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**As Congress adjourns for holidays,
church-state issues left pending**

By Robert Marus

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- Congress has adjourned until late January, and several significant church-state issues are left hanging in the legislative balance.

The Senate went into recess Dec. 9 after failing to pass an omnibus funding bill for several federal agencies. The legislation includes a measure that would create the first federal school-voucher program, targeted for schools in the District of Columbia.

The House provided final passage to the bill on a 242-176 vote Dec. 8. In the Senate, Republican leaders had hoped to bring the bill to the floor the next day, but some senators' objections to the legislation meant it could not be passed at least until the Senate reconvenes Jan. 20.

The massive \$328 billion package is an end-of-the-year catch-all spending bill that provides funding for 11 federal agencies and for the District of Columbia's government. The bundling of legislation is necessary because the Senate has failed to pass funding bills for those agencies.

The voucher program would provide scholarships of up to \$7,500 a year to low-income D.C. students to attend the private school of their choice -- including religious academies. Many church-state separationist organizations oppose such voucher programs as a violation of the First Amendment's ban on government support for religion.

However, the Supreme Court ruled last year that a school-voucher program in Cleveland passed constitutional muster because government money flowed to the religious schools through the genuine private choice of parents.

The bill is also laden with what congressional observers call "pork" -- funding slipped into the bill by congressmen for

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pet projects in their own districts. Fiscal hawks in both parties have decried the legislation.

In addition, many Democrats and some moderate Republicans have objected to the voucher provision and other aspects of the bill -- such as its softening of a gun-control law -- that House and Senate leaders reportedly slipped in at the behest of the White House. This was done even though both houses of Congress have not approved the measures individually.

If passed, the bill would create the nation's first federally funded voucher program -- a precedent that voucher opponents don't want to see set. Because of objections over the vouchers and other aspects of the bill, it may face a filibuster when Senate leaders bring it to the floor again Jan. 20. The bill is H.R. 2673.

A handful of other bills touching on church-state issues also are pending in Congress:

-- Gay marriage. The Federal Marriage Amendment has now been introduced in both houses of Congress. It would amend the U.S. Constitution to ban marriage and "the legal incidents thereof" for same-sex couples. Both versions have been referred to their respective chamber's Judiciary Committees. The House version (H.J.R. 56) had garnered 107 co-sponsors as of Dec. 11.

-- Government funding for religious charities. The House has passed two bills re-authorizing government programs that contain provisions expanding the government's ability to provide funding to religious groups to perform social services.

The School Readiness Act (H.R. 2210), which authorizes funding for the federal Head Start early-childhood-education program, passed the House July 24. It contains a provision explicitly allowing religious organizations receiving Head Start funds to discriminate in their hiring practices on the basis of religious ideology. This would repeal anti-discrimination provisions under which Head Start has operated for years.

That bill is now before the Senate Education Committee. Many observers believe it will have a more difficult time in the Senate than in the House.

In May, the House added similar provisions to the Workforce Reinvestment and Adult Education Act of 2003 (H.R. 1261). However, the Senate passed a version in November removing the employment-discrimination exemption. The bill is now before a House-Senate conference committee to hammer out the differences between the two versions.

Critics of government funding for social-service programs at churches and other religious organizations claim both bills are a part of a wider plan by the Bush administration to enact Bush's "faith-based initiative" in a piecemeal fashion.

-- Partisan political involvement by religious groups. Legislators who think churches should be allowed to endorse or oppose political candidates without losing their tax-exempt status are making the second attempt in as many years to amend Internal Revenue Service codes. The latest version of Rep. Walter Jones' (R-N.C.) "Houses of Worship Free Speech Restoration Act," currently in a House committee, had managed to gain 165 co-sponsors as of Dec. 11.

Although the House soundly defeated a similar bill last year, it has strong support from many Religious Right leaders and organizations. They claim that churches, pastors and religious organizations are being unfairly silenced on political issues by IRS regulations. Opponents claim the bill threatens religious liberty and gives religious groups political privileges that other tax-exempt organizations don't enjoy.

This year's version of the bill is H.R. 235. It has not moved out of the House Ways and Means Committee since it was introduced there 11 months ago.

