

# Light

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMISSION OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

MAY-JUNE, 1992

## Land, other leaders meet with pope, discuss child pornography battle

By Louis A. Moore

**Vatican City** -- Three Southern Baptist leaders, including Christian Life Commission Executive Director Richard Land, met with Pope John Paul II and other Vatican officials here to explore possibilities for an international, interfaith effort to combat child and hard-core pornography.

In addition to Land, Southern Baptists who participated in the January 30 meeting at the Vatican were Oscar Romo of Atlanta, director of the Language Church Extension Division at the Home Mission Board; and H. Robert Showers, a Washington, D.C., lawyer and a Christian Life Commission trustee.

The meeting produced a document, entitled "Declaration of Concern and Common Conviction Regarding the Problem of Pornography," pledging interfaith action against the spread of child and hard-core pornography. Land was a member of the subcommittee that drafted the declaration. (The document is printed on page 7 of this LIGHT.)

Land, Romo and Showers were among 19 U.S. religious leaders from a variety of denominations who met with the pope to encourage Vatican support for the effort. Included in the group were Roman Catholics, Greek Orthodox, Mormons, Pentecostals, and representatives of the Salvation Army, the National Council of Churches and the National Association of Evangelicals.



**Richard Land, left, Oscar Romo and Pope John Paul II discuss coalition against pornography.**

"I am tremendously encouraged that leaders from such diverse religious groups could come together and establish agreement on a meaningful commitment to eradicate hard-core and child pornography," said Land. "I was impressed by the sincerity and commitment of all the participants. A sense of urgency was expressed repeatedly as more people around the world are being victimized by adult hard-core and child pornography each day."

In his address to the group, John Paul said, "Dear friends, your meeting is a noteworthy example of reli-

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Life at Risk:



Crises in Medical Ethics

## Crises in Medical Ethics

**26th Annual Seminar**

**March 1-3, 1993, Nashville, Tennessee**

**Applying biblical principles to euthanasia, living wills, AIDS, "safe sex," genetic engineering, surrogate motherhood, abortion and other difficult issues.**



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## Think About It!



Recently I was a panelist in a forum on "freedom of expression" in the arts. The program's premise was that freedom of speech rights are endangered by the controversy over the National Endowment for the Arts' (NEA) grants of public funds in support of extremely controversial "art." Prior to the initial statements by the panelists, two events occurred which set the tone for the evening.

First, the museum hosting the event provided a summary of the controversy over the Annie Sprinkle, Robert Mapplethorpe and Andres Serrano projects funded by the NEA, complete with slides and vague descriptions of the "art" in question. Second, one of the museum staff prefaced the panelists' introductions by stating that he had always believed that living in America meant you were free to say or write anything you wanted, and now some people were trying to take away this right. This museum staffer said that now things were so bad that his children had told him that their school's Halloween party had been canceled because some "fundamentalists" had objected that Halloween had Satanic overtones, and its observance violated the public school's secular status. He thought this outrageous and volunteered his opinion that this "tiny group of fundamentalist fanatics should just go away, leave the majority alone, and quit imposing their narrow-minded, prejudiced views on everyone else."

As the first panelist scheduled to speak after this outburst, I felt compelled to respond. I suggested that the staffer no doubt approved the 1962 and 1963 Supreme Court decisions banning official Bible reading and prayer in public schools. I pointed out that there was a certain compelling logic to the Christian parents' objections to Halloween in light of the Court's decisions and subsequent rulings banning displays of Christian symbols at Christmas in the public schools. I also stated that the staffer was surely delighted that the Supreme Court did not tell a tiny *atheist* minority "to just go away and leave the majority alone." I pointed out that the speaker's prejudices against conservative Christians were the problem, illustrating the accuracy of Cornell professor Richard Baer's observation that "fundamentalists" are the final group in America that one can be prejudiced against with total impunity. Comments and attitudes expressed about fundamentalist, conservative Christians would invoke outrage and censure if voiced against any other group in society.

I then pointed out that in the introductory presentation another museum staffer had said, "I won't tell you how Annie Sprinkle got her name." Also, none of the controversial Mapplethorpe photographs showing various sadomasochistic homosexual practices were shown. My question was, "Why not?" If anything goes, then why not show the audience what was so objectionable? Of course, the answer is that people would be shocked and horrified at what their tax money was supporting and would question the dubious liberal platitude of "no limits" when they were presented with the particular examples, rather than the abstract theory.

I pressed this point of "no limits" with the other panelists and asked, "Do you really mean 'no limits'? Is it all right to distribute material depicting torture, mutilation and murder? Is it all right to portray children in all manner of sexual activities?" Finally, some in the audience and on the panel agreed that perhaps *some* limits were needed.

I believe we must continue to challenge erroneous assumptions, clearly and without rancor, whenever we encounter them, understanding that most people have not been exposed to our positions or made aware of their own prejudices.

*Richard D. Land*



# Ethicist and researcher add their talents to Christian Life Commission's staff

By Louis A. Moore

Within days after they arrived in their new offices at the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, medical ethicist C. Ben Mitchell and researcher/archivist Keith Ninomiya were stirring up a blizzard of paper and activity on issues ranging from the environment, hunger and homelessness to the Human Genome Project and euthanasia.

Mitchell has been digging deep into such issues as the Human Genome Project, living wills and world hunger in order to churn out new literature and plan future conferences and meetings on those issues assigned to him.

He is director of biomedical and life issues for the CLC.

Among Mitchell's early accomplishments was setting up a special hunger consultation for Southern Baptist agency leaders

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***Mitchell says he expects genetic engineering to eclipse many other medical issues in the 1990s.***

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in May. That meeting will focus on ways to increase Southern Baptist hunger giving and interest.

He also has begun planning the CLC's 1993 Annual Seminar on "Life at Risk: Crises in Medical Ethics." That meeting will be March 1-3, 1993, in Nashville.

