

more than two decades to decide establishment-clause cases has been under fire in recent years.

Sen. Howard Metzenbaum, D-Ohio, read a dissenting opinion by Justices Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas in a recent church-state case that described the Lemon test as a "ghoul in a late-night horror movie that repeatedly sits up in its grave and shuffles abroad, after being repeatedly killed and buried."

She declined to give her view of Lemon because the issue may well come before the Supreme Court in many cases. However, she said that the two justices' criticism was disrespectful. She added that she would be the kind of justice who would not discard a time-honored test, such as Lemon, without a better alternative.

When asked about discrimination against homosexuals, Ginsburg responded that "rank discrimination against anyone is against the tradition of the United States and is to be deplored. Rank discrimination is not part of our nation's culture. Tolerance is."

Sen. William Cohen, R-Maine, asked her to define rank discrimination.

Such discrimination is arbitrary and unrelated to a person's ability or worth but is based on the circumstances of their birth, such as race or gender.

"What about sexual orientation which at this very moment is before the court?" Cohen asked.

"I cannot say one word on that subject," she said, emphasizing she could not give any hint or preview as to how she might rule in a particular case.

"Rank discrimination is un-American for whatever reason," she added.

Ginsburg declined to give specific answers to an array of constitutional questions ranging from the death penalty to gun control because they might come before the high court.

Ginsburg's nomination has met with virtually no opposition -- a stark contrast to the hearings of Justice Thomas who was confirmed amidst televised charges of sexual harassment. In fact, the record of Bill Clinton's first nominee to the high court is so distinguished that committee members have simultaneously fended off comments that the hearings are a mere formality while talking about her confirmation almost as if it has happened.

Sen. Howell Heflin, D-Ala., said: "While it remains to be seen if this climate of goodwill will last, for now at least we are scaling the heights of bipartisan cooperation. Judge Ginsburg, you deserve much of the credit for this fresh new atmosphere. The excellence of your record has itself made your nomination a source of consensus."

Ginsburg, 60, pioneered the battle for women's rights in the 1970s, leading some to herald her as the "Thurgood Marshall of the women's movement," in reference to the court's civil-rights champion. As a litigator she won five of the six women's-rights cases she argued before the high court.

Ginsburg, the first person to be a member of both the Harvard and Columbia Law Reviews, tied for the top spot in her Columbia Law School class. In 1977, she was named by Time magazine as one of 10 outstanding U.S. law professors.

She has been on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit -- referred to as the second highest court in the land -- for 13 years, writing some 700 opinions.

Her nomination received the highest possible rating of the American Bar Association -- a unanimous judgment by a 15-member panel that she is "well qualified" for the highest bench in the land. That ABA rating means the nominee is among the best available for appointment.

No one has ever failed to be confirmed after receiving such a high

rating.

If confirmed, she will be the 107th justice and the second woman to sit on the high court. She also will be the only sitting justice of the nine who has been nominated by a Democratic president.

The Senate Judiciary Committee is expected to vote in late July on whether or not to recommend her confirmation to the full Senate.

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Warning labels on TV violence
don't amount to much, critics say

By Greg Warner

(ABP) -- Don't expect the TV networks' new on-air violence advisories to do much good, observers say.

The country's four major networks -- ABC, CBS, NBC and Fox -- announced in June they will attach warning announcements to heavily violent programs beginning this fall. The voluntarily proposal is viewed as a compromise intended to avoid government regulation of TV violence.

But critics are wondering what good the advisories will do, since the networks concede none of their current shows is violent enough to warrant the warning announcement. And only one new program slated for a fall debut is expected to carry the warning -- "NYPD Blue" on ABC.

Most observers said the warnings will do little to reduce violence and offer little practical help for parents. The warnings may in fact only promote viewership of violence by attracting the curious, according to Quentin Schultze, author of several books on the effects of television viewing.

"They are raising a red flag that is going to attract people and they are not going to help the typical parent with day-to-day decision making," said Schultze, professor of communication at Calvin College, an evangelical Christian school in Grand Rapids, Mich.

The warnings will be attached only to the most violent programs, which most people could easily identify anyway, critics say.

