

Light

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMISSION OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

MARCH-APRIL, 1995

Russ Polson answers God's call One person can make a difference

By Tom Strobe

One Christian with a burden from God and a willingness to follow His direction can make an impact—on an individual, on a family, on a church, maybe even on a community, a state and a country.

Take Russ Polson, for example. Only 18 months after Polson, 69, sensed a call from God he neither

could nor would resist, the ministry he heads has reached more than 250 churches in seven states.

The mission? Upholding biblical morality. The method? Videos, primarily.

From the converted office in the garage of his house outside Longview, Tex., Polson has mailed more than 600 copies of videos to be shown in churches. Those

videos have gone to churches from North Carolina to Texas. In addition, Polson and his wife, Wynell, have traveled to about 15 churches from Baton Rouge, La., to Jonesboro, Ark., to show the videos. He mails 25 letters a week to pastors informing them about the videos, and an average of 10 to 12 commit to purchase them.

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Growing up in a Children's Home

By Steven Wright

I see her now, sitting at the end of that metal and Formica kitchen table, silhouetted against the curtainless window. Knife in hand, she peels the potatoes—it seems now it was *always* potatoes—and she is crying, tears slowly moistening her cheeks.

"Why? Why?" she asks aloud, even though no one is in the room with her. "Why did he do this to me?" She wipes her cheek with the back of her wrist. "I gave him eight beautiful children, and he

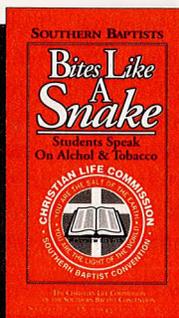
does this to us! Why?" The tears now stream, and crying has turned into sobbing.

The three of us slip from around the staircase where we have been quietly listening to our mother's pain. We are the three youngest, Gary and I and our youngest sister, Michelle—three little "Musketees," of sorts, on a mission. Enveloping her convulsing shoulders with our six-, five-, and four-year-old sets of arms, we speak softly into her ears our sym-

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Steven Wright



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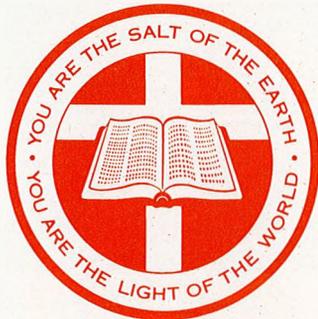
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'President Lincoln Still Inspires Us'

By Richard D. Land

The Lincoln Memorial has long been my favorite monument in our nation's capital. Its awesome grandeur and elegant simplicity reflect the unique combination of grandeur and simplicity that was Abraham Lincoln. President Lincoln has always seemed the most American of Presidents—a man who literally rose from humble log cabin origins to the highest political office in the land.

And when our nation's fate hung in the balance amidst the Civil War's anguish and sorrow, Lincoln, like a prairie prophet, gave voice to the nation's purpose and promise. In words which have stirred the nation's soul ever since, Lincoln reminded Americans North and South of what was at stake when he proclaimed at Gettysburg: "Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure." He then challenged the people to resolve "that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

On a recent visit to the Lincoln Memorial, I discovered a new and exciting reason to cherish the nation's tribute to Abraham Lincoln. The "Great Emancipator's" monument has long functioned as a rallying point for Americans seeking to extend the nation's promise of equality to all her citizens, regardless of race or ethnic origin. Now, thanks in great part to the idealism and grit of some American teenagers, a small museum has opened in the Lincoln Memorial's basement. The museum, conceived, designed and partly financed by high school students, tells the story of the hundreds of demonstrations, marches and protests which the memorial has spawned and which help make it such a special place.

Two events which are uniquely identified with the Lincoln Memorial, Marian Anderson's 1939 Easter Sunday concert from the Memorial steps, which drew a throng of 75,000, and Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech, witnessed by 500,000 civil rights protesters in 1963, are recounted in the visitors center museum, which is the fruit of the students' efforts. Visitors learn from the museum's exhibits the background of Anderson's concert, as well as Dr. King's speech.

The student-inspired museum has its origins in a 1989 student trip by Arizona high school students to the nation's capital to the Lincoln Memorial. The students wanted to know where Dr. King stood when he spoke and why no marker or plaque commemorated the spot or the event. These students decided to rectify the situation, and after much determined effort, they generated a nationwide student effort which helped design and finance the resulting museum visitors center.

The new museum bears fitting tribute to Lincoln's uncanny genius for stating with poetic simplicity the nation's greatest hopes and dreams. Lincoln's words are inscribed on 13 impressive black marble tablets. The first tablet quotes Lincoln from the 1858 Lincoln-Douglas debates: "Let us discard all this quibbling about this man or the other man, this race or that race, and the other race being inferior and therefore they must be placed in an inferior position. Let us discard all these things and unite as one people throughout this land until we shall once more stand up declaring that all men are created equal." The last tablet ends with Lincoln's Dec. 1, 1862 message to Congress: "The fiery trial through which we pass will light us down, in honor or dishonor, to the last generation.... We shall

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Kingsport woman, others defend pro-lifers

Southern Baptists go to media

By Tom Strode

When Ann Bennett of Kingsport, Tenn., saw how pro-lifers were being portrayed in the wake of the late December killings of abortion clinic workers in a Boston suburb, she took action.

First, she called a local newspaper, one which had used a photo of anti-abortion protesters holding signs such as "God bless John Salvi." Salvi has been charged in the slayings of two clinic workers. Bennett said she knew "no pro-life person that I had come in contact with believed this."

When the newspaper's response failed to satisfy her concerns, Bennett organized a news conference with the aid of Southern Baptist pastor David Carr of Greeneville, Tenn. Within 24 hours, not only had 13 pro-life organizations from northeast Tennessee agreed to "drop everything," she said, to participate, but 11 news outlets had attended and had begun the process of informing their readers, viewers and listeners.

The message Bennett and other pro-lifers communicated was: "We are about redeeming; we are not about killing," she said.

Violent acts toward abortion clinic doctors and workers "are tragically misguided and are the exact opposite of what the pro-life message is all about," Bennett told reporters, according to the *Johnson City Press*. "Shooting an abortionist or shooting at a clinic is bad religion, bad politics, and absolutely not pro-life."

Meeting at the offices of the Holston Baptist Association, Bennett and pro-life representatives not only condemned the killings but shared about the compassionate ministries of the area's pro-life

organizations. Among the organizations represented were crisis pregnancy centers, Southern Baptist associations and the Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes. Frank Hawkins, pastor of Kingsport's First Baptist Church and president of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, also spoke. Bennett is a member of First Baptist, Kingsport.