Mitchell is a former pastor and counselor who became interested in medical ethics in 1986 after



**Medical ethicist C. Ben Mitchell and researcher/archivist Keith Ninomiya help the Christian Life Commission stay abreast of current developments on an assortment of moral issues.**

attending a bioethics consultation. He then returned to school to pursue a Ph.D. in medical ethics from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. He has completed his course work and is working on his dissertation. He also holds degrees from Mississippi State University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Mitchell says he expects genetic engineering to eclipse many other medical issues in the 1990s. He is particularly concerned about the Human Genome Project, a 15-year, \$3 billion effort to map the entire human genetic structure. He says that project has implications for practically every aspect of life and raises serious ethical and moral questions and dilemmas that Christians need to be prepared to address.

Ninomiya scans and clips relevant articles from secular and religious publications ranging from *Christianity Today* to *The Dallas Morning News* to journals

and other periodicals that arrive at the CLC office in Nashville. His primary task is to keep the CLC staff up to the minute on current events in both the secular and religious worlds regarding all of the issues assigned by the Convention to the CLC.

Ninomiya came to the CLC from The Criswell College in Dallas, where he was a researcher and archivist.

He estimates he scans and clips dozens of periodicals a day for CLC staff. He also works with staff to research various ethical and public policy subjects in depth.

He is so thorough that one CLC staffer commented, "Having Keith here is like having our own daily digest of news that pertains to the Commission's program assignment."

Ninomiya received his bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Hawaii and did graduate work at The Criswell College.



# CLC speakers encourage focus on government

By Louis A. Moore

Washington, D.C. -- Speakers ranging from Democratic and Republican senators to a nationally syndicated columnist, the U.S. Surgeon General and a noted theologian urged Southern Baptists to impact American as well as world society through the U.S. political system and culture.

The wide-ranging group of speakers called on Christians to put their own houses in order while simultaneously working to impact governments and society with biblical ethics and morality.

The speakers made the comments March 2-4 during the 25th annual Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission seminar in Washington, D.C. More than 300 registered from 27 states for the event. The meeting's theme was "Citizen Christians: Their Rights and Responsibilities."

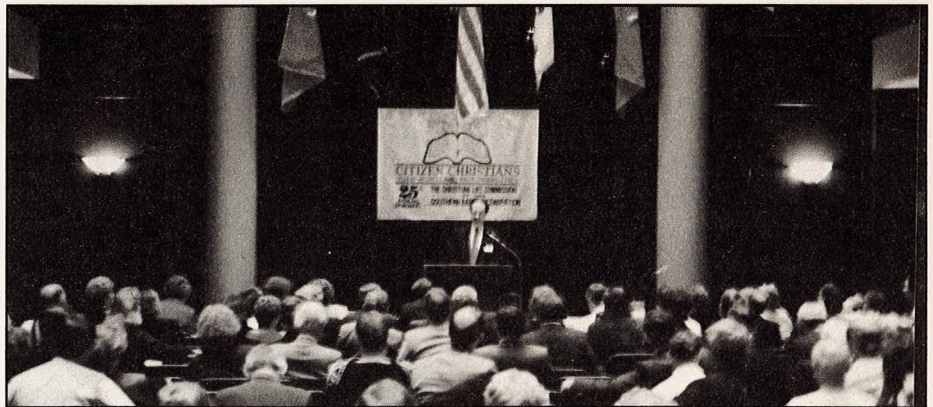
CLC Executive Director Richard Land said the seminar was purposely named "Citizen Christians" instead of "Christian Citizens" to emphasize the fact that Christians are first believers, with their secular citizenship being a modifier.

"We have responsibilities and we have rights, and those responsibilities and those rights are in both realms," he said.

"When we bring our religious



**HUD Secretary Jack Kemp spoke at White House briefing.**



**More than 300 registered for the Christian Life Commission's 25th Annual Seminar at the National Guard Memorial in Washington, D.C.**

and moral convictions and our faith affirmations into the public marketplace of ideas and involve ourselves in the social and political arena, we are standing solidly within the best of our traditions as Americans and as Baptists," Land said.

"It never has been, it never will be, accurate for Christians to debate their responsibility either to be a witness or to be salt and light. It always has been, and it always will be 'both/and.' We are disloyal to our Saviour if we neglect evangelization, and we deny the incarnation of our Savior, 'the Word made flesh,' if we see the flesh, that real world of human beings, as secondary or irrelevant. We must do both," Land said.

Southern Baptist law professor Lynn Buzzard told seminar participants the reverence with which some religious leaders today treat "the premier slogan, the wall of separation" tends to leave the erroneous impression that nothing, including morality and religious values, should pass from the churches to society or culture or government.

Buzzard, professor of law and director of church-state studies at Campbell University in Buies Creek, N.C., said such an attitude

distorts the Constitution and the meaning the founding fathers intended for the First Amendment.

He pointed out that the First Amendment does not use the phrase "separation of church and state." The First Amendment says, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

"It (the phrase 'separation of church and state') is almost an invocation that is given at any conference on church and state today, a sort of constitutional chant, or, if you will, a sound byte, which for many people is supposed to silence all further discussions," he said. "Many Baptists are fond of this phrase and use it in a kind of invitational way, particularly those who at times chide conservatives for slogans about inerrancy, and yet they themselves genuflect before the wall, wailing lest the wall be breached in some way."

Syndicated newspaper columnist Cal Thomas said dysfunctional churches must become functional again, so that government can stop being dysfunctional.

Thomas said opinion polls show that people's satisfaction with government is at one of the



lowest points in history. The reason for this dissatisfaction and frustration, Thomas said, is "government no longer is fulfilling the function for which it was created."

Southern Baptist theologian Carl F. H. Henry called upon all evangelical Christians to champion religious freedom for the entirety of humankind.

The end to communism in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union does not eliminate all the restraints imposed on religious freedom worldwide, he said.

"In view of the lifting of restrictions on Christianity by Soviet sphere nations, the repressive treatment of Christian minorities by Islamic nations and by communist mainland China becomes glaringly conspicuous," Henry said.

Henry singled out Saudi Arabia as a prime example of religious intolerance, but also fired verbal shots at Turkey, Egypt, Israel, China and the American secular culture.

