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SBC issues will include
homosexuality, Freemasonry

By Mark Wingfield

INDIANAPOLIS (ABP) -- After 13 years of fighting about the inspiration of the Bible, Southern Baptists are poised now to delve into how the Bible ought to influence the actions of churches and their members -- at least on two issues.

How churches relate to homosexuals and how church members relate to Masonic lodges are the two most controversial issues likely to be debated by messengers to this year's Southern Baptist Convention. The annual meeting is set for the Hoosier Dome in Indianapolis June 9-11.

Here's a look at those and other issues slated for debate:

-- Homosexuality. Some action intended to exclude from the SBC any church affirming a homosexual lifestyle is likely to be debated.

Precisely what form such a motion might take is unclear. The motion--or several motions--could come from the floor or could be offered by the SBC Executive Committee.

In late May, members of the Executive Committee were being polled by mail on the wording of one possible motion proposed by the committee's bylaws workgroup. The issue was referred to that workgroup at the Executive Committee's February meeting in Nashville, Texas.

Both the full Executive Committee and the bylaws workgroup will meet in Indianapolis June 8, the day before the SBC convenes. If some motion is worked out to be presented from that body, insiders said, it could pre-empt motions from the floor that might be even more harsh or reactionary.

Homosexuality has been the center of attention among Southern Baptists nationwide since two North Carolina churches took separate actions this spring -- one blessing the "union" of two homosexual men, the other ordaining a homosexual divinity student to the ministry.

The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina last month ousted Pullen Memorial Baptist Church in Raleigh and Binkley Memorial Baptist Church in Chapel Hill over the issue. Pullen was expelled by Raleigh Baptist

Association earlier this year. Binkley has not been involved in any Baptist association for several years.

In February, the SBC Executive Committee passed a resolution critical of the two churches' actions, which were under consideration but not finalized at the time. The committee also referred to the bylaws workgroup two motions that would exclude from the SBC "churches endorsing homosexuality."

-- Freemasonry. Southern Baptists have skirted the issue of Freemasonry for several years, but the simmering debate is likely to come to a head this year in Indianapolis.

Larry Holly of Beaumont, Texas, has mailed a packet of information critical of Freemasonry to 5,000 SBC leaders and plans to distribute 5,000 additional copies to messengers in Indianapolis, according to a Baptist Press report.

Holly has called for the SBC to take a stand against Masonic lodges, which he calls "a spiritually devastating and ungodly brotherhood of satanic darkness." His mailing says a motion will be made in Indianapolis to appoint an ad-hoc committee "to study the Masonic Lodge and report back to the Convention in 1993 with a recommendation for action."

Two previous motions referred to the Home Mission Board -- in 1985 and 1991 -- resulted in no action. Trustees twice have replied that a study of Freemasonry is not within the assigned responsibilities of the HMB's interfaith witness department.

In the HMB's report to this year's convention, trustees will again decline to take a stand on the issue and refer it back to the convention floor for action.

The issue is sure to generate heated debate since, according to a poll by the SBC Sunday School Board, 14 percent of Baptist pastors and 18 percent of deacon chairmen are or have been Masons.

-- Baptist Joint Committee. The final thread tying the SBC to the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs could be cut this year if messengers approve a recommendation of the SBC Executive Committee.

The SBC's longstanding relationship with this religious-liberty coalition based in Washington, D.C., has been a thorn in the flesh of SBC fundamental-conservatives for several years. In actions the past two years, SBC messengers have cut funding for the Joint Committee and given the SBC's religious-liberty assignment to the Christian Life Commission.

If approved, a recommendation from the Executive Committee this year would sever all ties between the SBC and the Joint Committee but allow the CLC to relate to the Joint Committee "in any manner it may deem appropriate."

However, a more controversial recommendation related to the Joint Committee concerns allocation of a \$300,000 account held by the Southern Baptist Foundation. The funds were set aside in 1964 -- but never used -- to help with the purchase of a building for the Baptist Joint Committee.

Last fall both the Joint Committee and the CLC attempted to retrieve the principal from the fund. The Foundation asked the Executive Committee what to do.

In February, the Executive Committee voted to give the BJC any interest earned on the account that had not already been distributed to the BJC. The committee also approved a recommendation that the convention authorize the Executive Committee to reallocate the principal amount "to Convention causes as the Executive Committee deems appropriate."

-- Pressler nomination. At least one challenge to the report of the committee on nominations is likely.