Ann Bennett of Kingsport, Tenn., refers to *Light* article at news conference. The article reported on a CLC document which rejects the killing of abortion doctors as a permissible Christian response to abortion.

A response from the mainstream pro-life movement was imperative, she said. Pro-lifers in her area, Bennett said, needed to overcome two problems stemming from some media characterizations: Those in crisis pregnancies might be afraid to go to pro-life ministries for help, and some pro-lifers might decide such violence is appropriate.

To allow the "media distortion to go unanswered would cause it to be perceived as truth," Bennett said. "The consequences in this instance are life-threatening."

To assist the pro-lifers, Bennett distributed copies of an article from the November-December issue of *Light* about the Christian Life Commission's statement rejecting the killing of abortion doctors as an appropriate response by Christians to abortion. The document is entitled "The Struggle Against Abortion: Why the Use of Lethal Force Is Not Morally Justifiable" and is now available from the CLC in pamphlet form entitled "Critical Issues: Why the Killing of Abortion Doctors Is Wrong."

The article "articulated some things I wouldn't have been able to," she said.

The news conference's results were extremely gratifying.

"I have done a lot of public pro-life activity," said Bennett, a former president of the northeast chapter of Tennessee Right to Life. "I have never had as much positive feedback as I have on this one. It helped unify the pro-life community. It helped Christian frustration with the press' mischaracterization.

"The most repeated comment was, 'This needed to be done.' I had my pro-choice friends come up and say, 'You know I disagree with you on the issue, but I sure do appreciate what you did.'"

The experience also confirmed a belief she has about relations between the news media and Christians who take biblical stands on controversial moral issues:

"They are not going to come to us; we have to go to them."

Growing up in a Children's Home

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phony of encouragement. "It's all right, Momma. It's all right. We're gonna make it. We love you. Momma...I love you, Momma."

It's a scene that is so deeply embedded because it repeated itself many times. Stricken by poverty caused by a wandering father who loved the bottle more than his family, my mother and her eight children were forced to live in the government projects near downtown Memphis, Tenn., relying heavily on the government to assist us in every basic need of life.

To reminisce is to invoke the five senses. The *sight* of my mother's daily pain. The *smell* and *sound* of flapjacks (made with flour, water, sugar and a pinch of salt) sizzling in the black skillet, to be devoured with our homemade "water syrup" because the potatoes had been gone a day or two. The *taste* of salty tears as my little lips sought to kiss away the pain. The *touch* of a tender mother's embrace in an environment marked by harshness and hardness, from the cheaply tiled floors to the lead-based, blandly painted walls. The *sight* again, of the Weona Grocery truck delivering food staples Momma had ordered because they had extended her credit line.

Ours was a full house, with three tiny bedrooms for the nine of us. It seems the older siblings were always coming and going. (There were six of us boys and two girls.) I remember the frustration of four of us sleeping in one small bed: Momma and we "Three Musketeers." Several times I tried finding respite at the foot of the bed, but, alas, three sets of feet in my face drove me away. They drove me generally to the closet, where I found that winter coats

could be made into a quite "comfy" bed of sorts, with one of them serving nicely as my cover.

I'll never forget the day the social worker came to the apartment. Oh, she and others like her had come on numerous occasions, always chatting and smiling at us. *But this day was different* because they broke the news to



us: Three of us (Debby, Gary and I) were going to go live at the Baptist Children's Home. "You're really going to love it," Momma said. "They have lots of trees and a TV and plenty to eat." The four older boys would go to Boys Town, while the youngest, our "special" sister, Michelle, would remain with Mother.

"We don't want to go, Momma," we all pined. "We wanna stay with you." But it was settled. With surprisingly little cajoling and soothing, we were made to actually anticipate our move. This is especially interesting because

we had just spent several years in St. Peter's Orphanage, later called St. Peter's Home for Children, a Catholic institution. Memories of the inner-city campus with its wrought iron fence and gates, of the habit-clad nuns pronouncing their instructions to the teeming numbers of preschoolers marching in file and of looking through those iron bars (placed there out of love and concern, of course, to keep us away from the busy avenue), and longing for the freedom of my mother's home. I remember that. I remember it quite well, my friend. And I was only a preschooler.

Born in Chicago, I was placed in my mother's lap at seven months of age, and with my five brothers and my older sister (Jimmy, Billy, Danny, David, Gary and Debbie) was driven to Dyersburg, Tenn., where my mother had been reared by adoptive parents. Mother soon found herself with her brood in Memphis, in the downtown bus station, with little money and less hope. The station manager offered her a waitress job in the diner, which she quickly accepted. She hired a live-in childkeeper and went to work the next day.

But fifty cents an hour did not go far, even in 1955. That's when St. Peter's stepped in and took the seven of us. A last attempt at reconciliation between my parents failed, but resulted in another child, our special sister, Terry Michelle.

One by one we came home from St. Peter's. I lived there four years. Mother had settled down in a government project apartment and was working in a downtown department store. But the poverty was too great. By this time, the sounds of anger had invaded our lives—angry, spewing

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One person can make a difference

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The response to Russ Polson's attempt to awaken Christians to the need to restore morality in America "has been just mind boggling," he said.

The videos the Polsons normally show and ship deal with abortion and the homosexual rights agenda. The former is "Blood Money: Getting Rich Off a Woman's Right to Choose," the testimony of former abortion clinic operator Carol Everett taped at the Christian Life Commission's 1993 medical ethics seminar. The other is "Gay Rights, Special Rights," a production by Jeremiah Films which includes footage of the 1993 march for homosexual rights in Washington, D.C.

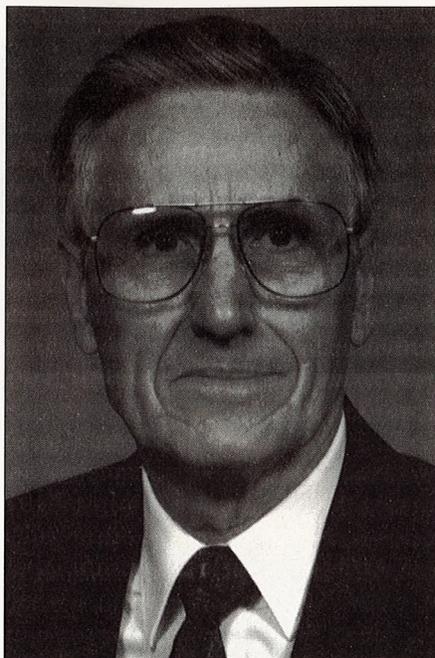
The videos have gained not only a widespread outreach but have made a deeply personal impact in some cases.

