

# Light

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMISSION OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

JANUARY-FEBRUARY, 1996

## Seminar focus: 'Who will occupy public square?'

By Tom Strode

Conservative evangelical leaders such as Gary Bauer, Jay Sekulow and Dee Jepsen will provide insight for Southern Baptists and other concerned Christians at the Christian Life Commission's 1996 seminar in Washington, D. C.

"Christians in the Public Square: Faith in Practice?" will be the theme of the 29th annual CLC conference scheduled March 4-6 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel on Capitol Hill.

In addition to speeches by national pro-family leaders and Southern Baptist pastors and ethics specialists, a congressional breakfast, public policy luncheon and lobbying effort on Capitol Hill are planned. It will all be done in Washington, the site of monuments and museums celebrating the country's history.

Headlining the seminar will be Bauer, president of the Family Research Council, one of the leading pro-family public policy organizations in Washington, D. C.; Sekulow, chief litigator for the American Center for Law and Justice, one of the foremost advocacy groups for religious liberty in the United States; and Jepsen, president of the *Enough Is Enough* anti-pornography campaign.

Richard Land, CLC president; David Gushee, professor of Christian ethics at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; and Gary Frost, second vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention and pastor of Rising Star Baptist Church, Youngstown, Ohio, will address seminar sessions.

Other Southern Baptist pastors on the program include O. S. Hawkins of First Baptist Church, Dallas; Charles Fuller of First Baptist Church, Roanoke, Va.; E. W. McCall, president of the African American Fellowship and pastor of St. Stephen Baptist Church, LaPuente, Calif.; and Mark Dever of Capitol Hill Baptist Church, Washington, D. C.

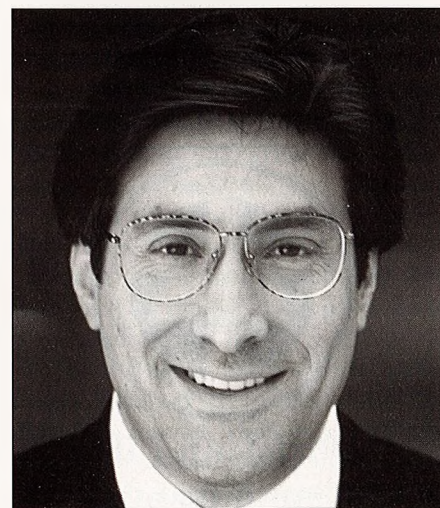
The registration fee is \$49 per person. The fee is \$25 for a spouse. Student registration is \$25. (See the registration form on page 11.)

Meals and housing are additional. The congressional breakfast is \$10, and the public policy luncheon is \$15. The seminar room rate at the Hyatt Regency is \$160 a night, single or double occupancy. Reservations may be made at the Hyatt by calling 1-800-233-1234.

For information, please contact the CLC Nashville office at 901 Commerce St., #550; Nashville, TN 37203-3696; (615) 244-2495.



Bauer



Sekulow



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change the world"*

## PERSPECTIVE

### Is Democracy Doomed?

By Richard D. Land



Jack Hamm

Carl F. H. Henry is undeniably the 20th century's greatest evangelical theologian, and arguably its most important theologian of any perspective. In the last decade of this turbulent and troubled century he stands head and shoulders above his contemporaries, past and present. Since the 1940s Dr. Henry has identified the issues and engaged the controversies that have been most determinative for the Christian faith. Decade after decade he has written masterfully and spoken eloquently to the most important issues confronting Christians. Surely no evangelical Christian leader has been so right so early so often on so many of the critical issues of the past half century.

Imagine my delight when I received a phone call from Dr. Henry a few weeks ago asking whether we might be interested in publishing his latest book, entitled *Has Democracy Had Its Day?* I became increasingly excited as he described the book's thesis to me, and when the manuscript arrived two days later, I read it through in one sitting. I believe *Has Democracy Had Its Day?* to be one of the most important things ever written by Dr. Henry. He brings a lifetime of insight and analysis to the question of whether a democratic society can long thrive or even continue to exist when the religious and theological underpinnings that have made such freedom possible have been abandoned. When the spiritual foundation collapses, can the implosion of the civilization which it supported be far behind?

*Has Democracy Had Its Day?* is the expansion of an address given in Grand Rapids on November 7, 1995, to the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty. The Acton Institute was named for Lord Acton, the 19th century British political philosopher and historian who believed that the conscience, informed by religion and morality, was the only sufficient safeguard for freedom in civil society. The excerpt of *Has Democracy Had Its Day?* printed on page three of *Light* exemplifies the appropriateness of Dr. Henry's theme being sponsored by the Acton Institute as well as revealing Dr. Henry's trademark eloquence, insight and analysis.

In *Has Democracy Had Its Day?* Dr. Henry quickly points out that while "the Bible does not commend any specific historical form as incarnating the kingdom of God, scriptural teaching on the nature of God and of human society nonetheless excludes some political options and clarifies the implications of others." He notes "that neither violent liberation nor chaos nor totalitarian rule nor absolute monarchy is compatible with the biblical emphasis that all humanity by creation is a divine-image bearer and equal in worth and duty and rights." Perhaps even more importantly, Dr. Henry concludes that "A democratically chosen and constitutionally limited government seems the political structure most compatible with the Christian insistence on human worth and liberty and most likely to accommodate the promotion and protection of human freedoms, justice and peace."

