

Light

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMISSION OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

JANUARY-FEBRUARY, 1995

Rep. Watts: Still breaking barriers

By Dave Parker

He's young, in a Congress previously dominated by older men. He's black, from a state that had never before elected a black man to Congress. And he's Republican, in a district that is 70 percent Democratic.

Those are only incidental accomplishments to former University of Oklahoma quarterback J.C. Watts, who gives credit to God for all he has done.

Watts, who has served as minister of youth at Sunnyside Baptist Church, a Southern Baptist congregation in Del City, Okla., since 1987, said it seems unreal to him that he could be the first black Republican elected to Congress from the South, even though in 1990 he was the first black elected to a statewide office in Oklahoma, when he became a Corporation Commissioner.

"It is hard for me to imagine, at 37 years of age, to be the first in anything," Watts said. "I never did

it to be first, to be a role model or anything. I just hoped that I could do something to add to the debate."

Watts' road to politics has taken a circuitous route. Reared in Eufaula, a town of 2,600 in eastern Oklahoma, he was a high school football star and attended the University of Oklahoma. After leading OU to successive Big Eight and Orange Bowl championships in 1980 and 1981—chosen Orange Bowl player of the game both

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Multicultural Morass

By C. Ben Mitchell

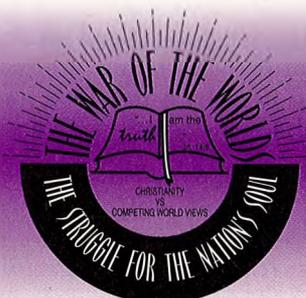
The vision of America as the great melting pot has given way to the vision of America as a great mosaic. Like a great pot of molten metal, the United States was viewed by turn-of-the-century immigrants as a place where persons from every nation might come to be forged together as alloy under the banner of inalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. This is not to say they had to surrender their ethnic identity. But immigrants shared, to greater or lesser degrees, in the freedom and opportunity afforded to them in American law and morality. Today,

Multiculturalism fragments society into contending and mutually exclusive groups and sub-groups. "Society is splintering into hundreds of subcultures and designer cults, each with its own language, code and lifestyle."

however, the U.S. is better characterized as a great mosaic—a nation of individuals who identify with their own race, gender and ethnicity more than with their common allegiance to the ideals of the American democratic experiment.

As University of Virginia sociologist James Davison Hunter reminds us, "Pluralism or diversity has been a fact of American life for quite a long time" (*Before the Shooting Begins: Searching for Democracy in America's Culture War*, p. 192). But, more recently, a transformation has taken place. Cultural pluralism as a description

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War of the Worlds: World Views and the Struggle for the Nation's Soul

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Richard D. Land, Executive Director



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A Baptist's View of Prayer in Schools*

By Richard D. Land

Once again, the issue of student prayer in public schools has provided the flash point for a high profile public debate on the First Amendment to the Constitution and how it impacts religious expression in society.

Where do Southern Baptists stand? I believe the majority of Southern Baptists are *against* the government sponsorship of religion which prevailed in our nation's schools prior to the 1962 and 1963 Supreme Court decisions. They also *oppose* government suppression of religious expression and government censorship of religion which have far too often been the practice, if not the precept, in our nation's public schools between 1963 and 1994. Most Southern Baptists *support* state and school accommodation of students' religious convictions that they bring with them from home, church, mosque, synagogue and temple. They neither support a return to the past nor a continuation of the intolerable and intolerant present situation, but instead *advocate* the new, yet untried way of government accommodation of students' "free exercise" rights without government violation of the "establishment" clause.

I believe most Southern Baptists (cf. the 1982 and 1993 Southern Baptist Convention resolutions on "prayer" and "religious expression in public schools") have concluded that the safest and surest way to guarantee such nonsponsoring government accommodation of students' free religious expression rights is to pass the right kind of constitutional amendment. Such an amendment would prohibit the government from sponsoring religion as was done prior to 1963, but would also forbid the government and the court system from censoring or segregating voluntary student religious expression from the public school milieu.

Why a constitutional amendment? A reporter's recent question furnishes the answer: "Won't any attempted solution passed by Congress just end up back in the courts?" I told him he had just raised the best argument for a constitutional, rather than a legislative, remedy. It is many times more difficult to challenge the Constitution, as amended, in the courts than it is to challenge a mere law. The prayer amendment becomes part of the Constitution, which, by definition, makes it "constitutional." Most Southern Baptists who now embrace the right kind of constitutional prayer amendment have done so because they have lost confidence in the nation's court system as being able or willing to protect students' free exercise rights without such an amendment.

When one surveys this issue's dismal history over the past three decades, it is not difficult to see why large numbers of people no longer trust the courts. As early as 1963 some of the Supreme Court justices expressed concern that the state neutrality which they felt was necessary in the nation's public schools was subject to misinterpretation and abuse. Concerning the 1963 *Schempp* decision which ruled officially sponsored Bible readings as unconstitutional, Justice Arthur Goldberg warned, "Untutored devotion to the concept of neutrality can lead to results which partake not simply of that noninterference and noninvolvement with the religious which the Constitution commands, but of a brooding and pervasive devotion to the secular and a passive, or even active, hostility to the religious. Such results are not only not compelled by the Constitution, but it seems to me, are prohibited by it." Justice Potter Stewart, dissenting from both the 1962 and 1963 decisions, declared that what the Court had accomplished in its decision was not "the realization of state neutrality, but rather an establishment of a religion of secularism."

Unfortunately, Goldberg's concerns and Stewart's pessimism have

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Gambling tops discussion by state CLC workers

By Tom Strode

Representatives from nine Southern Baptist state conventions shared their victories, disappointments and challenges at a recent two-day meeting with Christian Life Commission staff members, and one issue plagued the majority of them: Gambling.

From Florida to South Carolina to Mississippi to Arkansas to Missouri, the proponents of gambling are pushing their costly form of entertainment. Sometimes Southern Baptists help defeat such efforts to legalize gambling, and sometimes they help provide victory, said moral concerns/religious liberty workers from the state conventions.

In Florida, the Baptist state convention distributed 500,000 pieces opposing casino gambling in a successful attempt to stop its legalization on the November ballot.