At one church where the Polsons showed the videos, a woman—who said she could not share her past with her church—sorrowfully confessed to Wynell she would have had two teenagers if she had not had abortions nearly two decades before.

A man broke out crying during a viewing at another church. A few days before, he had buried a son who had died from AIDS.

At another church, the Polsons left the Carol Everett video with a woman who cared for preschoolers during the showings. She wrote them later, "I didn't realize so many abortions were being done each year. My prayer is that every woman could see this video. I really believe it would make a difference in the number of abortions being done."

Less than two years ago, Russ Polson had no plans for such a ministry. For more than a year, he had listened to sermons by new pastor Roger Tarver on moral issues. Before Tarver became pas-



Russ Polson

tor at Indian Rock Baptist Church in Gilmer, Tex., abortion and homosexuality were never mentioned from the pulpit, Polson said.

Polson responded during an invitation in mid-July. "The Lord just wouldn't let me rest," he said. "I kept telling Him, 'I'm just one man. I can't do it alone.' I said, 'Roger [pastor], the Lord has laid a burden on my heart to make a stand for morality.'"

On Aug. 1, he started the Resource Center for Biblical Morality. The church provided its encouragement, prayers, and \$500 to help the new ministry. The rural church has continued to encourage the Polsons in the ministry, especially through Tarver and members like Scott Ward.

In the beginning, weeknight meetings with speakers were held in churches. The attendance was low, however, in a majority of the meetings. "We could see we were not reaching people" through that method, Polson said.

Polson tapped his extensive network among pastors for a new

approach. He had traveled to churches for 20 years through the ministry of Underground Evangelism showing films and helping raise support for Bibles and literature for believers in communist countries. He also began utilizing the Christian Life Commission's video inventory. He mailed "Gay Rights, Special Rights" to 75 pastors. Eighty percent of the responses were positive. When this pilot project ended in January 1994, he knew he had found a successful model.

Now, when a pastor agrees to order a packet from Polson for \$45, the church receives both videos plus pamphlets by Everett, "What I Saw in the Abortion Industry," and by CLC General Counsel Michael Whitehead, "Critical Issues: The Homosexual Rights Agenda."

Often, the churches the Polsons visit provide two hours on Sunday night for the videos. When two hours are allotted, the CLC video "Citizen Christians" also is shown.

Tarver is "just thrilled" to have a grass-roots outreach for biblical morality begin with one of the members of the church he pastors.

"If the pulpits and the churches and the denominations don't tell the people the truth, they're not going to hear it," Tarver said. "I just rejoice in the boldness the Lord has given to Russ...."

Russ Polson also is glad he is doing what he is doing: "I'd be very uncomfortable not doing what God has called me to do."

The address of the Resource Center for Biblical Morality is P.O. Box 5626, Longview, TX 75608. The phone number for ordering materials is 1-800-838-5750.

By Michael K. Whitehead

"Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar?"

Matthew's ears must have perked up when he heard some Jewish leaders ask Jesus this question. He had once been a tax collector, an "IRS agent" for Caesar, so he knew how angry people could get about taxes. When Matthew wrote a gospel account of Jesus' life from a tax collector's point of view he included this incident in chapter 22.

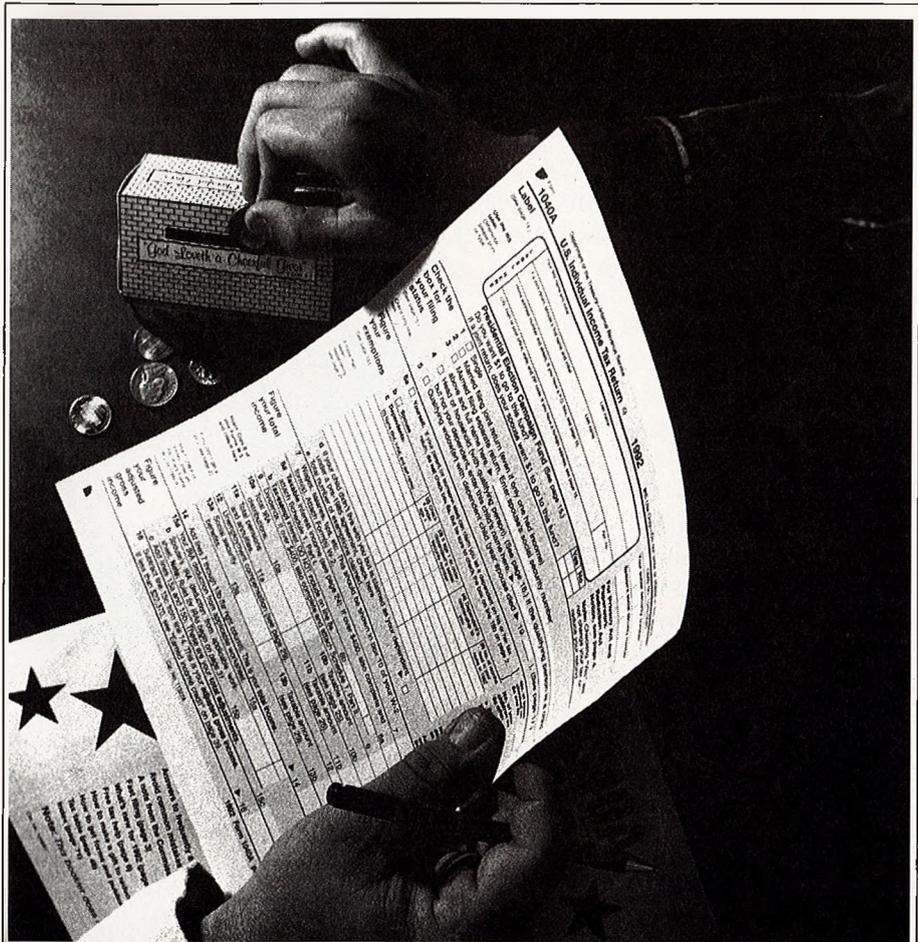
Followers of the Pharisees bitterly opposed paying any tax to a foreign king, considering it to be religious treason. The Herodians, on the other hand, supported Herod, governor of Galilee, and hence supported the payment of taxes as a religious obligation to civil authorities. These two groups could agree on little but their hatred of Jesus, so they conspired to formulate the trick question (22:15-17). Should a believer support Caesar's government or God's kingdom? It was the perfect trap. No matter how Jesus answered He would offend one camp or the other and would risk government prosecution or religious persecution.