Peggy Charren, retired director of Action for Children's Television, said the advisories won't help parents, who don't need help identifying violence but need viewing alternatives.

"I don't think they will be helpful for the average parent," agreed Schultze, author of the book "Redeeming Television."

Two Baptist ethics specialists agreed.

"The guidelines appear to be more window-dressing than substance," said Louis Moore, director of media for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

"It's just another small step that won't make much difference at the present time," added Ray Higgins, assistant professor of Christian ethics at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. "But it shows that people are moving toward greater frustration with violence on TV and are more likely to do something about it in the future."

"But trying to get something done at this point with the TV producers is like talking to the tobacco industry," said Higgins, lamenting the reluctance of both industries to concede their products have ill effects on consumers.

The anti-violence proposal came as time was running out on the networks to take action.

In 1990, when Congress passed the Television Program Improvement Act,

lawmakers gave the TV industry -- networks, broadcasters, cablecasters and programmers -- a three-year exemption from anti-trust laws so they could draft a joint agreement to address the problem of TV violence.

With that exemption due to expire soon, and with no action from the TV industry, a new law was introduced in the Senate May 12 to mandate violence warnings. Before the bill could be considered, however, the networks announced their voluntary guidelines, which closely parallel the Senate bill introduced by Sen. David Durenberger, R-Minn.

Under Durenberger's bill, the advisories would have informed viewers of the harmful effects of viewing violence, much as warning labels on tobacco products and alcoholic beverages warn consumers about the health risks.

"If the federal government is going to warn people about tobacco and alcohol, I see no reason we should not warn parents about the harmful effects that TV violence may have on their children," Durenberger said.

He cited estimates from the American Psychological Association that a child watches an average of 8,000 murders and 100,000 acts of violence before finishing elementary school.

According to the National Coalition on Television Violence, 25 percent of prime-time shows in 1992 contained "very violent" material, and the "TV homicide rate" rose 27 percent in that one year.

Although some details of the networks' proposal remain unclear, each network will be left to decide how much violence is enough to warrant labeling. The factors to be considered include the context of the violence, the intended audience and the time period during which the program appears.

The voluntary labeling agreement will be in effect for two years.

The advisories are "an anemic, very gentle first step" that may produce a negligible reduction of violence, the CLC's Moore said, but they are too little too late.

"We're responding to an issue we should have responded to a decade ago," he said. Now, with 500-channel cable systems on the horizon, a warning system limited to four networks is archaic, he said.

Moreover, the networks have demonstrated they are incapable of regulating themselves, he said. "It's like asking the fox to guard the henhouse."

Both Moore and Schultze said a more helpful proposal would be a ratings system similar to the one used by the movie industry but which would identify the troublesome content of TV shows -- such as violence, adult language, adult situations and nudity.

"There has to be some way that we as a society can provide objective information for parents to make decisions," Schultze said.

People on both sides of the TV-violence debate warn against government censorship of television. But, Schultze said, government should play a role in setting standards for content, at least in broadcasting, since TV stations operate with government licensure on a limited number of channels.

"There ought to be a line over which the television stations cannot cross," he said. "We could never agree on exactly where it is. But part of the job of government is to reflect the will of people, and it seems to me for the good of society we need to have a line drawn."

"It's naive of us to expect the television industry to regulate itself in anything except its own interest," Schultze said.

Moore said he favors direct consumer action against offensive television content, such as a boycott of companies that advertise during violent programs.

The American Family Association, a conservative watchdog group headed by Methodist minister Donald Wildmon, plans just such a boycott of those programs that earn the networks' violence warning. Moore predicted the

Christian Life Commission will get involved with the campaign.

"That is the free-enterprise way of responding," he said. "It's very much American."

Instead of fighting the networks, said Southwestern's Higgins, Christians should learn -- and teach their children -- how to use television properly. He said studying Schultze's book, "Redeeming Television," is a good way to become an "intelligent viewer."

"We should work two angles -- dialogue with the networks to say 'These are the kind of values that are healthy,' and also educating ourselves on how to watch television as a Christian," said Higgins, an associate with the Baptist Center for Ethics.