In Missouri, opponents thwarted an effort to approve slot machines in the spring, only to have Gov. Mel Carnahan, a Southern Baptist church member, revive the issue. Voters approved slot machines in the November election. The only explanation is "some Baptists voted for it," said Keith Markham of the Missouri Baptist Convention.

South Carolina Baptists worked against video poker payoffs in a county-by-county vote, but they were approved in 34 of 46 counties.

In Arkansas, the Christian Civic Foundation, which is funded largely by the Baptist state convention, challenged two casino gambling amendments in court, and the state supreme court struck both from the November ballot for having misleading titles.

In Mississippi, the Christian Action Commission of the state convention helped prevent an attempt to legalize land-based casino gambling from leaving a committee in the state legislature. The state, however, continues to suffer the

effects of more than two years of legalized casinos on the Mississippi River and Gulf of Mexico.

They see a "number of very serious problems as a result of casino gambling," including crime, violence and family crises, said Elizabeth Holmes, the Christian Action Commission's consultant for family and women's issues. "The state is being washed downstream, literally and figuratively."

Yet Mississippi's experience has enabled the CAC, led by director Paul Jones, to assist Baptist efforts in other states. Larry Page of the Christian Civic Foundation expressed gratitude to the Mississippi staff for its help in stopping the casino gambling initiative in Arkansas.

In fact, the annual meeting, which has been held the week after Thanksgiving at Nashville in recent years, provides a forum for the participants to learn from one another. The state workers and Christian Life Commission staff dialogue on a variety of issues, including religious liberty, the sanctity of human life, race relations, hunger, the environment, and alcohol and other drug abuse.

While some state conventions have multimember staffs dealing

with these issues, others have only one full-time program staff member and still others have a person who oversees the area as only a minor part of his responsibilities.

During the year, state convention workers sometimes seek assistance not only from representatives in other states but from the CLC. Speakers, as well as resources, are requested from the CLC. Joyce Lightfoot of the South Carolina convention reported CLC Executive Director Richard Land and staff member Lamar Cooper spoke in one of the counties which defeated video poker. Land also spoke at a church-state conference in Alabama at his invitation, said Joe Bob Mizzell, director of Christian Life and Public Affairs for the Alabama convention.

In addition to Holmes, Jones, Lightfoot, Markham, Mizzell, Page and the CLC program staff, other state workers who participated were Robert Mounts, new director of the Department of Family Life and Moral Concerns for the Florida Baptist Convention; Ferrell Foster, associate editor of the *Illinois Baptist*; Larry Creamer, a pastor and CLC consultant for the Minnesota-Wisconsin Convention; and Joe Haag, associate director of the Texas Christian Life Commission.



From left to right, Larry Page, Joe Bob Mizzell and Beth Holmes share a reflective moment at the state ethics workers meeting.

Rep. Watts: Still breaking barriers

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times—he played football in the Canadian Football League for five years, at Ottawa and Toronto.

After the 1986 season, he was offered a “six-figure contract,” he said, but by that time he felt God leading him in a different direction. Three weeks after deciding to retire from football, Sunnyside pastor John Lucas called to offer him the youth minister position.

“I thought, ‘No, Lord, not youth work,’” Watts recalled. But he accepted and began “an eight-year love affair” with the church. Lucas died in 1990 and was succeeded by Jerry Don Abernathy.

In 1989, Watts ventured into politics when he decided to run for the post held by Democrat Jim Townsend on the Corporation Commission, Oklahoma’s utility regulatory authority.

Watts, who had just changed from Democrat to Republican, was given little hope of winning a seat on the three-person commission, due to his lack of political experience, his party affiliation, the image of the “dumb jock” and the fact no black had ever even been nominated for a statewide office.

“I had done some oil and gas work, and felt that I could do the job, so I threw my hat in the ring,” Watts said.

He ended up winning the post by nine percentage points in a three-man race.

During the 1992 presidential campaign, Watts spoke at the Republican National Convention for President George Bush. He decided to run for Congress in 1994, and won a hard-fought battle.

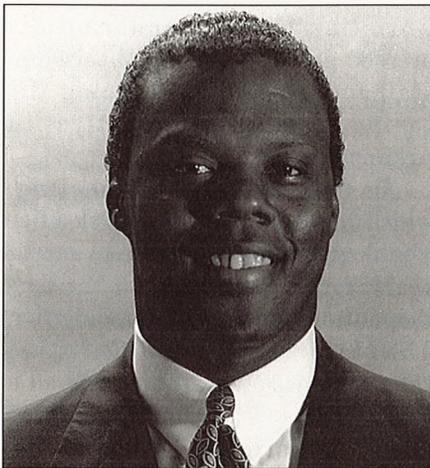
In spite of negative publicity resulting from an investigation of the Corporation Commission, Watts said the church has remained supportive. “It was a very humbling experience,” Watts said. “The church, the youth and Jerry Don have never seen me as a Corporation Commissioner, as a football player at OU or as a Congressman; they have seen me as a brother in

Christ who is their youth minister. I would hate to go through all this and not have a loving church family.”

The hardest part about moving to Washington will be leaving his church family, he said.

When he became a Republican in 1988, Watts said he did so because he felt the Democratic Party no longer represented his views on the economy and on social issues such as abortion and homosexuality.

“My principles and values were instilled in me by J.C. ‘Buddy’ Watts Sr. and Helen Watts when I was



J.C. Watts

growing up in Eufaula,” he said. “I didn’t change my values. I think the Democratic leadership, over the past 20 years, has left my values.”

Watts said he believes values transcend party lines, especially in Oklahoma, which is strongly conservative but overwhelmingly Democratic. “You get out in the state of Oklahoma and you get beyond labels,” he said. “Most people have the same values, whether they are Democratic or Republican.”

Watts equally rejects the idea that because he has changed parties he has left the black community behind, a community that is largely Democratic. “I don’t want to be a black leader; I don’t want to be a white leader; I don’t want to be an Hispanic leader; I want to be a leader, period,” he said. “I don’t buy into that idea that because I am black I should be Democratic. God gave me

a mind to think and choose for myself. Hopefully, I would base my decisions on merit, not on the color of my skin.”

