

Light

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMISSION OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

JULY-AUGUST, 1992

CLC is encouraging voter registration campaign in churches

The Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission is spearheading a major denominationwide effort to get all eligible Southern Baptists to register to vote and to participate in the election process this year.

The campaign is nonpartisan and designed to encourage voter participation in the American political system, not one particular party.

The campaign was kicked off in time for Religious Liberty Sunday on June 7 and for Christian Citizenship Sunday on June 28. It will extend throughout the summer, including Day of Prayer for World Peace Sunday on August 2, and into the fall general election on November 3.

The campaign includes mailing the agency's 1992 *Citizen Christian Awareness Guide* to pastors and Convention leadership. The CLC also produced a new *Citizen Christian Awareness Campaign Manual* which explains in detail how local churches can organize voter registration campaigns. (For information on how to order the guide and manual, see page 13.)

"Churches have every right to encourage their members to be involved in the political process," said Richard D. Land, the CLC's executive director. "One way we can do this is by starting a campaign to register voters and then encouraging them to vote."



Assisted suicide, euthanasia are now front-burner issues

By Louis A. Moore

Assisted suicide and euthanasia are moving to the forefront as major ethical/moral issues facing Christians today.

Reports of acts of assisted suicide have increased around the country in recent years. Retired doctor Jack Kevorkian is at the forefront of this movement with his sensational right-to-die activities, including his infamous "suicide machine." Indicative of the trend, Hemlock Society Executive Director Derek Humphrey's book *Final Exit* topped the *New York Times*' best-seller list last year.

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Racism*

By Richard D. Land



Like most Americans, I was sickened by the videotape of police officers beating Rodney King. It is difficult for me to comprehend how a jury could find these four Los Angeles officers on trial not guilty of anything. I am pleased that the federal Justice Department is pursuing the filing of charges under the civil rights laws in this case.

Certainly, any fair-minded person would acknowledge Mr. King's civil rights were violated in being beaten senseless by a bevy of club-wielding policemen.

I understand that Mr. King had led police on a high-speed chase and that he did not comply with the officers' commands. I don't understand how anything Mr. King did or did not do justifies the behavior of these police officers. I personally know several police officers who were nauseated and embarrassed by these policemen's behavior. At the same time, I am just as sickened by the nightmarish television images of people being dragged from cars and savagely beaten because of their race by a rampaging mob. While acknowledging they have a right to feel frustrated and angry, nothing can justify such actions. There is no important moral or ethical distinction between what those mobs did to those unfortunate drivers in Los Angeles and a Klan lynching. Nothing can ever justify such sickening violence.

However, it must not be forgotten that the vast majority of people of color in Los Angeles, while having the right to feel just as frustrated and angry as the rioters, have not gone on a violent rampage and engaged in murder, theft and arson. In fact, many of them have been the victims of such behavior. They are to be commended for their patience and their restraint in confronting the racism that still plagues our society. We must resolve to do more to reward their patience and justify their restraint by committing ourselves to eradicating the cancer of racism from our society. It is our Christian and our civic duty.

As a child of the '60s, I must confess that I am disappointed that we have not made more progress in eradicating the cancer of racial bigotry from our society in the quarter century since that turbulent decade which produced substantial racial progress. I am disappointed, but I should not be surprised. One 1960s black radical, commenting on the racial history of America, observed that racism and violence were "as American as apple pie." Unfortunately, the problem is far older and more pervasive than that—it is as human as sin. Racism and violence are a deep strain in American history because they are a deep strain in human history.

We must understand the nature of the enemy we confront—an enemy within as well as without. Racial bigotry is woven into the very warp and woof of our society because it is an integral part of humanity's fallen nature. At its base, prejudice is a sin, a consequence of the fallen, sinful human heart. The Bible reveals to us of the curse of the Fall on everything and everyone, with the consequence, as Paul tells us in Romans, that no single person or thing is as God originally intended it to be (Rom. 8:22-23). We Christians have a special responsibility to remind our society that racism, as well as other problems, will not be solved

**This editorial was originally released as an Ethics Commentary to Baptist state paper editors.*

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CLC, other agencies plan convocation accessing SBC efforts on world hunger

By Louis A. Moore

Representatives of five Southern Baptist agencies with responsibilities for ministering to the world's hungry have called for a major denominationwide hunger convocation in May 1993 to discuss the future of Southern Baptist work with the world's hungry.

The purpose of the meeting is to assess where Southern Baptists are now on the issue and to identify strategies for the future, the group said.

"We want to work toward a coordinated, unified strategy in this area," the agency representatives agreed.

Participants also said the convocation should lay to rest unfounded rumors that the new conservative leadership in the Convention is not interested in the world's hungry.

Concern for the world's hungry

"We want to work toward a coordinated, unified strategy in this area," agency representatives agreed.

is neither a moderate nor a conservative issue but should be a concern of all Southern Baptists, the group agreed.

The 1993 date was chosen for the meeting because it marks the 15th anniversary since a 1978 convocation in which the current Southern Baptist strategy on world hunger was begun.

The convocation will be held



Philippine Baptist pastor Tony Senora stands amid children and others searching for food on Smoky Mountain, their home and Manila's largest dump.

May 6-8, 1993, at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center in North Carolina.