"I'm talking about intelligent viewership," he continued, "watching television for a purpose, not just sitting there with it on and catching the images with your mind in neutral."

"That means being aware of the themes of the shows and the point the show is trying to make, and then conversing about the shows with family members and other Christians."

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Neglect of moral education places
America in peril, Bennett warns

By Lacy Thompson

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- The United States is paying a high price for the neglect of its soul, former U.S. Secretary of Education William Bennett warns.

As the emphasis on the moral education of children has decreased and even disappeared in many ways, the social problems facing the nation have skyrocketed, Bennett charges. And make no mistake, he insists, there is a direct link between the two.

"The social regression of the last 30 years is due in large part to the enfeebled state of our social institutions and their failure to carry out a critical and time-honored task: the moral education of the young," Bennett writes. "We desperately need to recover a sense of the fundamental purpose of education, which is to engage in the architecture of souls."

"When a self-governing society ignores this responsibility ... it does so at its peril."

Bennett, considered to be a likely Republican presidential candidate in 1996, now is co-director of Empower America, a conservative political group. He defines the crisis in the United States in a 22-page report called "The Index of Leading Cultural Indicators." He also is interviewed in the July-August issue of Light, published by the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

In both, Bennett stresses the same idea -- the United States is failing to pass along the values and beliefs that ensure its survival.

Since 1960, the country has experienced strong economic growth. At the same time, however, the nation has seen unbelievable increases in such things as violent crime, illegitimate births, divorce, single-parent households and teenage suicide, Bennett notes.

"Over the last three decades, we have experienced substantial social regression. Today the forces of social decomposition are challenging -- and in some instances, overtaking -- the forces of social composition. And when decomposition takes hold, it exacts an enormous human cost."

In other words, the nation is crumbling and people are suffering as a result.

"I think what has caused it is a collapse in the vitality of certain beliefs and vitality in the holding of certain principles and certain ideas on the part of the American people," Bennett says in the Light article.

Bennett's analysis is not without its critics, however.

Larry Lyon, professor of sociology at Baylor University, said he generally agrees with Bennett's assessment and applauds his attempt to measure social ills by objective statistics. "On the other hand, he simplifies and sometimes misinterprets some of the indicators to make things look worse than they are," Lyon said.

"And, like Ross Perot, he does a much better job of describing the problem than prescribing the solution."

Others, like ethicist Robert Parham, say Bennett places too much blame on the failings of two government programs -- public education and public welfare.

"Like Bennett, I am deeply troubled about what is happening in American culture, but his analysis is too limited, his blame is too predictable and his solution is too superficial," said Parham, executive director of the Baptist Center for Ethics in Nashville, Tenn.

Bennett builds his argument on the idea that beliefs and values are the basis of a self-governing nation, and that these must be passed along to every generation.

"The single most important predictor of a child's behavior is what the child believes -- not race, not socioeconomic background, but what the child believes," he said. "So these ideas, these values, these moorings that we give children, as Aristotle said, 'determine not a little, determine not some, but determine almost everything.'"

Until 25 years ago, Americans reflected this view by expecting schools to lead in moral, intellectual and spiritual development of students, Bennett says. In the last quarter of a century, however, the focus has changed -- and current trends show the consequences, he adds.

"You ask American people what they want schools to do. They want schools to teach their children how to read and write and count and think. They want schools to teach children how to distinguish between right and wrong. ...

"They think when they send their children to school they should come home smarter but also better," Bennett says. "They should treat their little brothers and sisters better. This is part of education too."

But it is a missing part in the 1990s, he says. The result is what he calls a hole in the soul of modern man.

"It is almost as if we have been conducting an unwitting social experiment about people, saying, 'Let's have children. Let's not raise them. Let's not teach them the right values. Let's support them entirely on government, and let's see how they turn out.' Now the results are in."

Bennett acknowledges the answer to the problem must come from many directions -- government (in the right way) as well as social and civic institutions and families. He outlines several legislative actions that could be taken, such as a reform of education, a restructuring of the welfare system, and toughened laws regarding divorce and support of illegitimate children.