Standard hires Ken Camp as managing editor

By ABP staff

DALLAS (ABP) -- Veteran Texas Baptist journalist Ken Camp has been named managing editor of the Baptist Standard.

Camp, 43, has worked in the Baptist General Convention of Texas news office since 1984. For the past seven years, he has been director of news and information and has served as Dallas bureau chief for Associated Baptist Press.

At the Standard, he will succeed Mark Wingfield, who has resigned to become associate pastor at Wilshire Baptist Church in Dallas. Camp was elected to the new role by the Standard's board of directors Dec. 11. He will begin work Jan. 1.

Camp's byline has been a regular feature in the Standard for two decades, as he has reported on the ministries of Texas Baptist churches and missions endeavors.

"Baptist Standard readers are blessed that Ken Camp will succeed Mark Wingfield," Editor Marv Knox said. "They're not only two of the top Baptist journalists. They're among the best journalists anywhere."

His writing has won numerous awards from the Baptist Communicators Association and the Religion Communicators Council. He twice has won BCA's top writing honor, the Frank Burkhalter Award -- once for coverage of healing found in Texas communities after hate crimes and again for combined coverage in the Standard of the 1999 shooting at Wedgwood Baptist Church in Fort Worth. He won RCC's top writing honor for a story about the Texas death chamber in Huntsville. He recently wrote a book about the history of Texas Baptist Men, "Anyway, Anytime, Anywhere."

"Ken will be a tremendous asset to the Standard," Knox added. "After covering the BGCT for two decades, he knows Texas Baptists' heartbeat better than anyone. Ken will continue to help us understand the issues and challenges that face our churches, associations and convention. ... Ken's commitment to Christ and his church, love and devotion to his family, and personal integrity are unsurpassed."

Charles Wade, BGCT executive director, expressed regret for the convention's loss but delight for the Standard's gain. "No one knows us better," Wade said of Camp. "... His integrity is a mile deep and wide. What he writes, Baptists can put in the bank."

Wade called Camp "one of the finest Christian laymen I have ever met. His love for his family and his church encourages all who know him."

Becky Bridges, coordinator of the BGCT Communications Center, echoed Wade's praise: "Ken Camp's great writing skills will help keep the Baptist Standard at the top tier of all religious newspapers. He is a world-class reporter whose heart for missions and evangelism is apparent in everything he does."

A native of Greenville, Camp earned a bachelor of arts degree in English and journalism from East Texas State University in Commerce and a master of arts degree in communication from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth.

He and his wife, Diane, have three sons, Daniel, Matthew and Nathan. The Camps are members of South Garland Baptist Church in Garland.

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- Adapted by ABP staff

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CBF using million-dollar gifts to keep missionaries on field during lean times

By Sue Poss

ATLANTA (ABP) -- Some missions personnel might never have reached the field, while others might be at home now taking early retirement, if not for two large anonymous gifts that the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship received in the past two years.

"These gifts have been very important in strengthening the ministry of CBF," said Daniel Vestal, the Fellowship's national coordinator. "They have made it possible for us to send missionaries that would not have been sent otherwise. They have provided the financial resources for mission projects, church planting and mission support."

The Fellowship's global missions program received \$8.2 million of the \$9 million gifts, to be spent over several years. The rest went to church starts and the CBF Church Benefits Board. "The decision as to how the funds would be used was determined by the donors," Vestal said.

The Fellowship's spends about \$11 million a year on global missions in the United States and abroad.

Gary Baldrige, global missions co-coordinator, said the unbudgeted gifts were used to send 16 new mission personnel to Toronto, North Africa, China, Los Angeles, Athens, Southeast Asia and Detroit; provide supplementary college funds for children of field personnel; and provide stipends for student missions, among other personnel needs.

Additionally, the money funded field projects such as agricultural development, literature, assistance to orphans and street children, hunger and refugee relief, medical, water development and Bible distribution, he said. Other priorities, such as local-church partnerships, church planting and social ministries to neglected people groups, benefited as well.

"Gifts such as these enhance CBF's work by relieving the pressures of the relatively lean economic years, providing resources to boost a particular ministry, like the 600 percent increase in student missionaries, and giving the organization time to rebound from dips in normal revenues," Baldrige said.

