



FEATURES
produced by Baptist Press

SBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
W. C. Fields, Director
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor
James Lee Young, Feature Editor

June 24, 1976

76-104

Bicentennial Feature

'We Hold These Truths
To Be Self-Evident...'

By Robert E. LaFavre
for Baptist Press

*Home of
Xian Ireland*

"Nothing happened today," wrote England's King George III in his diary on July 4, 1776. Little did the English monarch realize to just what extent the events of that day 200 years ago would affect the entire world.

A few days before, sandy-haired and freckled-faced Thomas Jefferson, who lacked much as a public speaker but was a master with the pen and page walked from his two rented rooms on the second floor of a bricklayer's home on Philadelphia's Market Street.

Beneath his arm he carried the draft of a document which was essentially his. Other-- placid, rotund Benjamin Franklin, portly John Adams, Roger Sherman and Robert Livingston--had been named with Jefferson by the Continental Congress to prepare a declaration putting forth the American colonies desire to sever political ties with Great Britain.

Those committee members deferred to Jefferson's mastery with the written word and left him to work out the document.

Violent rain squalls had lashed the Pennsylvania city during the night and early morning hours of July 2, and the heat and humidity in the meeting hall was oppressive as they gathered for consideration of Jefferson's declaration.

Flies coming in through open windows, heavy perspiration-laden clothes and burdensome wigs added to their discomfort.

With no negative votes that day, and only minor changes in wording on July 3, representatives of the 13 American colonies gave final approval to the Declaration of Independence on July 4.

Although many documents in human history, particularly in America may have stronger religious overtones and undercurrents, this declaration refers to God in four ways.

Its opening paragraph, where it talks about the laws of "nature's God" combines with the final sentence of the historical work in asking for the protection of "Divine Providence."

Within its body, the declaration refers to the "Creator" of man and later asks that the "Supreme Judge" be the one who assesses the correctness of the colonies' action.

Not only did King George fail to note the significance of the day, but the only mention of the historical action carried in that night's Pennsylvania Evening Post was squeezed in between advertisements and routine news on the last page.

It said only, "This day the Continental Congress declared the United Colonies free and independent states."

Today, there is no question that the Declaration of Independence has been one of the greatest factors of influence in our heritage.

Everything stems from it--the revolution itself, the Articles of Confederation, the Constitution with its Bill of Rights and our republican form of government.

From that beginning, men of Godly conviction joined those who might have denied the existence of God as we know him, but believed that man was destined to be a creature of freedom in the struggle that wound its way through five more years of bitter strife.

In their hearts beat the drums of freedom, spurred on by the knowledge that such freedom was given them by the God who created them in his image. (BP)



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
W. C. Fields, Director
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor
James Lee Young, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Orville Scott, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Tex. 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
MEMPHIS Roy Jennings, Chief, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, Tenn. 38104, Telephone (901) 272-2461
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Gomer Lesch, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 254-5481
RICHMOND Richard M. Styles, Acting Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON W. Barry Garrett, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

June 24, 1976

76-104

Wood Opposes Proposal
To Aid Church Schools

Wash

By W. Barry Garrett

WASHINGTON (BP)--Opposition to proposed tax aid to church schools pending in the U.S. Senate was voiced by James E. Wood Jr., executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs (BJCPA) here.

The aid to the schools would be in the form of a tax deduction for tuition paid by parents for dependents enrolled in church schools. The proposal is being pushed by Sen. James L. Buckley (Conn., R., N.Y.) as an amendment to the Tax Reform Act of 1976 now on the congressional calendar.

The Senate Finance Committee headed by Sen. Russell B. Long (D., La.) rejected the Buckley amendment and substituted instead an amendment providing for tax credits for parents paying tuition for dependents in a college or university.

Buckley vowed opposition to the committee substitute and planned to move for his amendment to replace the committee recommendation. Either the committee plan or the Buckley plan would cost the taxpayers approximately \$1.8 billion.

The difference between the proposals is that Buckley would include all private schools on the elementary, secondary and higher education levels. His plan would be for tax deductions rather than tax credits. A spokesman in Buckley's office asserted that tax credit for tuition paid to church schools is unconstitutional while tax deductions meet the constitutional tests.

The finance committee plan is for tax credit for tuition paid only for higher education.

Wood said about the Buckley plan, "Both the purpose and the primary effect of this proposed legislation is to advance religion. Therefore, we are unalterably opposed to this legislation which is designed primarily to give government aid to parochial schools and preferential treatment to parents of children in church schools."

The Tax Reform Act of 1976 has been passed by the House of Representatives. When the Senate passes its version, a conference committee will consider the two and will report a revised bill to both houses of Congress. No amendments can be made to a report from a conference committee. Action will be taken almost immediately on the Tax Reform Act since the new fiscal year begins July 1.

The growing number of private schools and their associations, both religious and secular, constitute a heavy lobby for the Buckley proposal for aid to their schools.

-30-

Grants to Baylor
Total \$126,800

Baptist Press
6/24/76

WACO (BP)--Baylor University has received \$126,800 in grants for basic chemical research from the Robert A. Welch Foundation of Houston.

Baylor President Abner V. McCall recently accepted the foundation's check for the amount at a Houston meeting in which eight other Texas colleges and universities shared more than \$4 million in new and renewal grants-in-aid for basic chemical research. More than \$5 million in grants was awarded to 31 educational and medical institutions.

The Robert A. Welch Foundation, the 20th largest in the world, was established by the late Texas oil millionaire whose name it bears, a Baylor spokesman said.

-30-

Georgia Pastor
To Stand Trial

*HMB/
Atlanta*

ATLANTA (BP)--Herschel Arnold Markham, 42, pastor of Mt. Vernon Baptist Church in Fairburn, Ga., was bound over for trial here on charges of "terrorists threats and acts."

Markham was arrested early Friday, June 18, in downtown Atlanta after holding police at bay for more than an hour when he claimed to have a bomb in an attache case. Later he called it a "literary" bomb--not a "literal" one.

He earlier caused a stir at the Southern Baptist Convention in Norfolk when he contested a report of the denomination's Christian Life Commissions concerning MACOS (Man: A course of Study) curriculum material now in use in public and private schools. He called the materials communistic and satanic.

After his arrest, Markham was ordered to undergo psychiatric evaluation. He was released on \$1,000 bond Monday, June 21. In a subsequent court hearing, Judge Ed Brock of Atlanta municipal court transferred Markham's case to the criminal court of Fulton County here for trial after doctors said Markham was capable of standing trial and of defending himself.

Markham's attorney told Judge Brock that his client was calling attention to materials being used in the schools.

"People should be aware of what is being used in the schools, but the pastor could have used extreme methods to demonstrate them," Brock was quoted by court officials as saying. No trial date has been set.

Court officials say the charge is a misdemeanor, carrying a maximum penalty of a \$1,000 fine or 12 months in prison or both.

-30-

CORRECTION

In (BP) story of 6-22-76, headlined, "Vietnamese Refugee...", graf 13, line 2, the church is Dogwood Hills Baptist Church (vice Logwood). Thanks--Baptist Press

-30-