



BAPTIST PRESS

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**Baptists Cabled to Broaden
Religious Liberty Concepts**

WASHINGTON (BP)--A prominent Jewish leader challenged a group of Baptist leaders to broaden the religious liberty agenda to include all the civil liberties guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution.

Marvin Braiterman, counsel and co-director of American Hebrew Congregations addressed the fifteenth Religious Liberty Conference sponsored by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

Seventy-five Baptist, representing denominational and state executives, pastors and lay persons gathered for the three-day conference here to consider the topic, "Religious Liberty and the Bill of Rights."

Braiterman urged the conference participants to keep religious liberty anchored to the First Amendment. "But don't bury it there" the Jewish lawyer pled.

"The First Amendment furnishes much, much too narrow and historic a frame for that to be the beginning and the end of the religious liberty agenda," Braiterman declared. "Religious liberty . . . cannot be roped in or fenced in by the religious liberty clauses in the First Amendment."

Braiterman recounted a number of Supreme Court decisions in the last year that, he charged, have moved the court "to the 'right' particularly in the area of criminal law, civil rights and civil liberties".

Among the list Braiterman mentioned were that procedural rights for due process for accused persons has been narrowed, states need not require a unanimous decision in jury trials and police can stop and frisk a suspect on evidence as small as an anonymous tip.

Other "set backs to civil liberties" listed by the Jewish constitutional lawyer included a Supreme Court decision giving grand juries subpoena powers over a reporter's confidential notes, a refusal by the court to enjoin the army from conducting surveillance over citizens, the first non-unanimous decision on school desegregation since the Brown decision in 1954 and a decision that a private, segregated club with a liquor license has the right to restrict its membership.

In urging religious people to become involved in the broader areas of civil liberties and the "cutting edge of social changes," Braiterman warned that religious communities will be the losers "If we turn away from unfolding social change and from movements designed to expand human liberation."

The Jewish leader said that "for some people a free political marketplace in an open society might be optional. But for people who take religious faith as a serious mandate for religious action, such a society is a moral imperative, an historical mandate and a political necessity for the healthy survival of an open constitutional government in the United States."

In an opening address to the conference, John W. Baker, associate director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs in charge of research services, and director of the Religious Liberty Conference, outlined the objective of the meeting.

"It is my hope," Baker said, "that we all come to understand more fully the religious

liberty implications of those rights which are protected by the Bill of Rights.

"The major thrust of this conference is an understanding of the legal rights which individuals enjoy under the constitution," Baker explained. In this context, Baker defined a right as "a limit on the power of the government."

He explained that "a right is not an affirmation of license for an individual but is a limit on government as it relates to that individual."

Baker's speech reviewed the development of the concept of human rights as expressed in the U.S. Constitution and as now interpreted by the Supreme Court.

"Beginning in the 1930's and accelerating under the Warren Court," Baker pointed out, "there was a selective nationalization of the Bill of Rights. By 1970, for all practical purposes, the Bill of Rights had been incorporated into the Fourteenth Amendment, which now makes the amendments of the Bill of Rights binding on the states as well as the national government."

Baker concluded with a prediction that the debates on the Bill of Rights will "take new directions."

One illustration of this new debate, Baker suggested, "may well be whether the due process of law clause of the Fourteenth Amendment is limited by the protections found in the Bill of Rights." He raised the question as to how the new Supreme Court under Chief Justice Warren Burger would interpret rights "such as the rights of privacy" under the due process of law clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

The Religious Liberty Conference described as a "working conference, featured small work groups wrestling with constitutional principles that relate to religious liberty.

Observations and suggestions from the conference will be relayed to the full Baptist Joint Committee at its next semi-annual meeting in March. The findings of the conference are in no way official and are not binding on the Baptist Joint Committee or any of the Baptist denominations participating, conference officials noted.

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Wood Reminds Baptists
Of Roots of Freedom

11/10/72

WASHINGTON (BP)--Throughout human history, religion and freedom have clearly not been natural allies, James E. Wood Jr. reminded participants in the fifteenth Religious Liberty Conference sponsored by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

"Let us not forget," Wood said, "that before the modern era neither Catholicism nor Protestantism espoused religious liberty as such, but each advocated and practiced coercion and physical violence, if necessary, to maintain sway over the territories in which either became established."

In an opening address to 75 persons invited to study religious liberty and the Bill of Rights, Wood, the executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee, presented a scholarly paper tracing the historical and theological perspectives of concern for religious freedom.