But Jesus did not fall for the false dilemma. With supernatural incisiveness He exposed the wicked motive of the hypocritical questioners (22:18), and He asked them to show Him a coin (22:19). Apparently He had no coin Himself. When the conspirators admitted that Caesar's image and name were on the coin, Jesus said, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (22:21).

In one sentence the theological tricksters were trumped, their false dilemma destroyed. Jesus stated the divine alternative: You can, and should, be both a good citizen and a good Christian. God does not give you the choice of one or the other. A commitment to the heavenly kingdom is no excuse for neglect of earthly government. The Great Commission is like a pair of scissors. The two blades, evange-

'Render therefore unto Caesar'

(Matthew 22:21)



**Observe Religious Liberty Sunday
June 4, 1995**

lism and discipleship, are both necessary. Discipleship is teaching all that Jesus commanded (Matt. 28:19), including the command to be salt and light (Matt. 5:13-14), to bring Christ's influence to bear in culture and government.

But what if Caesar exceeds his jurisdiction and starts taxing or legislating or regulating the "things of God"? Then the disciple has a duty to prevent larceny from the divine precincts. We must not render to Caesar the things that are God's. Baptists have long defended the biblical principle of religious liberty that religious conscience is the province of God over which Caesar has no jurisdiction. Even as to taxing and spending, Caesar must not be allowed to intrude upon con-

science. Thomas Jefferson wrote: "To compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves is sinful and tyrannical. . . ."

Thank God for religious liberty. Ask God to help you to be salt and light in your sphere of influence so that you may render to Caesar your sanctified involvement in self-government, while rendering to God the free expression of religious conscience in public affairs.

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

By James A. Smith

What a feeling it must be to be granted citizenship in the United States of America. Many have died seeking to come to our shores where liberty is protected as an inalienable right under our Constitution. Invariably, those who have been given their citizenship, especially after toiling under totalitarian repression, are the most enthusiastic defenders of the liberty most of us take for granted. The picture of a naturalization ceremony is a dramatic reminder of the citizenship believers in Christ have been granted in God's heavenly kingdom.

Instead of being "separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of promise without hope and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12), as followers of Christ, the Bible teaches we are "fellow citizens with God's people" (Eph. 2:19). The Word of God teaches that we do not merit this citizenship, but instead, we have been "adopted" by God's "glorious grace" through Christ's work on the cross (Eph. 1: 4-8).

Similarly, noncitizens of the United States, under certain conditions and circumstances, are able to become citizens of America. In a sense, they too have been adopted—not on the basis of anything they have done (in most cases)—but by the grace of the United States of America.

As Southern Baptists observe Christian Citizenship Sunday and celebrate our nation's birthday of political freedom, we remember our dual citizenship: our citizenship as Americans and, more importantly, our citizenship in God's kingdom.

As American citizens, we have the right to play a part in the decisions our democratically elected government makes. Many vexing moral problems face our nation: abortion, homosexuality, pornography, corruption in government, to name a few. Clearly, these ills would not be as prevalent if more Christians understood Christ's command to be the "salt of the earth" fighting the moral decay of our society (Matt. 5:13). Claiming our

'Fellow citizens with God's people'

(Ephesians 2:19)



**Observe Christian Citizenship Sunday
July 2 1995**

rights as Americans, Christians could do much to make our society better by becoming involved in our government.

However, there can be little doubt that our nation's moral climate would be vastly enhanced if more believers were following Christ's command to be the "light of the world" (Matt. 5:14). Too many professing believers have neglected our citizenship in God's kingdom and the responsibilities which it includes. We have hidden our light from the world instead of letting our "light shine before men" (Matt. 5:16). We have not shared the good news that God offers an abundant, new and eternal life to those who will turn from their sin and accept Jesus Christ

as Savior and Lord (John 5:24-30, John 10:10).

While Christians must fulfill our biblical duties as citizens of our government by advocating godly laws (Rom. 13), the most effective and eternally significant way to change *America* is to change *Americans*. The radical regeneration of souls for God's kingdom will result in the most permanent transformation of American culture.

This *Christian Citizenship Sunday*, let us not forget what type of citizens God wants us to be. Be a good citizen today—tell someone about Jesus!

James A. Smith is director of government relations of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, based in Washington, D.C.

Point and Counterpoint are reprinted by permission from The Western Recorder, the news journal of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

By Paul Schuster

In recent years, Christians have debated the merits of Christian education against the witness Christians provide in the public school system. It is a tough issue. The same Bible says, "Come out from among them and be separate" and "Go into all the world." Some have argued that we should "train up a child in the way he should go," while others feel that children educated in Christian schools are sheltered and unable to face the real world.

I would like to offer several reasons why Christians should educate their children in Christian schools or even home-school them as long as they are able. I speak from my experience as a teacher who began in public education, went to a Christian school and returned to public school.

When His opponents ques-

I believe Christians are commanded to educate their children according to Christian principles...by seeking to educate them outside the public domain.

tioned Jesus regarding the greatest commandment, He answered without hesitation, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength" (Mark 12:29-30).

Christians should educate their children in Christian schools



Paul Schuster

For Christian education, this command of our Lord forms the basis of educational efforts. Let us examine each of the four areas mentioned by Jesus. As always in Scripture, God starts with the heart or spirit. It is the spiritual dimension that is the starting point of Christian education. First, each student is encouraged to make a personal profession of faith in Christ. The public school cannot do this, nor should it. From there, the students are encouraged to seek first His kingdom through chapel programs, Bible classes and the example of Christian teachers. The thrust of education is God and therefore other-centered, not ego-centric.

The second area is the soul. This area deals with questions of the nature of humanity. We are created in the image of God, have sinned and fallen, and now need a savior, Jesus Christ. Humanity's ultimate problem is sin, which we cannot solve. Humanism, which is the foundation philosophy for public education, states that humanity can solve all of its own problems and that there is no need for God. These views of the very nature of

humanity are diametrically opposed.

The third area, the mind, deals with the what and how of instruction. Certain areas of history, for example, are conveniently ignored. No one in the public school classroom will hear of the impact of the Great Awakenings on colonial America, nor will they know of the frontier revivals that impacted the settling of places like Kentucky, nor of the prayer revivals that many feel delayed the start of the Civil War. Even though the vast majority of our founders were Christians and many preachers, we are told that they were Deists, not committed Christians.