Causing some concerns in the black community are plans to reform government assistance programs. Watts said they need to be reformed.

“Reform is too gentle a word,” he said. “For the last 30 years we’ve measured our compassion by how many people we have on food stamps and public housing. We should measure our compassion by how few people we have on food stamps and public housing. We should teach men how to fish instead of giving them fish. We need to teach people to use their God-given abilities.”

The only way to get ahead, he said, is through savings and investment, yet assistance programs penalize people for saving and investment. “We need to encourage families instead of discourage them,” he said.

“And we have a real opportunity to see prayer in our public schools. I think our teachers and schools need to operate without the fear of someone taking them to the Supreme Court,” he said.

Some observers are saying Republicans have two years to make changes or they will be turned out of office like Democrats were in 1994. Watts said that does not worry him.

“The eyes of the nation are going to be upon us for the next two years,” he said. “I think we have a chance to make some big changes. I think the American people are wanting change.”

If changes are not made, and another power shift occurs, Watts said, “God is going to grow me wherever he plants me. I’ll be happy wherever I am planted.”

Watts and his wife Frankie have five children: Kesha, 18; Jerrell, 15; Jennifer, 10; Julia, 5; and J.C. III “Trey,” 3.

Dave Parker is assistant editor of the Oklahoma Baptist Messenger. This article appeared first in Baptist Press.

Multicultural Morass

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of American life has mutated into an ideology now known as multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism fragments society into contending and mutually exclusive groups and subgroups. "Society," as one cultural commentator puts it, "is splintering into hundreds of subcultures and designer cults, each with its own language, code and lifestyle." Gene Edward Veith, Jr., Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences at Concordia University-Wisconsin, calls this phenomenon "The New Tribalism" in his book *Postmodern Times: A Christian Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture* (Crossway, 1994). The cement of the American mosaic is crumbling, and our culture is becoming increasingly segregated and dissonant. Multiculturalism as an ideology disintegrates unity.

Multiculturalism in ethics results in relativism. Who are we, say relativists, to say that one subculture is right and another is wrong? Right and wrong, according to multiculturalists, are not universal and absolute, but vary from culture to culture and person to person. Multiculturalism in education results in students identifying with their own race, class, gender or ethnic group instead of with a larger universal human intellectual culture. Multiculturalism in politics has resulted in a litany of -isms: ableism, ageism, classism, lookism, and sexism, for instance. All of these -isms are supposedly oppressive tools of the dominant culture, namely, Western Anglo-European Protestant male culture. The University of Pennsylvania tells students that "if you are perceived to be racist, sexist, heterosexist, ethnocentric, biased against those with religions different from yours, or intolerant of disabilities, you must be willing to examine and change your behavior" (cf. Richard Bernstein, *Dictatorship of Virtue: Multiculturalism and the Battle for America's Future*).

How should Christians respond to multiculturalism? As with other

cultural movements, we may embrace it in part and must repudiate it in part. That is, Christians can agree that both the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world are made up of people of every nation, kindred, tongue and tribe. We must eschew the sins of racism, sexism, ageism, etc., at every level. We can celebrate ethnic and cultural diversity and rejoice in the wonderful multi-giftedness of the body of Christ.

While we recognize multiculturalism as a description of our pluralistic society, we must reject multiculturalism as an ideology. For instance, we must reject the relativism inherent in the multiculturalist ideal. Just because some cultures practice female ritual circumcision doesn't mean such genital mutilation is morally proper. Even if some Eskimos abandon their frail elderly on ice floes, that does not mean it is right or noble to do so. Though some cultures have a highly ritualized religion complete with a notion of the afterlife, we still have an obligation under God, and to them, to take the gospel of the grace of God in Christ to every village, hamlet, province and township.

Furthermore, political multiculturalism leads to further segregation—America divided against itself—and, may finally lead to a new civil war. The *united states* can only stand so much diversity before they become the *divided states*.

We must reject the new tribalism and, as George Will has put it, its "campaign to lower America's moral status" (*Newsweek*, November 14, 1994). We must regain a unifying vision for American society and a core morality which will provide enough adhesion to put Humpty Dumpty back together again. This is not an argument for a Christian nation nor a "tyranny of one vision over others" (Ian Markham, *Plurality and Christian Ethics*, Cambridge, 1994). There must be room in America for engagement, argument, and persuasion—the environment in which the gospel always flourishes. At the same

time, we must not tolerate the dictatorship of multiculturalism and the cultural relativism it entails.

After all, relativism is ultimately self-refuting. If there are no absolute truths, no universal moral standards, then even multiculturalism cannot be true or universal.

Finally, Christians must remind one another that we do not define ourselves by our own race, gender, or ethnicity. Rather, we are defined by our union with Christ and our participation in the Kingdom of God. As the Jewish apostle to the Gentiles has said: "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both [Jew and Gentiles] one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us" (Eph. 2:13-14). Christians do not identify themselves by their race, but by His grace. In Christ Jesus "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female . . ." (Gal 3:28). "Those who belong to the community of baptized believers, those who have been dipped and dyed in the color of Christ, have put off their former selves and now stand in a fundamentally different relationship to the world than formerly obtained," says Timothy George, Dean of Beeson Divinity School (*Galatians*, Broadman and Holman, pp. 283-4).

The morass of multiculturalism is a giant step backwards for Christians. As George has observed, "Nationality and ethnicity have been corrupted by pride, material blessings by greed, and sexuality by lust. This has led to the chaotic pattern of exploitation and self-destruction that marks the human story from the Tower of Babel to the streets of Sarajevo and Soweto" (p. 285). In contrast to the world, we are a people with one Lord, one faith, and one baptism.

