

**(BP)****- - BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICESBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355W. C. Fields, Director
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor
Norman Jameson, Feature Editor**BUREAUS****ATLANTA** Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041**DALLAS** Richard T. McCartney, 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) L. Bracey Campbell III, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2798**RICHMOND** Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151**WASHINGTON** Stan L. Haste, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

October 2, 1979

79-164

WrapupCommittee Urges Human Rights
And Church-State Actions

By Stan Haste

WASHINGTON (BP)--The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs has voted to support a lawsuit filed by the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. and the American Civil Liberties Union against the city of Philadelphia for its announced intention to pay for a costly altar where Pope John Paul II celebrated mass on October 3.

The action by the Washington-based agency followed a report on the legal action by attorney Earl Trent, house counsel for the Division of National Ministries of the American Baptist Churches.

In other actions during its 49th anniversary meeting, the Baptist Joint Committee called on the U.S. Senate to ratify the SALT II treaty and adopt two United Nations-approved human rights covenants, and urged Congress to pass the Refugee Act of 1979, liberalize U.S. immigration policy and pass the Fair Housing Amendments of 1979.

The Baptist Joint Committee also named as its first general counsel veteran staff member John W. Baker, the agency's director of research services since 1969. Baker earned a doctor of jurisprudence degree from American University's law school and is a member of the Pennsylvania bar. He also earned a doctor of philosophy degree in political science from the University of California, Berkeley.

Controversy over the Philadelphia portion of Pope John Paul's U.S. visit erupted when Frank Rizzo announced the city would pick up the whole tab for expenses incurred, including the large altar where the Pope celebrated mass before hundreds of thousands of participants and spectators.

Two Philadelphia taxpayers, including American Baptist minister Mary Anne Forehand, filed suit in a federal district court challenging the use of public money for the altar. No objection was registered either in the suit or in the Baptist Joint Committee statement to public funds expended for police or fire protection or for other public safety measures.

Attorney Trent and lawyers for the city subsequently agreed to have the judge in the case hear arguments after the Pope's visit. As part of the agreement, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia agreed to pay the city \$75,999 in the event the court rules against the city.

Trent told the Baptist Joint Committee, however, that the \$75,999 originally estimated as the cost of building the altar has now risen to about \$500,000. He accused city officials of "repeated lies" during the proceeding and predicted that the Baptist position would win.

-more-

While voting to give its staff authority to lend "all appropriate support" to the lawsuit, the Baptist Joint Committee action also expressed a welcome to Pope John Paul and acknowledged specifically the appropriateness of spending public money for all necessary public safety precautions during the visit.

The Baptist agency also voted to send a telegram to Cardinal John Krol, Archbishop of Philadelphia, urging him to follow the example of the Washington Archdiocese in footing the bill for expenses involving public worship events. The telegram commended Cardinal William Baum of Washington for his announced intention to have the archdiocese pay for such events.

In formally declaring its support for ratification of the SALT II treaty, the Baptist group joined three member denominations which had already endorsed the measure. The American Baptist Churches, the Progressive National Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention all passed resolutions last summer approving the treaty.

Because of those actions, the Baptist Joint Committee joined the Religious Committee on SALT, a coalition of 27 national religious groups actively lobbying for passage.

The statement incorporated a portion of a document adopted in July by the Baptist World Alliance urging not only ratification of the embattled SALT II treaty but calling for new arms control agreements and for "the development of national policies which will give greater funding priority to non-military security measures."

In another related action, the Baptist Joint Committee urged Senate ratification of two human rights covenants adopted unanimously by the United Nations General Assembly in 1966.

The international agreements, which took effect in 1976 and have been signed by more than 50 nations, have been largely ignored by the Senate for allegedly political reasons. Opposition, mainly from the right wing of American politics, centers on fears that the covenants would undermine U.S. sovereignty and deny to U.S. citizens rights protected by the Constitution.

Supporters of the international covenants on economic, social and cultural rights and civil and political rights counter by arguing that no nation has been asked to surrender sovereign rights and that the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that no treaty with foreign governments can take precedence over individual rights guaranteed by the Constitution to U.S. citizens.

The action by the governing board of the Baptist agency gives its staff authorization to lobby for Senate ratification of the covenants. Baptist Joint Committee Executive Director James E. Wood Jr. has long advocated their approval.

Action on U.S. refugee policy followed a presentation to the Baptist committee by Gene V. Tunnell, consultant on refugees for the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. He urged the group to push for passage of the Refugee Act of 1979, which he said is needed to repair the "patchwork" approach the U.S. has taken toward refugee policy.

In passing its resolution on refugees, the Baptist Joint Committee also approved suggestions by Tunnell that it work to defeat an amendment to the measure which would eliminate the authority of the president to exercise "parole" authority in emergency situations where refugees fleeing their countries seek admission to the U.S.

The statement also urges governments to respond to the present plight of Indo-Chinese refugees by bringing in larger numbers and asks the U.S. government to establish refugee resettlement centers in this country.

