

OUR UNIQUE CONSTITUTION - LET'S MAKE IT BETTER

On February 3-5, 1863, Christian men of 11 denominations and 7 states gathered at Zenia, Ohio, to consider the state of our nation, then torn by civil war. On the second day of those meetings John Alexander, a leading business man in Zenia, brought before the gathering a paper in which the sins of the nation were confessed, and the importance of repentance and reformation insisted upon. Then the paper continued:

"We regard the neglect of God and His law, by omitting all acknowledgment of them in our Constitution, as the crowning, original sin of the nation, and slavery as one of its natural outgrowths. Therefore, the most important step remains yet to be taken - to amend the Constitution so as to acknowledge God and the authority of His law."

Then there followed a proposed amendment: "We, the people of the United States (recognizing the being and attributes of Almighty God, the Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures, the law of God as the paramount rule, and Jesus, the Messiah, the Saviour and Lord of

all), in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice,"

In 1844 certain citizens of Pennsylvania and Ohio, through Representative John Quincy Adams, petitioned Congress to provide for a clear acknowledgment of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the ruler of the American nation.

In 1894 such an amendment was proposed in a joint Congressional resolution presented by Senator Wm. P. Frye of Maine and Representative Elijah A. Morse of Massachusetts.

More recently bills have been introduced into Congress proposing a similar amendment. There are seven now before Congress: H. J. Res. 57, 61, 235, 314, 325, 332, 341. They call for the following amendment to the Constitution of the United States:

"1. This nation devoutly recognizes the authority and law of Jesus Christ, Saviour and Ruler of nations, through whom are bestowed the blessings of Almighty God.

"2. This amendment shall not be interpreted so as to result in the establishment of any particular ecclesiastical organization, or in the abridgment of the right of religious freedom, or freedom of

speech and press, or of peaceful assemblage.

"3. Congress shall have power, in such cases as it may deem proper, to provide a suitable oath or affirmation for citizens whose religious scruples prevent them from giving unqualified allegiance to the Constitution as herein amended."

Had the constitution at the beginning acknowledged God, or had the amendment proposed a century ago, and many times since, been adopted, those resolutions which poured into the House of Representatives on June 18, 1963, would have been unnecessary. Nine of them deal with Bible reading and prayer in our public schools. Here are three examples, the first by Mr. Dague:

"H. J. Res. 481. Joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to permit the use of prayer in public schools."

The second, by Mr. Taylor: "H. J. Res. 485. Joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States permitting the offering of prayers and the reading of the Bible in public schools in the United States."

A third, by Mr. Curtin: "H. J. Res. 486. Joint resolution proposing an amend-

ment to the Constitution of the United States pertaining to the offering of prayers and reading of the Holy Bible in the public schools and other public places in the United States."

These and similar bills were referred to the Committee of the Judiciary. Here, in the past, such bills have died. Let Christian people throughout the country inform their representatives in Congress that they want the bills brought out of Committee, debated, and a suitable bill passed; then an amendment to the Constitution.

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