In defending democracy buttressed by the foundational truths of Judeo-Christian morality as the most promising guarantor of freedom, Dr. Henry takes on all critics, from the "Singapore School" of Far Eastern political and economic theorists to theonomist reconstructionists and neo-Marxist liberation theologians. In doing so, however, he is careful to assert that "democratic government in its highest tradition is predicated not simply on the will of the majority but looks beyond that to transcendent truth to which the political realm is accountable" and that it "views such answerability in the context of specific religious beliefs and values."

Every Christian in America would benefit and be challenged by reading Dr. Henry's *Has Democracy Had Its Day?* When reading Dr. Henry's tren-

(Continued on Page 12)



# Politics, religion and authentic freedom

*Excerpted from Has Democracy Had Its Day?, available soon from the Christian Life Commission, \$9.95.*

**By Carl F. H. Henry**

An embattled multitude remains devoted to the biblical heritage despite secular society's routine underestimation of it. Most modern Christians view democracy favorably and believe it should be nurtured over against authoritarian governments. The surest way to lose it is to neglect its distinctives and take it for granted.

American evangelicals in the recent past have had serious reservations over both a politicized Protestantism and a politicized Catholicism, fearing a vigorous drive for religiopolitical power. The recent emergence of a largely politicized Evangelical movement has encouraged interreligious cobelligerency by coalitions sharing common moral and social concerns to arrest secular erosion of the nation's spiritual heritage.

These developments thrust forward the question of acceptable political theory and activity. Granted that Christians should be more involved politically—possibly to the limit of their competence and opportunity—what type of engagement will comprise biblical obedience? Is it enough simply to resist the growing secularization of society, but with no more articulate vision than sporadic social and political participation that may influence society in competing ways? Should not serious reflection on the Christian philosophy of politics be an important aspect of thinking christianly? Surely democratic principles must be clearly defined and strengthened.

The goal of civic renewal must be not merely to repel democracy's assailants but also to restore the nation's foundations. This requires comprehensive effort. The connective tissue of a nation is neither democracy nor information nor education. Every citizen must indeed have some understanding of democratic political processes, but he or

she also must contribute in some personal way to the advancement of truth and justice.

Moral issues being raised today are not focused only on the margin of politics; the whole political enterprise is being cross-examined anew in the context of ethics. Justice and love are not merely matters of tolerance, especially not tolerance of evil. A revival of healthy democracy requires a clear voting majority, and, more importantly, a shared moral vision and purpose. Out of this dynamic we are now seeing both family values and public economic responsibility again coming to the fore.

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There are some signs that illegitimacy is being restigmatized, and that the lost sense of shame is coming home again. Even some television shows seem to revive a distinction between right and wrong. "Feeling good" is being linked again to confession and repentance. Teenage pregnancy is eyed more critically. Hurried divorce evokes greater scrutiny, especially when children's lives are bartered.

More and more it is acknowledged that biblical and specifically Christian elements of religious faith had a significant impact upon early America. The United States may not have originated as a Christian government—indeed, the Founding Fathers disallowed a religious test for office—but there can be little doubt that the United States nevertheless was predominantly a Christian nation, that is, a geographical collectivity of Christians.

No nation and no culture can long survive in the absence of

shared values—indeed of transcendent values and absolutes. To speak meaningfully today of the invisible transcendent is to speak of the supernatural, self-revealing God of the Bible. Speculative alternatives to the theistic creator and moral judge are collapsing into insignificance. Our highest ideals are not self-sustaining. Modernism and secular humanism are emptying into postmodernism with its denial of objective truth, objective good, and objective meaning.

Freedom is revealed religion's supreme political promise and highest political end. Liberty requires the pursuit of an ideal civil society and the containment of arbitrary authority. During the American Revolution the clergy preached liberty—nothing less. They anticipated a day when humans would at last be free to choose the good and to do their duty, when liberty would be rescued from abuse by illicit authority and from the lust for power and possessions.

It is a tenet of revealed religion that humans in their present condition are not free to do the good, although they may nonetheless fulfill civic duties and make moral choices. The greatest text on freedom is that the truth—more particularly the redemption offered by the Son—sets one "free indeed" (John 8:32, 36). Charles Malik, former chairman of the United Nations General Assembly, said that true freedom is the greatest promise any nation can offer to the world, yet Western leaders now rarely talk about it.

True freedom is whole and, indivisible, it embraces political freedom, moral freedom, spiritual freedom, freedom of thought, freedom of belief, freedom of expression, free enterprise, a free press, free elections, but supremely, freedom to perform the will of God. Religious freedom is basic to all else; it offers humankind not only freedom not to worship Caesar, but freedom to worship Caesar's God, who is the ground of all human duties and rights.