Roy Edgemon, director of the Discipleship Training Department of the Baptist Sunday School Board, said citizen Christians today must be willing to be the "salt and light" at every level of government and politics if society is to reflect positive values.

"A church member who is an informed and involved citizen is dangerous to the cause of Christ unless that church member is dis-



**CLC Executive Director Richard Land, left, and SBC President Morris Chapman, right, listen to a talk by U.S. Surgeon General Antonia Novello at the White House briefing.**

cipled to follow Jesus Christ and is, in turn, discipling others," he said.

Edgemon called for churches to prepare Christians for participation in government.

Beverly LaHaye, president of Concerned Women for America and a Southern Baptist, reminded conference participants that despite what "secular humanists and atheists" say, religion and politics have mixed since the birth of the United States.

"It's good that early American Christians believed in having an influence on society," she said. "Had they not, there might not be an America today--certainly not the same America you and I are privileged to live in."

LaHaye cited five action steps for Christians to make an impact: vote, communicate with elected officials, volunteer to work on

campaigns, run for political office and pray.

Southern Baptist Convention President Morris Chapman called on the 15.2 million Southern Baptists in this country to bathe in prayer their efforts in dealing with moral issues and concerns.

He said government and politicians do not have the ultimate answers for morality, the economy and ethics.

"The answer comes by faith," he said. "We need to pray for the leaders of our land that the Spirit of God would stir us and them for His glory."

Evangelist Jay Strack of Dallas reminded conference registrants that to be a good follower of Christ, a person must be willing to be a servant.

"We have a generation of peacocks who want to serve God. But peacocks one day are feather dusters the next," he reminded.

Washington attorney Robert Showers told conferees that "God wants impact players."

Showers drew on his years in Washington to describe how Christians can make an impact on government and society for Christ. Prior to his current position, Showers served in various positions with the United States Department of Justice. He also is active with the National Coalition Against Pornography.

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**Meeting at the White House Old Executive Office Building, left to right, were CLC staffer Ben Mitchell, Health and Human Services Assistant Secretary for Health James Mason, U.S. Surgeon General Antonia Novello and CLC Executive Director Richard Land.**



By Michael Whitehead

Thirteen-year-old Jonathan opened the First Baptist newsletter and flopped on the sofa. "Hey, Dad, it says this is Religious Liberty Sunday."

"Um-hmm," replied Dad from behind his newspaper.

"It says we're 'celebrating religious pluralism in America.' What does that mean?"

"Sounds like preacher mumbo jumbo to me," sighed layman Dad. "Just means it's a free country, I guess. There are lots of religions, and people can believe whatever they think is true."

"Is that good?" probed Jonathan.

"Sure, as long as we get to believe what we want," replied fair-minded Dad.

"Oh, I get it. It doesn't matter which religion is true, so long as everybody gets to do their own thing. Right?" Jonathan asked.

Cautious Dad lowered the newspaper. "Good question, son. Better ask your mother. Oops, time for the 10 o'clock news."

Click!

Jesus said it does matter what you believe. It is truth that makes us free. Jesus' words in John 8:32 are often quoted on the subject of freedom, but rarely in context. Reading verse 31 along with verse 32 shows a precondition for freedom: "Then Jesus said to those Jews which believed on Him, 'If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'"

Jesus said there is only one way to be free from sin: "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (8:24). The root of faith will produce the fruit of obedience to His Word in the life of the disciple (8:31).

Baptists are committed to religious liberty because we are committed to proclaiming the truth. We are also committed to liberty

## 'The truth shall make you free'

(John 8:32)



Observe Religious Liberty Sunday  
June 7, 1992

of conscience. No government or church organization must be allowed to interfere with a person's relationship with his or her God.

But while we believe in religious liberty as a theological concept and social ideal, we do not yield our conviction in the absolute truth of the Bible. Our Father God's ultimate goal is not religious pluralism in America. It is salvation exclusively in Christ. God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). Religious liberty for all is the best means to the end that truth may be pro-

claimed, received and believed by all and that all individuals be free from coercion by any government, church or individual.

Thank God for religious liberty in America today. Ask God for religious liberty to spread throughout the world! Obey God by exercising your religious liberty to share the Truth who makes us free.

*Michael Whitehead is general counsel and director of Christian citizenship and religious liberty concerns for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.*



# Declaration of Concern and Common Conviction

*(Following is the statement written by Richard Land and others at the Vatican meeting between concerned U.S. religious and Vatican leaders on child pornography.)*

As religious leaders, we believe in the dignity of each human being as created in the image and likeness of God. We have joined in common cause to address a distinct assault on the family and on all human life: the pernicious, global problem of the production, distribution and consumption of pornography. Within the United States we have focused on the abolition of illegal child and adult pornography. We understand that concerned groups in other societies will choose an appropriate focus for themselves.

We are in unanimous agreement that it is our shared responsibility to alert people to the degradation that all pornography inflicts—first, on those used in the production of pornographic materials, and second, on those who are desensitized or destroyed through its consumption. We oppose pornography because:

- Pornography exploits and degrades the human person.
- Pornography undermines marriages and families.

- Pornography twists personal and social relations.

- Pornography contributes to the commission of sexual violence and child molestation.

- Pornography reduces God's gift of sexuality to a level that

**EXPLOITS VIOLENCE  
DEGRADES  
TWISTS UNDERMINES  
MOLESTATION**

lacks a sense of the personal dignity, human tenderness, mutual love and ethical commitment that are part of the Divine plan.

Deliberating, resolving and acting together, we believe we can help protect human life and foster human dignity. The goal is worthy and the need is great.

**THEREFORE...**

As religious leaders, we commit ourselves to foster an understanding among people of the moral dimensions of the problem of pornography and what their responsibilities are in this regard.

We commit ourselves to do all in our power to proclaim the truth of human dignity, freedom and responsibility, and to promote the God-given human values needed for the moral, physical and spiritual health of our world.

We commit ourselves to call on people of faith and good will everywhere to minister to victims of pornography and to effect public policies to bring change.