C. Ben Mitchell is a consultant for biomedical and life issues for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

'And the truth shall make you free'

(John 8:32)

By Louis A. Moore

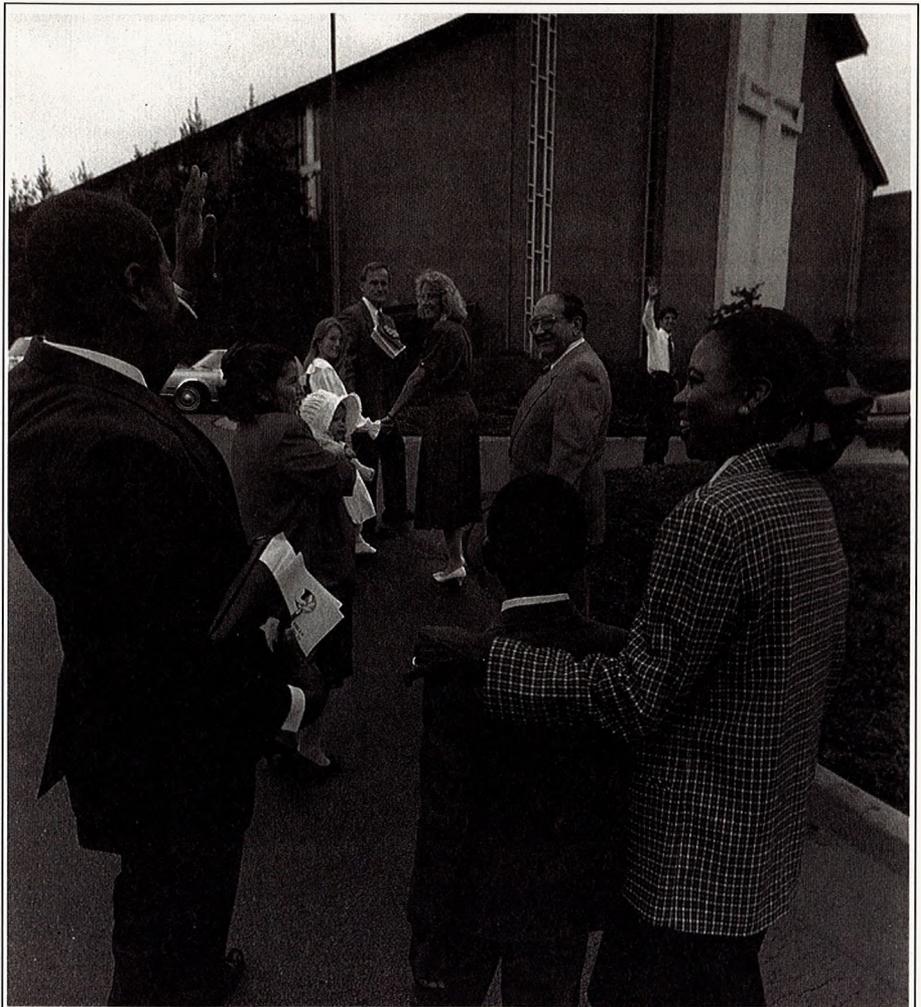
Racial prejudice cuts like a two-edged sword. It hurts both those who are victimized by it as well as those who practice it.

Our focus usually is on the victims of racism. These are the people who find themselves despised or ostracized for no other reason than the color of their skin or their ethnic origin. Millions of people worldwide still experience such prejudice. The ethnic war in the former Yugoslavia and the tribal slaughter in Rwanda are examples today.

Fortunately, in other places the situation is improving. At least no one in America today is forced to use separate rest rooms or water fountains because of the color of their skin or place of birth! The death knell is sounding for apartheid in South Africa. Still, more can be done—and certainly needs to be done—to eliminate the physical acts of discrimination in the United States and elsewhere.

For all the evil racial prejudice produces for the victim, the person who harbors prejudice in his or her heart may suffer a worse fate. The person who hates in his heart is in bondage even more than the slave who is in physical chains. And sadly, often the persons bearing the prejudice don't even realize what their attitudes and behavior are doing to their lives. Racial prejudice deprives one of the joy of getting to know all of God's people and the privilege of getting to share God's Word with every person one encounters in life, either directly or indirectly.

Jesus talked about such spiritual bondage when He said in John 8:31-32, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." He was addressing a group of Jews who "believed in Him." He told them that if they would con-



**Observe Race Relations Sunday
February 12, 1995**

tinue to abide in Him, they would know the truth.

Their response was illustrative of their lack of understanding.

The Bible records their arrogant response: "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man."

Jesus replied, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." (8:35)

The eyes of these Jews were blind to their sins.

Today, millions in our world are blind to their sins of racial and ethnic prejudice and its associated hatred and arrogance.

Those who are oppressed and those who oppress are both in need of our prayers and of our witness.

We who know the truth that Jesus Christ died to save each and every person who believes in Him must not allow the sin of racial and ethnic prejudice to continue to be a stumbling block to our witness to a sin-sick world that so desperately needs to hear the Good News of salvation.

Louis A. Moore is associate vice president for communications and director of news and information for the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

By Lamar Cooper

Alcohol, a legal drug in many communities, often is not considered to be in the same category as hard drugs. But alcohol is a mind-altering, physically damaging drug whose effects are just as destructive as illegal drugs.

In spite of this fact, the use of beverage alcohol has become increasingly more accepted. Unfortunately, some believers today mistakenly think the Bible condones, or at least does not prohibit, the use of beverage alcohol.

The Bible does not take a passive attitude toward the use of alcoholic beverages. Among those passages that warn against the use of alcohol, Proverbs 23:29-35 gives an extensive list of some of the negative side effects of alcohol use. The writer warns in verses 31 and 32 of the physical, psychological and spiritual consequences of the use of alcohol as a beverage.

But what could be so bad about a drink that looks so good? As with many things in life, looks often are deceptive. One should not always trust looks and taste as a guide for what is good. Alcohol is advertised as a "looks good, tastes good product." The phrase, "moveth itself aright" (v. 31) literally means "it goes down right" or as one translation puts it, "glides down smoothly." But what looks good and tastes good is not always good for you.

There are 15.3 million Americans who use or abuse alcohol. Annually, there are 108,000 deaths attributed to alcohol and more than \$98 billion in lost work time. Other drug use accounts for another \$70 billion in crime, lost work time and other losses.

Proverbs warns that the deadly nature of alcohol and other drugs is like the bite of a poisonous serpent. The discomfoting bite only begins to portend the ominous consequences which will include severe physical trauma, perhaps even death (see vv. 29-35).