As Christians, we are commanded to train our children in the way they should go, to diligently teach them the principles of God's Word. This will never happen in the public school and regrettably happens very little in the average Sunday school class. Even in a good Sunday school class, the child is only there one hour a week as compared to five hours of Bible study a week in Christian school, not to mention the advantage of Christian teachers being able to teach from a Christian perspective throughout the day.

The final area is that of strength, or the body. The first thing that comes to my mind is moral training. This is an area that impacts the lives of students daily.

In the public school classroom, there will be little, if any, instruction in moral purity. Instead of teaching abstinence, condoms are distributed. Virgins are humiliated by their peers. Drugs are openly discussed as a form of entertainment. One of my students said that he was a "tri-sexual—try anything sexual."

Behavior of this type is routine.

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By James Holladay

Parents may have many reasons for deciding to educate their children at home or private school. The choice of educational options should not be eliminated, nor should parents who choose nonpublic school alternatives be condemned for their choices.

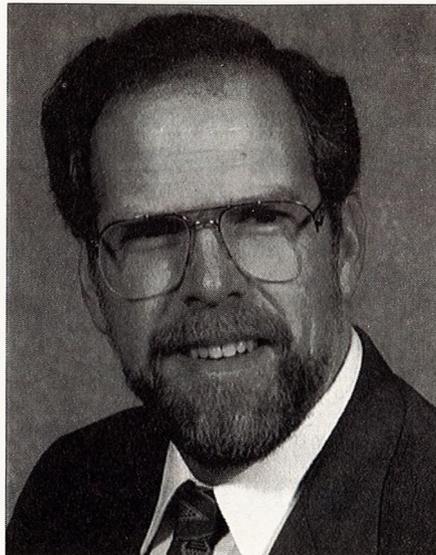
We should not remove our children from public schools solely on the basis of our Christian commitment or our concern about our child's exposure to secular values. Our commitment to Christ and His reconciling mission in this world ought to compel us toward public schools.

If Christians, as a matter of principle, begin to withdraw from public schools, we surrender the field to the enemy (Eph. 6:12), leaving many Christian teachers and administrators to deal with a totally secular environment. Additionally, many of the students and parents would be left without any regular, significant contact with a professing Christian. In our concern

Placing our children in homogenized residential, church and educational settings robs them of the ability to learn how to relate their Christian faith and values to those who do not share their commitment.

that our children may be corrupted by the values and behaviors of the world, we forget Jesus compared the kingdom of God to leaven, which may appear to be lost in the dough. Nevertheless, it does its work of transformation silently, steadily, certainly.

Christians should stay in public schools to witness



James Holladay

On a practical level, if Christian parents withdraw our children from public schools, we lose a voice. We lose our parental influence on the affairs of a particular school or the system as a whole. Our withdrawal from public schools diminishes the credibility or power of our voice in speaking with teachers, school board members or system administrators. Influence comes with involvement.

Withdrawing our children also deprives them of the opportunity to be exposed to persons from diverse backgrounds, cultures and ways of thinking. Most private schools are overwhelmingly composed of students and teachers of similar class, race, economic and ideological backgrounds. They tend to reflect the neighborhood in which they exist. They are neat and safe. Many people prefer it that way.

Public schools tend to be more heterogeneous. Students and teachers represent a variety of class, race, cultural and ideological backgrounds.

In our segmented society, children need to learn to deal with people who are different. They

need to learn how to communicate with people whose world view has been shaped by life experiences vastly different from their own. Because our churches tend to be homogeneous, public schools may be the only arena where the possibility exists for exposure to people of different backgrounds. Placing our children in homogenized residential, church and educational settings robs them of the ability to learn how to relate their Christian faith and values to those who do not share their commitment.

The decision to leave our children in an overwhelmingly secular school setting will necessitate increased parental involvement in the religious and values education of our children. It will demand that we be more engaged in processing our child's life experiences with him or her.

Jesus commissions His disciples to "Go into all the world..." Our mission field is not only Russia or Brazil. It is also much closer to home. Our neighborhoods, workplaces and schools are places Jesus has asked us to bear witness to Him. Christians are not called to withdraw from the world. Indeed, Jesus seems to expect that we will be in the world but not of it.

Rather than viewing public schools with suspicion and hostility, we need to remember Paul's observation in Ephesians 6:12: "Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but... against the spiritual forces of evil." We need to see involvement in public school as another opportunity to share our faith.

Now more than ever before, Christians need to accept the challenge to engage the world with the gospel. Rather than withdraw, we need to redouble our efforts to become involved with our child's school. Too much is at stake for

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'President Lincoln Still Inspires Us'

(Continued from Page 2)

nobly save or meanly lose the last, best hope of earth."

Even after all these years, President Lincoln's words, and the ideals behind them, still possess the ability to inspire us and to impel us to action. These high school students, from numerous racial and ethnic backgrounds from all sections of the country, came together to bear witness to the nation's ideal that all men are created equal. In doing so they bear eloquent testi-

The new museum bears fitting tribute to Lincoln's...genius for stating with poetic simplicity the nation's greatest hopes and dreams.

mony to the fact that Americans of diverse backgrounds can transcend their racial and ethnic differences and unite in pursuit of America's highest aspirations and ideals.

They still share the dream of an America that does not so much cherish differences as much as she pursues equality and justice for all. What a dramatic refutation of the politically correct practice of emphasizing those things that differentiate, divide and separate us and what a wonderful affirmation of the goal stated on the great seal of the United States—*E Pluribus Unum*—"out of many one." The dream still lives—may it ever be so.

Point

Christians should educate their children in Christian schools

(Continued from Page 8)

Although there are some fine Christians teaching in the public schools, there are also many who are morally debased.

Paul says that we will reap what we sow. Are we sowing a generation that is morally bankrupt? Paul also says, "Bad company ruins good morals" (1 Cor. 15:33). I have only seen the morals of Christian young people corrupted. I have not seen Christian young people exer-

cise influence in their public schools. I am not saying it cannot happen, but the vast majority of time the influence is in the reverse direction. It takes a truly unique individual to live in the moral cesspool of many of the public school classrooms and not be affected.

There are many reasons why children should not be educated outside the public domain. However, I believe that Christians are commanded to educate their chil-

dren according to Christian principles. Unless there are drastic changes in the structure of our school systems, I believe Christians will better serve their children by seeking to educate them outside the public domain.