We commit ourselves to concerted actions to foster and facilitate the involvement of concerned groups and individuals to address the problem of pornography within their own cultures.

We call on people of faith and good will throughout the world to stand against this pervasive evil.

We call individuals, faith groups, and public and private organizations pledged to the well-being of humanity to open their minds to the global problem of pornography.

We call them to pray and to work together to eradicate it, that subsequent generations will know the full measure of human dignity and worth.

The signatories to this declaration represent a broad spectrum of the world religious community. By signing, we call attention to the seriousness of the problem and our commitment to address it. It represents the beginning of a process which will facilitate greater cooperation among religious bodies on this vital issue.

## Land: International alliance against pornography needed

*(Continued from Page 1)*

gious believers coming together in order to address one of the great social ills of our time. I am convinced that by offering the unanimous witness of our common convictions regarding the dignity of man, created by God, the followers of various religions, both now and in the future, will contribute in no small measure to the growth of that civilization of love which is founded on the principles of an authentic humanism. I encourage your worthy efforts, and I cordial-

ly invoke upon all of you the abundant blessings of Almighty God."

The meeting with the pope was requested by the Religious Alliance Against Pornography, a group of U.S. religious leaders active in the fight against pornography. Land and Romo are members of RAAP's board and its executive committee.

Land said, "In America we have assembled an alliance against this pernicious evil that is unprecedented in its breadth and religious diversity. I am excited that it now looks as if we have

commenced a process that will allow an international alliance against pornography which will be worldwide in scope and yet flexible enough to allow people to adapt the movement to their particular cultures.

"There was common agreement among the conference participants that the problem of hard-core pornography knows and respects no national or denominational boundaries," he said. "It must be opposed by international and interdenominational efforts."



By R. Albert Mohler, Jr.

The 1992 presidential campaign has found some sectors of the media engaged in a pathetic fit of self-analysis over the so-called "character issue."

Should the American public be concerned about the private lives of candidates for public office? The question itself reveals the bankruptcy of our nation's moral discourse. Any assertion that personal character is irrelevant to public service is an affront to moral conviction and a mockery of common sense.

The radical separation of public and private spheres is impossible for those who would serve in elective office. The media can no longer protect its favored sons and daughters from the public scrutiny which now accompanies elective office and political campaigns.

The moral and ethical consciousness of the American electorate is woefully underdeveloped, but simple common sense should lead citizens to realize that a lack

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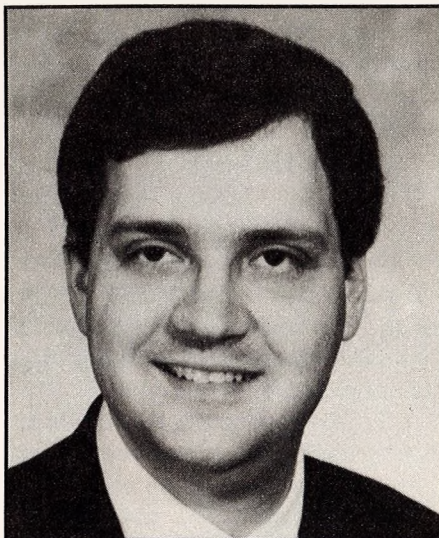
***Character is a  
bipartisan issue.  
No candidate--  
and no party--  
can hide behind  
a charade of  
public virtue and  
private vice.***

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of integrity in private life is a harbinger of disaster for public service.

The Christian world view explains this equation in terms of a holistic understanding of the human being. Our actions--public and private--are extensions of our character. "As a man thinketh in

## Mohler: Character should be test for public office



R. Albert Mohler, Jr.

his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7).

For years, candidates and public servants have been required to disclose details of their personal finances. Why? Because the public demands the right to inspect the financial and business affairs of candidates in order to determine their fitness for public service.

A pattern of broken trust in private financial affairs is a clear warning of impending public disaster.

But the current national morality play concerns the sexual conduct of candidates and elected officials. After revealing details of alleged indiscretions, the media now cries "foul" when the public treats such activity with moral seriousness.

This pattern of media exploitation followed by pious assertions of moral neutrality reveals more about the ethical values of some journalists than the moral conscience of the public.

Journalists cannot stalk candidates looking for evidence of marital infidelity or sexual promiscuity and then claim, in the end, that

the public shouldn't consider such activity relevant to their own electoral decision.

Some now assert that the sexual activity of candidates is an entirely personal affair--out of bounds for the public square. But the public knows better. Despite the nation's continuing slide into moral relativism, most citizens still recognize that the marriage bond and the marriage bed are sure tests of moral character.

Any assertion to the contrary is a call for a new gnosticism--an absolute cleavage between outward physical behavior and inner moral character.

Most Americans still understand the sacred vows of marriage to be the acid test for personal integrity. The covenant of marriage demands faithfulness and commitment and is based in a mutual pledge of unbroken fidelity.

Can those who would trample on this most sacred of earthly vows be taken seriously when they pledge fidelity and integrity to public service?

All Americans, public servants included, deserve a certain zone of privacy for the conduct of their personal family affairs. But in the crucible of public life, patterns of infidelity are almost certain to find their way to light. When such patterns are revealed, they can scarcely be ruled off limits for public consideration.

Character is a bipartisan issue. No candidate--and no party--can hide behind a charade of public virtue and private vice. "Know this, your sin will find you out" (Num. 32:23).

The American public has shown itself to be amazingly forgiving--when the wrongdoing is

*(Continued on Page 10)*



By Randall Balmer

Allegations of marital infidelity leveled against Democratic presidential candidate Bill Clinton raise questions once again about the relationship between private and public morality.

How much does the public have the right to know about the personal lives of its elected officials? If indeed Clinton had an affair with a woman who spells her name Gennifer, does that necessarily disqualify him from holding public office?