Anonymous gifts to the Fellowship of any size are unusual, said Jim Strawn, the Fellowship's coordinator for finance. "We don't get many of them of any size," he said. "These gifts were mission driven, given by people who have a love and a heart for missions."

Had CBF not received the special gifts, Baldrige said, it would have meant a moratorium on the commissioning and deployment of new mission personnel, early retirement of veteran personnel, elimination of dozens of field projects, potential layoff of staff, and possible return home of some field personnel.

"The next challenge will be to maintain and to increase these ministries beyond the life of the gifts," Baldrige said. "At some point within the next two or three years, normal giving to CBF will need to have increased substantially for these works to continue."

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Students, alumni, faculty again protest Louisiana College policy

By ABP staff

PINEVILLE, La. (ABP) -- About 150 students, alumni and faculty members of Louisiana College gathered for a candlelight vigil Dec. 10 at the front entrance of the Pineville college to protest the school's new textbook policy.

They said they were there to send a message to the college's trustees and administration that the new policy - which requires the vice president of academic affairs to approve all teaching materials, reading selections and textbooks -- should be rescinded.

The board took action after President Rory Lee removed "A Lesson Before Dying" by Ernest J. Gaines and "The Road Less Traveled" by Scott Peck from the school's bookstore.

Former trustee Clyde Hoyt said he doesn't agree with the policy. "They've gone overboard," he told the Town Talk of Alexandria. The crowd at the vigil urged the board to hold a special meeting to change that policy and return to the practice of letting faculty decide what materials are used in classes.

History professor Thomas Howell taught classes Dec. 8 dressed all in black to protest academic "censorship." Other professors wore black armbands Dec. 5, the same day a majority of faculty approved a statement opposing the policy. Students wrote chalk protests on campus sidewalks with messages like "Ignorance is Bliss," and "Education, not Indoctrination," according to the newspaper. Notes of thanks and support were scripted in the parking spots of faculty members who are fighting the new policy.

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Passport starts kids camp in partnership with CBF

By Alison Wingfield

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (ABP) -- Beginning next summer, Passport Inc. will offer camps for children completing third through sixth grade under a new program called Passport Kids.

Developed as a partnership between the Birmingham-based Passport and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, the kids camp will offer some of the same elements as Passport's well-known camps for teenagers but in an age-appropriate format.

"Passport Kids will integrate missions commitment with the fun and excitement of a children's camp," said Mark McClintock, coordinator of Passport Kids camp. "We want to plant the seeds early in children's lives for a commitment to following Christ and to reaching out to people around the world."

The idea surfaced several years ago when several children's ministers began clamoring for something more in a children's camp. About a dozen children's ministers were used as consultants in planning Passport Kids, according to McClintock, who was himself one of those ministers prior to leaving his position at Seventh and James Baptist Church in Waco, Texas.

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"There has been a lot of contact with children's ministers to make sure what we're doing meets their needs," McClintock said.

One of the differences between Passport camps and Passport Kids is the missions experience. While the teen camps feature offsite ministry projects, Passport Kids will offer missions projects at the camps.

The staff of 14 who will travel with the camp program next summer have been specifically recruited and trained to work with 8- to 12-year-olds, according to McClintock. Also offered are special activities to help sixth graders prepare for the teenage years.

"The 2004 theme is 'On the Edge,' featuring the Romany people group of Europe," says Colleen Burroughs, executive vice president of Passport. In addition to regular activities such as swimming, canoeing, horseback riding, archery and a ropes course, campers will work on projects that support the ministry of missionaries who work with the Romany, or Gypsy, people and meet other missionaries from around the world. A worship service caps off each day.

"We want worship and Bible study to be well-integrated, so it is a holistic approach," McClintock said.

The 2004 Passport Kids camps will be held in Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama and Missouri. The four-day camps run from mid-June through the end of July. Thirty-two churches have already pre-registered.

The Fellowship partnership is scheduled to last for two years.

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Texas men's group seeks middle road between moderate, conservative conventions

By Ken Camp

DALLAS (ABP) -- Treading the ground between competing Baptist conventions is no walk in the park, but it's the path Texas Baptist Men has chosen, according to interim executive director Leo Smith.

Texas Baptist Men is a self-governing affiliate of the Baptist General Convention of Texas that depends on the BGCT for most of its operating budget. But last February, the TBM board of directors voted also to have a fraternal working relationship with the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, a conservative group that broke away from the BGCT in 1998.