'Biteth like a serpent'

(Proverbs 23:31-32)



**Observe Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Sunday
March 19, 1995**

The analogy also has behind it the deception of the woman by the serpent in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:1-3). Through the serpent's lies about God's care for the human family, the "sting" of sin and death was introduced (1 Cor 15:56). Adam and Eve were deceived by the serpent to believe the consequences of disobedience in God's warning (Gen 3:3) would not happen to them. But they did!

Every believer should know that the Bible warns about the use of alcohol as a beverage. The idea that "it won't happen to me" or "I won't be affected" is another deception. The serpent's sting may be

felt but ignored when you take that first drink or first use drugs. But like the serpent's venom the end result is disastrous. This warning suggests that there is wisdom in practicing abstinence from the use of alcohol and other mind-altering drugs. The Bible clearly predicts the final outcome, "At the last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder" (v. 32). It can happen to you!

Lamar Cooper is director of denominational relations, seminars and conferences for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

By Richard D. Land

Christians are under a *prima facie* (conditional) obligation to obey civil authorities. Jesus said we are to "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Matt. 22:21). Paul enjoined every person to "be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. 13:1). The Apostle Peter calls us to "Submit [our]selves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake . . ." (1 Peter 2:13). At the same time, under the most extreme circumstances, we must follow the testimony and example of the early disciples who, when faced with a civil injunction to disobey God said, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). The blood of the martyrs is abundant testimony to the appropriate use of civil disobedience.

It is morally acceptable (and probably obligatory at some point) for God's people to disobey civil government when that government

It is morally acceptable (and probably obligatory at some point) for God's people to disobey civil government when that government mandates disobedience to God and preempts opportunities to protest.

mandates disobedience to God and preempts opportunities to protest. Furthermore, *in extremis*, Christians may rightfully engage in revolution and even armed violence if necessary. Under what conditions might armed violence be considered necessary?

First, the existing government must have degenerated into illegitimacy. Illegitimacy of government includes several facets. Totalitarian abuse of basic human rights would

Violence against one's government is sometimes justified



Richard D. Land

be one mark of an illegitimate government. When government abuses its power, rewarding evil and punishing good, it loses legitimacy. Further, to be illegitimate, government must preclude or forbid opportunities for redress of grievance. When tyrannical regimes punish peaceful protesters and oppress those who call for change, government forfeits its legitimacy. When government legislatively forecloses and excludes the possibility of peaceful reform, it ceases to be authentic government.

Second, every alternative must be exhausted before revolution is justified. Individuals must (1) try peaceful protest (including both legal and illegal avenues of nonviolent protest), (2) attempt to flee unjust government, and (3) be compelled to defend themselves, by force, if necessary. Self-defense is the only appropriate use of force by an individual. Individuals do not have the right to authorize violence or revolution.

Third, in order for revolution to be justifiable there must be a societal consensus that revolution is required. Only a new governmental authority could authorize the use of violence against the existing state. Thus, when people conclude that all other alternatives have been

exhausted or foreclosed, then they must *first* constitute a new governmental authority which would then possess the proper authority to legitimize armed insurrection. The first effort of revolution must be to establish legitimate government; for the use of the sword, other than in self-defense, belongs only to government (Rom. 13). God has not ordained anarchy, but orderly government.

Fourth, the goal of such a newly constituted governmental authority must be to replace the delegitimized government with a government which would seek justice and freedom. Finally, "Just War" criteria must be met in order for armed revolution to be appropriate: (1) its cause must be righteous, (2) its means must be controlled, (3) its outcome must be predictable, (4) disobedience must be public, not clandestine, and (5) revolutionaries must be willing to accept the penalty for civil disobedience. That our spiritual forebears embraced the notion of just war is clear from the *Second London (Baptist) Confession* of 1689, where the framers judge that magistrates may "wage war upon just and necessary occasions" (Chap. XXIV, Section 3). This confession formed the substance of the first Baptist confession in America, *The Philadelphia Confession of Faith* (1742).

One historical example of justified armed violence was the American Revolution. Our forebears acknowledged that revolution was appropriate only as a result of "a history of repeated injuries and usurpations . . ." and "the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these States" (*Declaration of Independence*, July 4, 1776). Following the litany of abuses of the British monarchy against the colonists, the framers of the declaration point out that "In every stage of these oppressions we have petitioned for redress

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By Norman Geisler

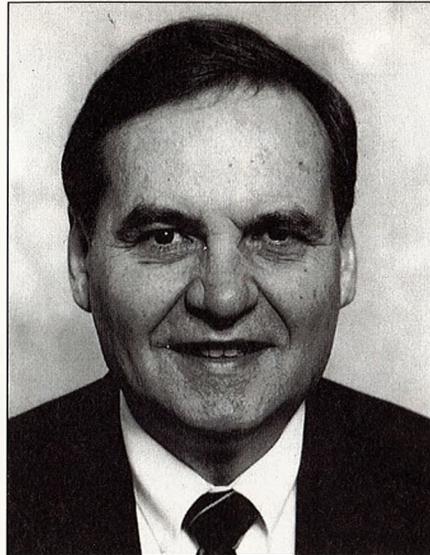
Biblical Reason for Rejecting Violence Against One's Government—Although the human authority of noted thinkers, including John Calvin, John Locke and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, can be cited in favor of violence against one's government, the only real question for a Baptist is whether there is any *divine* authority in the Bible for such activity. For many reasons the answer appears to be negative.

The Sword Was Given to the Government Not to the Citizens—According to Scripture, the sword was given to the government to use on the governed, not the reverse (Gen. 9:6). Paul reminded the Roman Christians that the Emperor is "God's servant" and "does not bear the sword for nothing" (Rom. 13:4). Never does the Bible even hint that God gave the sword to citizens to use on their government, even an unjust one. Indeed, Paul himself submitted to the unjust use of the Roman sword in his own life (2 Tim. 4:6).

While justification for violence against government can be found in The Declaration of Independence, it cannot be found in the Bible. And...it is only the latter, not the former, that is inspired.