Rumors about his dalliances and problems in his marriage have surrounded Clinton for the better part of a decade. Although he concedes difficulties in his marriage, the purported affairs remain unsubstantiated. The woman who brought the latest charge had previously denied any such involvement with the Arkansas governor, but when *The Star*, a supermarket tabloid, came calling with a large check, the for-

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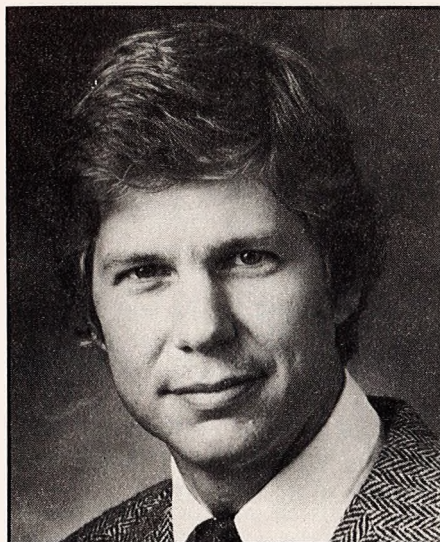
***The application of puritanical standards to the American presidency would probably have deprived us of the estimable talents of . . . others.***

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mer cabaret performer suddenly began to sing.

Any "trash for cash" story appearing in a tabloid that usually runs articles about Elvis apparitions or miscegenation between the human and animal kingdoms instantly raises questions about credibility. Regardless of the

## Balmer: Character issue inferior to public record



Randall Balmer

truth of the charges, the larger issue is whether such indiscretions reveal anything of substance about the candidate.

Do the personal lives of public figures tell us anything about how they conduct public policy? Not much. Some sexual libertine with a runaway libido might well raise concerns, but the application of puritanical standards to the American presidency would probably have deprived us of the estimable talents of Thomas Jefferson, Franklin Roosevelt and John Kennedy, among others.

Clinton and his wife, Hillary, stoically denied allegations in *The Star*, but the governor also declined to say that he had never had an extramarital affair. In an interview on "60 Minutes," Clinton confessed to having caused pain in his marriage but insisted that the details of his private life were, in effect, none of the public's business. Hillary Clinton agreed, speaking eloquently about the need for public figures to enjoy a "zone of privacy" and allowing the voters to decide for themselves

whether or not the issue is important.

The governor also turned the issue back on the media when he suggested reporters were applying a double standard by giving credence to the allegations. If he were divorced, he said, and such a liaison had occurred, no one would have thought it worthy of comment. He said he is, in effect, being penalized because he and his wife choose to remain married.

A scan of recent history suggests that private sexual behavior tells us nothing about a politician's ability to govern. Persistent stories of womanizing surrounded Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson, but their administrations remained relatively free of scandal.

There is no credible evidence of philandering on the part of Richard Nixon or Ronald Reagan, on the other hand, and yet they presided, respectively, over the Watergate and the Iran-Contra scandals.

Jimmy Carter, as always, remains something of an enigma in this configuration. During the 1976 presidential campaign he confessed to having lusted in his heart—something that the media, incredibly, treated as a news story—although no shred of evidence indicates that he ever acted on those impulses. Whatever the shortcomings of his administration, it was remarkable for high standards of probity.

That is not to say that questions of character are irrelevant in choosing a president, only that they should be placed in a larger context. Gary Hart's dalliance with Donna Rice, which came to light during the 1988 campaign, didn't tell us nearly so much about

(Continued on Page 10)



## Point

# Mohler: Character should be test for public office

(Continued from Page 8)

not judged to be a part of a larger pattern and when the wrongdoer does not hide behind dishonesty or arrogance. What the public cannot abide is public officials who consider themselves above common moral standards or who flaunt their disregard for public or private virtue.

The current call for term limitations and antagonism toward incumbents betrays a dawning awareness that many public officials and candidates have grown increasingly distant from the basic values, life styles and governing philosophies found among the public. This trend is not likely

to be reversed by politicians who hide their private indiscretions behind a cloak of public virtue.

Washington is constantly awash with scandals and rumors of scandals. The basic trust between the public and elected leaders has eroded in recent years--a trend which could threaten the democratic process itself.

The American public understands that something has gone horribly wrong in the body politic. That basic illness is not political, but moral. Character issues are the wave of the future as citizens demand to know more about their elected officials and those who would run for high office.

Faced with the ballot, citizens know they are electing a *person*--not merely a platform or party.

"Character," said D. L. Moody, "is what you are in the dark." The American public has an intuitive understanding of original sin. In a fallen world, we do not expect perfect leaders any more than we expect to produce perfect citizens.

But the public demands and deserves elected officials who can be trusted--even when the lights are out.

*R. Albert Mohler, Jr. is the editor of The Christian Index, the journal published by the Georgia Baptist Convention.*



## Counterpoint

# Balmer: Character inferior to public record

(Continued from Page 9)

the candidate as did his response to it. In a strange way the affair made this odd and imperious man seem a trifle more human. But Hart's reaction to the disclosure--first to deny it and then to protest indignantly that the press had invaded his privacy, after Hart had challenged them to do so--raised disturbing questions about the candidate's character, his defiant, reckless behavior and his response to adversity.

Clinton, like any other politi-

cian, should be judged according to several criteria--his character, his ideas, his background, his record of public service, the quality of his advisers--not merely according to unsubstantiated allegations. Hillary Clinton is correct: The voters, not the press, should decide.

Each of us brings his or her own agenda to the voting booth, and some may want to hold the candidates to their own standards of morality. Like single-issue politics, however, such a narrow view

ignores the complexities of political life and ultimately impoverishes the political process.

If forced to choose between Watergate and a sexual indiscretion or two, there would be for me, no contest. Clinton, I suspect, is fully capable of sorting out his private life. I prefer to judge him on his political ideas and his public record.

*Randall Balmer is associate professor of religion at Barnard College / Columbia University.*



Piper, John and Grudem, Wayne. *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, eds. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1991. 566 pp.