Paul Schuster, a Southern Baptist, is a teacher in the Jefferson County public schools in Louisville, Ky., and a former Christian school teacher.

Counterpoint

Christians should stay in public schools to witness

(Continued from Page 9)

our children—as well as for children from non-Christian homes—for us to withdraw our presence and voice.

As Christians, we are called to be on mission. We cannot do that if we stay only in safe places. Jesus calls us to risk losing our lives for the sake of the gospel. He reminds us that the way is not easy. He forewarned us that we would be challenged, ridiculed, and attempts would be made to silence us. Yet He also promised to be with us.

As a Christian parent, I see

involvement in the public schools not only as an opportunity but a responsibility. As I send my children off to school, and as I involve myself in various aspects of their educational experience, I try to keep three things in mind. First, Jesus prayed for the protection of His people in the world (John 17).

Second, God expects me as a parent to teach my children the ways of God and instill within them the values they need to be faithful to God's will.

Third, as Christians, we are not

defenseless in any arena. Jesus says to us, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go..." (Matt. 28:18).

For me, much of the answer to this question rests in my understanding of our mission. Will we withdraw into safe places in order to protect ourselves? Or will we engage the world in order to allow God to speak and work through us?

Jim Holladay is pastor of Clifton Baptist Church, Louisville, Ky.

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Alliance Defense Fund:

Cooperation in funding the legal advocacy of life, liberty and family

By Michael Whitehead

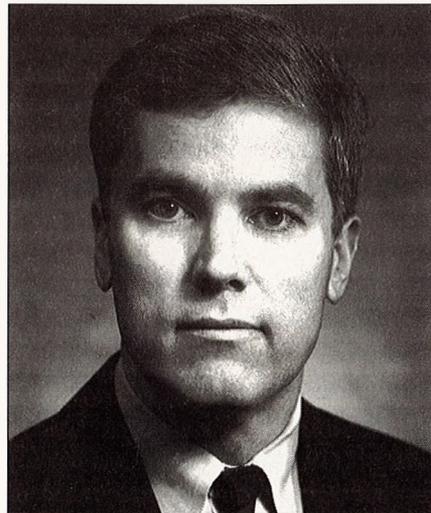
An unprecedented cooperative venture has been formed by numerous ministry leaders to raise a "superfund" to assist Christian lawyers and legal organizations with the costs of litigation in cases involving religious freedom, the sanctity of human life and family values.

Founded in 1993, the Alliance Defense Fund grew out of a vision shared in common by Bill Bright of Campus Crusade for Christ and Larry Burkett of Christian Financial Concepts Inc. They saw legal organizations on the liberal left such as the American Civil Liberties Union, with thousands of attorneys and millions of dollars, using the courtrooms aggressively to advance their agenda in the culture war. Meanwhile, it seemed that many fine Christian legal organizations, while doing excellent work, often lacked adequate staff and resources necessary to take on and handle all the meritorious cases with excellence. Many cases involving legal issues critical to the pro-life and pro-family community were not being pursued, at least in part due to lack of funds. It was not a matter of greedy lawyers demanding exorbitant fees. Many unselfish Christian lawyers were willing to donate their time, but they could not afford the thousands of dollars of out-of-pocket expenses for court reporters at depositions and expert witness fees, etc., which many of these cases require.

Wouldn't it be wonderful, Bright and Burkett dreamed, if a diverse group of evangelical broadcast ministries cooperated in forming a "superfund" with millions of dollars made available each year to defend and advocate for religious liberty, for life, and

for the traditional family. This would free the participating legal organizations from worrying about fund-raising, and let them do what they do best, lawyering.

When Bright and Burkett shared their vision with other Christian leaders at a convention of the National Religious Broad-



Alan Sears

casters in 1993, they struck a responsive cord. The idea was born to start a fund to which ministry organizations would commit the start-up and operating capital. Each member ministry would then notify its supporters on its mailing list about the existence of the cooperative fund and urge its supporters to make at least annual contributions to the fund, over and above their contributions to their local church and the participating ministries. A national advisory group was formed, whose founding members included Bright, Burkett and the following: Adrian Rogers, pastor, Bellvue Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn.; James Dobson, president, Focus on the Family; Gary Bauer, president, Family Research Council; D. James Kennedy, pastor, Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.; Marlin Mad-

doux, Point of View, Dallas, Tex.; and Don Wildmon, president, American Family Association, Tupelo, Miss.

The Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) is not a public interest law firm which will handle lawsuits or in any way "compete" with existing Christian legal groups. ADF's only purpose is to raise money and grant money to lawyers and groups already in the field but who need financial assistance because the clients cannot afford to pay the tremendous costs of lawsuits which may last for years through many levels of appeals.

A legal advisory group has been formed, comprised of most of the major Christian legal organizations, including: American Center for Law and Justice, William B. Ball, Wendell Bird, Christian Legal Society, National Right to Life, Americans United for Life, National Institute of Family Life Advocates, Home School Legal Defense Association, National Family Legal Foundation, Liberty Counsel, AFA Law Center, and the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission. (The Rutherford Institute has chosen not to participate in ADF.) These organizations and lawyers assist by consulting with clients and local lawyers about submitting applications to ADF for grants in meritorious cases.

Applications are evaluated by a grant review committee, comprised of volunteer attorneys from the participating organizations, including: Jay Sekulow, ACLJ (chairman); Steve McFarland and Kimberly Colby, CLS; Clark Forsythe, AUL; Dennis Casper, Campus Crusade; Victor Smith, private practitioner, Kansas City, Mo.J13; and Mike Whitehead, Christian Life Commission. The GRC reviews all grant applica-

tions and confers by telephone conference call at least monthly to discuss the merits and strategic importance of the legal issues in each case.

The ADF selected as its executive director Alan Sears and located the ADF office in Phoenix, Ariz., where Sears resides with his family. Sears has a proven track record of public service as an administrator and as an attorney. He served in the Reagan Justice Department as executive director of the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography and later headed up the National Family Legal and Children's Legal Foundations.

In the first year of operations

in 1994, ADF gave 19 grants totaling over \$300,000. Some sample cases included:

Lilly v. City of Minneapolis, challenging a city "gay rights" law providing tax-supported benefits to domestic partners of city employees. The grantee won at the trial level and an appeal is pending.

Christians v. Crystal Evangelical Free Church, challenging a bankruptcy trustee's order to a church to turn over tithe money given by church members who were forced to file for bankruptcy. An appeal is pending in the Eighth Circuit Court.

