

## **VAIB | Virginia Voice**

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**Conference Registration Open! Go online to register.**

<http://vaib.org/education/one-voice-for-liberties-conference/>

***One Voice for Liberties Conference | September 27-28, 2018***

### **Strengthen: Meeting with General Assembly Members**

With the General Assembly finally finished, I'm now working on strategies for next year. Part of that involves speaking one-on-one with legislators regarding issues of importance to us. Pray for me as I schedule appointments with legislators to encourage them to see the value of standing with VAIB.

### **Educate: How Did VAIB Begin?**

Recently, a good friend of VAIB reminded me of the two issues that originally brought our pastors together. He was concerned that pastors and church members may be unaware that those issues are still relevant to us. I thought it would be good to discuss one of them now—religious-exempt day cares.

In the 1970s, churches were uneasy about the state's position on certain issues. Some of our early pastors believed it was wrong to require a church to obtain a state license to operate a church day care. These men believed the church day care was no different from Sunday school, vacation Bible school, or Christian day school. Would they accept a license to operate those ministries? Absolutely not! But the state was determined there was no other way for these church day cares to operate.

This small group of pastors determined to seek a remedy. Could church day cares be allowed to operate under similar guidelines prescribed for licensed day cares while not encroaching on a church's firmly held beliefs? Could the state only be allowed to intervene when a credible issue of child safety arose? The remedy was to pass new legislation. To accomplish this, legislators needed to be educated and convinced that churches needed religious-exempt day cares. Unfortunately, there were few conservative legislators in the General Assembly at the time. It took several years for those few VAIB pastors to see the task accomplished, but in 1979 the bill passed. What a blessing! But once the bill became law, it was challenged in court by those churches who only wanted licensed day cares.

The legal case dragged on for ten years. Three independent Baptist churches stood up to defend the new law, but that meant hiring lawyers. Legal bills mounted, and these churches struggled under the financial burden. It was a joyous day in 1989 when the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously upheld the Virginia law creating religious-exempt day cares, but the legal bill of \$260,000 was overwhelming. Then VAIB stepped in. By this time, more churches had joined with VAIB, and it was decided to help with the legal bill. At the annual meeting in 1990, the legal bill was paid and the note was burned!

These early years taught us some valuable lessons. First, it's better to be proactive than reactive to situations. Second, it's critical to have a voice in government to speak to issues of importance to our churches. Third, it's invaluable to build relationships with legislators who will advocate for us.

Some say VAIB is just a political organization. I say we are practical. Avoiding government or turning a blind eye to political issues puts us at risk. I hope each independent Baptist church in Virginia will recognize the value of VAIB and join with us—in prayer, in speaking out on the issues, and with financial support.

### **Involve: Attend the *ONE Voice for Liberties Conference***

Have you determined to join us for the conference September 27-28? Whether you work and can only attend the evening sessions or you can come to every session, please join us for the *ONE Voice for Liberties Conference*. Register online at <http://vaib.org/education/one-voice-for-liberties-conference/>.

Pastors and friends of VAIB, please consider a special offering to help with conference expenses. Thank you in advance for your help and support.

### **Closing Thoughts**

Recently, I was reviewing the work of VAIB at the General Assembly over the years. We've seen wins and losses. So, do we give up on issues when we lose? No. We continue to fight the good fight for religious liberties! Laws can change, although it may take more time than we'd like. But our greatest need is not to change laws but to change hearts and minds. This is the work done by God through each and every church that stands true to God's Word. I pray for your continued success in seeing souls saved and disciplined.

Thank you for standing with VAIB.

Your voice for Christian liberties!

*Eddy Aliff*

Executive Director