Jesus Set Our Example by Rejecting the Use of the Sword—Certainly the greatest injustice ever done was the crucifixion of Jesus. Yet Jesus recognized Pilate's authority to take his life, saying, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above" (John 19:10-11). What is more, Jesus rebuked Peter's use of the sword on unjust authority, declaring that "all who draw the sword will die by the sword" (Matt. 26:52).

Violence against one's government is never justified



Norman Geisler

The Command to Obey Government Is Not Conditioned on It Being Just—The New Testament commands believers not only to "submit" to "authorities that exist" (i.e., *de facto* governments) but to "obey" them (Titus 3:1), even if they are not considered legitimate (*de jure*) governments. For "there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist [not merely the ones we believe ought to exist] have been established by God" (Rom. 13:1). The Bible makes no exception for unjust or oppressive governments. Indeed, when Paul wrote this, one of the most wicked rulers who ever lived (Nero) sat on Rome's throne.

If Any Revolution Were Ever Justified, It Would Have Been Israel's—The conditions for a so-called just revolution were never more ripe than for Israel under Egypt. Yet they used no violent actions against Pharaoh but simply pleaded with him and waited for God to deliver them. Indeed, the earlier use of violence to deliver Israel was condemned by God (Ex. 2:11f.), Moses being banished to the desert for 40 years. But if violent activity against an oppressive regime that took the lives of innocent children

(Ex. 1:16f.) was not divinely approved, then obviously no such violence would be justified.

The Bible Condemns Revolutionary Activity—Solomon exhorted us not even to associate with revolutionaries: "Fear the Lord and the king, my son, and do not join with the rebellious. . ." (Prov. 24:21, NIV). The context here is clear; those who engage in rebellious activity against the God-ordained authority of government are condemned. For God will send "sudden destruction upon them" (v. 22). Indeed other than the special cases of divine intervention to save the theocratic bloodline, every violent act against one's government in the Bible was condemned by God, including the infamous rebellions of Absalom (2 Sam. 15) and Jeroboam (1 Kings 12).

Even in Cases of Justified Civil Disobedience, Violence Is Wrong—There are, to be sure, many cases of justified civil disobedience against oppressive laws (Ex. 1, 12; Dan. 3, 6; 1 Kings 18; Acts 4-5; Rev. 13). Yet when Daniel disobeyed he submitted to the consequences of the lion's den. The three Hebrew children disobeyed the command to worship an idol but went willingly into the fiery furnace. Peter disobeyed the command not to preach but took prison as punishment. The Scriptures clearly teach that one should disobey his government when it *commands* them to sin (though not when it merely *permits* others to sin). When commanded to do evil we must heed the words of Peter: "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God" (Acts 4:19). But nowhere does the Bible even suggest that this disobedience should be violent. Rather, it should be *passive*, not *active*. That is, we should *refuse* to obey oppressive commands but not *rebel* against the

(Continued on Page 10)

A Baptist's View of Prayer in Schools

(Continued from Page 2)

proved to be prophetic. With breathtaking rapidity, subsequent judicial decisions, coupled with widespread administrative misinterpretation by public school officials, produced the "brooding and pervasive devotion to the secular and...hostility to the religious" which Goldberg had warned against. The past three decades have produced an aggressive secularizing neutrality which has been hostile to, and has discriminated against, the religious free exercise of students.

Most Americans agree that this secularizing of American society has gone too far. Three years ago, in a cover story entitled "One Nation Under God: Has the separation of Church and state gone too far?" *Time* magazine concluded "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" (*Time*, Dec. 9, 1991). Multitudes of Americans, including many Southern Baptists, heartily agree.

We should insist on a prayer amendment which accommodates students' free exercise of religious expression while restraining the government from approving or sponsoring one religious perspective over another. As we expel the tyranny of the minority which stifled students' religious free exercise in our public schools, let us not replace it with a tyranny of the majority which would violate the students' First Amendment protections against an establishment of religion. How do we accomplish this? I believe we do it by accommodating *all* students' free exercise of

their religious beliefs, while insisting on *no* official sponsorship or favoritism of *any* particular religious perspective.

A carefully crafted prayer amendment would accomplish these goals and would allow us to generalize from the particular example of the public schools to the society at large. The best, fairest, most balanced understanding and application of the First Amendment's religion clauses is to:

1. Separate them into the "establishment" clause and the "free exercise" clause.

2. Insist that government not honor one religion or no religion over other religions.

3. Demand that government understand that the First Amendment was intended to protect freedom *for* religion, not freedom *from* religion.

4. Require that government adopt an attitude of benevolent, accommodating neutrality toward the "free exercise" religion rights of its citizens, both student and non-

(Continued on Page 15)

Point

Violence against one's government is sometimes justified

(Continued from Page 8)

in the most humble terms," only to be "answered by repeated injury." Under such oppression, John Hancock and representatives from the 13 colonies claim "it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security."

Did circumstances warrant the use of violence against the state in our nation's birth? I believe all the criteria were met. Do present circumstances in America warrant the use of violence against the state? Absolutely not. Thanks be to God, we still enjoy civil and religious liberty and opportunity for redress of

grievance. Furthermore, every citizen in America still maintains, and ought to exercise, the right to vote for the persons and the laws under which they must dwell.

Richard D. Land is executive director-treasurer of the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Counterpoint

Violence against one's government is never justified

(Continued from Page 9)

government that commands them. We can *flee* oppression but should not *fight* the oppressor (Ex. 5-12).

While justification for violence against government can be found in *The Declaration of Independence*, it cannot be found in the Bible. And we must be reminded that it is only the latter, not the former, that is

inspired. As Americans, we celebrate the "baby" of freedom that was born, not the "rape" (violence) by which it was conceived.

If America had been more patient we could have gotten our freedom a little later without revolution, just as our sister colony to the north did. So we need not take things into our own hands; govern-

ments are in good hands—the hands of God. As for evil governments, God gave them their authority, and He will judge them for misusing it (Isa. 10:1): "Vengeance is God's [not ours]; He will repay."

Norman Geisler is dean of Southern Evangelical Seminary in Charlotte, NC.