"The primary reason for the relationship with SBTC is to maintain a working relationship with people who have been integrally involved in the ministries of Texas Baptist Men since its beginning," Smith explained.

East Texas and the Dallas-Fort Worth area are regions where TBM has been strongest, and they are also areas of Southern Baptists of Texas Convention prominence. More to the point, many of TBM's key lay leaders -- particularly in disaster-relief ministries -- are members of churches now affiliated with SBTC, Smith noted.

TBM crafted the working agreement with SBTC out of a desire to be a place where members of BGCT and SBTC churches could work together, and to avoid the threat of having two competing Baptist men's organizations in the state, Smith said. "My hope is that Texas Baptist Men will be able to walk between the two conventions with integrity and a vision of bridging the gap for the laymen," he said.

But moving from vision to reality isn't easy, he acknowledged. "It's a work in progress."

Jim Richards, executive director of the conservative group, agreed. In the last nine months, there has been "significant progress" in developing a working relationship between his group and Texas Baptist Men, he said.

Yet questions remain unanswered and some issues have not yet been finally resolved, he said. "We may be a little over five years old, but we're still a work in progress ourselves."

Richards said TBM and SBTC mutually benefit from having the chance to share information about each other with new audiences.

"It's an opportunity for more men to be involved in missions through Texas Baptist Men. There are churches affiliated with us who have never heard of TBM. We have over 200 churches that were not in existence in 1998 affiliated with our convention. As these churches grow up, it gives their men the opportunity to plug into the TBM organization," he said.

However, at this point, the SBTC website has no link to Texas Baptist Men and does not include any TBM-related events on its calendar. By the same token, the TBM website does not provide any links to SBTC, but the TBM annual plan-book for leaders includes a page promoting the SBTC state missions offering, from which TBM derives no benefit.

TBM's long-time status as an affiliate of the BGCT has been beneficial both to the convention and the missions organization, according to BGCT Executive Director Charles Wade. "People of our state know Texas Baptists as caring Christian people in large part because of the sacrificial service of TBM disaster-relief volunteers and Retiree Builders," he said. "The BGCT has benefited from the goodwill produced by these ministries, and TBM could not have performed these ministries without the significant financial support of BGCT-related churches. My prayer is that this important missions partnership will continue for years to come."

As TBM seeks to develop a working relationship with SBTC, while trying not to alienate the BGCT, some of the key issues involve money, disaster relief and volunteer construction.

The Baptist General Convention of Texas provides budget money, office space and mission offering funds to TBM. The SBTC doesn't. If TBM were an "affiliated" organization of the conservative convention, like Criswell College, it might be included in the budget. But as a "fraternal" partner, TBM can expect "no guarantee" of financial support through the SBTC budget or its state missions offering, Richards said.

In the future, SBTC might grant funds to specific disaster-relief efforts or to a jointly sponsored men's rally, he added. But it won't become a line item in the SBTC budget as long as its relationship is strictly "fraternal." However, SBTC channels some designated money to TBM from its churches -- about \$20,000 so far in 2003. In contrast, TBM received more than \$1.2 million through the much larger BGCT last year.

For disaster relief, the American Red Cross relates directly with Texas Baptist Men for work within the state. SBTC has worked with its affiliated churches and sympathetic associations that have disaster-relief vehicles that could become a part of the TBM fleet, Richards noted. He said this ministry is a "leading area where coordinated efforts have worked to the advancement of both Texas Baptist Men and SBTC in accomplishing Kingdom work." The volunteers operate with the understanding that "if called out, they work under the leadership of TBM and become a part of their team," he added.

In volunteer construction, TBM has a 24-year-old ministry that includes church, camp and special projects builders. SBTC has developed its own volunteer builders program, Texas Baptist Builders. "It's an amicable relationship," Richards said. "I don't see it as competition. It's complementary. There's plenty of work to go around."

Other areas, like missions education, are even less clear. SBTC might eventually develop its own missions education program, Richards said.

TBM maintained exhibit booths at both the BGCT annual meeting recently in Lubbock and the SBTC meeting in Corpus Christi. But the annual TBM convention was held in conjunction with the BGCT meeting. A committee was recently appointed to study when and where TBM should hold its annual meeting and may consider a neutral site.