C. Ben Mitchell, the Christian Life Commission's director of biomedical and life issues, was named ad hoc chairperson of the meeting. Louis A. Moore, the CLC's director of media and product development, was appointed ad hoc media coordinator for the project.

The decision to call for the convocation grew out of a smaller hunger consultation held at the Christian Life Commission's Nashville office on May 20. Nine representatives from the five agencies attended that meeting. Participating were John Cheyne of the SBC Foreign Mission Board, Nathan Porter of the SBC Home Mission Board, Dellanna O'Brien of Woman's Missionary Union, James Williams of the SBC Brotherhood Commission and Richard D. Land, Ben Mitchell, Louis Moore, Lamar Cooper and Mattie Lee Massey of

the SBC Christian Life Commission.

According to action taken at the Nashville meeting, each participating agency will appoint representatives to serve on an ad hoc committee to oversee the convocation. Efforts will be made to widen representation to include other SBC agencies and the six SBC seminaries.

Participants said their hope is to garner the widest possible Southern Baptist support within the denomination for the convocation.

Since 1974, when Southern Baptists first began collecting hunger gifts, the annual amount has grown from \$299,925 to more than \$7.8 million in 1991. Hunger gifts peaked in 1985 when more than \$11.8 million was raised. In recent years the gifts have leveled off at about \$7.7 million.

Consultation participants said they hope the convocation will energize SBC giving for hunger.

Euthanasia becoming major issue of the decade

(Continued from Page 1)

The federal government's new Patient Self-determination Act, which became law in December 1991, now requires hospitals, nursing homes and other medical facilities to provide to patients information on their state laws regarding Advance Medical Directives.

Southern Baptist ethicists say the issues of assisted suicide and euthanasia (sometimes called mercy killing) will be among the hottest ethical and moral debates of the 1990s.

CLC Executive Director Richard D. Land says, "On this issue, Southern Baptists are now at the same stage as they were on the abortion issue in 1971." At that time, some Southern Baptist leaders supported abortion, and the denomination as a whole was lukewarm to the issue. Today, the denomination is among the most ardently pro-life church bodies in the country.

Land and C. Ben Mitchell, the CLC's director of biomedical and life issues, are encouraging Southern Baptists to become informed about the issues involved in assisted suicide and euthanasia. Once fully knowledgeable, Southern Baptists are likely to become as concerned about those issues as they are about abortion, say Mitchell and Land.

As many as 59 percent of U.S. Protestants support legalization of euthanasia, according to a report published in the May 20, 1992, issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. The survey, conducted jointly by KRC Communications Research on behalf of the *Boston Globe* and the Harvard Program on Public Opinion and Health Care, reveals a sharp rise since 1950 in public support for the legalization of euthanasia and the withdrawal of



Ben Mitchell: "If you function by a 'quality of life' ethic in abortion, it is inevitable that you will apply the same relativistic ethic at the other end of life."

life support from patients with incurable diseases. According to the report, "In 1950, only 34 percent of Americans thought physicians ought to be allowed to end the lives of patients with incurable diseases, if their families requested it. By 1977, however, this figure had risen to 60 percent. Since then, support has remained relatively steady, between 61 percent and 63 percent, and was at 63 percent in 1991."

Among religious groups, 72 percent of Catholics, 59 percent of Jews and 59 percent of Protestants support legalizing euthanasia if patients and their families request it.

"This somewhat startling report reveals how insidiously and potentially the 'quality of life' ethic has infiltrated our society in general and the religious community in particular," said Mitchell. He added, "The fact that 70 percent of the respondents who favor euthanasia are between the ages of 18 and 34 is both instructive and frightening. It is instructive because it demonstrates that just as our society sowed the pro-abor-

tion wind, we are now reaping the pro-euthanasia whirlwind. Like it or not, these two issues are inextricably tied together. If you function by a 'quality of life' ethic in abortion, it is inevitable that you will apply the same relativistic ethic at the other end of life. And that is terribly frightening since the majority of those polled in the survey will be making end-of-life decisions for their parents and family members."

Reasons Americans gave for supporting euthanasia include the fear of being a burden to one's family, concern over living in pain and fear of dependence on machines. Mitchell said several things must be done to try to short-circuit the euthanasia movement in evangelical churches:

- "First, pastors must preach doctrinal messages on the nature of human beings as creatures of God, made in His image. Biblical anthropology will not allow one person intentionally to kill an innocent human being.

- "Second, we need to come to grips with the sovereignty of God and rethink the nature and pur-

poses of human suffering. Americans have become wimps when it comes to pain and suffering. We have decided that any amount of pain and any suffering is too high a price to pay for life--and that simply should not be the case.

- "Third, we must call for continued research and efforts to manage pain more effectively. Ironically, the same issue of JAMA that contained the report of the euthanasia survey also contained a notice of the publication of a new guide for the clinical management of acute pain. We have not yet exhausted our arsenal of pain-control techniques.

- "Fourth, evangelicals will have to become more active in supplying comfort and care for dying patients. Nursing homes and hospices need compassionate volunteers to make the end of life more comfortable for dying patients and their families. Churches must also help families who are struggling to take care of a terminal loved one.

- "Finally, pro-life Christians are going to have to keep working hard to raise the level of public awareness of the issues and help motivate one another to do our work in the voting booth. Pro-euthanasia legislation is popping up all over the country. We must be vigilant, realizing that we will reap in due season if we do not faint."