The committee has nominated Houston judge Paul Pressler to serve as a trustee of the Foreign Mission Board. Several high-profile leaders of the fundamental-conservative movement in the SBC have asked Pressler to decline the nomination, but so far he has shown no inclination to do so.

Pressler, the most prominent architect of the fundamental-conservative

movement's rise to power in the SBC, recently rotated off the powerful Executive Committee. Critics argue making him an FMB trustee so quickly violates the conservatives' promise to "broaden the tent" of SBC leadership.

Well-known leaders such as SBC president Morris Chapman and Sunday School Board President Jimmy Draper have said they oppose Pressler's nomination in principle but would not take the issue to the floor of the convention. Other Baptists, however, appear willing to make a substitute nomination at the convention.

-- Relationship of Woman's Missionary Union to SBC. The SBC Executive Committee will recommend adoption of revisions in the program statement of Woman's Missionary Union, which functions as an auxiliary to the SBC.

Among the revisions is a statement that WMU should work with "churches of the Southern Baptist Convention." That addition apparently is intended to discourage WMU from supporting mission endeavors of SBC splinter groups such as the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

At its June 8 meeting, the Executive Committee will consider whether to proceed with a motion that would ask WMU to become an agency of the SBC. That issue could be brought to the convention floor for consideration.

Some Executive Committee members would like to bring WMU under the control of the SBC's new fundamental-conservative leadership. However, WMU leaders have said they would decline any invitation to give up their auxiliary status.

-- Accreditation of schools. The SBC Education Commission will reaffirm its 1991 report that concluded there is no need to establish an independent Southern Baptist accrediting agency.

The action is part of a report from the commission's accreditation task force, which will bring four recommendations. Two recommendations call on SBC agencies and institutions 1) to provide better training for trustees and 2) to understand their governing documents and how to enact changes in keeping with them. Two other recommendations call for 3) the SBC to affirm trustees and administrators of the six SBC seminaries and 4) for a renewed emphasis on the Southern Baptist heritage of all schools.

Many of the issues addressed either directly or indirectly by the motions arose out of conflicts at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, which has undergone a significant transition in recent years.

By dismissing the need for an SBC-only accrediting agency, the Education Commission may draw the ire of some SBC fundamental-conservatives who are upset about Southeastern's problems with existing accreditation agencies.

-- Decreased CP budget. Messengers will consider a proposed \$140.2 million Cooperative Program budget for 1992-93. That total is a \$509,887 (0.36 percent) decrease from the current fiscal year.

The Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' unified budget to fund foreign and home missions, six seminaries and other SBC agencies.

-- Resolutions. Messengers also will consider resolutions proposed by the convention's resolutions committee.

Committee chairman Al Mohler of Atlanta, interviewed two weeks prior to the SBC's opening day, declined to comment on the nature of resolutions the committee has received in advance.

"We're already receiving resolutions covering a wide range of issues, most of them reflected in the events and issues current among Southern Baptists," he said.

Mohler confirmed he has received resolutions related to the homosexuality issue but would not "prejudge the committee" by speculating what kind of resolution might ultimately be presented.

Education Commission again will
recommend against separate agency

By Mark Wingfield

INDIANAPOLIS (ABP)--For the second consecutive year, the Southern Baptist Education Commission will recommend against forming a new Baptist accrediting agency to serve the denomination's seminaries and colleges.

That will be part of the Education Commission's report to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Indianapolis June 11.

However, three recommendations from the Education Commission to the convention call for better training of seminary trustees, better understanding by trustees and administrators of how to work with a school's governing documents, and renewed emphasis on the Southern Baptist heritage of denominational schools.

A fourth recommendation would affirm trustees and administrators of Southern Baptist seminaries "for their efforts to carry out their mission in a manner consistent with Southern Baptist theological heritage" and for maintaining "a responsible role and relationship" with existing accrediting agencies.

The Commission also will report adoption of a resolution last March that calls on accrediting agencies to "avoid creating pressure or the appearance of pressure designed to affect the theological posture of the educational institutions."

Accreditation procedures have come under increased scrutiny in recent years as one of the SBC's six seminaries, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, has dealt with a threatened loss of accreditation from the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

Southeastern trustees and administrators ran into trouble with the accrediting agencies by attempting to change the way faculty are hired without first changing the school's governing documents.