"Intolerance not tolerance, conformity not nonconformity, and assent not dissent, have been the hallmarks of the history of religion," declared Wood, a former professor of the history of religions at Baylor University.

He noted further that "more wars have been fought, more persecutions have been carried out, and more lives have been lost in the name of religion than for any other single cause."

In referring to the history of Christianity between the fourth and seventeenth centuries, Wood said it was a time when the church "vigorously opposed freedom of thought, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly and indeed liberty of conscience.

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"It is not surprising therefore that the church has never been popular with champions of the free society," the Baptist leader observed.

The concept of full religious liberty, constitutionally or legally guaranteed, is clearly a distinct contribution of the United States, Wood observed. He said the United States became the first nation in history constitutionally to guarantee religious liberty and the separation of church and state.

He noted that church historians frequently cite religious liberty as the greatest contribution of Baptists to Protestantism.

There is a danger, Wood warned, of supporting religious liberty purely for practical, secular reasons alone, rather than any conscious philosophical or religious basis.

It is quite possible, he observed, to argue for religious liberty simply on the basis that the modern secular state views religion as a private concern of its citizens and that religion has no role to play in the public and social spheres of human society.

Further, the Baptist executive said, the state may also embrace the idea of religious liberty simply because it holds an apathetic view toward religion and seeks to avoid for purely political reasons any entanglement in the disagreements and dissensions between the religious communities themselves.

Or, Wood continued, religious liberty may be viewed not as an inalienable right, but as a concession to be granted by the state only insofar as religious liberty is not in conflict with the individual citizen's national allegiance and loyalty.

Such pragmatic bases "will not suffice to sustain the principle or to prevent religious coercion, discrimination and/or persecution during a crisis period of our nation's history," Wood warned. "To be secure," he said, "religious liberty must ultimately find its basis or rationale within one's religious faith, within one's value system."

Wood listed three "roots of liberty" in his address. For Christians, he said, "liberty is theologically rooted first of all of God's nature and in his dealings with men." The Biblical basis for religious freedom is not in single passages of scripture, rather it is in God's whole way of approaching mankind, he explained.

"God-given, man's personhood is the foundation stone of man's right to religious liberty," he declared. "Religious liberty, therefore, is the recognition of the right of the individual acting alone or in community. It is not a gift of the state," Wood said.

In the second place, religious liberty is "rooted in the inviolable sacredness of the human conscience." Basic to all of man's moral rights is religious liberty, without which all of man's civil rights are abridged, Wood explained.

The third "root" of religious liberty, Wood listed, is "the sinful nature of man." No Christian and indeed no church is entitled to the claim of having attained to any final, infallible dogmas of truth, he explained.

"The sinful nature of man negates the possibility of the absolutizing of human authority, religious or political," the Baptist historian said.

Wood's paper, along with other addresses made to the conference, will be published in a report of the conference. The findings and suggestions of the participants will be relayed to the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs for further study before particular recommendations are made to the eight Baptist denominations in the United States that are a part of the Baptist Joint Committee.

Christian Council in Israel
Elects First Lay Secretary

TIBERIAS, Israel (BP)--For the first time in its 16-year history, the United Christian Council in Israel has elected a Baptist layman from Israel as general secretary. The council is a cooperative body of 17 evangelical Protestant churches and mission societies in Israel.

Fuad Haddad, a Baptist layman from Nazareth, was elected to a three-year term during the council's annual conference held here. He also will serve on the 10-member executive council.

Haddad is assistant headmaster of the Nazareth Baptist Schools and is active in many phases of church and civic life in Nazareth. He is a graduate of Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

For several years Haddad has served as chairman of the Association of Baptist Churches in Israel. In 1971 he was an official United Christian Council observer at the World Consultation of Christian Councils in Geneva, Switzerland.

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Griggs to Direct Northeast
Work with National Baptists

11/10/72

ATLANTA (BP)--The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board has shifted staffer W.R. Grigg for a concentrated effort in work with National Baptists in the high priority area of the Northeast.

Grigg leaves his position as associate secretary in the board's department of work with National Baptists to become the northeast area director. He will establish an office in Winston-Salem, N.C.

He will work within the 14-state area from West Virginia to Maine and from Ohio to the East Coast. All are states where Southern Baptists do not have directors of work with National Baptists but they have a high percentage of black Baptists. Nearly one-third of the nation's 21-million blacks live in the area.