In a matter closely related to euthanasia, the Harvard survey found that only 16 percent of all Americans would want to withhold food and water from dying patients. "In spite of these statistics, a number of states, such as Alabama, are considering revisions of their laws which include permission to withhold and withdraw nutrition and hydration. By permitting the withholding and withdrawal of food and water, we are legalizing for human health care what we would be jailed for doing to animals," warned Mitchell.

New CLC pamphlet on living wills answers the difficult questions

To help Southern Baptists understand as well as direct their lawyers and medical care personnel about their wishes involving end-of-life issues, the Christian Life Commission has produced a new pamphlet on advance medical directives and living wills.

The pamphlet, entitled "A Time to Live, A Time to Die: Advance Directives and Living Wills," is written by C. Ben Mitchell, the CLC's director of biomedical and life issues, and Michael K. Whitehead, the CLC's general counsel.

The pamphlet will assist people who want to take a biblical approach to the issue of advance medical directives and living wills. The federal government's new Patient Self-determination Act requires hospitals, nursing homes and other health care facilities to provide to patients information on their state laws regarding Advance Medical Directives. In addition, many families want to prepare for this before any of their loved ones are hospitalized or institutionalized.

"While living wills may sound harmless and even desirable, there is the very real potential for future abuses," warn Mitchell and Whitehead in the pamphlet. "No matter what the issue or technology, the Christian must always ask the question, 'What does the Lord say? Are there precepts, principles or examples in the Bible

that help us to understand our Heavenly Father's will on the matter?"

The pamphlet explains what the Bible says about the issue, describes some of the problems with living wills in general, then offers advice about alternatives to a living will.

The pamphlet suggests both a Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care entrusted to a relative or friend whose values the person making out the DPAHC can trust, or the new Will to Live.

The Will to Live is a pro-life, anti-euthanasia alternative to a living will. Euthanasia backers support living wills. The Will to Live designates food and water as basic necessities and allows a person to specify treatments he or she would want withheld or withdrawn

under certain circumstances. The document also defines "imminent death" as, when a "reasonably prudent physician, knowledgeable about the case and the treatment possibilities with respect to the medical conditions involved, would judge that I will live only a week or less even if lifesaving treatment or care is provided me...."

To order a copy of this new pamphlet, see the order form on page 13 or call the Christian Life Commission at (615) 244-2495. The pamphlet sells for 33¢ each. A discount of 30 percent is available for orders of 300 or more pamphlets.

The Sanctity
of Human Life

A TIME
TO LIVE,
A TIME
TO DIE:
ADVANCE
DIRECTIVES
AND
LIVING
WILLS



By Michael K. Whitehead

God has called each of us to be Christian citizens involved in government, but some in different ways from others.

"Ye have been called unto liberty," the apostle Paul told the Galatians (5:13). He spoke of spiritual liberty: freedom to know God personally by faith in Christ, freedom to make biblical choices and to act on them.

But the "Call to Liberty" also reminds us of the political freedom we enjoy in our republic. The freedom of self-government is a blessing of God. The Call to Liberty is a call to Christian citizenship and responsibility.

Was Jesus involved in public issues and government? True, He never ran for public office, and He did say that His Kingdom was not of this world. But He never told His followers to be "so heavenly minded" as to be "no earthly good."

Jesus often talked about public issues with diverse groups such as the Herodians, Pharisees and Zealots. He talked about paying taxes (Matt. 22:21). He commented on the character of public figures (Luke 13:32). He boldly confronted Pilate with the moral issues of ultimate truth and government authority (John 18:28; 19:11). He charged His followers to be "salt" and "light" in society (Matt. 5:13-16).

Old Testament prophets regularly preached to kings and rulers about justice and morally righteous living (1 Kings 21). John the Baptist publicly exposed Herod's sin (Matt. 14:4). The apostle Paul makes clear that government is God's idea and part of His plan for promoting good and restraining evil (Rom. 13). He said we should pray for our rulers (1 Tim. 2:2). He did not hesitate to assert his own rights of citizenship (Acts 22:25).

The First Amendment encourages Christian citizens to engage in the public forum about Bible-based values. It guarantees our right to participate, along with people of

'Ye have been called unto liberty' (Galatians 5:13)



**Observe Christian Citizenship Sunday
June 28, 1992**

other world views. Christians should be working to elect good public officials and also working for good laws through our local, state and national governments. We may disagree on policies and candidates. But each Christian should seek to base his or her views and votes upon the values revealed in the Word of God.

1992 is an important election year. Every Christian citizen has a duty to study the issues, to pray for the candidates and to vote! Be sure you are registered, be sure you are informed and be sure you vote. Encourage every eligible voter in your church to do the same.

Involvement in public issues is

no substitute for a personal relationship with Christ. Evangelism and discipleship are our primary goals. But mature discipleship will include good citizenship. We must be both salt and light. Light illuminates spiritual truth. Salt helps preserve His creation from decay.

Has God called you to be involved in government? YES! Our Constitution permits it. Our Call to Liberty demands it.

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

By Michael K. Whitehead

A bumper sticker read: "Visualize World Peace." In the 1970s John Lennon sang, "Give peace a chance." Another song said, "Imagine there's no heaven . . . no hell . . . no war. . . . And then the World will be as one." Neither idea worked, but God has a better idea.