# Effort, not edict, key to right relations

(First of series of two)

By Bill Merrell

When the Southern Baptist Convention overwhelmingly approved a resolution apologizing "...to all African Americans for condoning and/or perpetuating individual and systemic racism in our lifetime" saying, "we genuinely repent of racism of which we have been guilty," there was broad exposure in the secular press. Most of the coverage was approving, though some, unconvinced of the sincerity or purity of the motives of the Convention, expressed open skepticism.

Many have remarked that as important as the actions of the SBC are, the actions of local churches and individual Southern Baptists are even more crucial in bringing about lasting reconciliation.

Gary Frost, African American pastor of the Rising Star Baptist Church of Youngstown, Ohio, and SBC second vice president, said following the historic vote, "This is one of our most inspiring moments. It made a huge statement to the African American community." "But," he added, "there is still a need for progress at the local church level."

Arkansas Baptists are making serious, persistent, good-faith efforts to effect reconciliation and improve racial relations, and the Lord is blessing their efforts, according to Jack Kwok, director of co-operative ministries with National and Southern Baptists of Arkansas.

Kwok described worship, evangelism, and ministry projects which are improving race relations in his state. He stated, "Our purpose is to initiate and nurture righteous interracial relationships. Our goal is not just to avoid rioting in the streets, but to foster relationships defined by the righteous standards of Scripture—relationships in which there is no paternalism, no prejudice, and no patronizing."

Through the Co-operative Ministries Department, Arkansas

Baptists support more than a dozen annual regional fellowships statewide. These are joint worship services in which black and white pastors in a region share in planning and leading. The services are rotated from a National Baptist church with a Southern Baptist pastor preaching one year; alternating location and preacher the next.

Kwok said of these meetings, "They are the least threatening thing we do; they help to overcome fear and insecurity." These meetings confirm what Kwok calls the "permission principle." He explained, "For those who want to do the right thing, it gives them permission."

Saying racial reconciliation is like climbing a ladder, one rung at a time, he stated. "We declare to the

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***"Racism flourishes in the midst of stereotypes.***

***When you get to know other believers...as individuals, you can no longer treat them as just a part of a group."***

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community that racism as a doctrine is heresy, and racism as a practice is sin. As we worship together, we affirm our unity and appreciate our diversity. There is clearly a difference in style—unity is not sameness. Our unity is in Christ and our doctrinal understanding. They help us to learn from and grow to appreciate each other."

He described the beginning of a new fellowship in a community with what he described as "a strong racist residue." They worked for three years, exploring possibilities, explaining goals, building trust. After the first joint worship service, two elderly men spoke to him. An eighty-eight-year-old white worshiper said to him, "This is one of the greatest things I've ever known in my Christian experience." Later

the same evening, an elderly black deacon said simply, "I never thought it could be."

Evangelistic and church building ministries have grown from the worship fellowships. Simultaneous revivals, in which more than a hundred churches participated, "Here's Hope" evangelistic crusades and conferences, evangelistic rallies, witness training, and the development of multiracial evangelistic choirs brought white and black Baptists together in the interest of bringing others to know Christ.

"Church in a Day" is another successful strategy which brings work teams together to do construction work on church buildings, doing so without regard to race. Kwok told of a work team traveling together to construct a church building, when one of the volunteers asked, "Are we going to build a colored church?" One of the other men replied, "Yes, do you have a problem with that?" After what seemed like a long time, the original questioner said, "No, I guess I don't."

Kwok thinks of this as what he calls the "parallel principle." "When we share in a common project, whether it is evangelism, the construction of a church building, disaster relief or whatever, working parallel or alongside persons of another race enables us to see them as individuals, not as members of a stereotyped group."

Kwok observed, "Both black and white Christians are subject to feelings which keep brothers apart. We have to confront those feelings regardless of our race." He continued, "Racism flourishes in the midst of stereotypes. When you get to know other believers as those who know Christ, as individuals, you can no longer treat them as just a part of a group."

"You can't stop racism or prejudice by edict. They will be overcome one person at a time."

*A follow-up article will address what some local churches are doing to effect racial reconciliation.*



# The Devaluing of Life

By Dianna Lightfoot

"First do no harm."

The Hippocratic oath, which every physician must pledge could, in our utilitarian age, soon be replaced by: "First do what is cost-effective, in the best interest of the patient's family or meaningful in terms of quality of life."

This dramatic change in medical philosophy reflects the attitudes of society in general. The new philosophy may be traced to one central idea: the devaluation of human life.

One and one-half million abortions are legally performed in this country every year. Congress has recently considered banning partial-birth abortions because this is not a recognized medical procedure.

"Partial-birth abortion" is portrayed as particularly abhorrent because the brain tissue of a late-term fetus is sucked out so that it is delivered dead. No less barbaric, however, is the most common form of abortion, a sharp or suction curettage abortion, that is performed up to the date of delivery. This procedure dismembers the baby in the uterus, after which it sucks it out. It is a recognized medical technique; thus, it is protected by law.

President Clinton's executive order to allow experimentation with fetal tissue is another example of the current philosophy. The National Institutes of Health went even further than the President by suggesting last year that the medical research community should consider "growing" human embryos solely for the purpose of experimentation. When the tests were completed, the embryos would simply be destroyed. The NIH also proposed harvesting eggs from aborted female babies and surgically removing a woman's egg, then stimulating that egg to produce a one-parent pregnancy, and combining human genes with animal genes to produce "chimeras."