By Timothy George

In *My Fair Lady*, Henry Higgins asks, "Why can't a woman be like a man?" To which Eliza Doolittle, frustrated to the point of fury, replies, "Just you wait, 'enry 'iggins. . . . You'll be sorry, but your tears will be too late!" Among the numerous "culture wars" which beset American religious life in the last decade of the 20th century, none is more upsetting and potentially destructive than the conflict over the role of men and women in the life of the family and the ministry of the church.

The issue is further clouded by the fact that much of the rhetoric on both sides is uncritical, bombastic, and emotionally driven, whether it be derived from traditionalist stereotypes or contemporary feminist ideology. *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* is a happy exception to this pattern. John Piper, a Baptist pastor, and Wayne A. Grudem, a seminary professor, have brought together 27 well-written essays and have woven them into a coherent and sustained presentation of a biblical perspective on sexual identity, gender roles and women in ministry. Without doubt this is the most impressive and comprehensive statement of a conservative evangelical understanding of these issues to be published to date. No one seriously involved in seeking a responsible Christian engagement with such concerns can afford to ignore this magisterial undertaking.

Piper and Grudem shun the tags "traditionalist" and "hierarchicalist" in favor of *complementarian* as the preferred description of their view. This term, they argue, suggests *both* equality and beneficial differences between

## Biblical manhood, womanhood

men and women. Basic to this perspective is the claim that neither the "natural equality" all men and women enjoy as creatures made in the image of God, nor the "evangelical equality" of sisters and brothers in the family of faith (Gal. 3:28), is abrogated by the biblical vision of masculine and feminine complementarity. The former is defined as a "sense of benevolent responsibility to lead, provide for and protect women in ways appropriate to a man's differing relationships," while the latter implies a "freeing disposition to affirm, receive and nurture strength and leadership from worthy men in a way appropriate to a woman's differing relationships." The key to these definitions is the phrase "in a way appropriate to." Thus, in the covenant of marriage, the husband and wife should practice mutual submission, but each should do so in his or her unique way. Their God-given (and not merely culture-derived) gender differences would thus be expressed in the loving and complementary roles of true manhood and womanhood.

The subtitle of this book, "A Response to Evangelical Feminism," reflects the apologetic and somewhat polemical tone which runs through many of the essays. Since 1987 two organizations of evangelical Christians have taken opposing sides on the cluster of issues discussed in this book: The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, which sponsored this project; and Christians for Biblical Equality, a group of theologically conservative, evangelical feminists. Both groups profess a high view of biblical authority, a fact acknowledged by the editors of this volume. Indeed, the irenic, yet tough-minded approach taken throughout the book is a case study in how Christians with deep convictions can disagree strongly

with fellow believers without writing them out of the Kingdom of God. The volume ends on a note of hope, appealing to the clarifying ministry of the Holy Spirit and the assured triumph of God's mission in the world.

This is not to suggest that the issues discussed here are trivial or easily resolved. Far from it. They touch the deepest chords of human life and call into question the most basic presuppositions of divine creation and revelation. For example, lurking just beneath the surface is the question of homosexuality, and the willingness of some (not all) evangelical feminists to extend their arguments for biblical equality to homosexual alliances and even to the endorsement of gay and lesbian ministers. The contributors to this volume challenge evangelical feminists who do not go this far to show why the logic of their position would not lead them to do so. Certainly the gender blending of contemporary society can only contribute to the confusion of sexual identity which Chuck Colson has aptly described as an assault on the basic truth of creation.

More than anything else, the church of Jesus Christ needs the discerning wisdom of the Holy Spirit in dealing with the issues raised in this volume. Pat answers and hot rhetoric cannot achieve desirable results. If Jesus tarries, future generations of Christians will judge us not by how closely we conform to the reigning orthodoxies of our declining culture, but rather by our willingness to swim against the stream when something decisively important is at stake. Judged by this standard, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* will likely stand the test of time.

*Timothy George is Dean of Beeson Divinity School at Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama.*



**Religious Liberty Sunday, June 7, 1992**  
**Christian Citizenship Sunday, June 28, 1992**  
**Day of Prayer for World Peace, August 2, 1992**

Quantity	Christian Citizenship and Religious Liberty Resources	Price	Total
	<b>New Religious Liberty/Christian Citizen Awareness Guide</b>	\$ .45	
	<b>New Christian Citizenship Awareness Campaign: A Manual for Prayer and Action</b> 1-5 copies - \$5.00 each    25-99 copies - \$2.00 each    500-999 copies - \$1.50 each 6-24 copies - \$3.00 each    100-499 each - \$1.75 each    1,000 + copies - \$1.25 each		
	<b>New Bulletin Insert for Religious Liberty Sunday (undated)</b>	.06	
	<b>New Bulletin Insert for Christian Citizenship Sunday (undated)</b>	.06	
	<b>New Sermon Outline for Christian Citizenship Sunday</b>	.22	
	<b>New Sermon Outline for Religious Liberty Sunday</b>	.22	
	Tract - Citizen Christians: Their Rights and Responsibilities by Richard D. Land	.10	
	Pamphlet - The Bible Speaks on Christian Citizenship	.17	
	Pamphlet - Christians and Politics	.22	
	Pamphlet - How Christians Can Be Involved in Politics	.22	
	Pamphlet - The Christian Hope for Government	.22	
	Pamphlet - Patriotism and Civil Religion	.22	
	Pamphlet - Christian Life Committee Guidelines (10 copies or less)	Free	
	<b>Christian Citizenship Resource Set (one of each above)</b>	<b>6.00</b>	
	<b>New CLC Supreme Court Brief on <i>Lee v. Weisman</i> - A crucial religious liberty case</b>	4.95	
	<b>New Book: Winning the New Civil War: Recapturing America's Values (Dugan)</b>	7.50	
	<b>New T-shirt "Citizen Christians" logo</b> _____ Large    _____ X-Large    _____ XX-Large	10.00	
	<b>Peace Resources</b>		
	<b>New Bulletin Insert for Day of Prayer for World Peace (undated)</b>	.06	
	<b>New Sermon Outline for Day of Prayer for World Peace</b>	.22	
	Pamphlet - The Bible Speaks on War and Peace	.17	
	Pamphlet - Issues and Answers: War and Peace	.17	
	Poster - Peace with Justice Wall Poster	.55	
	Guide - Peace with Justice Awareness/Action Guide	1.40	
	Guide - Day of Prayer for World Peace Planning Guide	1.10	
	<b>Peace Resource Set (one of each above peace resources)</b>	<b>3.30</b>	
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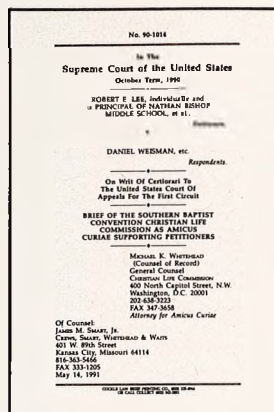
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To help Southern Baptists better understand the church-state issues involved in the important *Lee v. Weisman* case pending before the U.S. Supreme Court, the CLC is offering for \$4.95 a copy of the CLC's brief in support of accommodation of graduation prayers and other religious expression.