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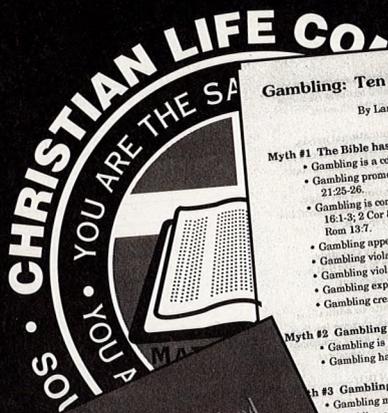
Gambling...

The Hidden Realities

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Students Speak On Alcohol & Tobacco



Gambling: Ten Myths Vs. Real Truth

By Lamar E. Cooper, Sr

- Myth #1** The Bible has nothing to say against gambling.
- Gambling is a covetous form of stealing, Ex. 20:15, 17.
 - Gambling promotes violence, Prov. 1:16-19; 16:27; 21:25-26.
 - Gambling is contrary to biblical stewardship, 1 Cor 16:1-3; 2 Cor 8:1-9:7; Jn 13:29; Eph 4:28; Mt 22:21; Rom 13:7.
 - Gambling appeals to "fate," "chance," Isa 65:11 (NIV).
 - Gambling violates biblical work ethic, 2 Thess 3:10-12.
 - Gambling violates law of love, Mt 22:34-40.
 - Gambling exploits poor; Am 5:6-7, 10-15.
 - Gambling creates a stumbling block, Rom 14:21.
- Myth #2** Gambling is harmless family entertainment.
- Gambling is a vice, like alcohol, drugs, prostitution.
 - Gambling has no place for a believer, 1 Cor 6:19.
- Myth #3** Gambling a sound method to raise revenue.
- Gambling money used as revenue, exploits citizens.
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- Gambling is a stable source of new revenue.
- Gambling revenues decline after initial euphoria.
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	New Pamphlet: A Southern Baptist and Roman Catholic Perspective: Racism	.10	
	Tract: Racism and the Evangelical Church by Billy Graham	.10	
	Pamphlet: The Bible Speaks on Race	.17	
	Pamphlet: Issues and Answers: Race Relations	.17	
	Pamphlet: Issues and Answers: Human Rights	.17	
	Pamphlet: Help for Families: Marriage Across Barriers of Religion, Race, Culture	.17	
	Pamphlet: Critical Issues: Refugees	.33	
	Pamphlet: Declaration of Human Rights	.28	
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	Book: <i>More Than Equals: Racial Healing for the Sake of the Gospel</i>	11.99	
	1989 Race Relations Conference Book of Proceedings	3.30	
	New Videotape: "Southern Baptists Face Racial Issues" 1/2" VHS, 22 min.	19.95	
	Resources to Combat Gambling		
	New Pamphlet: Critical Issues: Gambling Myths vs. The Hidden Realities	.33	
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	Pamphlet: Biblical Insights on Gambling	.22	
	Pamphlet: Casino Gambling	.22	
	Pamphlet: State-Operated Lotteries	.22	
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Light from the Capital

Justice reverses stand in child porn case

The Department of Justice has reversed itself again in an important child pornography case, but this time its switch has elicited approval from opponents of pornography.

Attorney General Janet Reno announced two days after the November election the Department of Justice is opposed to a convicted child pornographer's appeal for the United States Supreme Court to accept his case.

A year before, the Department of Justice had reversed a previous interpretation and argued against the conviction of Stephen Knox. As a result, the Supreme Court returned the case, *Knox v. United States*, to the Third Circuit Court of Appeals. The appeals court disagreed with the arguments of Solicitor General Drew Days for the Department of Justice and again upheld the conviction.

In announcing her department was asking the Supreme Court not to hear Knox's appeal, Reno said she agreed with the appeals court's ruling and not with the interpretation of her solicitor general. The brief filed with the Supreme Court bore her signature rather than that of Days, she said.

"I believe the government must argue for that legitimate interpretation of the statute which prohibits the receipt and possession of child pornography to the maximum extent allowed under the Constitution," Reno said in a prepared statement. "The Third Circuit's interpretation is sound and persuasive."

The Christian Life Commission lauded Justice's action after sharply criticizing its previous position.

"There seems to be a great awakening at the Justice Department," CLC General Counsel Michael Whitehead said. "Its old position indicated greater concern for pornographers than for child-victims. Its new position puts children first.

"General Reno should be praised for awakening to this moral insight. Unfortunately, the solicitor general has not yet seen the light."

In addition to Reno's action, 238 members of Congress also submitted a brief asking the Court to refuse to review the case. It is uncertain when the Supreme Court will announce whether it will accept the case.

Days had contended child pornography must "show minors engaged in the conduct of lasciviously exhibiting their [or someone else's] genitals or pubic area" and must include visible depiction of the genitals. The interpretation argued by the Department of Justice under President Bush and upheld by the court of appeals focused on the intention of the adults producing the photos or videos.

Three days after the Supreme Court remanded the *Knox* case to the Third Circuit last November, the Senate showed its displeasure by passing by a 100-0 vote a non-binding resolution saying the Justice Department's brief "did not accurately reflect the intent of Congress" in enacting child pornography legislation.

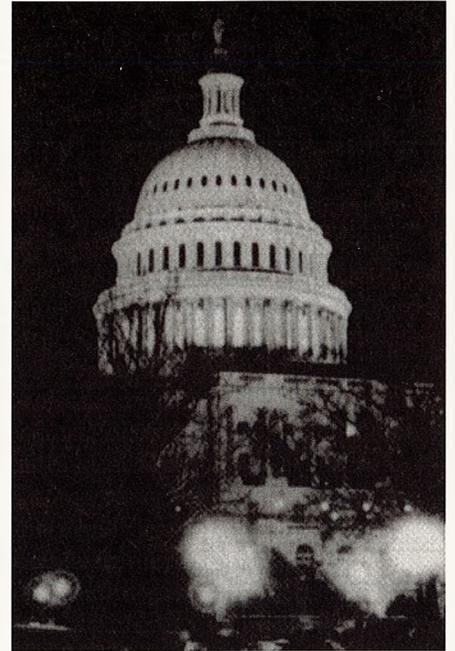
—Tom Strode

RU 486 trials begin in United States

The availability in the United States of the French abortion pill, RU 486, moved a step closer to reality with the announcement in late October that clinical trials are in progress in more than a dozen clinics in the country.