In 1994, the United States became the first civilized nation in the world to legalize physician-

assisted death when Oregon passed its "Right to Die" measure. After "assisting" in several suicides, some in the back of his own van, Dr. Jack Kevorkian's latest contribution to medicine is the obitrium—a death clinic. A *New York Times* editorial in December 1993 remarked on the dismissal of one of the assisted suicide cases against Kevorkian by proclaiming this a legal victory and "a strong step toward sensible regulation in this troubled area." Bills to legalize euthanasia and assisted suicide have been introduced in at least fourteen state legislatures during the first ten months of 1995.

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***"If life is not  
precious at its  
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collapses?"***

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The devaluation of life is not limited to the unborn or those who wish to die. Dr. Eugene Diamond, professor of pediatrics at Loyola University School of Medicine, describes a "radical change in the current standard." He was referring to the Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs of the American Medical Association which recommended that live anencephalic infants be approved for donors as a "limited exception" to the general rule; that is, that the donor be legally dead.

Anencephalic babies are born without a brain or spinal cord. They function only by involuntary impulses from the brain stem. Understandably, such babies usually have a short life span. Yet, they are human beings, and they are alive. Dr. Diamond forcefully argues, "Killing one patient to benefit another is a line that society should not cross."

What has happened to respect for the patient's best interest? We could blame it on *Roe vs. Wade*, which extended a woman's right of privacy to the right to do whatever she wanted to the person growing inside her. Or we could blame the acceptance of thought forms in which standards of right and wrong are as flexible as a pipe cleaner. Some blame the environment, saying a crowded planet means somebody must be sacrificed. But the truth is, like the frog in a slowly heating pot of water, we are not reading the temperature correctly. We may find ourselves cooked before we realize the heat is on.

The healers/terminators are only a reflection of the rest of society. We have been desensitized to horror, destruction and death because they have become so much an accepted part of our daily lives. Insensitivity becomes indifference. What was once horrifying is now merely terrible, and the terrible has become tolerable. When the news is too gory or the changes in public policy and law too gruesome or unpalatable, we turn away and reason that surely it won't get any worse and, even if it does, it certainly won't affect us.

But it already has.

In *Brave New World*, Aldous Huxley describes a future society in which human life is devalued. There, a dose of medication is administered to deaden emotions. Death conditioning begins at eighteen months of age. The elderly are considered a burden at best and an embarrassment at worst. Such a society remains fictional, for now, but certainly will not forever in the presence of increasing complacency. After all, if life is not precious at its beginning and near its end, how long can it be before the middle collapses as well?

*Dianna Lightfoot is director of the Physician's Resource Council for Family Issues in Birmingham, Alabama, a component of The Alabama Family Alliance.*



By Gary L. Frost

*Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers? (Mal. 2:10).*

Malachi is listed as one of the minor prophets; however, we know there is nothing minor about his message. His was the last Old Testament voice crying in the wilderness before another Voice joined the chorus some four hundred years later.

Though little is known about Malachi, we know he was burdened to see integrity in the midst of God's people. He lived in a time of religious hypocrisy, and longed to see genuine spiritual passion replace lifeless ceremonial form.

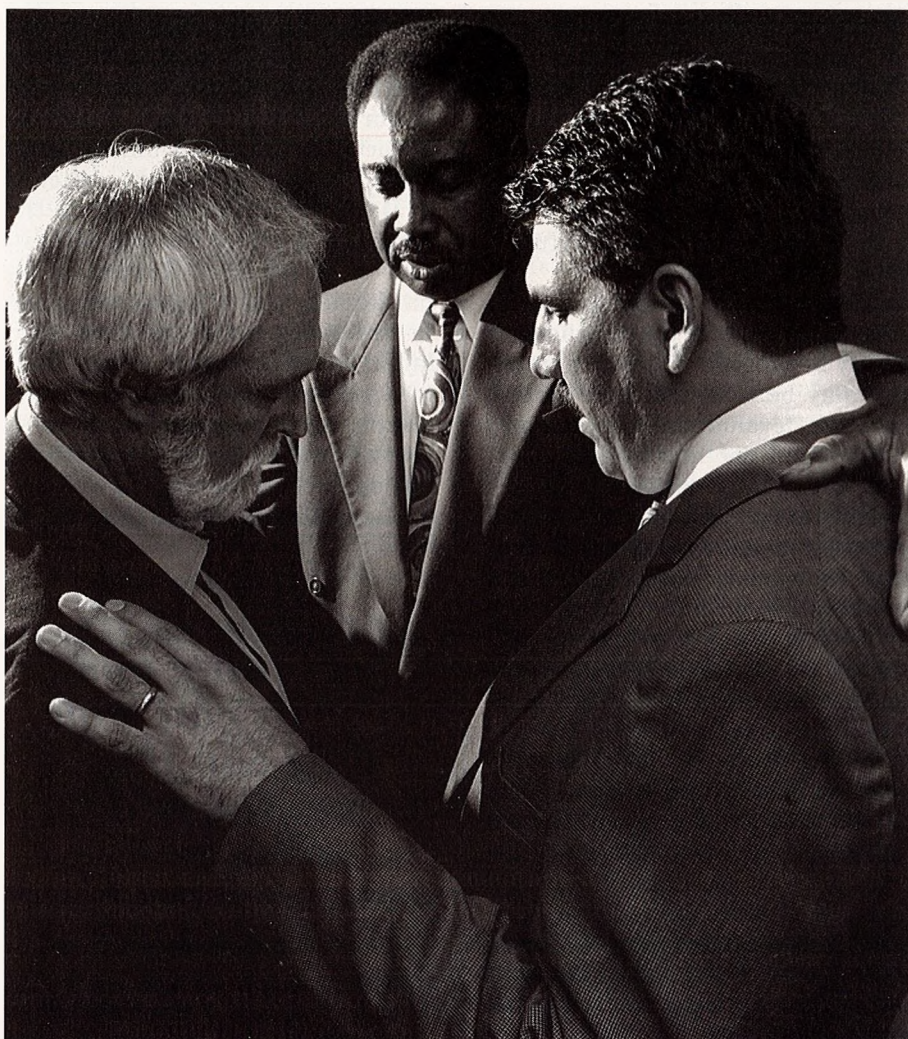
Malachi's words were not addressed to the world in general, but to the children of God in particular and to their leaders more specifically. He wrote to Israel, the chosen of God, to verbally chastise them for mistreating their fellow Jews. He appealed to the covenant made with Abraham as a basis for their commitment to God and their concern for their brothers.