God's plan is the only one that really works. He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to be the Prince of Peace. The angels announced His birth with a promise of peace on earth (Luke 2:14). At the start of His ministry, Jesus promised: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the sons of God" (Matt. 5:9). Near the end of His ministry, Jesus said, "My peace I give you, not as the world gives" (John 14:27). At His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, He lamented for the Jewish people: "Would that . . . you knew the things that make for peace" (Luke 19:41).

So how does God plan to "make peace" in the world? One person at a time. There are over 5.5 billion of us on this planet. Modern warfare may have killed more people in this century than there were people living on the earth in Jesus' day. But God's plan remains the same.

When a person receives Jesus Christ by faith, through prayer (John 1:14), Christ dwells in his or her heart (Rev. 3:20). Jesus died on the cross to pardon the sins of the world. Every person who receives Christ can experience peace with God (Rom. 5:1) and the power to live in a manner that pleases God (Rom. 1:16).

A little girl, Holly, tried to assemble a big jigsaw puzzle of a world map. Each piece of the puzzle was shaped like a country. She studied the picture on the box top, but still couldn't figure out how to get all the pieces in the right place. Finally, in hopeless frustration, she came to her father

'Would that . . . you knew the things that make for peace' (Luke 19:41-44, RSV)



**Observe Day of Prayer for World Peace
August 2, 1992**

for help. Her dad turned the puzzle box over, revealing that it was a two-sided puzzle: the world map on one side and a picture of a man on the other. Holly and her dad turned all the puzzle pieces over and quickly put the pieces together to form the picture of a man. Then they turned the puzzle over again, and the world map was perfectly in order. "I see now, Dad!" Holly said. "When you get this one man put together, you are getting the world put together right, too!"

World peace comes one person at a time, as each person receives the Prince of Peace. A forgiven

sinner is able to love and forgive other people, in the family, in the church, in the nation and in the world. A person loved by God will love every person he meets enough to want to share the powerful, peace-making gospel with every person on the planet.

Southern Baptists set aside one Sunday as a special Day of Prayer for World Peace. It is a good time to pray for leaders of our nation, and of the world, as they seek peace between nations. It is a good time to pray for someone who does not know Jesus to receive the Prince of Peace into his or her life.

By Louis A. Moore

The Bible says (John 19:14 and 1 Cor. 5:9-10) that Christians are to be in the world but not of the world. The Bible (Matt. 5:13-16) also says society is to be transformed by the Christian's witness, influence and presence.

In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gave the New Testament church part of its marching orders. He said (Matt. 5:13-16) that we are to be salt and light in a decadent world. A detailed exegesis of these verses shows that in the New Testament era salt was a preservative and disinfectant. Salt cannot preserve unless it touches that which it is to preserve. Likewise, light cannot illuminate and expose unless it is taken to the area that is to be illuminated. We are to be God's salt and light in the world, preserving and illuminating.

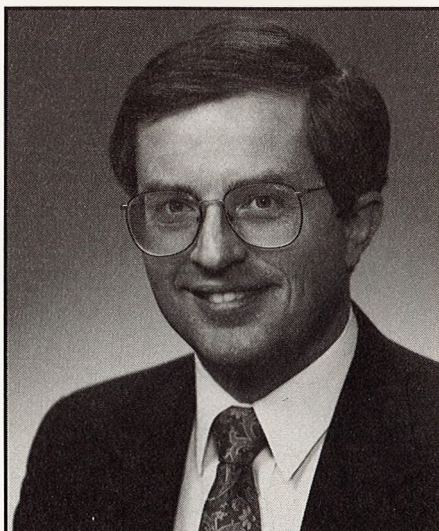
Moreover, the apostle Paul exhorts Christians to be good citizens "for conscience sake" so long

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as the civil government does not require us to do anything contrary to God's revelation (Rom. 13:1-7).

These passages clearly indicate we Southern Baptists should not be monastics who live apart from the world in a monastery set high on a hill. As Dr. Richard Land has said, "The responsibilities of Citi-

At times we must work with others to gain greater good



Louis A. Moore

zen Christians include not just obedience to the state but involvement in society."

But what are we to make of Paul's instruction in 2 Cor. 6:14-18 where he says, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"

Does this passage prohibit political coalitions? Are we Southern Baptists to operate as Lone Rangers when we seek to be salt and light in the world? When groups join a common cause like the battle against pornography, child abuse or abortion, are they "yoked?"

The answer is found in the nature of the union or "yoke" which binds issue-type coalitions together. The figure of the yoke was employed to explain that believers should never seek to advance the cause of unbelievers. The Corinthian church was guilty of trying to append secular doctrine to the Body of Christ, of allowing Corinthian culture to

direct the church instead of vice versa. That is different from our trying to take the gospel message to a lost and dying world. On issues which do comply with the scriptural view of morality, we can be in cooperation, since it is the Christian cause that is being promoted.

The Bible (Dan. 1:18-21; 3:15-18) tells us Daniel and his friends cooperated and contributed to the collective wisdom of Babylon, exercising influence for good and for God without compromising their convictions and beliefs in any way.