But he also notes many of the problems are beyond government cures. "How intelligently and honestly we address these problems is the critical social-policy question of the decade....," Bennett insists.

"Treatises have been written on why this (situation) has occurred.... The hard truth is that in a free society the ultimate responsibility rests with the people themselves. It is our beliefs, our behavior and our

philosophy that have in many instances changed for the worse.

"Our injury is self-inflicted. The good news is that what has been self-inflicted can be self-corrected."

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-- Greg Warner contributed to this article.

Bennett's cultural index paints
gloomy picture of American society

By Lacy Thompson

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- If you are having a bad day, don't pick up "The Index of Leading Cultural Indicators" to read. It is not just depressing -- it is downright frightening.

The index was compiled by William Bennett, former U.S. secretary of education, former national drug czar and current co-director of Empower America, a new conservative political organization.

The premise is simple. Since the 1960s, economists have relied on an index of several indicators to judge the economic condition of the country. Why not, in the same manner, focus on various cultural indicators to evaluate the social condition of the nation?

Bennett, a possible Republican presidential candidate in 1996, attempts just that in his 22-page report. He finds evidence of "substantial social regression," "serious social and behavioral problems," and "a marked shift in the public's beliefs, attitudes and priorities."

Bennett summarizes that society has shifted away from self-responsibility and self-control to self-expression.

"According to pollster Daniel Yankelovich, our society now places less value than before on what we owe others as a matter of moral obligation; less value on sacrifice as a moral good; less value on social conformity, respectability and observing the rules; and less value on correctness and restraint in matters of physical pleasure and sexuality.

"Higher value is now placed on things like self-expression, individualism, self-realization and personal choice."

At one point, Bennett quotes author John Updike, who said the fact that Americans still live well "cannot ease the pain of feeling we no longer live nobly."

The index focuses on trends in seven key areas in support of such a view.

-- Crime. Statistics in this area reflect a rocketing increase in the number of crimes committed and in the rate of arrest of juveniles for violent crimes.

The number of total crimes in the nation has risen more than 300 percent in the last three decades, from 3.3 million crimes in 1960 to 14.8 million in 1991. The number of violent crimes has jumped more than 500 percent, from 288,000 in 1960 to 1.9 million in 1991. And, the index notes, the 41 percent population growth since 1960 cannot account for all of the increase.

Meanwhile, the fastest-growing segment of the criminal population is juveniles, Bennett's index reports. In 1965, an average of 137 of every 10,000 juveniles were arrested for violent crimes. In 1990, that rate had increased to 430, an increase of 214 percent.

Even as these statistics climbed, however, there has been a marked decrease in the average prison sentence for all serious crimes, the index

notes. In 1954, the median prison sentence for all serious crimes (murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny/theft and motor vehicle theft) was 22.5 days. In 1990, the median figure was eight days.

According to the National Center for Policy Analysis, the expected punishment for someone committing murder in 1990 was 1.8 years and for someone committing rape was 60 days.

Overall, the number of people incarcerated in the country is at an all-time high -- 825,000 at the end of 1991. But the punishment rate is at an all-time low -- almost three out of every four criminals are not incarcerated and fewer than one in 10 serious crimes result in imprisonment.

-- Poverty. The index cites two trends regarding poverty and children -- the increase in the number of children living on government welfare and the percentage of children living below the poverty level.

One of every eight children (12.9 percent) lives on welfare, the index notes, much higher than the 3.5 percentage rate in 1960. That translates to 8.4 million children living on welfare. At the same time, 14.3 million children (21.8 percent) live at or below poverty levels. That figure declined from 1960 to 1970, then began to climb once more in the 1990s.

While 12 percent of all children under age 6 who live with both parents are at the poverty level, 66 percent who live only with their mothers are at the poverty level.

The index blames the rising totals on the collapse of the family structure in the country. "Changes in family structure over the past generation are strongly correlated with rising rates of poverty among children," notes William Galston, a domestic adviser for President Bill Clinton.