This passage obviously applies to our contemporary situation. Those who have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ are now the beneficiaries of a better covenant and are now members of God's great household. Peter wrote that we are "a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God" (1 Pet. 2:9, NIV). We should no longer see our primary identity as Negroid, or Caucasoid or Mongoloid, but now, in becoming partakers of the divine nature, we can identify with a new race of people; to coin a term, we are "Regenezoid."

Some wrongly suggest that God's agenda is to "homogenize" the church and to blend us all together into one bland expression of uniformity. But God's plan is not uniformity; it is unity. Unity speaks of oneness of purpose and commonality of character. It does not speak of identical expression and regimentation of behavior.

## 'Hath not one God created us?'

(Malachi 2:10)



### Observe Race Relations Sunday February 11, 1996

A refreshing wind is blowing across our land as believers in Jesus Christ surmount cultural differences and endeavor "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3). We see God bringing His family together. Believers of various nationalities and ethnic backgrounds are unifying in Christian oneness. While maintaining their cultural distinctiveness, with a single voice they declare that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Malachi asks, "Why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?" This rhetorical question calls not for an answer, but

for an examination. God compels us to pursue a visible manifestation of our invisible unity in Christ. My prayer is that the church will clearly demonstrate that "there is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph. 4:4-6).

*Gary L. Frost is pastor of Rising Star Baptist Church, Youngstown, Ohio. He was elected second vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1994 and was reelected in 1995.*



**RACE RELATIONS SUNDAY - February 11, 1996**  
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Quantity	<i>Race Relations Products</i>	Price	Total
	<b>New Bulletin Insert:</b> Race Relations Sunday emphasis (Color/undated)	\$ .06	
	<b>New Poster:</b> Race Relations Sunday Promotional Poster (Color/undated)	.95	
	<b>New Sermon Brief:</b> Race Relations Sunday (Luke 10:25-37)	.22	
	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	
	Pamphlet: "A Southern Baptist and Roman Catholic Perspective: Racism"	.10	
	<b>Race Relations Resource Set</b> (one of each above)	<b>2.00</b>	
	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	
	<b>Videotape:</b> <i>Southern Baptists Face Racial Issues</i> 1/2" VHS, 22 min.	19.95	
	<b><i>Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Products</i></b>		
	<b>New Bulletin Insert:</b> Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Sunday (Color/undated)	.06	
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	Pamphlet: "Critical Issues: A Case for Abstinence"	.33	
	Fact Sheet: "Hard Facts About Alcohol and Other Drugs"	.22	
	<b>Alcohol Resource Set</b> (one of each above)	<b>2.00</b>	
	Guide: "Alcohol Awareness: A Guide for Teenagers and Their Parents"	4.25	
	<b>CLC Videotape:</b> <i>Bites Like a Snake: Students Speak on Alcohol and Tobacco</i> 1/2" VHS, 20 min.	19.95	
	Guide: "Drugs Awareness: A Guide for Youth and Youth Leaders"	1.95	
	Poster: Drugs Awareness Promotional Wall Poster	.75	
	Pamphlet: "Christian Life Style for Youth: Drugs"	.35	
	Pamphlet: "Issues and Answers: Drugs"	.17	
	Pamphlet: "Issues and Answers: Smoking"	.17	
	<b>Drugs Resource Set</b> (one copy of each of above 5 printed resources)	<b>2.75</b>	
	<b>Videotape:</b> <i>Cocaine: The Broken Promise</i> 1/2" VHS, 65 min. (for all ages)	16.95	

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*Point/Counterpoint is intended to forward discussion and understanding of issues about which Christians disagree. Opinions expressed are those of their authors and do not necessarily represent those of the CLC.*

By Gerald Hutchinson Jr.

