

Light

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMISSION OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER, 1992



Just what can churches, pastors do in election year?

By Michael K. Whitehead

Are you suffering from "tax-exemption paranoia?"

The syndrome makes cultural cripples of many well-meaning pastors and church leaders who have developed an irrational fear about losing a church's tax-exempt status because of excessive "political activity."

This fear can paralyze churches and prevent them from helping members to apply their Bible-based convictions when exercising their citizenship.

In extreme cases, victims are afraid it is illegal even to talk about political issues or candidates while inside a church building. They would prefer that pastors and teachers avoid criticizing government policies or politicians rather than take any chance the Internal Revenue Service might revoke the church's tax exemption.

Historic Baptists such as John Leland were willing to be jailed or hanged before they were willing to be licensed or muzzled by Caesar, who had no authority over when, where or what they could preach. Baptist statesman George Truett went to the steps of the United States Capitol and demanded

(Continued on Page 14)



What ARE
family values?
Page 2

What's Inside



No
political
party
at prayer
Page 6



Observe
World Hunger Day
on October 11
Pages 10, 12

- 3 National Affairs Briefing
- 4 CLC's report at SBC
- 5 CLC's '93 Seminar
- 6 SBC is not a political party
- 7 Book Review
- 8-9 Point/Counterpoint
- 10 World Hunger Theme
- 11 Hunger in Russia
- 12 Order Forms
- 15 What can churches do?
- 16 See You at the Pole

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Richard D. Land, Executive Director
Louis A. Moore, Editor



**Christian Life
Commission
of the Southern
Baptist Convention**

P. O. Box 25266
Nashville, TN 37202-5266



Jack Haman

Family Values?

A reporter called me recently and said, "Everyone talks about family values, but they often mean different things. What do you mean by family values?" I answered that my definition wasn't important, but God's is. God defined the family by creating it and giving divine instructions about its role and function (Gen. 2:18-24).

When Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, described God's ideal for marriage, he addressed husbands and wives and their responsibilities to each other and to their children (Eph. 5:22-6:4). The new *Anchor Bible Dictionary* concludes that "In the Bible . . . the appropriate locus of sexuality is the monogamous nuclear family, the ideal human relationship."

Today the biblical definition of the family is under sustained attack. Two powerful trends lead the assault on the family. The first surveys the wreckage of a society wracked by divorce, where married couples with children comprise only 26 percent of American households, and concludes that since so few families meet the traditional biblical ideal, we must redefine the family by describing what *is*, rather than what *ought* to be. This definition by description, which enshrines the dysfunctional status quo as normative, is generating catastrophe and heartache. Mothers are taught that husbands are optional, and children are told they don't need fathers. There is all the difference in the world between not *having* a husband or a father and being told you don't *need* one.

Recently a Southern Baptist ethicist decried the fact that the family is defined only as "the age-old nuclear definition of 2.3 kids, a cat and a dog." He cautioned Christians to avoid "parenting by propositions" such as "all families should have a mother and a father," which he added is "simply not true." This ethicist then defined the family as "any place that one finds the kind of small network of support where emotionality, intimacy, love and nurture can be experienced and which creates wholeness."

That kind of definition opens the door for calling all kinds of perverted relationships "family relationships." Gay and lesbian couples regularly claim they have positive, affirming family relationships. But from a biblical perspective, their relationship is sinful, not familial. Such expansive definitions make constantly changing cultural patterns normative. God's Word about the family does not change. We must hold up His ideal. We empathize with single parents and divorced individuals in the struggles they experience. Churches need to redouble their ministries to dysfunctional families, single people and hurting children. But that does not mean we toss out the biblical model for the family.

A second, even more sinister attack comes from those who see the family as a source of oppression and inequality, stifling the "personal autonomy and self-creation" that is "the core of their world view" (*Newsweek*, July 20, 1992). Even within Christian circles some argue that families should "launch" members "to do whatever it is they want to do" and that "imposing a model on a Christian woman or a Christian man or a Christian family is absolutely trying to play God to them," as a Baptist family therapist recently put it.

No matter what happens societally, God's model remains one man, with one woman, in a one-flesh relationship for life. This is not a model we are imposing on the family, but a model God has designed for the well-being of His creatures and the human community. The monogamous marriage is still God's ideal. When Christians teach monogamy and God's model for the family, we are not "playing God," but merely repeating God's instructions for human family relationships.

Richard D. Land

McAteer looks for repeat performance at this year's National Affairs Briefing

By Louis A. Moore

The forum that helped launch conservative evangelical Christians onto the U.S. political stage will celebrate its 12th anniversary with a repeat performance Aug. 21-22 in Dallas.

President George Bush has accepted the invitation to speak to the meeting, and Democratic challengers Bill Clinton and Al Gore have been invited to participate.

Other speakers include Richard D. Land, executive director of the Christian Life Commission; former Southern Baptist Convention President Adrian Rogers; Donald Wildmon of the American Family Association; Beverly LaHaye, president of Concerned Women for America and E.V. Hill, pastor of Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church in Los Angeles.

"If we could have the same effect and excitement we had the first time in 1980, we would be delighted."

Architect for the National Affairs Briefing is Ed McAteer, a political activist who is a member of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis. McAteer is quoted frequently and extensively in all sorts of publications, ranging from numerous religious news services to *The Dallas Morning News*, as an expert on conservative Christian involvement in politics.

"If we could have the same



National Affairs Briefing architect Ed McAteer says the meeting will reaffirm traditional moral, ethical, family and spiritual values.

effect and excitement we had the first time in 1980, we would be delighted," said McAteer. "That is certainly our goal."

The 1980 meeting is remembered for Ronald Reagan's performance, which many observers believe clinched his support from what came to be known as the New Religious Right. It was there he said, "I know you cannot endorse me, but I endorse you."

President Jimmy Carter declined to attend the meeting, which many believe underscored his waning support among conservative Christian voters.

McAteer's personal friendship with both Democratic Vice Presidential candidate Al Gore and President George Bush is expected to be a factor in this year's forum.

The two-day Dallas event is scheduled immediately following the Republican Convention in Houston. It begins at 1 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 21, and will conclude with a speech by radio personality Rush Limbaugh Saturday evening, Aug. 22.

The dates and the city are the same as the 1980 meeting. The

theme for the meeting, to be held at the Dallas Convention Center, is "The 1992 Presidential Election: A Defining Moment in America's History." McAteer estimates the forum will draw 10,000.