-- Natality. The index notes a continuing decline in the infant mortality rate in the nation. In 1960, 26 of every 1,000 babies born in the country died within the first year of their lives. In 1991, that rate was down to 8.9. Even so, the rate was higher than 23 other countries or territories.

Meanwhile, the teenage pregnancy rate has skyrocketed in the last two decades. In 1970, 49 of every 1,000 teenage girls became pregnant. Twenty of every 1,000 had abortions. About 23 of every 1,000 gave birth.

By 1990, the pregnancy rate was 99 of every 1,000. The abortion rate had risen to about 44 and the birth rate stood at 42. In other words, all three areas almost doubled their 1970 levels.

At the same time, the nation's illegitimate birth rate was skyrocketing as well, from 224,300 births in 1960 to 1.2 million in 1990. Currently, about 28 percent of all births are illegitimate. The increase has come among whites and blacks alike.

Finally, the number of abortions since the practice was legalized in 1973 has grown from 586,000 a year to 1.7 million. Today, nearly one of every four pregnancies end in abortion, the index notes. The report says the United States has the most permissive abortion laws of any democracy.

-- Family. In a segment on the family, the index reports on dramatic increases in child abuse, teenage suicides, divorces and single-parent families.

The index notes that in 1976, there were 669,000 reported cases of child abuse. By 1991, the number had grown to 2.7 million. By the same token, 3.6 of every 100,000 teenagers committed suicide in 1960. By 1990, the rate was up to 11.3, more than triple the earlier figure. Suicide is now the third-leading cause of death among teenagers, the index points out.

Statistics related to marriage and divorce indicate diverging trends, the index notes marriages are at an all-time low, while divorces remain high (although they have dropped to 1979 levels).

In 1960, there were 73.5 marriages for every 1,000 unmarried females and 9.2 divorces for every 1,000 married females. By 1990, the rates were 54.2 for marriages and 20.9 for divorces. Only about half of all marriages now are first marriages.

Meanwhile, divorces continue to affect a large number of children. Only 57 percent of all children live with both biological parents.

On a related note, the number of single-parent families continues to rise. In 1960, 9 percent of all families in the country were single-parent households. In 1991, the percentage was 28.6, and nine of 10 such families were headed by the mother.

Children in one-parent families face greater-than-average risks of living in poverty and experiencing a variety of behavioral and educational problems, the index notes.

-- Education. The index cites two trends in this area, the slide of SAT scores (a drop of nearly 80 points since 1960) and a declining high school dropout rate (from 15 percent in 1970 to 12 percent in 1990. At the same time, spending on education has increased considerably since 1960, from \$2,035 per student to \$5,247 per student.

-- Drugs. The index reports on encouraging trends in drug use. Use remains higher than in 1960 but also reflects a decline from early 1980s levels. In fact, overall drug use is at its lowest level since the government began tracking such behavior in the 1970s.

In a survey of high school seniors, about 37 percent said they had used marijuana, 7.8 percent said they had used cocaine, 7.8 percent said they had used hallucinogens, and 88 percent said they had used alcohol. All the totals were down from the previous year and well down from the early 1980s.

-- Television viewing. The index cites a steady increase in daily television viewing among Americans, from five hours a day in 1960 to seven hours a day in 1992. Last year's figure reverses a decline during the late 1980s and returns the trend to its high mark of just over seven hours a day.

Perhaps more important that the quantity of television, the index adds, is the quality. "Today there is more brutal violence and explicit sex on television than ever before ... According to researchers, 'Heavy exposure to televised violence is one of the causes of aggressive behavior, crime and violence in society.'"

The index also notes that 56 percent of respondents in a 1991 survey said they felt that television had the greatest influence on children's values, more than parents, teachers and religious leaders combined.

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Society's cure may be worse
than disease, sociologist warns

By Greg Warner

WACO, Texas (ABP) -- There is little disagreement that America suffers a variety of social ills, but the cure might be worse than the disease, warns sociologist Larry Lyon.

Lyon, professor of sociology at Baylor University, a Baptist school in Waco, Texas, said he generally agrees with the assessment of society offered by former U.S. Secretary of Education William Bennett, who blames America's growing social problems on society's failure to provide children with moral training.