A cherished tenet of Baptists is the belief in a "free church in a free state." Our forebears were persecuted, and some died in the defense of the faith. One might wonder how or why any Baptist could suggest that we use tax funds or resources in our ministries. I think there are good reasons to do so.

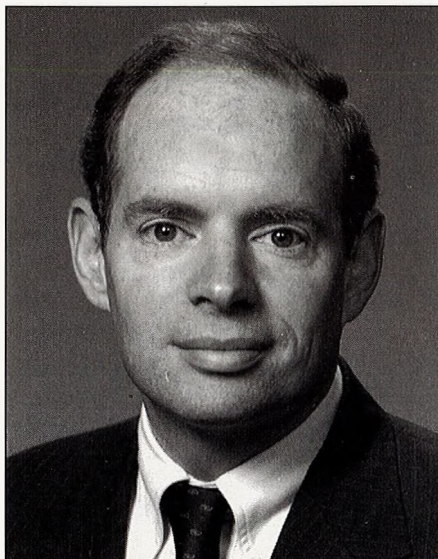
There are areas of mutual interest and concern to both church and state. Caring for the sick; providing for poor, elderly persons; caring for children who are in need; feeding the hungry and sheltering the homeless are a few examples. Such needs allow for the possibility of positive partnering between the church and the state in addressing critical concerns. For example:

1. First Baptist Church, Longview, Wash., used federal Department of Housing and Urban Development funds to build two apartment complexes for low-income elderly persons. In 1970 they built one complex with fifty-two units, and in 1979 they built a second complex with one hundred units. The construction of these units met a community need for affordable housing for poor, elderly persons. The church offers Bible studies and other spiritual ministry to residents from the housing complexes.

2. Most Baptist Children's Homes receive income from the per diem payments of children who are in the custody of the state and yet reside and are cared for at a Baptist child-care facility. During the 1992 Haitian refugee crisis the Georgia Baptist Children's Home entered into a contract with the U.S. Justice Department to provide short-term care for a number of Haitian youth. The experience turned out to be a very positive Christian witness.

3. The Christian Activity Center in East St. Louis, Ill., a Baptist Center sponsored by the Metro East

## Baptist entities should consider using tax funds for their ministries



Gerald Hutchinson Jr.

Baptist Association, Illinois Baptist State Association and the Home Mission Board, partnered with the local school district to offer lunch to children participating in the center's summer program in 1995. Tax funds paid for the purchase and preparation of the food at a nearby school cafeteria. Meals were delivered daily to the Baptist Center for distribution to the children. The Baptist Center was able to render a service in Jesus' name, children received a nutritious meal and cafeteria workers maintained their jobs during the summer. It was a win-win situation for all.

4. In North Carolina more than fifty percent of the residents in nursing facilities owned and operated by the Baptist Retirement Homes receive funding through the state's Medicaid program. While the Medicaid reimbursement does not cover the full costs associated with providing care to the older adults, it plays a vital role in the benevolent ministry provided to North Carolina Baptist older adults.

In each of these situations the Baptist entity involved rendered a service to people with the government funds or resources. Guidelines

related to the receipt of these funds did not impinge upon the freedom of Baptists in carrying out their ministry and witness.

The following guidelines, drawn from a document prepared by the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina entitled "Guidelines for the Use of Public Funds by Institutions and Agencies of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina," may prove helpful to Baptist entities considering utilizing tax funds.

- Baptists should recognize that a church operates within a state and that there is no absolute separation of church and state. However, the government should guarantee that a free church should function without ownership or operational control by the state.

- Baptists recognize and reaffirm

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***"Good stewardship implies that we explore the possibility of using tax funds in ministry when appropriate."***

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firm the principle that since tax dollars are collected from people of all faiths and people of no faith, they should never be used as an outright gift or dole to build or operate any denominational institution or agency. Furthermore, service for which government payment is received should always be service to humanity in general and should never be used excessively to involve government in the sectarian interests of a Baptist entity.

*(Continued on Page 10)*



By A. William Merrell

More than thirty-nine thousand nonprofit groups share \$40 billion annually in federal grant money—equal to one-quarter of this year's deficit. Not all are religious, but many are. Catholic Charities receives \$25.9 million, while the Presbyterian Church USA receives only \$1.38 million.

As a *citizen*, I strongly disagree with such policies. As a *Baptist*, I hold it unsuitable for us to receive tax monies for the exercise of ministries, whatever those ministries are. I leave the question of constitutionality to constitutional specialists. It is unwise, unwarranted and unnecessary for Baptist entities to take tax money for their work, as I will elaborate.