We must keep in mind that coalitions formed around issues are far different from ecclesiastical alliances. Working with another group to obtain our objective to change our world is not the same as embracing the group's whole theology. Such coalitions will be, of necessity, temporary. Once the goal is achieved, we need to disengage until another situation arises that demands our working together again.

In addition, while working with groups such as Catholics, for example, we must keep in mind the limits of our relationship. Southern Baptists and Roman Catholics, for instance, agree on some major points of theology, such as the virgin birth of Jesus, the bodily resurrection of Jesus and the Trinity. But we also disagree mightily on other points--for instance, baptism, the Lord's Supper, the priesthood of all believers and the place of Mary in Christian theology. Papal pronouncements should in no way be authoritative and never should be placed in juxtaposition to the Bible. For all New Testament Christians the

(Continued on Page 10)

By Tony Pierce

The February issue of the *Indiana Baptist* contained a full-page article by a Christian Life Commission writer praising the involvement of leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention in the Religious Alliance Against Pornography. Other groups involved in this alliance are Roman Catholics, Mormons and the National Council of Churches, along with several other denominations. This group formed this alliance to construct a declaration to fight pornography and, together, met with the Pope to gain his participation in this interfaith effort. Certainly, with such a noble cause, no concerned, right-thinking person could find reason to object to such an alliance.

Wrong! Any alliance with groups that propagate false doctrine does raise some important issues.

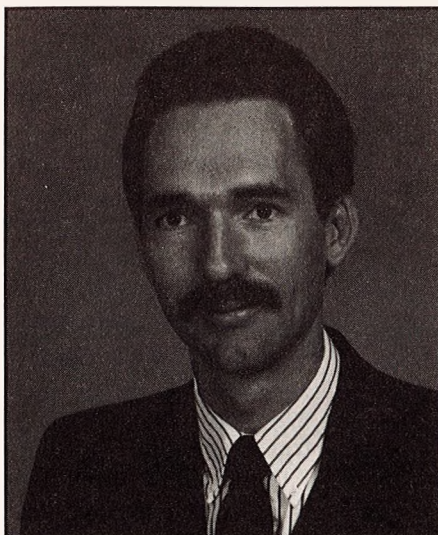
Is it proper, in order to accom-

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who deny Christ.***

plish the work of the Lord, for our leaders to enter into an alliance with this group? It is clear that many in the alliance teach false doctrines concerning the Person and work of Christ. The Bible makes it clear that we should not.

In the Old Testament God

Working with others creates an unholy alliance



Tony Pierce

repeatedly warned Israel to abstain from joining false religions. The New Testament teaching is the same. Paul exhorts the church in 2 Corinthians 6:11-18 not to be "unequally yoked"; that "light has no communion with darkness"; and to "Come out from among them, and be separated." It is also interesting that Jesus' harshest words were reserved for teachers who led people astray with their false doctrines. The biblical mandate is clear for all who receive it; we cannot make an alliance to do the Lord's work with those who deny Christ.

While it is true that pornography is a horrible sin in our society, we must realize that the teaching of false religion is just as horrible. Pornography destroys peoples' lives. False religion sends people into eternity without God. We must remember that the same hell that will hold the pornographers will also house the teachers of false religions. Just as we would never try to do the Lord's work

by joining with those who produce pornography, we should never make an alliance with the false religions and cults to accomplish the task God has given us.

When those in favor of this alliance are asked to biblically support their view, their response has been from *The Baptist Faith and Message* which states, "We are to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in a spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth." While I do not disagree with this statement, my question is how can one call groups that are leading people by the millions to hell with their idolatry and their promise of the deification of man, "men of goodwill"? Also, how can true, born-again believers join in an alliance with these groups and not compromise their "loyalty to Christ and His truth"? I submit to any who have ears to hear that this is impossible.

It is frightening to consider the utilitarian attitude that is gaining acceptance in our denomination. It seems there are those who are willing to throw out biblical truth in order to accomplish their goals. We have truly come to the place where we are acting like "the end justifies the means."

I wonder, if it were possible for those who died for their faith at the hands of the Roman Catholics to speak to us, what they would say. It is amazing that we refuse to consider that Roman Catholicism is a false religion in every sense of the word, which, contrary to popular

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Point

Working with others not same as embracing them

(Continued from Page 8)

Lord Jesus and His Word are and must always be the supreme authority.

Nevertheless, Catholics are right on many social issues today, such as child pornography and abortion.

Issue coalitions do not call for any doctrinal synthesis, ecclesiastical consensus, or organic union. A political coalition is a direct, focused effort to voice common concerns about a single issue or narrowly defined set of issues. In fact, one of the strengths of such coalitions is that the various groups maintain their doctrinal and ecclesiastical distinctives while demonstrating concern on a particular issue. The political force of their appeal is that while the groups may differ radically in doctrine and practice, there is

agreement on a specific social or legislative issue.

Carried to its logical conclusions, the practical effect of monastic separatism, which is advocated by some, would severely limit much of the good that Southern Baptists are doing today in the world. Monastic separatism would keep us from endorsing a bill in congress advocated by a Catholic, Mormon or Jewish member of Congress. We could not work with the National Association of Evangelicals, which has members who teach such doctrines as falling from grace and a "second filling" of the Holy Spirit. We would have to steer clear of such groups as Eagle Forum, which is led by a devout Catholic and includes a large number of Mormons and Southern Baptists. Even Concerned Women for Amer-

ica, which is headed by Southern Baptist Beverly LaHaye, includes Catholic and Mormon members along with a large number of Southern Baptists.