Victor Glass of Atlanta, secretary of the department, said in announcing Grigg's move, "We want W.R. Griff to help Southern Baptists in this high priority area to relate to National Baptists as people. These Baptists are in a position to help Southern Baptists because they have more people, and they have the organization and the experience."

Southern Baptists in these states, according to Grigg, have established good relations with National Baptists. "Many predominantly black churches are affiliated with the associations and state conventions, the churches have open memberships, and a number of blacks are leaders among Southern Baptists," he said.

Grigg, formerly a state director of work with National Baptists in North Carolina and Louisiana, said he feels the promise of cooperative ministries between the black churches and Southern Baptists in this area is the highest of any place in the nation.

He cited already existing projects with black churches in Harlem and other areas of New York City as examples of how such cooperative ministries can be accomplished.

In one of these projects, Baptist tenants are forming non-profit corporations to purchase apartment buildings, renovating them, and planning for the churches to occupy the ground floors.

Southern Baptists through this department and cooperating state conventions spend more than \$1 million annually for cooperative ministries in education, mission training, church extension, evangelism, and stewardship. There are 16 state Baptist directors of work with National Baptists, mostly where there are stronger state conventions.

Grigg has been active in such work for nearly 20 years and was honored with a doctor's degree by Shaw University in Raleigh for accomplishments in human relations. He is a graduate of Wofford College, Spartanburg, S.C., and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.

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Florida Baptists Approve New Church-Staff Relations Ministry

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (BP)--The Florida Baptist Convention meeting here, after lively debate and a close vote, approved a new church-pastor-staff relations ministry to help churchless pastors and pastorless churches get together.

The convention also gave a standing ovation to Florida Governor Reuben Askew who told the messengers in the closing address that he was "utterly and totally dependent on Jesus Christ."

The governor, a Presbyterian, received loud "amens" when he told the Baptists he was "deeply grateful to know Jesus Christ as personal savior."

Governor Askew acknowledged that many people are reluctant to publicly declare their faith, perhaps because of fear of being misunderstood, but added he was "willing to offend anyone" if through his testimony he could bring another "to a saving faith in Jesus Christ."

Liveliest debate during what was described as a rather calm and quiet convention was prompted by a recommendation from the State Missions Board which had been asked by the 1971 convention to study the possibility of establishing a church-pastor-staff relations ministry.

The program the board recommended was designed "to assist Florida Baptist churches and ministers in the area of church-pastor-staff relations" by providing information and counsel to both pastors and church staff members seeking a place of service, and churches seeking a pastor or staff member.

Under the program, a convention staff member would be assigned the responsibility of maintaining a confidential information file on all ministers and churches willing to have such on record, and to share with churches that request it, information on at least three available persons for any vacancy. No recommendations or evaluations would be made. Only factual information would be shared.

During the debate, messengers opposing it argued that such a program would interfere with "the leadership of the Holy Spirit," and that pastors or other church staff members who were having problems should "talk to the Lord" about the problems, not to a counselor. Others expressed fear the program would usurp the autonomy of a local Baptist church.

The proposal, despite opposition, was approved by a vote of 420-344.

Another recommendation from the State Board of Missions also prompted opposition. The proposal would have permitted trustees of the Florida Baptist Childrens Home, Lakeland, Fla., to sell 50 acres comprising the campus and use the proceeds to establish two new child care centers in the Lakeland and Tallahassee areas.

After a brief flurry of debate, the convention voted to postpone the recommendation indefinitely. In a later session, however, messengers reconsidered the matter and referred it back to the State Board of Missions for further study. The board was given authority to grant permission for the sale and acquisition of property, if the board deems it appropriate.

When the convention reconsidered the matter, James P. Haun, chairman of the home's board of trustees, told the messengers some of the buildings have been condemned as fire hazards. He added that a professional, two-year study had recommended selling the property and building two smaller, community-oriented homes with an emphasis on family living, rather than on institutional-type care.

In other major actions, the convention approved a record \$4.8 million budget, an increase of about \$200,000 over last year's budget. Of the total, 46 per cent, the largest percentage of any state convention in the SBC, will go to Southern Baptist causes through the SBC Cooperative Program.

Elected president of the convention was Joe M. Bamberg, pastor of First Baptist Church, Milton, Fla. For the third time in history, a woman was elected as vice-president--Mrs. Doyle E. Carlton Jr., a housewife from Wauchula, Fla. A layman, J. Nixon Daniel Jr., an attorney from Pensacola, Fla., was elected first vice president.



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