**Historical understandings.** Baptists have long known it is not fitting for churches to expect others to foot the bill for their work. In colonial days, when other denomi-

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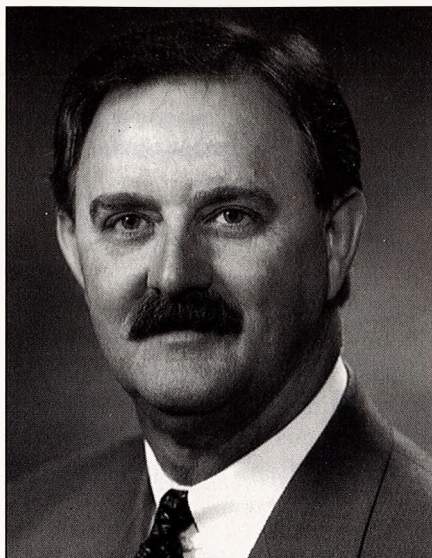
***"To take tax funds for ministry squanders an opportunity to serve the poor and our society most redemptively."***

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nations accepted favored status and tax funds, Baptists consistently refused them. They considered it unconscionable to expect other citizens to provide support for those things contrary to their own conscience. Our forbears were right!

Can we simultaneously assert that "The state has no right to impose taxes which support any form of religion," as the Baptist Faith and Message does, while arguing that it is appropriate for us to receive tax funds for our min-

## Baptist entities should not consider using tax funds for their ministries



A. William Merrell

istries? Is, or ought there be, *any* legitimate ministry which is not a "form of religion"?

**Erroneous message.** God is the Sovereign Source of the church. He provides for it by the freewill tithes and offerings of His people. Pursuit of tax funds invites the scorn of outsiders; their acceptance brings the inevitable intrusion of the government into the work of the church. What the government funds, it ultimately controls, as many private colleges and universities have learned to their dismay.

Access to government funds is very seductive. It is the "nail too close to the compass" which distorts its reading. For the church to be simultaneously dependent upon the Lord and upon the State is not ultimately possible.

**Incompatible bases.** Biblical concepts of ministry to the poor are not those of the modern welfare state. The Scriptures teach that men, made in the image of God, are endued with inherent dignity and attendant responsibility. The Scriptures also sanction private ownership of property, assigning stewardship responsibilities,

including helping the poor, to property owners.

A relief system embodying these principles is described in Leviticus 19. Landowners were to leave the corners of their fields unharvested, picking their vineyards and fields only once per season. Food could be "gleaned" by the poor and immigrants after a harvest crew had finished its work. All were benefited—none were degraded! The owner of the field was repaid for his investment and industriousness, while the poor man met his family's needs by his own diligence. The landowner was delivered from greediness and excess through charitable restraint, and the poor man from grinding need and indignity through honorable labor. Both could maintain confidence in the Lord God of Israel, Who supplied daily bread for His people.

In the New Testament, mercy ministries are specifically linked to the spiritual dimension. (See Acts 3:6 and Matt. 25:40). This dimension gives compassion a vitality that no partnership with the government can.

**Ruinous outcomes.** The modern welfare state embodies views of the nature of man, work, human responsibility, personal property, and proper means of assisting the needy which radically diverge from the teaching of Scripture. Faulty premises lead to faulty prescriptions, with tragic results.

Cultural observers of varied political opinions decry linkages between welfarism, dependency, indignity, and what Tom Bethell refers to as "...welfare's open encouragement of illegitimacy." These outcomes are as inevitable as they are unintentional, based as they are on wrong assumptions, contrary to the principles of Christianity.

(Continued on Page 10)



## POINT/COUNTERPOINT

(Continued from Page 8)

- Baptists believe that the working relationship between church and state must involve constant alertness to ensure the integrity of both and that this vigilance must be practiced by each.

- Any cooperative enterprise between Baptists and the government should meet the following requirements.

1. No Baptist entity shall enter a cooperative enterprise with the government for the primary advancement of the entities' sectarian interests.

2. A Baptist entity may accept assistance from the government

only in such cases as will enable it to render services commensurate with that assistance.

3. A Baptist entity should not accept funds that will alter its essential character or be inconsistent with court decisions concerning the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.

I respect and understand the position of those who choose to avoid any cooperation with the government for fear of being restricted in how they may bear witness to Christ. Some federal/state funds have guidelines that preclude verbal witness in the delivery of a service. Often the paperwork that

accompanies the application and administration of funds is so cumbersome that church-related organizations choose not to pursue the money for that reason alone.

Good stewardship implies that we explore the possibility of using tax funds in ministry when appropriate. I encourage Baptists to be open to opportunities where the church and state can work together for the common good.

*Gerald Hutchinson Jr. is director of the Church and Community Ministries Department of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.*

## POINT/COUNTERPOINT

(Continued from Page 9)

The very foundation of the welfare state is now questioned: "Is it a legitimate function of government to take responsibility for providing daily bread for millions of its citizens?" This provision can only be made by some form of coercive income distribution. As Kenneth W. Sollitt observed, "Government cannot give to people what it does not first take away from people. And that which one man receives without working for, another man must work for without receiving." Biblical Christians do not have to be convinced that churches should not be complicit in this redistribution!

In sum, there is a need for our understanding of ministry to be reestablished on sound, biblical thinking. One of the great services churches could render in this environment would be to model systems of assistance which incorporate biblical ideas and which do not spawn the unintended destruction of the welfare state. To take tax funds for ministry squanders an opportunity to serve the poor and our society most redemptively.

