.

Convention officials explained that the recommended increase was held at a minimum for the second consecutive year in an effort to guarantee an "advance section" of receipts beyond the basic budget which would primarily benefit California Baptist College.

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#### Pentagon Defends Compulsory Chapel in Service Academies

4/30/70

WASHINGTON (BP)--The Pentagon put two of its top men on the witness stand in U.S. District Court here to testify in support of compulsory chapel attendance at the nation's three military academies.

A case filed in the District Court charges that the military regulation is in conflict with First Amendment guarantees of religion. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) filed the suit in behalf of six midshipment at the U.S. Naval Academy and one West Point cadet.

Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird and the three secretaries of the Army, Navy and Air Force are named as defendants.

At the three academies, Protestant, Jewish and Catholic services are provided on Sunday morning which the cadets and midshipment must attend or risk punitive action.

At an earlier hearing, a Southern Baptist cadet from Carmi, Ill., Lt. David Vaught, told of his efforts to get permission to attend Southern Baptist services within a 15 or 20 mile radius of West Point, N.Y. Permission was never granted.

Lt. Vaught testified that he was "disturbed with many things said (at the cadet chapel service) that didn't agree with my beliefs." He explained that one of them was the attempt "to justify war on religious means."

His testimony came when Judge Howard F. Corcoran of the U.S. District Court heard testimony on whether the midshipmen and cadets had exhausted their internal administrative remedies before resorting to court action to force the policy change.

Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, chief of naval operations and chairman-designate of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said that top military officials had reviewed the compulsory attendance rule and concluded the regulations should be continued.

Admiral Moorer defended the regulation as part of the whole package of the military's "leadership training" for future officers. Required chapel attendance puts the future officer in a position where he will get "a feel of the impact of religion on various individuals," he said, adding this will help an officer later in crisis situations.

Asked if a moral and ethics course could achieve this instead of forced chapel attendance, Admiral Moorer replied: "No, this is the best way to see how people live... and it is better to observe this in a real world than an artificial one."

When told that many church groups had urged that the requirement be lifted, Admiral Moorer said that opinion would not change his mind. "They are thinking in terms of 'forced worship' and we are thinking in terms of leadership training," he said.

A cadet or midshipmen could be excused from chapel, he continued, if he could prove that compulsory attendance "is counter productive" to the goals of the academy. A man would not be excused solely because he did not believe, he said.

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An earlier witness from the Defense Department, Roger T. Kelley, the assistant secretary for manpower and reserve affairs, said that an excuse would not be granted to the man who refused to attend chapel because he felt it was a violation of his First Amendment rights.

Rebuttals to the Pentagon's position during the three-day trial came from two clergymen, one a Baptist, and from a graduate of West Point.

A. Ray Appelquist, executive secretary of the General Commission on Chaplains and Armed Forces Personnel, told the court that the mandatory church services has had an "adverse effect" on recruiting chaplains.

When asked to explain, Appelquist, a Baptist and a former Army chaplain, said that "the pool of men interested in the chaplaincy has been reduced" because of the "climate" created by the compulsory attendance regulation.

A spokesman for the National Council of Churches, Dean M. Kelley, told the court of a statement adopted by the National Study Conference on Church and State in 1964. The statement urged that attendance at chapel in military academies "should be completely voluntary at all times."

He quoted also from an official statement in 1968 of the United Methodist Church which said that "participation...must be on a purely voluntary basis." The statement further urged that "there be no penalties" for not attending, "nor rewards" for attendance.

"Worship is not a spectator sport," Kelley declared when asked about the military's stated purpose of requiring the men to attend in order to observe how other men react to religion.

The idea of forced attendance at a worship service is "degrading...offensive...and a mockery," Lt. Robert L. Leslie of Fort Bragg, N.C., testified.

Leslie, a 1969 graduate of West Point, told of his efforts to go through the chain of command to be excused from chapel and to get the regulation changed. Leslie said he was threatened with court martial by one officer if he continued his efforts.

A decision on the case is expected sometime this summer. Whatever it is, it will probably be appealed.

In addition to the "establishment of religion" and "freedom to worship" questions, some observers are saying that the case poses a larger one for church-state relations.

Is it a proper function of government to use the church and religion to accomplish a secular purpose?



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*460 James Robertson Parkway  
Nashville, Tennessee 37219*

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HISTORICAL COMMISSION, SBC

W. C. ROOLLEY HO  
HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
127 NINTH AVE. N.  
NASHVILLE, TENN. 37203