Bennett's 22-page "Index of Leading Cultural Indicators" cites

statistical increases in several areas -- including crime, divorce, teen pregnancy and suicide -- to demonstrate a decline in America's social health from the 1960s.

Bennett, a possible Republican presidential candidate in 1996, argues for less self-expression and more self-restraint. But his solution, Lyon said, would produce a more restrictive society with more governmental constraints on personal freedom.

"Iran has a society like that," Lyon said. "Nazi Germany had a society like that. He's not suggesting that. But you have to look very carefully at what you're giving up and what you're getting in return."

Lyon said Americans, particularly women and minorities, may not be willing to surrender the gains they have made since the 1960s -- to cure social regression with social repression.

For instance, he said, some social conditions might improve if women fulfilled the earlier role model of self-sacrifice for the sake of their families, but women would also sacrifice many hard-won freedoms, such as the freedom to pursue a career or education.

"If I have to choose between my daughters growing up in the '90s ... and my daughters growing up in the '50s, I would prefer the choices and freedoms of the '90s," he said.

"I think we are going to have to live with much of what he (Bennett) measures in his cultural indicators, because the social and economic cost is too great to turn the tide in the other direction," Lyon said.

While society certainly has suffered in the last three decades, Lyon said, Bennett's analysis of the decline also suffers from oversimplification.

For example, while crime figures are up since the 1960s, crime reporting is now more common and sophisticated, say Lyon and other sociologists. Meanwhile, independent surveys of crime victims show little increase, Lyon said, suggesting "the increase in crime probably isn't there."

While scores on college entrance exams have dropped, Lyon said, "that doesn't mean we're dumber. It means higher education opportunities are being expanded ... and people who didn't use to go to college are applying now."

"While there appears to be a connection (between statistical changes and social ills), when you dig a little deeper you find there's a lot more going on," he said.

Still, Lyon said, Bennett's assessment of society's problems is generally correct, although "sometimes he puts a very negative and conservative spin on them."

More troublesome, Lyon said, is finding solutions that allow Americans to retain some of the advances in individual freedoms they have won in recent years.

"Do we want fewer choices for women? Do we want less equality (for minorities)? We can find societies where that exists. But are those societies we want to model after?"

Robert Parham, executive director of the Baptist Center for Ethics in Nashville, Tenn., also found fault with Bennett's prescription for America's ills.

"Clearly these cultural indicators are troubling," Parham said, "but the solution lies not simply in the significant reform of government programs but also the reassertion of the authority and responsibility of the church and family."

Parham said Bennett ignores other cultural indicators that would more fully define America's social slide and its causes.

"He wants to blame education and public welfare programs for the demise of culture without acknowledging the contribution made by Madison Avenue and Wall Street," Parham said.

Other trends worth studying, Parham said, are white-collar crime, domestic violence, commercialization, and drug consumption -- particularly America's two most popular drugs, alcohol and tobacco.

Parham said the rapid commercialization of American culture stimulates "greed, envy and excessive materialism" and has contributed to the social ills cited by Bennett. "From 1950 to 1990, the global advertising budget multiplied seven fold," he said.

"Like Bennett, I am deeply troubled about what is happening in American culture," Parham said, "but his analysis is too limited, his blame is too predictable and his solution is too superficial."

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Wife of New York editor
dies after cancer battle

NORTH SYRACUSE, N.Y. (ABP) -- Patricia Ann Towler Lockwood, 45, wife of the editor of the New York Baptist newspaper, died July 21 after a three-year battle with cancer.

A native of Hopkinsville, Ky., Patricia Lockwood moved to Syracuse, N.Y., in 1981 and worked as a ninth-grade social studies teacher until 1989. She was a member and deacon at Bellewood Baptist Church in Syracuse.

In addition to her husband, Quentin Lockwood, Jr., she is survived by three sons -- Clinton III of Washington, D.C., Daniel of Georgetown, Ky., and Benjamin of Syracuse -- her parents, her brother, a niece and a nephew.

Funeral services were set for July 24 at Bellewood Church, with burial scheduled for July 26 in Elizabethtown, Ky.

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