McAteer has outlined three objectives for this year's forum:

- "Increase awareness concerning the critical moral and social issues of today.
- "Provide information and resources to equip citizens for participation in the political process.
- "Determine common goals of participating groups and organizations and outline a unified strategy."

McAteer also says, "The purpose of the NAB is to provide a forum to unite conservative business, political and religious leaders to focus on public policy concerning moral issues. The event will provide information and resources to encourage and equip millions of Americans to participate actively in the political process. The Briefing strives to reaffirm publicly traditional moral, ethical, family and spiritual values in our nation."

Southern Baptists and the struggle for the nation's soul

(In response to numerous requests, the Christian Life Commission is publishing excerpts from Dr. Land's annual report to the Southern Baptist Convention in Indianapolis, June 10, 1992.)

I do want to tell you that we are very excited about what the Lord is doing through the Christian Life Commission (CLC) and through the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). One of the things we are most excited about is the change in program statement that you approved at this Convention, which will allow us to relate more directly to the headquarters of the SBC, which is the local church. We do not ever forget that at the CLC. The headquarters and the foundation on earth of the SBC is the local assembly of believers.

We have produced a *Citizen Christian Awareness Campaign* manual. We hope that you will get one. It is a manual on how you as an individual church can get involved and get your people involved in the political process. We are calling Christians, not to a sporadic election-year response, but to a fundamental change in lifestyle. We believe that as people of faith, discipleship through our Lord Jesus Christ impels us to involvement with society, including informed participation in our nation's political process.

We are committed to a complete gospel for the complete person. We reject any imagined conflict between the social and salvation aspects of the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It was never intended that there should be a dichotomy or division between the two. We believe that it is wrong to seek to feed the hungry and not tell them about the Bread of Life. We believe that it is shameful to clothe the naked and not tell them about the whole armor of God. We believe it is a

disgrace to seek to house the homeless and not tell them that in our Father's house are many mansions. But it is also a denial of the incarnation of our Savior to ignore the physical needs of people. We believe in a whole gospel for a whole people, both spiritual and temporal, meeting all human needs, earthly and heavenly alike.

I want to share with you, very briefly, two magazine cover articles. We have some barometers of our culture. Two of the most potent and powerful are *Time* and *Newsweek*. The December 9, 1991,

***We are calling
Christians, not
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change in lifestyle.***

Time ran this cover story: "One Nation Under God: Has the separation of church and state gone too far?" Well, as you might imagine, when a powerful secular voice like *Time* even asks the question, the answer is yes. In our society it has gone too far. *Time* concluded this article by saying,

For God to be kept out of the classroom or out of America's public debate by nervous school administrators or over-cautious politicians serves no one's interest. That restriction prevents people from drawing on the country's rich and diverse religious heritage for guidance, and it degrades the nation's moral discourse by placing a whole realm of theological reasoning out of bounds. The price of that sort of quarantine, at a time of moral dislocation, is—and has

been—far too high. The courts need to find a better balance between separation and accommodation, and Americans need to respect the new religious freedom they would gain as a result.

If *Time* can understand this, I say it is time we help the rest of America to understand our true heritage of religious freedom. In America we believe not in freedom *from* religion, but freedom *for* religion. We are not calling for government sponsorship of religion, but we are insisting that when our children step on public school property they retain their First Amendment right as American citizens to pray with each other, to talk to each other about religion and to witness to one another about religion. And when people say to us, "People who don't believe will be offended if they hear your child pray," our response is this, "There is nothing in the First Amendment that protects you from being offended." My children and your children are offended by God's name taken in vain. But we are told that is protected speech. My dear brothers and sisters, if God's name taken in vain is protected speech, even if offensive to believers, then God's name invoked in prayer is protected speech, even if offensive to non-believers. And we are going to insist on it.

I have a second article, *Newsweek*, June 8, 1992, which asks the question, "Whose Values?" *Newsweek* says that we are discussing

something that really matters, something perhaps too precious to be entrusted to mere politicians. . . . These values questions—about how we've chosen to live our lives and how that's affected our children, about the nagging sense that unlimited personal freedom and rampaging materialism yield only greater hungers and lonelier

nights—have been quiet American obsessions for some time now, the source of a deep, vexing national anxiety.

'We have conducted a 30-year experiment in desublimination,' says Fred Siegel. . . . 'Everyone gets to act out. There are no consequences. It's been a disaster.' . . . The 30-year spree has caused a monster hangover.

We have been called for such a time as this. Never before has our nation needed to hear the clear and certain sound of the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ more than it needs to hear it today. It is fitting that we are meeting in an athletic arena because we are in a struggle, a contest, a combat for the soul of our nation, and the faith of millions of souls depends on the outcome. And we had better "Put on the whole armor of God. . . . For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:11-12). And we had better put on the girdle of truth and "the breastplate of righteousness" and have our feet "shod with the gospel of peace" and take up "the shield of faith" and "the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit. . . . the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication" (Eph. 6:14-18), because the forces of darkness are against the forces of light, and Jesus says to us, "Ye are the light of the world" (Matt. 5:14).

And it must begin with us. "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" (2 Chron. 7:14).

God bless you. Pray for us. Talk to us. Pray that we will have the discernment to serve you as God would have us to do.

John MacArthur will keynote CLC's '93 Seminar in Nashville

Noted Bible expositor and conference speaker John MacArthur will key-note the 26th annual Christian Life Commission seminar to be held in Nashville, March 1-3, 1992.

The conference is entitled "Life at Risk: Crises in Medical Ethics." It will focus on the application of biblical principles to the dilemmas of modern medicine.

MacArthur, pastor-teacher of Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, California, will speak on Monday and Tuesday of the meeting on the impact of the Christian world view on some of the controversial bioethical issues of our day.

Experts from the fields of medicine, law, ethics and theology will address a host of issues such as AIDS, abortion, living wills and euthanasia. The program includes world-renowned scientists such as Dr. Francis Collins, co-discoverer of the genetic causes of cystic fibrosis and a Southern Baptist. Dr. Joe S. McIlhaney, an obstetrician and well-known author from Austin, Texas, will address the myth of "safe sex." Dr. Edmund Pellegrino, one of

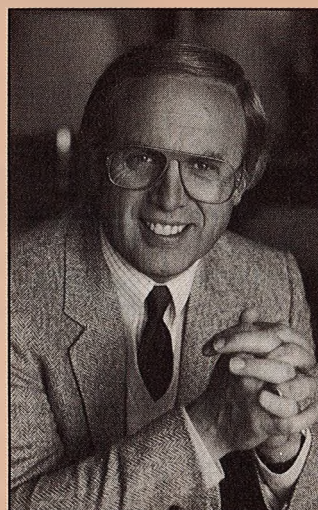
the patriarchs of medical ethics in America, will speak on "Bioethics for the Third Millennium" and offer a hint of what is

yet to come in medical technology. Former abortionist and practicing physician Beverly McMillan will address abortion, and Jack C. Willke, president of Life Issues, will speak about the abortion pill, RU 486. Dr. Jimmy Draper, president of the Baptist Sunday School Board, will deliver the theme interpretations and

Dr. Richard Land will provide an overview of the conference.