In addition, the resolution urges an overall liberalization of U.S. immigration and naturalization programs and encourages the normalization of relations with countries such as Vietnam in order to help alleviate refugee problems at their source.

On another issue, the Baptist committee asked its staff to work for passage of the fair housing amendments currently pending in Congress. Present law, while forbidding discrimination in housing on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, has been difficult to implement. Enforcement efforts have been limited and court suits are too costly for most victims.

The proposed amendments would give the Department of Housing and Urban Development authority to investigate charges of discrimination, hold hearings, present evidence, and make binding orders on violators of the law.

The agency also reelected its present chairman, Gideon K. Zimmerman, executive secretary of the North American Baptist General Conference, to a second one-year term. Elected vice presidents were Elizabeth J. Miller, secretary of the office of issue development for the Board of National Ministries of the American Baptist Churches and Dorothy Parrott, secretary of the Christian Social Action Committee of the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference. Kenneth H. Calvert, a professor of education at Meredith College in North Carolina, was elected recording secretary.

In other actions, board members approved a record 1979-80 budget of \$329,300, of which \$291,850, or 88.6 percent, is contributed by the Southern Baptist Convention, including \$19,000 from the Southern Baptist Foundation. They also approved an across-the-board seven percent raise for staff employees.

-30-

Buchanan Calls Baptists
To Lead in Human Rights

By Norman Jameson

Baptist Press
10/2/79

WASHINGTON (BP)--It's past time for Baptists, especially Southern Baptists, to get out of the caboose and into the locomotive in the matter of civil rights in the United States, according to Congressman John Buchanan.

Buchanan, a Southern Baptist minister and U.S. representative from Birmingham, Ala., told 100 persons gathered for the 17th Religious Liberty Conference in Washington that "Baptist Christians have done many good things in the world, but we have not given the attention we should to civil rights in the U.S."

Buchanan opened the conference on the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, which sponsors the conference. He told the leaders from nine Baptist bodies in the United States and Canada that government can be a decisive force for good, but it needs help from the Christian church.

Government has had "some impact on the other super power, the Soviet Union, by keeping human rights in the forefront in our foreign policy," Buchanan said. He also credited that policy with having a part in the downfall of violators of human rights like Uganda's Idi Amin.

-more-

The Republican congressman, liberally illustrating his human rights philosophy with the teachings of Jesus, maintained that Christians also need to be advocates for religious dissidents in other nations where their own countrymen cannot speak. "But we can be heard, and we must be," he said. "And our voice will help them."

He referred to Russian Baptist Pastor Georgi Vins, who came to the U.S. in April as part of an exchange for two Russian spies. Vins has often said since that letters from the West to Soviet authorities contributed to his release from prison and to better conditions while he was there.

"It's our job to speak out for the Vinses, the Pentecostals now seeking asylum in the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, and for other Pentecostals and Soviet Jews," he said.

Buchanan was author of a resolution in Congress which urged the Soviet Union to release Vins. He said one of the charges contained in Soviet documents against Vins was that he wrote a piece of anti-Soviet literature--which turned out to be Psalm 23.

Buchanan said women's rights in the U.S. ought also to gain increasing attention, as should the rights of children, especially since 1979 is the U.N.-designated Year of the Child.

He said we must make sure that every person born into our society, regardless of his race, creed or economic status, has every opportunity to become the most and the best it is within that person to be. "Until we do that, we cannot know of what we've robbed the world," he said. "We don't know into which child of which creed or which race God has placed the cure for cancer."

Buchanan, son of a Baptist preacher, quoted Jesus again, saying "If you have done it not unto the least of these, my brethren, you have done it not unto me."

-30-

Black Pastor Levels White
Church for Denying Rights

By Carol Franklin

Baptist Press
10/2/79

WASHINGTON (BP)--The white church in America is a part of the racist society, a prominent black pastor told participants in a Religious Liberty Conference on the Church and Human Rights.

"Many white clergy are mere puppets rather than prophets," declared William A. Jones Jr., president of the Progressive National Baptist Convention and pastor of the Bethany Baptist Church, Brooklyn, N.Y.

"The white church historically and presently is an instrument of the American system, sanctifying its sins and giving inspiration to its iniquities," he said. "It has never in collective manner assaulted the prevailing power arrangement in the name of God who has 'made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth.'"

Asserting that "the struggle for human rights is essentially a religious struggle," Jones said, "The advancement (of human rights) is therefore a religious responsibility."

Jones told participants in the conference, sponsored by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, that injustice which produces racism "almost always emerges from the

-more-

desensitized consciences of people who deem themselves better than others." He charged that white American feelings of superiority have created "the American trinitarian formula of capitalism, racism and militarism" which perpetuate racism.

"The nation historically has been long on promise and short on performance," Jones said. "The democratic ethic represents the ideal with respect to historic social experiments. It is rooted in religious realism. It is grounded in the Judeo-Christian doctrine of humanity... The democratic ideal has yet to flower."

Jones said that racism in the American society is based on bad theology. "A simple surface diagnosis reveals a sick sociology based on a faulty anthropology which emanates from a false theology...Racism is demonic, a spiritual perversion."