Smith of TBM is reluctant to guess what the future holds for his group's relationship with the two Texas conventions, but he knows what he hopes will happen. "My dream is that there will come a day when we know each other well enough that relationships just happen, and we don't have to go through the process of working out cooperative agreements," Smith said.

He also knows what he hopes will never happen. He doesn't want to see TBM sever its longstanding ties to the BGCT, or lose the opportunity to work with valuable lay leaders in SBTC-related churches.

"I don't think that a parachurch Baptist men's organization in Texas is the answer. The answer is to walk between the two conventions," he said.

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Carolina church develops integrated e-ministry

By Allison Horne and Adam Martin

COLUMBIA, S.C. (ABP) -- Media technology is changing so fast that churches trying to keep up can get exhausted. But at least one church in South Carolina is making an effort to develop a churchwide electronic strategy.

Today churches all over the country are using computer technology to communicate their message and optimize the efficiency of their administrative and pastoral staffs. Many of these churches are also using computer tools to keep the staff in touch with each other and with other ministries.

"Websites facilitate about 90 percent of instant communication within the church between ministerial staff and multiple ministries," said Jay Wingard, a church website developer.

Ministers also are using technology to prepare sermons and find relevant information. Computer technology allows them access to a wide variety of information in a more efficient way.

"I rarely get up from my desk to pull a book from my shelf anymore. Everything is at my fingertips with a computer," said Ed Carney, senior pastor of Riverland Hills Baptist Church in Columbia, S.C. "Membership information and counseling tools are easily accessible through my Palm Pilot, anywhere and anytime."

But staff members at Riverland Hills wanted to use technology for more than just their own benefit. They wanted a tool that would benefit the congregation and help reach their community.

The result? An e-ministry designed to bring all the communication tools under one umbrella, taking the technical burden off the various ministry components and allowing each to focus on the people and their needs.

"Because there is so much out there, our church leadership felt the need to develop a ministry to be used as a tool to

facilitate the various needs of all ministries," said Riverland Hills executive pastor Wayne Cole.

This new ministry involves people from all aspects of the church and embodies three features -- Web design, multimedia and communications. Each subcategory has unique responsibilities and roles pertaining to the ministries' mission.

"The website gives information about the ministries I am involved in, and I am able to keep up with various ministries that I wouldn't otherwise know about," said college Sunday school teacher Marie Hogue.

As the ministry slowly becomes an instrument for the church body, it develops new interactive ways to reach others, church leaders said. "Our multimedia CD-ROM will be for new and prospective members," Wingard said. "It includes a video welcome from our executive pastor and basic information on our church. We will also look to develop this CD to be used as a witnessing tool."

"Technology is driving our country," said Cole, the pastor. "So why not use technology to the fullest in order to advance the kingdom?"

-- Allison Horne and Adam Martin are college students and members of Riverland Hills Church.

-- Photos available from Associated Baptist Press

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News Briefs from Associated Baptist Press

By ABP staff

Criswell hires Jerry Johnson from Southern Seminary

DALLAS -- Jerry Johnson, 39, was elected president of Criswell Center for Biblical Studies Dec. 5. He currently is dean of the Boyce College, the undergraduate college of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Johnson succeeds Richard Wells, who resigned in May to become pastor of a church in Rapid City, S.D.

Criswell Center for Biblical Studies - which includes Criswell College and several radio stations - was founded in 1971 by First Baptist Church of Dallas and named for legendary pastor W. A. Criswell. Criswell College, which is affiliated with the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, has more than 400 students and 17 full-time faculty members. Former presidents include Paige Patterson, now president of nearby Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Johnson, a native of Malakoff, Texas, served nine years as a trustee of Southern Seminary, two as chairman, and was an outspoken critic of the former moderate administration. He is a graduate of Criswell College (1986) and Denver Conservative Baptist Seminary (1998) and earned a doctor of philosophy degree from Southern Seminary. He has been a pastor of churches in Texas and Colorado. (ABP)

Baptist pioneer Charles Ashcraft dies at 86

EL PASO, Texas -- Charles H. Ashcraft, 86, who served as executive director of two Baptist state conventions and oversaw the birth of the New Mexico Baptist Foundation, died Dec. 2 in El Paso, Texas. He led the Arkansas Baptist State Convention from 1969 until his retirement in 1980.