Other seminar speakers include Dr. Tom Harris of Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, Dr. Thomas Elkins of the University of Michigan School of Medicine, Dr. Dianne Irving of Georgetown University, Dr. Kurt Wise of Bryan College, Dr. Timothy George of the Beeson Divinity School at Samford University and others.

The cost of the conference is minimal: \$12.50 for students and \$35.00 for others. The meeting will be held in the new conference facilities of the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville.



'We must continue to strive for balance'

SBC is not any political party at prayer

By Louis A. Moore

Has the Southern Baptist Convention become the "Republican Party at prayer?"

That question has surfaced again in the wake of charges leveled by some following the Convention in Indianapolis. It brings back memories of a similar question I pondered about 14 years ago: "Is the Southern Baptist Convention the Democratic Party at prayer?"

In the late 1970s, the link between the SBC and Democrats seemed overwhelming. Among the evidence:

- Many in the SBC leadership, especially in the SBC media, displayed open admiration for Bill Moyers, then more noted as a partisan LBJ Democrat than a news commentator. Moyers is a graduate of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, was once news director of that school and was considered by many SBC leaders then as an example of a religious journalist.

- Many Southern Baptists, including top leaders, showed unabashed attraction for President Jimmy Carter. In fact, several SBC leaders then were so enraptured with Carter that they worked nonstop in his election and reelection campaigns.

- SBC President Jimmy Allen (1978-79) was so caught up in the Carter presidency that when the Iran hostage situation arose, he raced to Iran to try and become involved firsthand.

- Several Southern Baptist entities, including the Southern Baptist Convention's Christian Life Commission in Nashville, were thought by many to be bastions of support for the Democratic Party. A quick check of the



CLC history shows, among other things, that the Commission historically has invited twice as many Democrats to speak as Republicans. And the balance prior to the 1980s was three to one or worse.

The link between Democrats and Southern Baptists did not begin in the Carter years but preceded it by many decades. As late as the 1950s, our beloved denomination was landlocked in the South and very much captive to the South's culture, including the Southern wing of the Democratic Party.

One example of this linkage was Brooks Hays, president of the SBC in 1958-59 and chairman of the Christian Life Commission 1956-57. He served for many years as a Democratic U.S. congressman from Arkansas.

The political changes in the South, the SBC and the country as a whole are all well documented. From 1980 to 1990 many Southern Baptist pastors, like many Americans, switched party affiliation. But even now there is a strong element in the Convention who are Democrats, offering a balance not evident previously.

But the issue is really not whether the Southern Baptist

Convention should be the "Republican Party or the Democratic Party at prayer." Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior and reason for our existence as a denomination, was neither a Republican nor a Democrat. Like Him, we as a denomination should be neither.

God revealed Himself in the lives of biblical people and through Jesus Christ and Holy Scripture as a God of principles and values that supersede any political power or party. Indeed, strong evidence exists that the Southern Baptist Convention is neither the Republican Party nor the Democratic Party at prayer. We must continue to strive for that balance.

Two years ago an invitation to President Bush to speak at the Southern Baptist Convention in New Orleans fizzled in the wake of Bush's invitation to some gay activists to attend a White House ceremony. On biblical principles, the majority of Southern Baptists disagree with stands on homosexuality taken by gay activists. Bush was invited to speak at the 1991 Convention in Atlanta after assuring SBC leaders he had heard their concerns, but the Convention adopted a resolution

deploring "the lack of initiative by the President and Congress in addressing the continuing abuses of the National Endowment for the Arts."

Vice President Dan Quayle was invited to speak this year because the SBC was meeting in his hometown, Indianapolis, and he had sought out SBC leaders to assure them that he is listening to their concerns, too.

Quayle's appearance brought back memories of my first introduction to Jimmy Carter. It was in the SBC pressroom in 1974 in Dallas. Carter was there to introduce then Vice President Gerald Ford at a Brotherhood Commission breakfast. (Home Mission Board President Larry Lewis says Carter declined overtures from the HMB to make a presentation during the HMB's report to the Convention in Indianapolis.)

At times, biblical principles will coincide with certain aspects of any particular political party's platform or actions, as many Christians believe is happening today with the Republican Party's platform on abortion. At other times, biblical principles will collide with a particular political party's agenda. Political leaders should never be able to assume that such support for one plank means unquestioned backing for another plank or action when biblical principles are violated.

As U. S. citizens, some Southern Baptists probably always will register as Republicans and others as Democrats. But when we pray, it will be as redeemed people who have experienced God through Jesus Christ in firsthand, personal ways, not as Republicans or Democrats.

Louis Moore is director of media and products of the Southern Baptist Convention's Christian Life Commission in Nashville. He was religion editor of the Houston Chronicle from 1972 to 1986.

Book Review

Campolo: Christianity at its best is environmentally responsible

Campolo, Tony. *How to Rescue the Earth Without Worshipping Nature*. Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, Tenn., 1992. 213 pp.

Lamar E. Cooper, Sr.

One reason evangelical Christians have been so slow to embrace the environmental movement has been the movement's identification with New Age extremists.

New Age religions are based on a pantheistic world view that venerates nature as an object of worship. Campolo points out that creation was meant to glorify God, not to be worshiped as God. The Bible teaches that humans should join with all creation in giving glory to God, their Creator.

By using biblical passages as well as other Christian writings, Campolo builds a case for Christian environmentalism. Christians are to be good stewards of planet earth by working for a "peaceable kingdom" of ecological harmony. He maintains that being concerned about the environment is a biblically mandated command, and acting to rescue creation is a Christian obligation. "What must be made clear is that each of us has a responsibility to do something about our polluted and trashed creation right now. In anticipation of the return of Jesus, we must go to work today and contribute to the work which He will complete on the day of His coming."

Concern for the environment also has a practical benefit. The destruction of the rain forests in the Amazon Basin of South America is already having a negative affect on the global cli-

mate. No one knows what the ultimate consequences will be. Many of the plants from which pharmaceuticals are made are found in the rain forests of the world. There is no way to tell if we have already inadvertently destroyed a cure for cancer or AIDS in some tropical plant, now extinct.

