

The War Effort and Government Intrusion

The messengers of the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches—North, assembled in the Wealthy Street Baptist Temple, Grand Rapids, Michigan, May 15–18:

Loyalty to Our War Effort

Feel the hour is ripe for clear, emphatic declarations concerning attacks being made on our cherished national liberties, Christian beliefs, and practices.

Unlike the Methodists, and other groups within the Federal Council of Churches, who for much of the war period have been officially pacifistic in their voted policy, and so recently as May 5, in Kansas City, were able to secure endorsement for the war effort from their ministerial delegates by the thin margin of one vote, the General Association of Regular Baptists from the outset of this war have given undisputed loyalty to our government in its resistance of totalitarian aggressors, and we hereby now reaffirm that loyalty.

A Call to Prayer

And, pursuant to this principle, we as messengers here assembled recommend to our churches, and to all churches that in this day of invasion crisis, seasons of prayer be observed in all our churches for our leaders and our Armed Forces, that the blessings of God may rest upon our nation at home and our war efforts abroad, believing as we do that prayer to God is the mightiest weapon against the forces of evil.

We deplore in this crisis the lack of concern on the part of the people at home, and the general trend throughout our land toward a moral and spiritual decline, as evidenced by the increase of juvenile and parental delinquency, and our government's encouragement of the liquor interests. Yet we affirm our belief in the adequacy of the Gospel of Christ for such a day as this.

Protest of Government Intrusion

Notwithstanding the fact that we have stood loyally with our government, both in peace and in war, and more especially in fighting for the liberties of mankind throughout the earth, we deplore and fervently protest what appears to us to be marked indications of a trend toward the principles of fascism and communism in the political machinery of our government.

We emphatically protest those tendencies and acts of governmental agencies and bureaucratic departments by which our religious liberties are being threatened and by which the government is systematically encroaching on the sacred domain of the church.

Specifically, we deplore the following six things, which we regard as characteristic of this tendency to violate the historic principle of the complete separation of church and state:

- 1) Forcing our churches to be collecting agencies for government taxes.
- 2) The practice of some local collectors of internal revenue of forcing churches to make income tax reports.
- 3) The insertion of questions requiring detailed information as to the religious convictions and practices of citizens in such questionnaires as one concerned purely with the granting of irrigation privileges for farmers in a project in California.
- 4) The attitude of the OPA in their official regulations concerning the minister's use of gasoline, specifically forbidding him to use his B or C ration book for the purpose of "converting" and largely leaving him to the mercy or whim of the local ration boards.
- 5) The attitude of the War Production Board in their refusal to permit churches to build or repair buildings, as unessential to the national welfare during this war, while at the same time granting permits to other purposes, many of which are harmful to the best interests of our nation, as evidenced by the multiplication of taverns and like places of business.
- 6) The deliberate and discriminatory provision of the new "streamlined" Simplified Tax Bill for 1945, as applied to those earning less than five thousand dollars, who have their taxes deducted by employers, which bill was passed over the protest of experts who warned of the tragic results to churches and charities, and which is based upon the following fallacies and inequalities:

- 1) After family deductions, the 1945 tax law allows only 10% exemption for all deductions including gifts to churches and charities, under the theory that the average American gives only 2% to 3% to these causes. (The basis of figuring gifts to these causes is determined by striking an average between saints and sinners, profligates and widows, givers and non-givers, without any regard for, or relief to, those who are conscientious stewards and tithers, providing no

differential between supporters of these worthy causes and those who waste their funds destructively.)

2) Formerly 15% of net income was deductible for gifts to churches and charities, but this law provides for an average of only 3% and all given in addition to the 3% not only may not be claimed for deduction but the giver pays a tax on all gifts over 3%. Thus, the person doing the most to meet America's basic spiritual and social need is penalized.

Concerning Navy Chaplaincy Issue and the American Council

We commend the American Council of Christian Churches for their splendid accomplishments of securing free radio time over the Blue Network and a quota of army chaplains in the extremely short period since its organization, and for their courageous stand on the issues of the day, especially the Navy Chaplaincy issue.

We join with them in charging Captain Robert D. Workman, Chief of Naval Chaplains, with insincerity in broadcasting desperate appeals for chaplains while deliberately excluding such groups as ours, in which there are many qualified men who would gladly serve were they not eliminated by Captain Workman's own stubbornly-persisted program, which makes a Navy chaplain responsible for entertainment and recreational duties, involving their presiding over worldly amusements and practically forcing them to be willing to assist in the distribution of liquor (if requested by a commanding officer), both of which practices would not only be contrary to the conscience of ministers of our Association, but to thousands of ministers in all denominations. And for his further insincerity in loudly proclaiming freedom of conscience when these conditions exist; as well as his insincerity in allowing hundreds of chaplains of other groups to go into the chaplaincy without placing before them certain probable duties, while being very careful to exclude our conscientious fundamentalist men by making a clear-cut issue in such statements as, "a candidate who feels he cannot carry on these collateral activities disqualifies himself for the naval service," when the practice of the army, of forbidding any officer to assign collateral activities, works very acceptably with a far larger number of chaplains.

We join with the American Council in calling upon Admiral Randall Jacobs, head of the Bureau of Navy Personnel, to transfer Captain Workman and replace him with a man who will adhere to the army policy of freeing a chaplain's full time to pursue his spiritual duties.

Although recognizing we are a minority, we protest that while our boys are fighting a war overseas to recover and protect minorities' rights, we in America are being refused a minority's rights in the most important sphere of national life today, that of ministering to the spiritual needs of a great branch of our armed forces in their hour of crisis and danger.

Concerning the Post-War World

We must disassociate ourselves from those religious bodies and civic leaders who, no doubt in all sincerity but wrongly, are misleading our American people into thinking that with the successful completion of this war an enduring and uninterrupted peace will be brought in.

While desiring a just peace with all our hearts and holding malice toward none, and while desiring to extend the period of post-war peace by all the means at our command, we regret this delusive line of propaganda, which is definitely contradicted by the plain prophetic words of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who declared that wars and rumors of war would not only continue but increase until, at the end of the age, He shall come again to this earth to judge and cast out wicked men and systems, and to set up His own beneficent reign of righteousness and peace.

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