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He was the first executive director of the Utah-Idaho Southern Baptist Convention (1965-69) and started the first Baptist church in Las Vegas, Nev. He also was a pastor in New Mexico and was founding president of the New Mexico Baptist Foundation (1947-51). "Charles Ashcraft took a fledgling foundation and gave it credibility, strong leadership and defined its purpose in those first days," current president Lee Black said.

An Arkansas native, Ashcraft was a graduate of Ouachita Baptist College and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. After retirement, he worked with the International Baptist Bible Institute in El Paso for two years. Survivors include his wife of 68 years, Sarah Ashcraft of El Paso, three sons, three brothers, two sisters and four grandchildren. (ABP)

Samford library gets 1,000 missionary biographies

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. -- Samford University's library boasts a new collection of 1,000 biographies of Christian missionaries. Included are biographies of Christian missionaries Lottie Moon, Albert Schweitzer and others both familiar and less well known. The collection, presented Dec. 2, is a gift from Samford President Thomas Corts in honor of his wife, Marla Haas Corts.

The Cortses first assembled the collection in 1999 with a nucleus of volumes from their international travels. Other books have been added since. "As long as their stories are preserved, they will serve as measuring points for our own journey, and models as we strive to follow Christ's example," said Marla Corts, who traces her interest in missions to her conversion as a junior in high school.

The biographies, she noted, teach that "our faith is worth living and dying for, that countless thousands have labored sacrificially with no name recognition or earthly promise of reward, that one effectively declares the gospel in many ways, not only with words, [and] that God honors the work of those committed to carrying the good news." (ABP)

Group objects to 'faith-based' prison plan

WASHINGTON -- A church-state watchdog group is objecting to a plan by Florida Gov. Jeb Bush (R) to create a "faith-based" prison. Americans United for Separation of Church and State issued a press release objecting to Bush's Dec. 5 announcement that he would create an 800-man medium-security prison at Lawtewy Correctional Institution in Bradford County.

According to the Palm Beach Post, inmates at the facility would "receive religion-based classes in everything from parenting to character building to job training." Bush announced the plan at a White House conference in Tampa promoting President George W. Bush's "faith-based initiative" to expand the government's ability to fund social services through religious institutions.

Americans United's director said the plan was "a clearly unconstitutional scheme." According to the press release, Barry Lynn added: "A state can no more create a faith-based prison than it could set up faith-based public schools or faith-based police departments." (ABP)

French panel recommends ban on religious symbols

WASHINGTON -- Among the most controversial recommendations of a new French government report is a law banning Muslim head scarves and other prominent symbols of individual religious expression in public schools.

The report, which was presented to French President Jacques Chirac Dec. 11, also recommends that schools make some concessions to the religious practice of students, such as providing special meals to observant Jewish and Muslim students and adding Jewish and Muslim holy days to the state calendar.

But few issues in French society in recent years have been more controversial than the hijab, or the head scarf that

many Muslim women believe their religion requires them to wear in public. France has a large Muslim and Arab population.

Although historically an officially Catholic country, France has an anti-public-religion tradition dating to the days of the French Revolution. The government is officially secular, and many French view the head scarf as symptomatic of larger desires of Muslim groups to force their religious laws on the public.

However, Islamic groups as well as the nation's organization for Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox Christian clergy oppose the ban, calling it an infringement of religious freedom. (ABP)

Federal panel's China trip again postponed

WASHINGTON -- For the second time, a federal panel charged with monitoring religious freedom conditions around the world has been forced to postpone a trip to China.

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom announced Dec. 8 that it is postponing the same trip it had already postponed in July. Both times, the panel blamed the postponement on the Chinese government's refusal to let the commissioners meet with residents of Hong Kong to study conditions of religious freedom there.

"Although we are encouraged by the demonstrated willingness of the Chinese side to schedule meetings for the commissioners with relevant leaders on the [Chinese] mainland, we are disappointed that the Hong Kong issue has again become a hindrance between our two countries, standing in the way of a productive interaction on religious freedom," said commission chairman Michael Young in a statement. (ABP)