Campolo wants to show that Christianity at its best is environmentally responsible. He believes that at the core of what we do to rescue creation from abuse should be a deep commitment to free nature to join us in giving glory to God, the Creator. He recommends that churches take an "environmental audit" to measure a congregation's response to conservation. He wants to wake up evangelicals to become committed stewards to protecting and preserving planet earth. The chapter entitled "The Greening of the Church" identifies key Christian outreach organizations that work to preserve the environment.

This book is in Campolo's readable style and has practical suggestions as well as information and motivation. Evangelical Christians must not surrender the vital area of the environment to the New Age movement. By the same token concerned believers must proceed with caution so that they do not end up talking very much like New Agers. This book should be recommended reading for every believer concerned about the present and future welfare of planet earth.

Lamar Cooper handles environmental issues for the CLC.

By M. Mahan Siler

(The following "open letter" to Southern Baptists issued by Dr. Siler is reprinted here with Dr. Coppenger's response to help Southern Baptists focus on the issues at stake in the debate surrounding the SBC's actions excluding churches which condone homosexual behavior. The publication of this Point/Counterpoint should not be seen as a disagreement with the SBC's action, which the CLC editorially supported in Salt.)

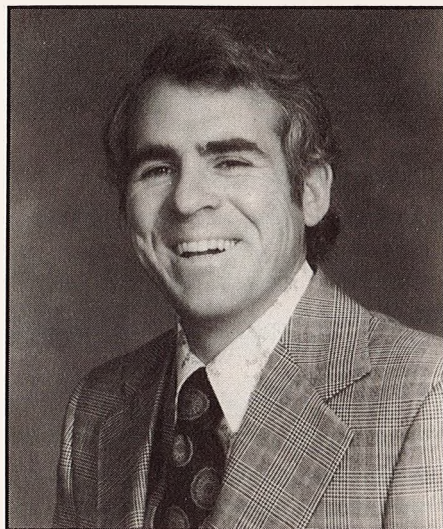
What do you say when relationships die?

The death of Pullen Memorial's 108-year relationship with Southern Baptists has been decided—first by the Raleigh Baptist Association on May 5, next by the General Board of the North Carolina Convention on May 19 and finally by the Southern Baptist Convention on June 9. The decision by Pullen Memorial regarding gay Christians had stretched the relationship to a breaking point. To the dismay of many, the Southern Baptist relationship snapped. In the absence of some ritual, I feel the need to offer some personal response.

**... you are making
as a condition for
cooperation in
Christian ministry
a particular
position in regard
to homosexuality.**

Gratitude is my first word. From you, Southern Baptists, I received a superior theological education at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. With you I've enjoyed opportunities of ministry, from being pastor in five congregations, to serving on boards, committees and adjunct teaching in seminaries and most significantly being a member of the School of Pastoral Care staff at N.C. Baptist Hospital for a decade. I will be forever shaped by the learnings

Siler: SBC needs room for discussion of homosexuality



M. Mahan Siler

and relationships of these years. Even the controversies have deepened in me the value of our Baptist heritage.

Regret follows gratitude. I do not regret the process followed or decisions made by our congregation. I do regret the painful dilemma in which our actions placed many Southern Baptist friends and causes. Our congregation was responding to a pastoral request by an active member; we were not intending to confront the denomination with the issue of homosexuality.

My parting concern is that you are making as a condition for cooperation in Christian ministry a particular position in regard to homosexuality. This position seems to include the following assumptions: 1) In contrast to heterosexuality, homosexual orientation is chosen, not discovered. 2) The role of the church is to persuade homosexuals to abandon their sexual orientation or, at least, remain silent and celibate. 3) No distinction should be made between biblical condemnation of promiscuous, idolatrous homosexual behavior and homosexual intimacy within a

monogamous, lifelong, committed relationship. 4) Religious and cultural violence against homosexuals is not a major social injustice to which the church should give clear prophetic witness. 5) Homosexual "lifestyle" means any expression of homosexual behavior. 6) Being gay and Christian are incompatible identities.

You would expect me to challenge these assumptions. But more important is the creation of a climate where debate and differences of opinions are respected. In the face of this complex issue, dogmatism is unwarranted. Devout, learned Baptists disagree. I hope, within the Baptist tradition of dissent, you will support safe places for continuing dialogue in the common search for the mind of Christ.

Let us *celebrate* the courage behind convictions expressed by members of Pullen Memorial (and Binkley Memorial) who agreed and disagreed with the decisions by their congregations, and by countless Southern Baptist persons, congregations and associations who conferred and expressed their moral conscience on this matter. The cost of facing more openly this "closeted" subject has been higher than most of us expected. But much "soul-searching" has begun concerning the church's response to homosexual persons and their families in our day. For this I give thanks. Only in time, looking back, will we be able to speak definitively.

The death of a relationship, of course, does not mean the death of the parties involved. I am grateful for what was; let us be grateful for what God is yet to do through all our congregations. In Dag Hammarskjöld's words, "To the past: Thanks . . . to the future: YES."

Mahan Siler is pastor of Pullen Memorial Baptist Church in Raleigh, N.C.

By Mark T. Coppenger

In his book, *New Rules*, Daniel Yankelovich tells of a young woman who went to a psychiatrist on account of physical and emotional exhaustion. She disclosed a lifestyle of too little sleep, bad diet, alcohol abuse and promiscuity. When he asked her why she lived like this, she exclaimed, "You mean I don't have to do what I feel like doing?"

Why was she shocked? Because she'd been taught that she was morally obliged to follow her impulses, that to do otherwise would be unnatural and hypocritical. She had somehow missed out on the biblical truth that the enthronement of desire is spiritually toxic.

Jesus did not come to honor our urges, but to set us free from those which are unholy. The Bible clearly teaches in Ephesians 2:1-3 that, without Christ, we are spiritual goners, dead men incapable of feeling as we ought, unfit for God's

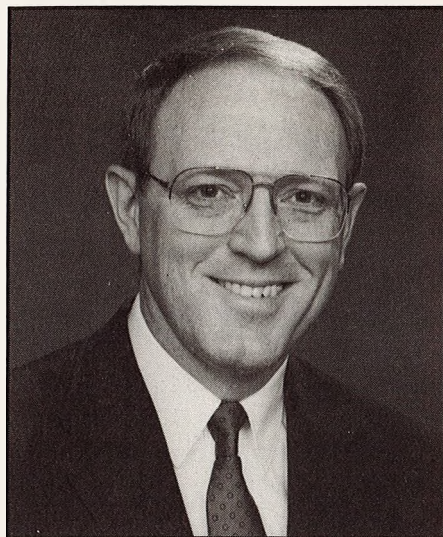
***The last thing they
[homosexuals]
need is some
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telling them they
are okay.***

works, slaves to selfish interests.