Order yours today!



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Call this recorded message for up-to-date information about moral and religious liberty issues before Congress and the White House.

## Alcohol & Drug Abuse Prevention, Race Relations sales were up

Sales of Christian Life Commission literature for 1992 Race Relations Sunday and 1992 Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Sunday were up substantially over the previous year.

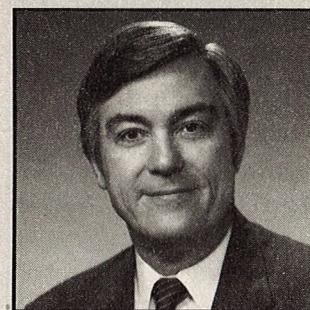
Louis Moore, Director of Media and Products, said final tallies of sales for those two Sundays may show an increase of about 20 percent over 1991. For the first time, sales of bulletin inserts for Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Sunday topped 100,000. Sales of bulletin inserts for Race Relations Sunday exceeded 70,000.

"We continue to see steady growth in the use of CLC products," Moore said. "We are particularly pleased that much of the increase is coming from average-sized and smaller SBC churches.

"CLC staff are working on a number of new products which will be available to Southern Baptists shortly," Moore said.

Churches are encouraged to order now the products they need for the next three emphasis Sundays, Religious Liberty on June 7, Christian Citizenship on June 28 and Day of Prayer for World Peace on August 2.

To inspire Southern Baptist pastors to preach on these issues, CLC staffer Lamar Cooper, an Old Testament, Hebrew and biblical archaeology scholar, has written new sermon outlines for Religious Liberty, Christian Citizenship and Day of Prayer for World Peace Sundays.



Lamar Cooper

Order your emphasis Sunday material now!



# Light from the Capital

## Ethics scandals rock 'House of disrepute'

As a result of a number of widely reported perks, privileges and ethics scandals in the United States Congress, especially the House of Representatives, the American public's confidence in Congress has reached an all-time low.

A *Washington Post-ABC News* poll found a meager 22 percent approval rating for Congress, an all-time low for an institution that has rarely in recent years been held in high esteem by Americans, the *Post* reported March 11.

Since last fall, a rash of revelations has come to light regarding perks and privileges members of Congress have enjoyed which many Americans regard as excessive, unethical and unfair.

- **House Bank** - An ethics committee investigation of the House bank revealed that at least 66 current and former representatives systematically wrote bad checks. The bank routinely "kited" these checks for days and, in some instances, weeks without penalty of any kind. These members essentially took advantage of the system to obtain interest-free loans.

The *Washington Times* reported March 17 that 296 current members and 59 former members have written overdrafts over a 39-month period totaling more than \$25 million. The ethics committee found that the 66 worst abusers accounted for 20,000 overdrafts totaling nearly \$11 million over the same period of time. Acting ethics committee chairman Matthew F. McHugh, D-N.Y., said, "I don't know how some of these folks slept at night."

The ethics committee also found the poor management of the bank was the cause of many of the bad checks.

When the House bank scandal broke last fall, Speaker of the House Tom Foley, D-Wash., decided to close the bank because of the abuses. In March, however, the House leadership agreed to full disclosure of the members who had written bad checks, but only after a storm of protest from constituents as well as House Republicans and some rank-and-file Democrats.

As a result of the controversy, the official who oversaw the House bank, Jack Russ, the House sergeant at arms, resigned under heavy criticism for his management of the bank. Russ also wrote bad checks on the House bank, totaling more than \$50,000. Foley named his chief of staff, Werner W. Brandt, as interim sergeant at arms.

Some have suggested the Speaker's handling of the crisis may result in changes in the House Democratic leadership.

On March 16, a spokesman for Jay Stephens, the United States attorney for the District of Columbia, confirmed that Mr. Stephens' office is conducting a "preliminary inquiry" into the House bank scandal.

The focus of the investigation is whether certain members were guilty of criminal fraud by intentionally writing bad checks. The probe also will focus on whether federal campaign laws were violated when members wrote bad checks to their reelection campaigns which essentially became interest-free loans. Additionally, Stephens' office will attempt to determine whether certain members violated income tax laws.

- **House Post Office** - Scandal also has rocked the House post office in recent months with allegations of embezzlement, drug-trafficking, check "kiting" and interest-free loans involving current and former employees and some representatives.



The postal facility is run by an independent contractor to the U.S. Postal Service which is accountable to the House leadership. The House postmaster, Robert V. Rota, resigned his post March 19 in the wake of the burgeoning post office scandal. Patronage hiring practices allowed many relatives, political associates and friends of current and former House members to obtain jobs in the post office.

In addition to the investigation of the House bank by the U.S. attorney's office, the Postal Inspection Service and Stephens' office are investigating the post office for "any evidence of wrongdoing."

A bipartisan task force of the House Administration Committee also is investigating the House post office for wrongdoing. Indications are that the investigators for the House Administration Committee will recommend elimination of patronage hiring.

The *Washington Times* reported March 19 that a federal grand jury is looking into allegations that congressional and/or campaign checks were used to buy postage which later would be turned back in for cash.