The test for whether the Christian Life Commission should work with an organization for the advancement of a particular public policy agenda should be whether the desired goal conforms with biblical Christianity. If the other organization supports the same agenda for the wrong reasons, they may have "stumbled into the truth." As long as our position on an issue is in line with what the Bible says, we should accept with gratitude whatever clout another group might offer for the advancement of God's agenda.

Louis A. Moore is director of media and products for the Christian Life Commission.

Counterpoint

Working with others creates an unholy alliance

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opinion, has not changed from its historical heretical doctrines.

Vatican Council II (1962-65) simply reaffirmed the false doctrines of this group propagated at the Council of Trent (1545-64). At the same time, we so easily look past the fact that the Mormons, with whom we have made an alliance, are a cult. Whatever happened to trusting God and relying on Him rather than numbers to do His work? I am afraid Gideon would have a hard time functioning as a leader in certain offices of the Southern Baptist Convention.

I offer three questions for your consideration. First, what message are we sending to a lost world when they hear and see

our leaders joining in an alliance with false religions?

Second, is there any need for us to join with false religions to do the Lord's work?

Third, is there any biblical basis for joining ourselves with false religions to accomplish our God-given mission? These are the questions that should concern us in this issue.

It needs to be understood that I am not talking about being separated from other Christian groups. There is no doubt that the family of God is larger than the Southern Baptist denomination. Nor am I talking about minor doctrinal differences. We cannot be the "salt" and the "light" that Jesus commands us to be and at the same time join ourselves with those

who deny the true Christ of the Bible.

Finally, I draw your attention to 2 John 1:9-11, which says, "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds." The Bible is clear; we are to be separated from the world, which includes the false religions, and separated unto Christ.

Tony Pierce is pastor of First Baptist Church, San Manuel, Arizona.

Payne, Jr., Franklin E. *What Every Christian Should Know About the AIDS Epidemic: The Medical and Biblical Facts About AIDS*. Covenant Books, P. O. Box 14488, Augusta, GA 30919-0488, 1991. 204 pp.

By C. Ben Mitchell

One of the newest and best in the proliferation of books on AIDS is this volume by a practicing physician and full-time faculty member at the Medical College of Georgia. Though published by a small press, this book is by no means small in scope or usefulness.

Dr. Payne's treatment of HIV and AIDS is factual, biblical and compassionate. He raises the Christian's dilemma in the first chapter when he says, "For Christians, AIDS is unique in another way: Its modes of transmission are strictly forbidden by God's Word. Yet, with more than 100,000 dead and 1 million infected with the AIDS virus, Christians are also called to show compassion to the suffering and dying. How then does one balance condemnation of sinful behaviors and at the same time be a Good Samaritan?" (p. 13).

Chapter 2 is a brief survey of the history of the AIDS epidemic, focusing on the disputes surrounding the discovery of the HIV virus and former Surgeon General Koop's controversial 1986 report. Chapter 3, "How Bad Is This Plague?" examines the AIDS statistics and the manipulation of those statistics for political purposes. While he is hesitant to offer a prognosis, the author calls upon Christians to continue "to strive to understand the spiritual, social, and political issues that have caused this death and destruction" (p. 49).

The middle section of the book, chapters 4-7, treats the biblical, sexual and family issues related to the AIDS epidemic. As an

This AIDS epidemic primer should be on every pastor's desk

evangelical physician and medical ethicist, Payne offers a very perceptive analysis of the biblical world view and the nature of God's judgment on sin. He exhorts Christians to minister to persons with AIDS without condoning the sinful behaviors that may have been the avenues for infection. "We minister to those outside the church regardless of their sins; we minister to those within the church who demonstrate repentance and growth; but, we do not minister to those who profess to be Christians but live immorally" (p. 58). Dr. Payne contends it is necessary for churches to revive the practice of

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discipline with a view toward restoring repentant members and, if necessary, excluding the unrepentant. The doctor's prescription may seem strong, but he argues very convincingly that discipline is a healing medicine for the church.

Payne takes a very strong stand against homosexuality and briefly discusses the social and political agenda of gay activists. At the same time, the author encourages Christian ministry to homosexuals. Furthermore, Payne criticizes his own profession for its anti-family approach and its complicity with the liberal political agenda. "To their shame," he says, "physicians have adopted and promoted this anti-family bias. Under a pious pre-

tense of being 'nonjudgmental,' physicians are indoctrinated in their training not to bring morality or religion into the physician-patient relationship" (p. 81).

The latter third of Dr. Payne's volume takes up issues related to the transmission of the HIV virus among medical professionals and points out the fact that most medical professionals with HIV have been infected through high-risk behaviors off the job, not by exposure from HIV-infected patients. The risk of casual infection is "infinitesimal," according to Dr. Payne's research. He does not challenge the notion that there are some things yet unknown about the transmission of the virus, but does a good job of explaining why casual infection does not occur.

Finally, Dr. Payne analyzes the economic and social impact of the disease and treats the questions of quarantine, universal testing, the safety of the blood supply and the difficulties in developing a vaccine for HIV. The last chapter of the book, "Winning the War Against AIDS: Our Nation's Response vs. A Biblical Response," is by Herbert W. Titus, Provost and Dean of the College of Law and Government at Regent University.