Like the rest of us, the homosexual struggles with sin. His is named in Romans 1. Ours may be in the Sermon on the Mount or Galatians 5.

We go to church to get the word on God's judgment, mercy and assistance. We do not go to church to have our sub-Christian tendencies sanctified. But where is our love? Where is our compas-

Coppenger: Bible has final word on homosexuality



Mark T. Coppenger

sion? The same place it was for the biblical writers—resting on truth.

A doctor does his patient no favor when he says her melanoma is a mere beauty mark. Sure, the truth is grievous, but he'd better say it, for this is serious business.

So, too, is homosexuality. It's not just a matter of right- or left-handedness, of preferring pistachio to vanilla. It has to do with our soundness as human beings. How can I know? The Bible tells me so in Genesis 19, Leviticus 18 and 20, 1 Corinthians 6, 1 Timothy 1 and Jude.

In the current debate, some argue that homosexuals are simply born that way. So what? Aren't we born wanting to strike those who vex us, to take whatever attracts us, to avoid difficult decisions, to control absolutely the TV remote control?

It would take a miracle for avowed homosexuals to turn to celibacy or to heterosexual monogamy within marriage. But, *mirabile dictu*, God is adequate

for miracles, miracles of "clama-tion" and reclamation.

It took a miracle for the wife abuser to be transformed into a wife edifier. It took another for the sloth to get motivated, the phony to get real, the coward to get a spine, the alcoholic to get sober, the prima donna to get humble, the miser to get generous, the bully to get gracious. God came through. And consider what He was able to do with such scoundrels as Zacchaeus and Paul.

I deserve hell. The Bible tells me so. And the Bible gets no argument from me. I admit it with conviction. And, therefore, I find salvation and help.

The same gracious resource is available to homosexuals. And the last thing they need is some "man of the cloth" telling them they are okay. At that rate, they'll miss out on God's cleansing love.

When the Convention expels homosexuality-indulgent churches, does it violate their autonomy? Of course not. Each Baptist body is free to determine its own membership. That's what has happened. Autonomy is intact.

But what of the slippery slope? How far will this disciplinary spirit lead us?

Let's turn the question around and look at the other slippery slope. How far would indulgence lead us? Indeed, how far has it led us already? And if we fail to act here, what will be next? Incest? Bestiality?

God's love draws lines. Let's not attempt to erase them.

Mark Coppenger is vice president for Convention relations of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention.

One-sided religion and crushing hunger are as commonplace today as when Amos roared like a lion his message of the Lord to the Israelites. Like the people then, we would do well to hear the word from Amos.

The Old Testament prophet pointed out that the rich trampled upon the poor (Amos 2:7, 5:11 and 8:4), sold the needy "for a pair of shoes" (2:6) and turned "aside the way of the afflicted" (2:7). The rich turned justice to wormwood (5:7), while bribed judges perverted justice (5:12).

Amos charged that the marketplace was thoroughly corrupt. The ephah, the container for measuring grain, was smaller than normal, cheating the consumers. The shekel, the bar for the balancing scales, was made heavier than usual, taking advantage of customers. The merchants sold chaff with wheat (8:5), impoverishing the diet of the poor.

Amos condemned the lifestyle of luxury: "Woe to those who are at ease in Zion" (6:1). The idle rich sprawled out on expensive furniture. They ate lambs, a delicacy in a society which seldom ate meat. They drank wine in bowls and bathed in fine oils (6:4-6). Their lifestyle oppressed the poor and crushed the needy (4:1). It perverted justice which, Amos said, was as dangerous as men making horses run upon rocks (6:12).

The root of injustice was shallow religion, said Amos. Piety was widespread but separate from ethics. The people gave burnt cereal and peace offerings. They made sweet sounds of worship. They held solemn assemblies. But Amos said the Lord hated their empty acts of worship, despised their feasts and took no delight in their special prayer meetings (5:21-23).

Justice was what the Lord desired! Amos shouted "seek the Lord" (5:6) and "seek good" (5:14). Unlike many of the people, Amos knew that true religion and ethics went hand in hand. God-

'Establish justice in the gate'

(Amos 5:15, RSV)



Observe World Hunger Day October 11, 1992

centered, authentic religion issued forth justice in the gate, the entrance to the walled city where the elders ruled on cases (5:15). Amos longed for a society where justice flowed like a spring that never went dry (5:24).

But what is justice in a hungry world? Micah 6:8 tells us that justice is at the top of the list of what the Lord requires.

Justice must include a tender heart for the poor. It must include a spirit that yearns to alleviate the personal, social, political and economic forces which keep children hungry, adults unemployed and the aged chronically ill. Justice is respect for fair play. It is personal righteousness.

We live in a world which produces enough grain alone for every

person to have 3,600 calories every day, but where 700 million people are chronically hungry. We live in a world where a single spring in France provides bottled water for the prosperous around the world to drink, but where 2 billion people drink and bathe in contaminated water. We live in a world which has 157 billionaires and 2 million millionaires, but where 100 million people are homeless.

Observe World Hunger Day on October 11. Pray that true faith and ethics will beat in the hearts of Southern Baptist people. Seek justice in your workplace, city and state. Seek it in the halls of Congress. Support the hunger ministries of your Foreign and Home Mission Boards.

By Ronald H. Nash

Never in the 40 years I have been telling people about Jesus have I ever seen a response to the gospel to equal that of the people in Russia, Ukraine, the Baltic States and other republics of the former Soviet Union. These newly independent states may well represent the most remarkable missionary opportunity in the entire history of the church.

Unlike America, Britain and Western Europe where familiarity with the faith seems to have bred contempt or disinterest, efforts to share the truth about Jesus Christ in Russia and other commonwealth states find people hungry to know more about the Bible. Truly, these states are white unto harvest.

Alongside spiritual hunger in these lands is devastating poverty and physical hunger as well. Visitors to what used to be the Soviet Union receive a shocking lesson in the economic failings of socialism and the moral-spiritual bankruptcy of atheistic communism. Russia should be one of the richest nations in the world. But its vast natural resources have been squandered through an economic system that destroyed personal initiative and accountability.