Leaders of the movement to make Southeastern represent a more conservative theology have charged the accrediting agencies are attempting to keep that change from happening. The accrediting agencies have responded that they are not concerned with theological positions so much as proper governance of accredited schools.

This dispute has prompted some Baptists to call for the creation of a new Southern Baptist accrediting agency. Convention motions to that effect were referred to the Education Commission in 1990 and 1991.

Randy Davenport, retired president of Campbellsville College in Campbellsville, Ky., has served as chairman of an accreditation task force appointed by the Education Commission.

The task force issued a lengthy report at last year's convention, concluding "the formation of a separate Southern Baptist accrediting agency will not provide the effective mechanism to assure correction of any problems which may be perceived nor to prevent the scrutiny of other accrediting bodies."

With the second referral of an SBC motion at last year's convention, the task force's work was continued, and they began meeting with three members of the SBC Executive Committee who contributed to this year's report.

This year's report makes specific reference to the conflicts at Southeastern Seminary, on the one hand calling for trustees to be better informed about how to avoid accreditation conflicts but on the other hand praising trustees for acting responsibly in relation to accrediting agencies.

And the resolution adopted by the Education Commission states: "There is a widespread perception that some accrediting agencies have dealt harshly with Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and others as a reaction to

efforts by trustees to move the seminaries toward a more conservative theological stance; and...there is a further perception that accrediting agencies try to pressure institutions to adopt a more liberal theological perspective than what most Southern Baptists are comfortable with."

Davenport said the report does reflect specific concerns related to the North Carolina seminary but also reflects other longstanding concerns of Southern Baptist educators.

How accrediting agencies deal with Southern Baptist schools has been "an honest concern for years," he said.

Despite the intense interest of some leaders in the accreditation issue, it has not become a widely debated concern among most Southern Baptists. That is evidenced by the placement of the Education Commission's report as the last item of business at this year's convention.

By the time of this report at 10:45 a.m. June 11, many convention messengers will already have gone home. In recent years, some business could not be conducted on the last day due to lack of a quorum.

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Communicator ceases publication
because of costs, 'apathy'

MOORE, Okla. (ABP) -- The Southern Baptist Communicator, the latest in a series of newspapers promoting the fundamental-conservative movement in the Southern Baptist Convention, will cease regular publication because of low subscriptions and reader "apathy."

Subscriptions to the newspaper have not kept up with production costs, according to an article in the May-June issue.

"Further, since the (1991) Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta, the perception by many has been that the struggle (in the SBC) is settled and therefore the assumption 'We no longer need a conservative paper.' This erroneous perception has allowed for apathy to curtail renewal of subscriptions."

The newspaper began sporadic publication in March 1990, with the first issue promoting the candidacy of Texas pastor Morris Chapman, who later was elected to two terms as SBC president.

From the beginning, the Communicator was mailed free to approximately 40,000 churches and individuals, funded by contributions from churches and others. The newspaper went to a subscription basis in August 1990, but only about 4,000 subscriptions were sold.

According to the latest issue, which includes a front-page endorsement of fundamental-conservative candidate Edwin Young of Houston for SBC president, the Communicator will resume publication "when the need arises and the demand is deemed strong enough."

The newspaper was edited by Fred Powell, associate pastor of First Baptist Church of Moore, Okla., and a former associate of two-time SBC president Charles Stanley of Atlanta. Powell recently was nominated as chairman of the SBC Committee on Order of Business by the SBC Committee on Nominations, which was chaired by his Oklahoma pastor, Bobby Boyles.

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-- By Greg Warner

Jimmy Carter urges seminary grads
to combat discrimination of poor

By Marv Knox

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (ABP) -- Jesus still wants Christians to minister to society's poorest people, former President Jimmy Carter told Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's graduating class May 22.

Such a ministry may be the only way to heal his troubled denomination, added Carter, who identified himself as "a lifetime Baptist and Sunday school teacher since I was 18 years old." Carter echoed Jesus' command to minister to "the least of these."

"The main discrimination that afflicts us, and indeed the world today, is the discrimination of the rich people against poor people," Carter said, receiving sustained applause.

"Who are rich people?" he countered. "Everyone in this room is a rich person. A rich person is one who has a home, who knows family, who has a modicum of education, a decent chance for a job, enough to eat, some degree of health care, some hope for the future, who believes the police are on your side and if you make a decision it will make a difference."

Poor people live in faraway places, but they also live "right next door to us," he stressed.