What Every Christian Should Know About the AIDS Epidemic probably fails to live up to its ambitious title, but it is a very useful primer. After reading the book, Christians will be well on their way to knowing everything they need to know (for now at least) about the epidemic and will have a sound biblical foundation upon which to add new knowledge about AIDS. Pastors, medical professionals and day-care workers should read this volume immediately.

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Light from the Capital

Abortion focus of RFRA hearing

Disagreement over whether the Religious Freedom Restoration Act will advance abortion rights dominated a recent congressional hearing on the bill.

RFRA (H.R. 2797) is designed to restore the free exercise of religion to its status before the Supreme Court's 1990 *Employment Division v. Smith* opinion. In *Smith*, the Court ruled government was not required to show it had a "compelling interest" out-ranking religious freedom before restricting the First Amendment right.

Nearly all 13 witnesses in the two-day hearing before the Civil and Constitutional Rights Subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee agreed the *Smith* decision needed a legislative remedy. While concurring on the damage done by *Smith*, pro-lifers split over the specifics of RFRA.

The National Association of Evangelicals and law professors with pro-life credentials denied any new right to abortion would result from RFRA. Rep. Chris Smith, R.-N.J.; the National Right to Life Committee and the United States Catholic Conference expressed opposition unless the legislation includes language excluding abortion claims from being made by women.

The Christian Life Commission examined the abortion concerns closely last year before deciding the pro-abortion agenda would not be advanced by RFRA.

"Pro-life legislators can support this bill without having to choose between life and religious liberty," CLC General Counsel Michael Whitehead said after observing portions of the hearing. "The ACLU promised to continue making claims of a religious right

to abortion under the First Amendment, just as they have in the past, whether or not RFRA is enacted. The CLC and other pro-life groups are convinced that RFRA will not help the ACLU to win such claims."

In addition to the CLC and NAE, other pro-life groups supporting RFRA include Concerned Women for America, Christian Action Council, Christian Legal Society, Coalitions for America, Home School Legal Defense Association and Traditional Values Coalition.

National Right to Life and the Catholic Conference expressed concern RFRA would provide a new basis for finding a right to abortion if the Supreme Court overturns the *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion. Supporters of the legislation agreed claims that abortion is a religious right would be made, but they would undoubtedly fail, largely because the government would find it has a "compelling interest" in protecting the unborn.

Ed Gaffney, dean at Valparaiso University School of Law, said after *Smith* and without RFRA:

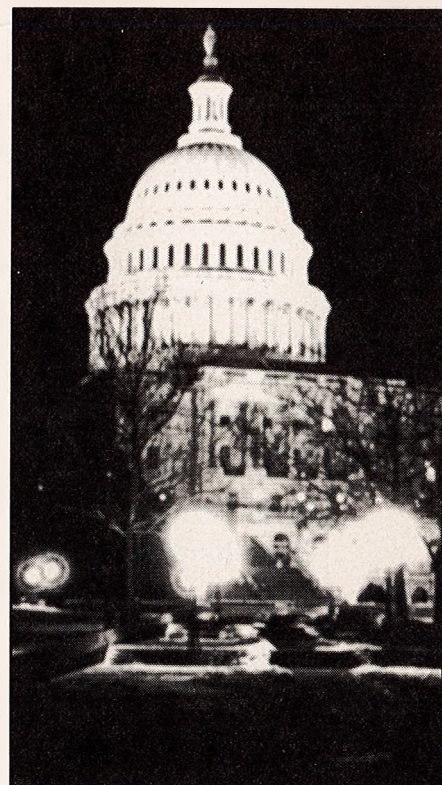
- Roman Catholic children may no longer have the right to be excused from sex education classes espousing teachings contrary to their parents' beliefs;

- Churches might not be exempt from hiring homosexuals;

- Christian schools might not avoid accreditation requirements expected of secular schools.

RFRA has 187 cosponsors in the House but has yet to be introduced in the Senate. Few of the sponsors are strongly pro-life.

Rep. Smith has introduced an alternative bill, the Religious Freedom Act (H.R. 4040), which includes language prohibiting abortion claims from being made and language preventing restric-



tions on church participation in government social service programs.

- Tom Strode

New NEA chief vetoes explicit grants

The National Endowment for the Arts' acting chairman, Anne-Imelda Radice, ignited a storm of protest with the arts lobby and a chorus of praise from the pro-family lobby when she vetoed two explicit grants May 12.

Radice assumed the chairmanship of the NEA May 1, when she was elevated from her position as deputy chairman in order to replace the outgoing chairman, John Frohnmayer.

Unlike Frohnmayer, Radice seems to be willing to veto grants which she regards as sexually explicit and of questionable value because of the nature of public funding. During her first week on the job, Radice testified before a House committee she would consider sexual content as an important factor when making decisions on grant applications.

In vetoing the grants, the acting chairman said the two exhibits were "unlikely to have the long-term artistic significance necessary to merit endowment funding."