Rosenberger v. University of Virginia, awaiting hearing in the

U.S. Supreme Court in March 1995 regarding discrimination by the university in providing student activity funds to a student newspaper because of its religious content.

Oregon Right to Life v. Marion County, Ore., challenging a denial of tax exemption on real estate taxes on the ground that its real goals are to persuade others to agree with its point of view, and therefore it is too political to be charitable.

For more information about ADF or to make a contribution, write to: Alliance Defense Fund, Inc., P.O. Box 54370, Phoenix, AZ 85078.

Growing up in a Children's Home

(Continued from Page 4)

words, flying all the time like darts into the heart of my mother. The older boys needed a father's direction. So, off to Boys Town—and we went to the Baptist Home.

It was as they had said. *Beautiful!* Hundreds of acres of lush Tennessee farmland with plenty of room for boys and girls to romp and roam. Gary and I were placed in a room with two other brothers, Wilbur and Tommy Kobeck, who had just arrived the day before. Little did either set know, but these brothers would all live at the Home together for a decade or more.

I was six. I was frightened. I remember sitting on the steps of the large, screened-in dormitory back porch. I cried. Victor Thacker came running up the steps and promptly stepped on my little toe—the one that had just been sewed up in the ER because I had stepped on Coke bottle glass one of my brothers had shattered all over the kitchen floor in a fit or rage. Welcome to the Children's Home, Steven!

But the pain quickly dissipat-

ed. Katie Smith and Ruby Stafford, two godly, gum-chewing Baptist widows, fed, clothed and bathed 24 boys each and every day! They taught us how to work, how to wash dishes, take out the "slop," clean our rooms and how to shine our shoes on Saturday for Sunday wear. They taught us to give to the Lord by placing in our palms a dime each Sunday morning. They taught us to quote Scripture around the table every morning, *every one of us*. They taught us the meaning of an environment of love, of discipline (yes, there was plenty of that), of protection, of home-cooked meals and of team-living.

I could not wait to get to the "Big Boys' Building." It came at age 12. The anecdotal history of those years fill my memory bank with scenes of laughter, of baseball, of school, of awakening hormones, of teenage rebellion, of church, of living a life that was filled with many happy happenings. Circuses, ball games, fishing rodeos, hay-baling (ugh!) farming, tractor-driving, flirting with the gals—all these memories and many more I have shared

with scores of Baptist churches and associations.

My "orphanage experience" was wonderful, to be honest. Oh, to be sure, there were many nights I wept, even as a teenager, longing for a decent father and a safe haven for my mother and siblings. But the Baptist Children's Home plucked me out of the cycle of poverty, pain and regression. She gave me hope. She gave me direction. She gave me the gospel. She taught me how to work hard, how to play hard, how to study hard. She taught me to laugh again, to love again, to hope again.

Thank you, Southern Baptists! Thank you, Tennessee Baptists! Thank you Superintendent and Mrs. Butler! Thank you, Coach Presley. Thank you, "Miss Smith," "Miss Stafford" and Mr. and Mrs. Griffin and "Miss Long." Thank you all, but most of all—thank you, Jesus!

Dr. Steven Wright is pastor of Park Hills Baptist Church, Austin, Tex., which has grown from 85 to 850 members in seven years.

Light from the Capital

New gift rules take effect

Taxpayers who made any single charitable contribution in the amount of \$250 or more in 1994 must comply with the new rules on substantiating donations in order to take the charitable deduction on their tax returns. Such taxpayers may no longer rely solely on a canceled check to substantiate a "covered gift."

Note that the new rules do not apply to donors whose combined gifts add up to \$250 or more but only to those who write a single check for \$250 or more. Taxpayers who make gifts of less than \$250 per check may still use canceled checks as proof of the gifts, even if the total of all checks written to one or more charities exceeds \$250.

Before April 15, or other due date for the return, the taxpayer must request and obtain a written acknowledgment from the church or charity, stating the amount of each "covered gift" (only the ones more than \$250 each). If a covered gift is non-cash property, the statement by the charity must describe, but need not value, such property. The acknowledgment should state whether the charity provided any goods or services in consideration, in whole or in part, for the gift, and, if so, state a good faith estimate of the value of such goods or services. In the new law, these are referred to as *quid pro quo* contributions.

There is also a new code section regarding "quid pro quo" gifts in excess of \$75. For example, if a donor gives \$100 to a charity in exchange for a banquet dinner valued at \$40, there is a covered *quid pro quo* donation.

The charity has a duty to inform the donor, either in the solicitation or the receipt: (1) The payment is deductible only to the extent that it exceeds the value of the goods or services, and (2) the estimated value of the goods and services the donor received.

For more information, contact the Internal Revenue Service for Publication 1771 or ask your local tax adviser.

— Michael Whitehead

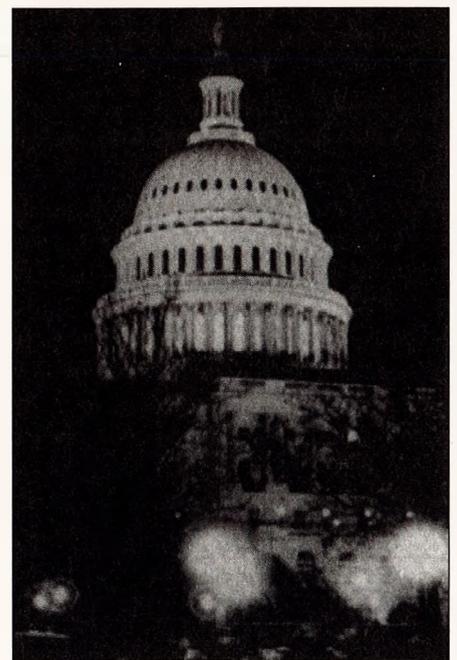
Bills aim to roll back homosexual agenda

On the first day of Congress, Sen. Jesse Helms, R.-N.C., introduced two bills which seek to protect taxpayers against subsidizing the homosexual agenda and to protect federal employees who want to speak out in their workplace against homosexual rights. Helms has long been known as a critic of the homosexual agenda.

In S. 25, Helms seeks to address the promotion of the homosexual agenda through the federal workplace. This bill would prohibit tax funding for programs and activities designed to encourage federal employees to accept homosexuality as a legitimate or normal lifestyle.

An example of the need for such legislation was demonstrated last fall. On Sept. 8, as President Clinton was meeting with Southern Baptist Convention President Jim Henry following a prayer breakfast with religious leaders, various federal agencies sponsored a Diversity Day 1994 training event.