The people most at risk in Russia and Ukraine are people on fixed incomes. Most of these are elderly pensioners who cannot stand for hours in food lines and cannot afford the necessities of life when food does reach the stores. Inflation outstrips the meager incomes of average Russians. If physicians and professors make less than the Russian equivalent of 50 U.S. dollars a month, imagine the plight of poor pensioners!

The harsh living conditions in the former Soviet Union extend to medical care. If you become seriously ill in Russia, visitors are told, do *not* head for the hospital. Go instead to the airport and pray that you reach Germany in time.

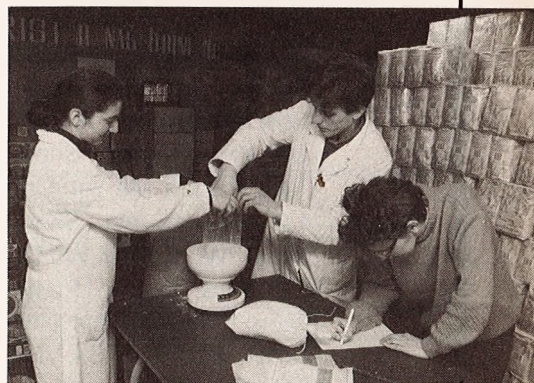
Spiritual and physical hunger in Russia

While in Moscow in early June, some of my companions visited several hospitals with gifts of such items as aspirin, sterile dressings and hypodermic needles. If such things cannot be found in Russian hospitals, don't look for basic medicines and antibiotics. The average hypodermic needle in a Russian hospital is used more than 65 times. No Russian hospital tests the blood it uses in transfusions for HIV.

The Russian people never were enemies of America, even if the old rulers of the Soviet state were. The suffering people of Russia are victims of the old system. They deserve all the help we can give them. Right now, Russia is wide open to the gospel. Steps are under way to add the teaching of the Bible to the curriculum of Russia's state schools. Probably the only thing that could stop Russia's rapid move toward democracy, a market economy and a return to its Christian heritage is a new counterrevolution that the masses would unthinkingly support out of desperation and hunger. Christian efforts to ease the poverty and hunger in Russia cannot only fulfill Jesus' command in Matthew 25 that we help the needy, it can also open additional doors for Christian witnessing and ensure that the opportunities for Christian witness that already exist will continue.

One legitimate concern in all such endeavors is making sure that the aid actually reaches the people who need it and isn't siphoned off into the black market. One impressive ministry to the poor is the establishment of soup kitchens for poor senior citizens on fixed incomes that one Russian businessman is supporting throughout Moscow. I visited one of these kitchens and found it

clean and efficiently run. But there are obvious needs for such things as used clothing, frozen meat from nations in the West, and money to purchase equipment, pay salaries, purchase food and set up new kitchens. These efforts by private citizens are programs that Southern Baptists could conceivably assist. By joining hands with the nongovernmental efforts already begun, Southern Baptists could help provide the used clothing, frozen meat and financial help that



could see these operations grow. These operations could then serve as a basis for ministering to thousands of Russian people on a regular basis.

Christians who see what God is doing in Russia sometimes wonder out loud how long this remarkable opportunity will last. Tragically, this door could close suddenly and without warning. And if that happens, the deprivation within Russia will no doubt have played a major role. But if American Christians will join hands among ourselves and with our new friends in Russia, we can make major strides toward seeing that this door to the gospel never closes again.

Dr. Nash is professor of philosophy at Reformed Theological Seminary, Orlando, Fla. and a member of First Baptist Church in Winter Park.

PRODUCTS**ORDER WORLD HUNGER RESOURCES****October 11, 1992**

Quantity	Materials	Price	Total
	New Bulletin Insert for World Hunger emphasis (Undated)	\$.06	
	New Poster - World Hunger Promotional Poster	.95	
	New Guide - World Hunger Awareness/Action Guide	.75	
	Guide - Hunger Alert: World Hunger Awareness/Action Guide for Youth	3.30	
	Updated Pamphlet - What Are Southern Baptists Doing About Hunger?	.11	
	Pamphlet - The Bible Speaks on Hunger	.17	
	Pamphlet - Issues and Answers: Hunger	.17	
	New Sermon Outline for World Hunger emphasis	.22	
	Christian Actions for the World's Hungry	.11	
	New Testament Studies for a World Hunger Emphasis	.22	
	Old Testament Studies for a World Hunger Emphasis	.22	
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	Play - "The Unseen Guest" - Playscript	.22	
	New Bank for World Hunger Relief Offering	.25	
	World Hunger Resource Set - 1 sample copy of each of above resources	6.00	
	Book: <i>What Shall We Do in a Hungry World?</i> By Robert M. Parham	SALE .99	
	New Videotape: "A Caring Family" (Deals with homelessness) 1/2" VHS, 32 min. Show date:	Rental \$ 11.00 Purchase \$ 39.00	
	Tape: "Show Me You Care" 1/2" VHS, 15 min. Show date:	5.00 10.00	
	Tape: "What Shall We Do in a Hungry World?" 1/2" VHS, 45 min. Show date:	11.00 27.50	
	Tape: "Give Us This Day" - 1/2" VHS, 28 min. Show date:	11.00 27.50	
	Tape: Missions USA Video Magazine: "No Place Like Home" (Report on the Homeless) 1/2" VHS, 13 min. Show date:	11.00 27.50	
	Tape: Missions USA Video Magazine: "An Uncertain Harvest" (The Farm Crisis Challenge) 1/2" VHS, 30 min. Show date:	11.00 27.50	
	Tape: "Love in Action in a Hungry World" 1/2" VHS, 12 min. Show date:	11.00 27.50	
	Film: "What Shall We Do in a Hungry World?" 16mm, 45 min. Show date:	27.50 275.00	
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	New Poster - Sanctity of Human Life Promotional Poster (Undated)	.95	
	New Pamphlet - A Time to Live, a Time to Die: Advance Directives and Living Wills	.33	
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	Tract - Is Life a Right? by Richard D. Land	.10	
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	Booklet - "Not an Easy Time" by Sylvia Boothe (20 pages)	1.25	
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	Videotape: "Hard Truth" 1/2" VHS, 10 minutes Warning: Contains explicit abortion photos Purchase Price: \$14.95 [] Rental Fee: \$8 [] Show date:		
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Quantity	Speaker	Audio Cassettes from Sanctity Conference	
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	Lynn Buzzard	What the Webster Case Did and Did Not Do: What Can be Done	3.85
	Jimmy Draper	The Impact of a Crisis Pregnancy Center on a Local Church and Community	3.85
	Carol Everett	What Really Happens in an Abortion Clinic	3.85
	Raymond Higgins	The Complex Issues of Pre-Natal Diagnosis	3.85
	Paul Jones	Do's & Don'ts of Lobbying Legislators: Utilizing Professional Expertise and Experience	3.85
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	Liz Minnick	Do's & Don'ts of Lobbying Legislators: Mobilizing Volunteers Effectively	3.85
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Tax-exemption paranoia