More than 2,100 women over the age of 18 and in the early stages of pregnancy will participate in the trials, which were announced by The Population Council in New York City. In May, The Population Council received the United States patent to the drug by donation from Roussel Uclaf, the French company which developed RU 486.

RU 486, also known as mifepristone, is used with a prostaglandin,



misoprostol, to induce abortion in women in the early weeks of pregnancy. It is legal in France, Great Britain and Sweden. While The Population Council said more than 150,000 women have used RU 486 safely in Europe, the National Right to Life Committee has said the drug has caused the death of a woman and injuries to others.

The Council hopes to have RU 486 on the market in 1996.

"By bringing RU 486 into this country, 'The De-Population Council' has effectively taken aim and fired at women's and children's health," said Ben Mitchell, consultant on biomedical and life issues for the Christian Life Commission. The tests will occur in more than 12 clinics but in fewer than 20, The

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Population Council said, but it refused to reveal the sites. The Planned Parenthood Federation of America, however, announced six of its affiliates are trial sites. They are in Houston; San Diego; Aurora, Colo.; Des Moines, Ia.; Willston, Vt.; and Cambridge, Mass. The Houston affiliate is conducting trials in collaboration with the Baylor College of Medicine, according to Associated Press.

Other sites were described by The Population Council as hospital-based clinics, Feminist Health Center facilities and abortion clinics.

On his third day in office in 1993, President Clinton directed the Food and Drug Administration to determine if the import ban on RU 486 should be lifted. At the time, pro-life leaders predicted the federal government would do all it could to gain approval for the drug. When the donation of the drug's United States patent was announced in May, Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala said Rous- sel Uclaf had done so after repeated urgings by the Clinton administration.

Clinton and Shalala share the ultimate blame for "unlocking the doors of this arsenal in the assault on unborn babies," the CLC's Mitchell said. "History will not be kind to this administration. We ought to bombard the President, Congress and The Population Council with phone calls and letters. The generations which follow ours need to know we adamantly protested."

The CLC has joined NRLC and other organizations in calling for a boycott of the products of Hoechst-Roussel Pharmaceuticals and Copley Pharmaceutical, which are American subsidiaries of Hoechst AG, the parent company of Roussel Uclaf.

The procedure for RU 486 requires at least three visits to a clinic, according to The Population Council. On the first visit, the woman takes three tablets of RU 486, then returns two days later for two tablets of misoprostol. After a four-hour stay at the clinic on this second visit, about 70 percent of women abort, according to the council. The remainder of women will

abort after they leave the clinic. Two weeks after the first visit, the woman returns to make sure the abortion is complete. If it is incomplete, a surgical abortion is done. Failure occurs in about four percent of women, according to the council.

RU 486 causes the lining of the uterus to release the human embryo, while misoprostol causes the uterus to contract, expelling the child's body.

—Tom Strode

Administration half right in tithing case, CLC says

President Clinton is to be commended for ordering the Department of Justice to abandon arguments in favor of a church returning tithes given by a couple before they filed for bankruptcy, Christian Life Commission General Counsel Michael Whitehead said. The action, however, falls short of what the federal government should do to protect religious liberty, he said.

In mid-September, the Department of Justice announced it was withdrawing its brief at the request of the President, who "concluded that it adopted a narrower view of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act than his understanding of the meaning of the new statute."

Whitehead said, "The President has our praise and gratitude for calling off Janet Reno's assault against RFRA. This proves that the President does not want RFRA to become a dead letter at the hands of his own Justice Department.

"However, we had asked the President to go further. Rather than just withdrawing from the case, Justice should have stayed in the case and supported RFRA.

"The Department of Justice is no longer fighting against RFRA, but it doesn't deserve the Medal of Honor just for being AWOL at the battle for religious freedom," he said. "RFRA is under attack, and we hope the White House will actively engage the effort to rescue and revive RFRA."

In the case before the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals, a federal bankruptcy judge had ordered a church in Minnesota to return

\$13,450 in tithes given by a couple in 1991, the year before they filed for bankruptcy. The Crystal Evangelical Free Church was required to surrender the tithes, the judge said, because the couple, Bruce and Nancy Young, had not received an equivalent value for the contributions. The Youngs could have spent money on alcohol, gambling or prostitution without it being considered fraudulent. A federal judge upheld the decision.

The CLC had joined six other organizations in a friend-of-the-court brief opposing the government's arguments. Others on the brief were the Christian Legal Society, Baptist Joint Committee, Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, National Association of Evangelicals and Traditional Values Coalition.

Clinton signed RFRA into law in November 1993. RFRA, which was enacted in response to a 1990 Supreme Court ruling, restores the compelling interest test in cases involving free exercise of religion. The test requires the government to prove it has a compelling interest before restricting religious freedom.

—Tom Strode

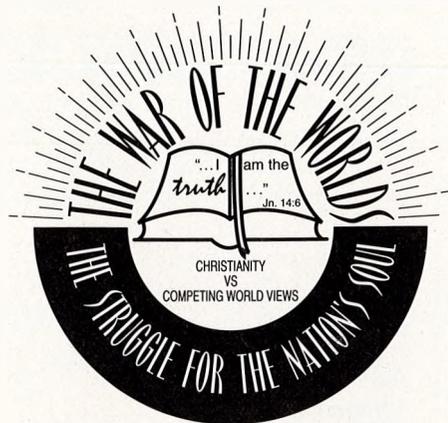
Prayer in schools

(Continued from Page 10)

student, recognizing and protecting the citizens' rights to freely exercise their religious convictions in the public arena.

If we fail to insist on such a governmental and accompanying judicial posture, we will be doomed to pass on to our children a society which creates a sterile, artificially secular public square by segregating religion from the nation's public life. And, the saddest thing about such a scenario is that it is utterly unnecessary and requires the ignorance and indifference of people of faith to succeed.

*This editorial is an abridged version of a newly published CLC pamphlet: "Critical Issues: A Baptist's View of Prayer in Schools" (see order form on Page 13).



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