The memorandum from the Department of the Navy, one of the sponsoring agencies, described the purpose of the event as "designed to solidify the



members' commitment to promote the value of diversity, encourage cross cultural awareness and exchange ideas and resources. This is the first undertaking of this type in the Federal sector." The memorandum from Commander G.R. Sterner ends with the warning that he "expect[ed] your active support of this endeavor."

Workshops and video titles for Diversity Day 1994 included: "On Being Gay," "Another Color of the Rainbow: Sexual Minorities in the Workplace," and "Flashpoint: When Values Collide." This last workshop dealt with "deep-seated values [which] are programmed in each of us at an early age and remain with us at a subconscious level.... The video may be highly sensitive to some viewers; the topics and diversity have strong emotional impact."

Helms' other bill, S. 23, would prevent federal employees from being removed from their position because of "remarks made during personal time in opposition to the federal government's policies, or proposed policies regarding homosexuals." The bill would

also retroactively reinstate any federal employee who has been removed prior to enactment of the bill.

The introduction of this bill is motivated, in part, by an incident which occurred in July 1994 with a Department of Agriculture employee who spoke out against Clinton administration policies during off hours on a local television news program. The employee was demoted and reassigned to another position with the department.

Helms successfully amended legislation which directed the Department of Agriculture to reinstate the employee. However, that legislation only affected the rights of employees at the Department of Agriculture. With S. 23, Helms seeks to apply the same protection for all federal employees.

— James A. Smith

Bill would form panel on gambling

Congress will establish a panel to study the impact of gambling in the United States, if a representative from Virginia has his way.

Rep. Frank Wolf, R.-Va., has introduced H.R. 497, a bill to form the National Gambling Impact and Policy Commission for the purpose of compiling information on gambling's effect on economics, crime, families and individuals. The nine-member panel Wolf proposes will have three members appointed by the president, three by the Senate majority leader and three by the speaker of the House of Representatives. One of the appointees should be a governor from a state which has legalized gambling, he said.

The United States is on a "gambling binge," Wolf said. "This is an issue of national eco-

nomics importance, and I believe the new Congress should examine it closely over the coming months."

The commission, he said, should review the cost and effectiveness of federal and state regulations, gambling's impact on other businesses, the influence of gambling promoters on the development of policies regulating gaming, the relationship between gambling and crime, teenage gambling and the effect of pathological gambling on individuals, families and social institutions.

The commission also should propose whether gaming operations on Indian lands should be regulated by the states, not just the federal government, he said.

The Christian Life Commission applauded Wolf's proposal.

"A congressional commission has the potential of alerting Americans to the dangers of gambling in the same way that the Commission on Pornography formed in 1985 by then-Attorney General Edwin Meese warned of the danger inherent in allowing unbridled proliferation of pornographic material," said Lamar Cooper, the CLC staff member who handles the gambling issue.

"The gambling industry has convinced large numbers of the public and state legislators that gambling revenue is a 'free lunch' to state budget needs, but there still 'ain't no free lunch,'" Cooper said. "An unbiased commission could point out the discrepancies that exist between what the gambling industry promises to state governments versus what it actually delivers.

"The use of gambling as a source of revenue does not come without a cost. That cost is the negative impact it has on people and communities."

The commission should be established in a "fair and balanced" way, Wolf said, in order to

centralize data so "governors, state legislators and citizens can have the facts they need to make informed decisions."

He has opposed attempts to legalize riverboat gambling in Virginia and would fight against gambling in the District of Columbia, but he is not taking a position on what the other 49 states should do, Wolf said.

Examples of Wolf's concerns about gambling's impact:

- "Gambling cannibalizes other business, such as restaurants," he said. The number of restaurants in Atlantic City decreased in 10 years from 243 in 1977, the year after the legalization of casinos, to 146.

- In the first 16 years of casino gambling in Atlantic City, the police budget tripled to \$24 million while the population fell 20 percent, according to the *Wall Street Journal*. The crime rate rose 230 percent in the city's first 13 years of legalized casinos, Wolf said.

Only Hawaii and Utah prohibit gambling. There are lotteries in 37 states and casinos in 23 states, Wolf said. By the year 2000, it is predicted 95 percent of Americans will live within a three- or four-hour drive of a casino, he said.

— Tom Strode

Express your opinion

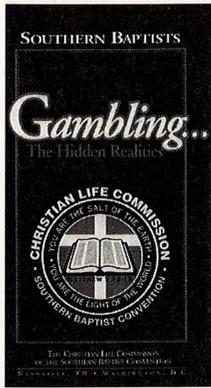
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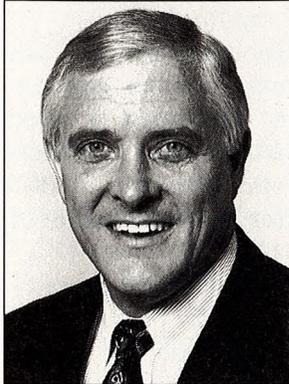
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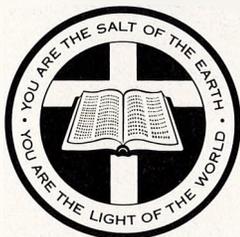
"It's a harmless pastime." "If people want to throw their money away, let 'em!" "It's a good way to raise revenue for the government and education." "Look at all the money you can win." These half-truths and more are part of the propaganda line of the gambling industry. Although we know gambling (or gaming, as the industry calls itself) is wrong, too often we are not sure why. And when we finally learn why, too often we don't have a clue when it comes to stopping the highly financial and even more highly polished public relations campaigns of the gaming industry. Enter "Gambling . . . The Hidden Realities." This brief video offered by the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission contains in nugget form the steps necessary to confront, expose and stop the gambling cancer. Get it. Watch it. Do what it says. The sooner the gambling menace is confronted in any situation, the easier it is to stop. This video is a winner!

Jerry Sutton, pastor
Two Rivers Baptist Church
Nashville, Tenn.



Thanks to the Christian Life Commission for a well-documented video, "Gambling . . . The Hidden Realities." This is an excellent presentation accentuating the real bottom line of the gambling promoters. You factually shot holes in the gambling industry's arguments with input from those on the scene. Your closing suggestions on combating gambling efforts are well presented and right on target. This reminds me of the encouraging words in 1 John 4:4, "Greater is He that is within you than he that is in the world." Thank you for a very helpful documentary that will be useful throughout America.

D. L. Dan Ireland, chairman
National Coalition Against Legalized Gambling
Birmingham, Ala.



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