"The life of Christ was devoted to eliminating discrimination. That's what the church should remember," Carter said. Jesus even served victims of leprosy -- people whose disease was thought to have been inflicted by their own sin, he noted.

Unfortunately, churches are not taking the lead in eliminating poverty, he added: "I'll tell you this, and you won't like it: politicians do a lot more to end discrimination against the poor than churches do."

Politicians feel pressure to serve poor people, Carter explained, noting a "force in the political world" drives them to end discrimination and to provide education, clothing and housing while eliminating hunger and civil rights abuses.

"Where is the competition between the churches to alleviate the discrimination against the poor?" he asked. "How many of you, including me, know a genuinely poor person? We cannot afford to be complacent."

The Carter Center, a benevolence agency affiliated with his presidential library in Atlanta, has been responsible for immunizing children and feeding poor people around the globe, as well as monitoring elections in some of the world's most strife-ridden countries, he said.

"There's been a very self-congratulatory spirit for me," he confessed. "But six months ago, we began to ask what we're doing about the poor next door."

Consequently, the center began to focus on "the other Atlanta the Chamber of Commerce doesn't want to talk about" -- home of 500,000 poor people.

Carter reported visiting a junior high school and asking the principal about the greatest problems in her school. For boys, it was self-esteem and the subsequent "answer" of carrying semi-automatic weapons. For girls, it was pregnancy -- even in the sixth grade, because "pimps and pushers want sex with little girls; they're cheaper, they're unable to defend themselves, and they're less likely to have AIDS."

"It's a world we do not know, but it's a world by God, through Christ, we should know -- intimately," he charged.

Although poor people often are stigmatized as "despicable, lazy, without vision," Carter said his relationship to them has proved otherwise. Every year, he works alongside poor people through Habitat for Humanity, a home-building program for families with incomes below the poverty line.

"They are just as intelligent and hard-working, and they love their kids as much as I do," Carter reported. "Just having a home they helped build transforms their lives."

And such ministry to the poor also can transform the Southern Baptist Convention, he insisted.

The SBC has been "treated as something of a joke," he reported, noting the convention, in many people's minds, is "equated with schism" rather than missions.

"We're not going to heal the rift among Southern Baptists through theological or philosophical debate," he said. "But all Baptists, regardless of ultraconservatism or extreme liberalism, can find a common ground by dealing church-by-church, believer-by-believer, minister-by-minister with the poorest among us."

Carter was accompanied by his wife, Rosalynn. They are members of Maranatha Baptist Church in Plains, Ga., and their pastor, Dan Ariail, received a doctor of ministry degree from the seminary during the ceremonies.

Because of Carter's appearance, the event was held at the Kentucky Center for the Arts in downtown Louisville. About 2,250 people -- more than 700 above the capacity of the seminary's Alumni chapel -- saw 238 students receive their degrees.

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Waite urges Samford graduates
to be 'crusaders for justice'

By Mark Baggett

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (ABP) --"Keep your passion for truth, your passion for justice," former hostage Terry Waite told Samford University graduates at commencement ceremonies May 23. "Be crusaders for justice wherever there is injustice."

The 52-year-old Englishman announced that his Samford speech would be the last public occasion at which he would represent the Archbishop of Canterbury, whom he has served as personal envoy and advisor for 13 years.

Waite said he will work at Cambridge University, writing a book about his five years of captivity in Lebanon at the hands of Shiite Muslims. Four of those years were spent in solitary confinement.

Waite was kidnapped in 1987 while trying to negotiate the release of American Thomas Sutherland, acting dean of American University in Beirut. He and Sutherland were released by their captors last November.

Speaking to Samford's 1,028 graduates and about 5,000 other listeners in the Birmingham-Jefferson Civic Center, Waite defended the Anglican Church's role in hostage negotiations.

"I come from the experience convinced that my vocation takes me onward into those fields of reconciliation," said Waite.

"The word I share with you is to enable the weak and powerless to be strong, to enable the strong to be just, and to enable the just to be compassionate," he said.

At a press conference following his address, Waite said that his captors allowed him to read the Bible during his confinement, much of which was spent chained to the wall of a darkened cell.

He said he was determined to accomplish two things in his prayer life: "I was not going to get into the business of special pleading, or of being over angry at what had happened.

"I never got into the position of saying, 'Why me?' I mean, 'Why not me?'" Waite said.

When he was captured, he made three vows to himself that he said served him well: No self-pity; no regrets; no over-sentimentality.