(Continued from Page 1)

that Caesar keep his millstone off the church's neck.¹

Is it possible Baptists have allowed the principle of church-state separation to be so mangled by modern secularists it is now used to intimidate the church into silence about political/moral issues in exchange for exemption from income taxes?²

Part of the reason for the paranoia is an ambiguous statute. Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code has two rules which regulate political activity by churches and exempt corporations.³

The first rule permits some lobbying, or "influencing legislation" by a church body, so long as it is "no substantial part of the activities" of the entity. The code does not define "influencing legislation" or "substantial part."⁴

The second rule prohibits a church or tax-exempt corporation from "participat[ing] in or interven[ing] in [including the publishing and distributing of statements] any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office." The code does not define "participate" or "intervene."

What is the speed limit?

"Just tell me what I can and can't do. Tell me the speed limit, and I'll obey it," you say. Unlike speed limits, the tax code is not always clear.

Come to think of it, speed limits are not always clear. A driver on an interstate highway may be going 65 miles per hour toward an unfamiliar city. Leaving the rural area and entering the suburbs, he has not seen a speed sign in a while, but he knows the limit must change to 55 mph somewhere near the city. He is in a hurry, but he feels uncomfortable not knowing if 65 mph is safe or risky.

Some people handle such daily dilemmas by going 40 mph, the legal minimum on the freeway. Others will weigh the circumstances and make a judgment about what is safe or risky until they see a clear signpost. Living with ambiguous tax laws requires similar judgment.

Preventive law

Practicing such preventive law is prudent, but pastors and teachers will seek to balance their duties under an ambiguous law with their religious duty and constitutional right to preach prophetically to culture and government.

When balancing the risks, consider the fact that the Internal Revenue Service has never judicially revoked the tax-exempt status of a church because a pastor went too far in praising or rebuking a political candidate or in stirring up public pressure about some legislation.⁵ This is not to say churches should ignore the

law just because the IRS has not enforced it. A driver should not drive as fast as he pleases just because he sees no police officer.

The fact that the IRS has judicially never enforced this section against a church, however, is relevant to reducing the fear churches have of this issue. It may show the IRS realizes the code is ambiguous, and strict enforcement would conflict with constitutional rights. Therefore, churches should feel comfortable in making judgments about such activity with more latitude than the letter of the law seems to give.

The IRS always could change its policy and start enforcing the letter of the law against churches. If that happens, churches will doubtless ask the Supreme Court to hear many of these cases in order to define the rights and duties of churches and members.

Until then, it is prudent to "drive with care" but without paranoia. Pastors don't have to be tax lawyers to make practical daily judgments about complying with the law while still obeying Christ's command to be "salt" and "light." Like the driver on an interstate, pastors and churches can make some informed judgments about the level of risk with which they feel comfortable.

With these ideas in mind, consider the following samples and our estimate of the relative risk of violation of the tax code, using our analogy of miles per hour on the interstate.

Mike Whitehead is general counsel of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

Footnotes

¹"Christ's religion needs no prop of any kind from any worldly source, and to the degree that it is thus supported it is a millstone hanged about its neck." May 16, 1920.

²"Because some churches define their religious missions as including obligations to speak out on and attempt to influence public affairs, we hold to do so is part of their constitutionally protected religious liberty. The state may not deny or limit

that right. Neither may it require that a church give up its right to 'free exercise' of religion under the First Amendment to be eligible to gain a statutory privilege [e.g. tax exemption]." Dr. James Wood, Baptist Joint Committee, hearings before House Ways and Means Committee on H.R. 13500 (1976).

³Proponents of the restrictions say the issue is not whether churches may preach about laws or candidates, but whether such churches may retain their exemption from income tax on gift revenue, permit-

ting donors to deduct contributions. Otherwise, all political campaigns would use churches or other nonprofits to support their candidates. They also note a (c)(3) entity could create a (c)(4) entity, like a subsidiary or affiliate, to engage in lobbying and endorsement while retaining exemption but without the deductibility for the funds used by the (c)(4) affiliate.

⁴Some cases, commentators and the Treasury Department provide a guideline saying expenditures for lobbying of 5 per cent or less of the organization's budget

Just what can you do in an election year?

1. Pastor Doe tells his neighbor, "I am voting for Smith." Speed: 40 to 45 mph. Safe. The IRS and the Federal Election Commission laws apply to official actions of a church body or other exempt corporations, not to actions by persons in their individual capacity. Individual Christians, even when employed as pastors or staff members, may exercise their freedoms of speech and association to talk and work together as private citizens on matters of mutual concern, including issues and candidates.

2. Pastor Doe says from the pulpit, "The church does not officially endorse candidates, but I am voting for Smith, because I believe his position on X is biblical." Speed: 45 to 50 mph. Low risk. Lawyer Alan P. Dye recommends "a clergyman should not make a regular practice of endorsing candidates from the pulpit, lest his personal position be attributed to his church. . . ."⁶

3. The church adopts a resolution at a business meeting which the pastor reads Sunday morning: "Our church body endorses Smith. His position on X issue is consistent with what we believe is biblical, and we are giving \$1,000 to his campaign." Speed: 100 mph. Extreme risk. You have just blown the doors off Smokey's patrol car, and he is thinking, "No more Mr. Nice Guy." Call it careless or call it courageous, but you cannot call this preventive law.

4. The church sponsors a non-partisan voter registration drive and spends church funds to promote it, to pay registration workers and to mail registration forms. Speed: 53 to 55 mph. Low risk. Nonpartisan efforts are safe. Official church action attempting to register supporters of one candidate or party would be very risky.

5. Pastor Doe invites Smith, the incumbent congressman, and all other candidates to speak in the pulpit on Citizenship Sunday a month before the election. Speed: 53 to 55 mph. Low risk. Pastor Doe might want to make some disclaimer that "the church is not endorsing" candidates.⁷

6. Pastor Doe invites only Smith and has him read the Bible and lead the morning prayer. Speed: 60 to 65 mph. Moderate risk, even with a disclaimer.