One exhibit, "Corporal Punishment," featured, according to *The Washington Times*, "'male and female genital wallpaper,' and piles of disembodied breasts and buttocks." The grant requested was for \$10,000 and sought by the List Visual Arts Center of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The other grant request, "Anonymity and Identity," also for \$10,000, was sought by the Anderson Gallery of Virginia Commonwealth University. This exhibit included a photograph of an arrangement of pubic hair and other tiny photographs of body parts.

Both grants vetoed by Radice were approved narrowly, 6-4, by a peer review panel in the Museum Special Exhibitions category. While the National Council for the Arts (the NEA's governing board) approved "Corporal Punishment" by a vote of 11-1 with one abstention, "Anonymity and Identity" was approved unanimously without any special attention.

Marjorie Heins, director of the American Civil Liberties Union's Arts Censorship Project, decried the vetoes. She warned Radice was imposing a "Jesse Helms test" to sexually explicit grants. "That obviously is a very frightening prospect for the arts and I think is painfully reminiscent of McCarthyism," she said.

Two of the NEA's peer review panels, the Visual Arts Fellowships in Sculpture panel and one for solo theater artists, have resigned in protest over the vetoes.

Richard Land, executive director of the Christian Life Commission, sent a letter to Radice praising her actions and requesting a

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You may call the Christian Life Commission's special message line, (202) 638-4095, to receive up-to-date information on moral and religious liberty issues in Washington.

meeting to discuss the NEA controversy.

Southern Baptists who are concerned about their tax dollars supporting sexually explicit, blasphemous and offensive "art" should write Radice and thank her for the grant vetoes at the following address:

The Honorable Anne-Imelda Radice; Acting Chairman; National Endowment for the Arts; Room 520; 1100 Pennsylvania Ave. NW; Washington, DC 20506. (The official title of the position is "chairman," regardless of the gender of the person holding the office, an NEA official said.)

- James A. Smith

Bill would lift homosexual ban

Rep. Pat Schroeder, D.-Colo., recently introduced a bill seeking to lift the ban on homosexuals serving in the United States military. The Military Freedom Act (H.R. 5208), which has 38 cosponsors, would overturn a Department of Defense directive calling homosexuality and military service incompatible.

In a written statement, Schroeder said the policy was "un-American because it judges people by their being rather than their conduct."

The directive says the presence in the service of persons "who engage in homosexual conduct or who, by their statements, demonstrate a propensity to engage in homosexual conduct, seriously impairs the accomplishment of the military mission."

Gen. Colin Powell, chairman

of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney both have defended the policy in recent months.

"While this bill has little chance of passage this year, it is just one part of a larger strategy to lift the ban on homosexuals in the military," said James A. Smith, the CLC's director of government relations. "As far as I'm concerned, the greater danger is not that Congress will pass this bill but that the bill's existence will increase pressure on the Bush administration to lift the ban."

"Although the bill is not likely to pass, Southern Baptists should inform their representative and senators of their opposition. Perhaps even more importantly, Southern Baptists should call and write the President and ask him to maintain the ban."

The day before the bill's introduction, Democratic presidential candidate Bill Clinton vowed to rescind the policy if he is elected, according to *The Washington Post*. Clinton made the commitment at a Los Angeles fund-raiser held by the homosexual community and attended by 600 homosexual activists, *The Post* reported. The newspaper also said homosexual leaders had helped Clinton develop his AIDS policy.

- Tom Strode

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Commentary

Land: Let fight against racism begin with us

(Continued from Page 2)

without including spiritual solutions.

Racism's spiritual roots do not mean that legislative and judicial remedies should not be applied. Legislative and judicial remedies radically altered the status of *de jure* segregation and institutionalized racism in our society. Many of us are old enough to remember the painful, disgraceful situation prior to such legislative and judicial restraint. But what about *de facto* segregation and discrimination? These deal with attitudes, not actions. When you enter the realm of the mind and of the heart, you are moving beyond the power of restraint.

Equality, not restraint of racism and bigotry, is the goal. We Christians must move beyond merely legislative and judicial answers to spiritual solutions. The ultimate answer to the plague of racism is not Black Power, or Brown Power, or White Power, but Gospel Power.

What can we Christians do? We must proclaim our Heavenly Father's message of equality and justice. It is God's victories in

their hearts which will really change people's lives. The process must start with us. We must allow God to change *our* minds and *our* hearts until *our* actions are transformed. We must show the world we really believe what we say we believe. We must pray that God will give us passion as

***The ultimate
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Power, or Brown
Power, or White
Power, but Gospel
Power.***

well as compassion. We must really care about racial equality and justice.

At a recent Christian Life Commission consultation on racism an African-American Baptist pastor spoke with deep feeling about the hurt and pain in minority communities, saying, "You just don't realize how badly you have hurt us." I am convinced this is

absolutely true. We in the majority Anglo community don't realize the healing power for everyone, including ourselves, of saying we are sorry. We cannot "repent" for our forebears' sins. We are not Mormons. While we cannot repent for our forebears' guilt and sin, we can express our regret and our sorrow for the pain and suffering it has caused. We cannot repent for anyone's sin but our own, but we can repent of our own and call others to repentance and restitution as well.

The necessary first step in claiming God's promise is found in 2 Chronicles 7:14: "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." Let us begin on our knees, before God, then extend our hand in fellowship to all our brothers and sisters. God will not heal our land of racism and its consequences as long as the most segregated moment in American life is Sunday morning when we gather to worship.



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