"The one thing that sustained me during those years of captivity was knowing in fact that one could stand on truth," he said in his speech.

"There are times when one can take a step because one knows where one's personal integrity lies, knowing that Christ is the light and that the light is stronger than darkness, and that no chains, no bars can hold you once you know your own internal liberation. One's spirit could not be broken because one knows where one's truth lies."

In the early 1980s, before his capture, Waite negotiated the release of hostages from Iran and Libya as the personal envoy of former Archbishop of Canterbury Robert Runcie. Waite dealt face to face with the kidnappers of American hostages and discussed the kidnappers' claims and demands at the White House.

He suggested that news reports of arms-for-hostages deals involving former U.S. National Security Council aide Oliver North "caused major complications" in hostage diplomacy.

"Was Terry Waite or the (Anglican) Church involved in arms negotiations for the hostages? Did we know? The categorical answer to that question is 'no,'" Waite said.

Waite went to Beirut in January 1987 to seek Sutherland's release "purely on humanitarian grounds," he said.

"We made no claims to be great diplomats or negotiators, nor did we wish to secure for ourselves a place on the world stage. We saw it as our fundamental duty to do all that was within our power to help those who were desperate."

Waite's time in captivity, he said in his press conference, allowed him "to get to know myself more deeply. It gave me the courage to face myself, the real truth about myself and my prejudices."

He said he hoped his understanding will help him "make positive contributions in the field of reconciliation."

Referring to the recent rioting in Los Angeles and other United States cities, Waite said, "Conflict often results where people perceive a great sense of injustice."

"It is not for me to advise the U.S. government in domestic or foreign affairs," he said. "But it does seem to me that many governments of the world really lack an understanding about what the people of the world think."

"When I was working in Africa, it seemed to me that church people really had a much better understanding of the local conditions than diplomats because they had spent some time talking with the ordinary man on the street."

Waite said he accepted the invitation to speak at Samford, from among several hundred similar invitations, because of the Baptist university's commitment to global education.

He praised the work of universities in promoting international understanding. "One of the great things universities can do is promote face-to-face contact, right across the board," he said. "And that pays enormous dividends in the future."

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Court tells prosecutors to base arguments on law, not Bible

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- The U.S. Supreme Court has declined to review a Pennsylvania court's decision to reverse a death sentence because the prosecutor in the case cited a biblical text to argue for the death penalty.

The high court's May 26 action left standing a decision by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court to vacate the death sentence imposed in a 1986 slaying. In reversing the death sentence in November, the top Pennsylvania court warned that prosecutors should rely on evidence and state laws -- not the Bible or other religious writings -- when asking juries to impose the death penalty.

After being convicted of robbing and killing Anna Mae Morris, Karl Chambers was sentenced to death on the murder conviction and to 10-to-20 years in prison for robbery. On appeal, Chambers' attorneys raised numerous challenges concerning trial and sentencing procedures, but the Pennsylvania Supreme Court agreed with only one: the prosecutor's use of a biblical argument was inappropriate.

In closing his argument for the death penalty, District Attorney Stanley Rebert told jurors: "Karl Chambers has taken a life. As the Bible says, 'and the murderer shall be put to death.'"

That argument, the Pennsylvania court said, "advocates to the jury that an independent source of law exists for the conclusion that the death penalty is the appropriate punishment for (Chambers). By arguing that the Bible dogmatically commands that 'the murderer shall be put to death,' the prosecutor interjected religious law as an additional factor for the jury's consideration which neither flows from the evidence or any legitimate inference to be drawn therefrom."

The court said that because the argument "reached outside" the evidence in the case and beyond state laws, "we are not convinced that the penalty was not the product of passion, prejudice or an arbitrary factor, and therefore, ... we must vacate the sentence of death and remand this matter for a new sentencing hearing."

The court warned all prosecutors in Pennsylvania that "reliance upon the Bible or any other religious writing" to argue for a death sentence will lead to a reversal of sentence for the defendant and may bring disciplinary action against prosecutors.

In asking the U.S. Supreme Court to review the case, Pennsylvania argued that the state court's rule against religious arguments for the death penalty violates the free-speech rights of prosecutors and the First Amendment's ban on an establishment of religion.

In a separate opinion, one member of the Pennsylvania court joined with the majority in affirming Chambers' conviction but dissented from the ruling to vacate the death sentence, saying the court majority overreacted to the prosecution's biblical reference.