7. Pastor Doe takes an offering Wednesday night to raise money to give to the election campaign of Smith. Speed: 75 to 80 mph. High risk.

8. Church funds are used to prepare, print and mail "voter scorecards," listing the leading candidates and their voting records on various restrictions on abortion. No editorial comment is made. Speed: 55 to 60 mph. Moderate risk. Some commentators feel safer if the guide covers more than one general subject. (See *Faucher* case, footnote eight, however.)

9. The voter scorecard bears the statement: "First Baptist is Pro-life." Speed: 60 mph. Moderate risk. IRS may criticize the voter guide as "biased" under IRC 501(c)(3). Recent action by the Supreme Court seems to indicate interest groups may advocate their position on an issue, such as "pro-life," on voter guides, so long as they do not expressly advocate voting for a certain candidate.⁸

10. A Sunday school teacher criticizes the mayor for supporting a homosexual rights ordinance. The mayor's opponent is opposed to "gay rights." Speed: 50 mph. Low risk. Statements by individual lay Sunday school teachers are not normally considered "official" actions or positions of the body.

Churches may want to evaluate their situations and develop a policy about what actions church members are comfortable with in this area. Some churches will choose to go slowly.

Others will be comfortable "driving a little faster." Churches may want to get the advice of a private attorney who knows all the facts of the proposed actions and current tax law to help draw the policy more precisely. In addition to considering what the law permits, pastors will want to be sensitive to the attitudes of church members about avoiding any appearance of partisan political activity. Knowing the truth about these laws should set churches free from the gag reflex caused by tax-exemption paranoia.

are not substantial. Lynn Buzzard, *Minister's Legal Desk Reference*, Chapter IV-3: Page 16, FN 83. Excellent pamphlet is available by writing Lynn Buzzard, P.O. Box 158, Buies Creek, NC 27506.

⁵Swaggart Ministries issued a press release December 17, 1991, stating the IRS had complained in an audit because the pastor had endorsed Pat Robertson for president, from the pulpit and in a church magazine prior to the 1988 election campaign. JSM announced it had compromised the audit complaint by agreeing not

to do it again. Some commentators said this was the first case in which the IRS had enforced the political activity rules against a church. But the JSM press release is not binding legal precedent. This was a compromise settlement, not a decision by the IRS or by a court that Swaggart's comments violated 501(c)(3).

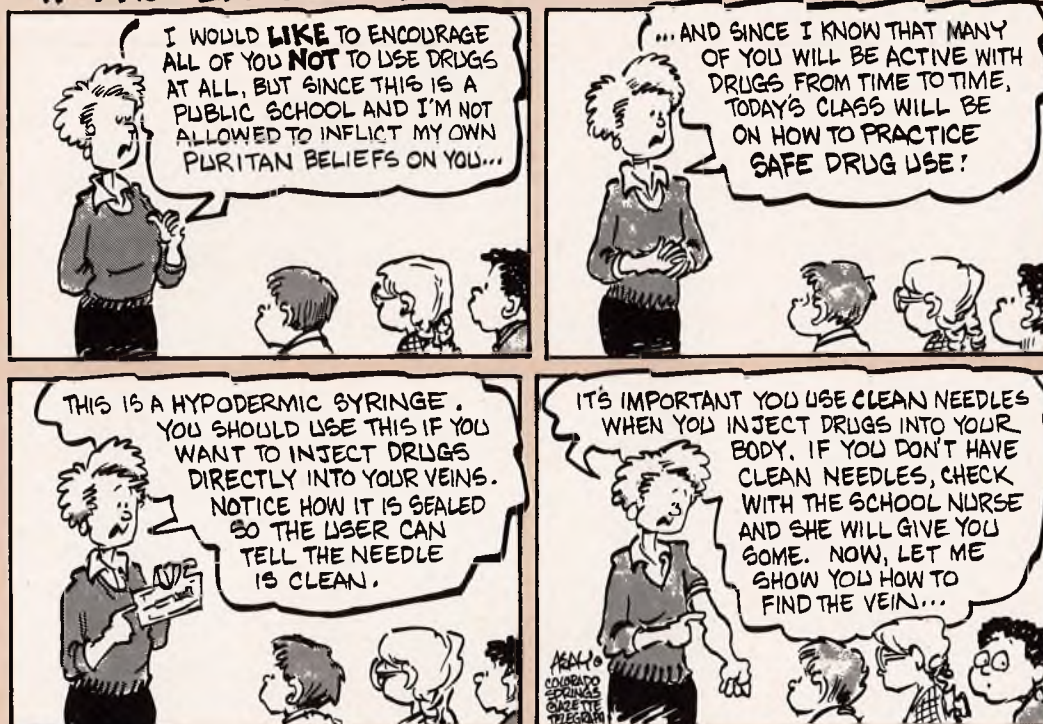
⁶"Political Activity by Clergymen," memorandum by Alan P. Dye, esquire, Washington, D.C., in *Winning the New Civil War*, by Robert Dugan.

⁷Rev. Rule. 74-574, involving appear-

ances by candidates on TV stations operated by religious groups; Rev. Rule. 66-256, 1966-2 C.B. 210.

⁸*Faucher v. Federal Election Commission*, 743 F. Supp. 64 (1991). See 2 U.S.C. § 441 (b); Rev. Rule. 78-248 and 80-282. In *Faucher*, the Supreme Court declined to review a lower court ruling in favor of a pro-life scorecard under Federal Election Commission statute. Tax exemption was not at issue here, but a similar rule may be applied by courts, permitting "issue advocacy," even single issues.

IF DRUG EDUCATION WERE TAUGHT LIKE SEX EDUCATION



Youth encouraged to support 'See You at the Pole'

The 1992 "See You at the Pole," a nationwide youth prayer rally at school flag poles, is Sept. 16.

Last year, 180,000 youth participated in the first national rally, which is held before school starts and includes prayer for youth issues, said Dean Finley, Home Mission Board youth evangelism specialist.

"See You at the Pole" is a student movement to carry out the biblical mandate, based on Joel 2, to do something about crisis in a culture, Finley said.

The current crisis, Finley said, includes alcohol and drug abuse, misuse of sexuality, suicide and crime.

"See You at the Pole" is not a

demonstration, a protest or a patriotic rally, Finley said. It is a united declaration of a Christian's dependence on God as a solution to the crisis facing teenagers, he said.

Also, youth are asked to wear T-shirts with a Christian message on each of the five Wednesdays in September.



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