It is also alleged that some representatives wrote checks for "cash" or to "the postmaster" which would sometimes be held for days before depositing them. Additionally, members were allowed to cash their personal and campaign checks in spite of federal postal regulations which prohibit the practice, according to the *Times*.

While the House bank was essentially a petty-cash fund of the pooled salaries of House members, the funds in question in the post office inquiries involve the use of U.S. Postal Service money.

These scandals come at a time of increased interest in and scrutiny of some of the other perks and privileges which members of Congress enjoy.

The "frank" which allows members to send mail to their constituents at taxpayer expense is one of the most cherished and, at times, abused privileges. This privilege is abused by some members who send newsletters and questionnaires which seem to be used as a means of promotion, especially before election seasons.

Members also have generous privileges to travel abroad at taxpayer expense. Critics of Congress charge that in spite of claims to the contrary, these foreign trips more closely resemble vacations than "fact-finding missions."

The bank and post office abuses should rekindle contemplation of the personal ethics of members of Congress and the corporate ethics of the institution of Congress as important considerations for citizen Christians when they go to the polls this year.

-James A. Smith

## RFRA nears hearings in House, stalls in Senate

The Religious Freedom Restoration Act (H.R. 2797), which is designed to restore protection of the free exercise of reli-

gion, continued to gain momentum in the House of Representatives but had yet to be introduced in the Senate at press time for LIGHT.

RFRA has 165 cosponsors in the House, with the Judiciary Committee expected to conduct a hearing in its Civil and Constitutional Rights Subcommittee in late April or May. As of March 18, original cosponsors lined up for a Senate bill consisted of seven Democrats and three Republicans, including Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah. It was uncertain when RFRA would be introduced in the Senate.

If passed, RFRA will require government once again to prove it has a "compelling interest," rather than just a reasonable cause, for restricting the free exercise of religion. RFRA is a legislative remedy to *Employment Division v. Smith*, a 1990 Supreme Court opinion which abandoned the compelling interest test.

The Christian Life Commission continued its work in support of RFRA by sending a Feb. 20 letter to every member of Congress asking for his or her support of the bill. In the letter, CLC Executive Director Richard D. Land addressed the bill's abortion controversy, which has helped slow RFRA's progress.

Some pro-life groups, led by the National Right to Life Committee, fear RFRA will result in abortion being considered by courts as a free exercise of religion by women. The CLC and other groups with pro-life credentials, such as the Christian Action Council, Concerned Women for America and the National Association of Evangelicals, concluded free-exercise abortion claims have not succeeded in the past and are unlikely to succeed in the future under either the First Amendment or RFRA.

"Our support for RFRA is predicated on an understanding that RFRA will not be interpreted

in any way which would enhance claims of a 'religious right to abortion,'" Land said in his letter to Congress. "It is the conviction of the CLC that government has a compelling interest in protecting pre-born life, which should override claims of a religious right to abortion, except in cases of saving the life of the mother.

"We intend to make these convictions clear as the Religious Freedom Restoration Act is considered at every stage of the legislative process."

Michael Whitehead, the CLC's general counsel, said recently, "It's enough to have religious freedom stated as a broad principle, and we'll fight the perversions [including abortion] case by case. . . . based on the track record we have in the courts, we're confident we'll win."

Passage of RFRA will help, not harm, the pro-life cause, the Christian Action Council's president said recently.

"I've found that there are many reasons people become motivated to be involved in the abortion issue, but the primary one that I see is religious conviction," Thomas Glessner said. "And when we have religious freedom restricted in this country, there's no pro-life movement. It's gone. Kiss it good-bye."

-Tom Strode

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# Seminar participants hear array of speakers

*(Continued from Page 5)*

He cited four things a person must have or do in order to make an impact for God: be humble, obey God, please God and not man and develop an eternal perspective.

Former Secretary of Education William Bennett told seminar participants only the right values, not larger governmental programs, will turn American society in the correct direction.

"It is much more important what ideas, what values are out and abroad in the mainstream than anything any government can do," Bennett said. "Government, for all the good that it may do, cannot undo" wrong ideas.

United States Senators Albert Gore, D-Tenn., and Trent Lott, R-Miss., and Senate Chaplain Richard C. Halverson all urged seminar participants at a congressional breakfast to continue to make their voices heard in the nation's capital.

Gore urged Southern Baptists to continue to be active in the areas of the environment and health warnings in alcohol beverage advertising.

Lott emphasized the need for Christians to express themselves through the ballot box in the elec-

tion of Bible-believing Christians to public posts. He also called for more Southern Baptists to step forward and run for public office.

Lott also seemed to endorse a constitutional amendment for prayer in public schools. "Wouldn't it be nice if we could open our schools with prayer as we open the Senate with prayer?" he said.

Halverson said Christians need to become interested in a wider array of public issues beyond just the traditional concerns of pro-life issues and prayer in public school.

Both Lott and Halverson said Christians need to learn to write their congressional representatives when they are pleased with how they have voted as well as when they are angry about certain votes.

During a White House briefing, HUD Secretary Jack Kemp said a government's concern for its citizens should not be measured by how many it is supporting financially.

Surgeon General Antonia Novello told conferees in the briefing the Bush administration is seeking to reduce illegal underage drinking.

Though this is a problem affecting half of the country's 20 million junior high and high school students, Novello said, "You won't believe the people who think I have the problem."

Of the 10 million secondary school students who drink, Novello said, eight million drink weekly, five million binge (consume five drinks in a row), three million have binged in the last month and 500,000 binge weekly, according to reports compiled by the Department of Health and Human Services.

Parents, friends and the media help determine a teenager's perspective on drinking, Novello said.

There is a need to "cultivate a culture of character," HHS Assistant Secretary for Health James Mason said in the briefing.

"A lot of diseases we have today are related to choices we make," said Mason, who oversees the Public Health Service. "The department uses the 'C word' [condom]," Mason said, "but I guess we need to talk more about faithfulness in marriage."

*(Tom Strode and Lonnie Wilkey contributed to this story.)*

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