"This decision should not be interpreted as banning all scriptural references in the courtroom," said Oliver Thomas, general counsel at the Baptist Joint Committee in Washington. "It does mean that we do not live in a theocracy. If people are to be punished, it is because they have violated the laws of the state, not the rules of a particular religion."

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-- By Larry Chesser

Debate over peace-tax fund
focuses on religious freedom

By Pam Parry

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- Those who object to military service as a matter of conscience should not be forced to support the military with their tax money, religious leaders and others recently told a House subcommittee.

The House Subcommittee on Select Revenue Measures held a hearing on the

U.S. Peace Tax Fund Bill (H.R. 1870) that would allow conscientious objectors to designate their taxes to a fund used for non-military purposes.

Taxpayers eligible to make such a designation would be limited to individuals who demonstrate that -- by reason of religious training and belief -- they are conscientiously opposed to participation in war.

The bill would establish the Peace Tax Fund within the U.S. Department of the Treasury. The legislation would authorize appropriations from the Peace Tax Fund for certain non-military activities, approved by a board of directors, such as retraining displaced military workers. Remaining portions would be returned to the general Treasury fund but could not be used for military purposes.

Witnesses supporting the bill represented an array of religious groups, including Quakers, Catholics, Episcopalians, Mennonites, Jews and Methodists. A Treasury Department official said the administration opposes the bill for policy and administrative reasons.

Alan Eccleston, a Quaker from Hadley, Mass., told subcommittee members that religious freedom is at issue.

"Conscience must be taken into account," said Eccleston, who is an organizational development consultant with the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund. "Spiritual values are real. They are not to be treated as incidental or expendable to fit the needs of the state.

"That is what the First Amendment is all about," he continued. "That is our heritage as a nation -- a nation that was settled by colonists who came here seeking religious freedom."

James Madison, a chief architect of the First Amendment, spoke on behalf of conscientious objection, Eccleston said.

"Paying for others to bear arms when it is morally repugnant to do so oneself" is the very issue addressed by the bill, he said. The bill has a 50-year precedent in the practice of conscientious objection to participation in war, he said.

Sen. Mark Hatfield, R-Ore., and co-author of the bill, said Congress should extend this right to the tax system. Hatfield, a World War II veteran, said he is not a pacifist, but he is interested in protecting the rights of those who are.

Calling conscientious objection an "idea as old as the Republic," Hatfield said objectors are loyal citizens who wish to pay their taxes without violating their deepest and most fundamental beliefs.

"I can say with confidence that the individuals who would be provided relief under this act are no less deserving of the full recognition of their moral and religious beliefs than those who have been granted conscientious objector status by the Department of Defense," Hatfield said.

Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, representing a national Catholic peace movement, said the need is to "balance the legitimate right of the state" to collect taxes "and the equally legitimate right of those, who for religious or moral reasons, cannot contribute to military spending without violating their conscience."

Some conscientious objectors have violated their consciences and paid taxes, while others have faced prosecution or poverty to avoid paying them, witnesses said.

"These people do not take their moral positions lightly," Gumbleton said. "They are paying a price for their religious and moral beliefs. None of them is financially benefiting from their tax resistance or tax avoidance and most of them would welcome an opportunity to become a fully contributing citizen of this country."

Terrill Hyde, tax legislative counsel for the Treasury Department, said the administration opposes H.R. 1870 because it would extend to some individuals a right not enjoyed by every taxpayer -- the right to designate a part of their taxes to specific purposes. Currently, taxpayers may only

designate \$1 of their income tax to the Presidential Election Campaign Fund. The adoption of this proposal, she said, would erode congressional authority to choose the programs funded by tax revenues, which would ultimately undermine the nation's entire budgetary process.

"Taxpayers may be conscientiously opposed to many activities other than military operations that are funded by the government," she said.

"No taxpayer...should have a direct say over the way the government spends their tax dollars, as opposed to the influence they exert through the normal political processes and the ballot box."

The bill would impose costly and difficult administrative burdens on the administration, she said, because the Internal Revenue Service would have to adjudicate claims of conscientious objector status.

One subcommittee member noted the criteria is similar to that used by the Selective Service and asked Hyde if she thinks the military is more efficient than the IRS. The Selective Service is set up for this, she responded.

The absence of "any deterrent under the bill to restrain taxpayers from inappropriately claiming" this exemption is "an attractive vehicle for protest movements," she said.

Hatfield said that the concern this bill opens a "Pandora's box" is a mythical one.

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