



BAPTIST PRESS

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November 14, 1972

Baptist Conference States Unity of All Human Rights

WASHINGTON (BP)--Human rights as set forth in the Bill of Rights of the U.S. Constitution stand or fall together, and the churches have an obligation to exert influence on government to preserve and protect these rights.

These two conclusions were expressed by the 85 participants in the fifteenth Religious Liberty Conference in Washington sponsored by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

Findings of the conference participants are not binding on any of the eight Baptist bodies sponsoring the Baptist Joint Committee, pointed out John W. Baker, associate director in charge of research services for the joint committee and conference director. Baker said the conclusions were "for the edification" of the conference participants and the joint committee, and were not "official documents."

Although the Bill of Rights includes the first ten amendments to the Constitution, conference participants did not discuss the First Amendment and its "no establishment of religion" and "free exercise" clauses because Baptists in recent years have given special attention to the First Amendment, but have not given major study to the other rights in the Constitution, Baker said.

The rights that received primary consideration by the conference include: freedom of speech and the press, peaceable assembly, right to petition the government for redress of grievances, right of privacy, right against undue searches and seizures, double jeopardy, trial by jury, due process of law, private property for public use, speedy trial, right of the accused to face his accusers, right to counsel, protection against excessive bail, fines, and cruel and unusual punishment, and other rights not listed in the Constitution.

A section headed by George Hill, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Washington, D.C., summarized not only the consensus of his section but of the entire conference, when he reported "that religious and civil rights are basically unitary in character."

This view was reinforced by Donald Anderson, editor of the Baptist Standard of the Baptist General Conference and chairman of another section which considered constitutional amendments six, seven, and eight.

Anderson reported: "It is clear to us that the church must be engaged in protecting these rights and seeking their extension to all people. Any abuses of these rights that may occur constitute a threat to religious liberty."

Another section led by Francis W. Hensley, pastor of Vineyard Haven Baptist Church, Vineyard Haven, Mass., declared that human rights can be realized only by a limited government. This section declared:

"A free church in a free society requires that the church not be subject to the censorship of the government in the area of ideas. To fulfill its prophetic role on behalf of the individual and society, it is essential that the church, and its leaders in particular, be free to take public positions that conflict with current governmental policy."

Although all the conference findings were addressed to the Baptist Joint Committee, the conference made several specific recommendations:

1. It was recommended that the Baptist Joint Committee be asked to work with member denominations on the formulation of a statement of functions of the church, particularly

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with reference to church-state relations, as they affect such matters as taxation, lobbying, petition of government and business activities of the church.

2. It was recommended that ways be found to influence the Baptist Joint Committee, as well as the sponsoring Baptist bodies and the general public, to work for the maintenance of all the rights found in the Bill of Rights.

The conference as a whole felt that the constitutional provisions against "an establishment of religion" and for "the free exercise of religion" were closely related to all other rights in the Bill of Rights. Hence, they felt that the mandate to protect separation of church and state and religious freedom also included the protection of the other rights.

3. It was hoped that the Baptist Joint Committee and other denominational bodies look upon the national 1976 bi-centennial "as a golden opportunity to remind Baptists and others of the origin of the Bill of Rights and of its continued significance."

Among the findings of the three conference sections are the following:

Freedom of Speech: "The role of the church is to protect freedom of speech for every person. The only limitation should be when speech infringes upon the liberties of others."

Freedom of the Press: "Freedom of the press is the human liberty to print and to publish, for the public, facts and opinions when such action does not infringe upon the liberty of others... To preclude further governmental controls, we urge the press to exercise diligence in self-control, in terms of accuracy, balance, fairness and honesty."

Freedom of Peaceable Assembly: "The church should seek to protect this liberty for all, regardless of the popularity of the participants or the cause espoused."

Right of Petition: "For the church, the exercise of this right may be effected through the petition of the church as a corporate body, or through its members acting as individual citizens. Churches should commit themselves to serious study of public issues so that individual members might be informed."

Privacy, Self-Incrimination, Due Process: "We need to influence units of government and power structures outside government in support of amendments four and five of the Constitution... We must develop and maintain the concept that it is Christian to give attention to public issues and influence their outcome in a positive way."

Capital Punishment: "Capital punishment is viewed as 'cruel and unusual punishment' in the light of the eighth amendment." (There was dissent by several from this opinion.)

Responsibility: "Because officials, being human, are prone to err, Baptists must exercise vigilance for the Bill of Rights by helping create informed public opinion to maintain equal protection for minorities and those who have different life styles or priorities, and to change officials by constitutional process when those officials violate procedural rights. Justice must be administered fairly without multiple standards."

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Army General Sees No Conflict
Between Military and Religion

11/14/72

ABILENE, Tex. (BP)--A four-star general told faculty and students at a Baptist school here he had found citizens outside the military community are "sometimes startled--even bewildered--to find a man in uniform expressing openly his faith in Almighty God."

General Ralph E. Haines Jr., commanding general, U.S. Continental Army Command, told a chapel audience at Hardin-Simmons University here that he had been "baptized in the Holy Spirit" and since had become "deeply and joyfully associated with spirit-filled Christians of all denominations."

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"I find no incompatibility between my faith as a Christian and my duty as a soldier," said Gen. Haines, an Episcopalian. "I have no apologies for my profession--it is a noble one, one which demands the services of dedicated, God-fearing men and women,

"As a people, we are dedicated to the cause of peace," he added. "I join with you in hoping that we'll soon have a just and honorable peace in Southeast Asia.

"But we must bear in mind that we are today opposed by an ideology which denies God and avows its ultimate intent to impose its political thought and its economic concepts on the rest of the world," he went on.

"Whether we like it or not, America is today the acknowledged leader of the free world and everything we do--or fail to do--affects profoundly the course of events throughout the world," the general said.

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Texas Baptist College
Names Brooks President

11/14/72

BROWNWOOD, Tex. (BP)--Roger L. Brooks, 45, dean of the College of Liberal and Fine Arts at East Texas State University at Commerce, Tex., since 1967, will become president of Howard Payne College here, Jan. 1, 1973.

He succeeds Guy D. Newman, who was named chancellor last May by the Baptist school's board of trustees.

Brooks, a Baptist deacon, is a native of El Dorado, Ark., and is a graduate of Baylor University, Waco, Tex., and the University of Illinois, Urbana. He earned the doctor of philosophy degree in English from the University of Colorado, Boulder.

As chancellor, Newman, Howard Payne President for 18 years, will devote most of his time to development, public relations, fund raising and public speaking. He stepped down as president at his own request.

The new Howard Payne president served as professor of English and associate dean of the graduate school at Texas Tech in Lubbock before moving to East Texas State.

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