### Government's stewardship.

Oversight of public money is a legitimate function of government, and should be insisted upon. If the government is *not* exercising close oversight, it should be. If it *is* doing so, then Baptists must forego those funds, maintaining autonomy over the essence, meaning, and purpose of ministry.



If we are to be fully effective in our world, we must be able to do as Peter did on his way to the temple. Asked for assistance by the congenitally lame man, he saw that the man received what met his need not just for a day, but for a lifetime; and not just physically, but spiritually. We cannot do that if we exchange our autonomy for public moneys and act simply as the final link of an often ill-conceived government distribution chain.

### Principle over pragmatism.

The General Committee of Virginia Baptists addressed a letter to George Washington in 1789 describing the liberty of conscience as "dearer to us than property and life." I urge my Baptist contemporaries to rediscover that dearness. Pragmatism, however well-intentioned, is a shabby substitute for principle!

We are the bride of Christ—not the handmaiden of the State!

*A William Merrell is director of communications for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.*



# "CHRISTIANS IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE: FAITH IN PRACTICE?"

*29th annual national seminar of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission*

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## CLC invites youth to write on Christian citizenship

A Christian citizenship essay contest designed for young people has been announced by the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. Students up to age eighteen not yet graduated from high school are invited to submit an essay of up to 1,000 words on the topic "Citizen Christians: God's Ambassadors."

"Every believer faces the challenge of living out one's faith in a sometimes hostile environment,"

says CLC president Richard Land. "We hope this contest will encourage young people to begin considering the issues that they will need to deal with when they reach voting age."

Entries must be legible—preferably prepared on a typewriter or word processor—and must be the original work of the person submitting them. Each essay will be evaluated by CLC staff members.

A plaque and a \$50.00 savings

bond will be awarded to the first place winner, and the winning essay will be printed in the May-June issue of *Light*. The runner-up will receive a plaque and a \$25.00 savings bond.

Entries must be postmarked no later than April 1, 1995, and mailed to:

Christian Citizenship Contest  
Christian Life Commission  
901 Commerce #550  
Nashville, TN 37203-3696



# Two CLC staffers, chair go to sister agency

Two program staff members and the trustee chairman of the Christian Life Commission have resigned to accept vice presidential positions under a new administration at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Lamar Cooper, CLC director of denominational relations, left the Commission to become Midwestern's vice president for academic affairs and dean of the faculty. He also will serve as professor of Hebrew and Old Testament. Cooper began his service at the school October 19.

Michael Whitehead, CLC general counsel, will be the seminary's vice president for business affairs. His position will be effective January 1.

Gary Ledbetter, chairman of the board, began serving December 1 as vice president for student development. Ledbetter, editor of the *Indiana Baptist* since 1989, served as the CLC's chairman in 1994-95 and was re-elected to a second term in September. All three were approved by the Midwestern trustees in mid-October.

Richard Land, CLC president and chief executive officer, expressed regret at the departure of the staff members.

"We at the Christian Life Commission are sorry to lose two such valuable and experienced colleagues," Land said. "We will miss

Lamar Cooper and Mike Whitehead greatly. They both have given years of dedicated service to the work of the Christian Life Commission. However, we acquiesce to the Holy Spirit's leadership in their lives, and we wish them Godspeed and every blessing in their new places of service.

"It is some small comfort to us that they will be serving in a sister Southern Baptist agency, so that their considerable gifts will continue to be exercised within our Southern Baptist Zion."

Cooper had served as director of denominational relations for the CLC since 1989. Before joining the CLC staff, he was dean of graduate studies at Criswell College in Dallas for nine years. He also had served as a pastor in Louisiana and Texas. Cooper has a bachelor degree from Louisiana College in Pineville, La., and two degrees from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, a master of theology in 1969 and doctor of theology in 1975. He has also studied archaeology at Tel Aviv University and Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

Cooper and his wife, Barbara, have four children.

Whitehead has been the CLC general counsel and director of Christian citizenship and religious liberty concerns since 1990. He has written and filed friend-of-the-court briefs in the U.S. Supreme Court

and lower courts. As a lawyer, Whitehead also handled the CLC's general legal work. He practiced law privately for 15 years before joining the Christian Life Commission.

Whitehead has a bachelor degree and a juris doctor degree from the University of Missouri in Columbia.

Whitehead and his wife, Jan, have three children.

Lee Hollaway, a veteran of Southern Baptist Convention agency work, has joined the staff on an interim basis to perform Cooper's responsibilities in coordinating plans for the CLC national seminar in Washington, D.C., and the agency's exhibit at the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in New Orleans next June.

Bill Merrell, CLC communications director, has been temporarily assigned responsibility for dealing with issues such as gambling and pornography which Cooper handled.

Will Dodson, a former Texas county judge, will join the CLC's Washington staff in mid-January. The CLC board elected him in September as director of government relations and associate general counsel. (See article on page 15.)

Board Vice Chairman Charles Betts has succeeded Ledbetter as chairman. Betts is pastor of First Baptist Church of Vandalia, Ohio.

## Is Democracy Doomed?

(Continued from Page 2)

chant prose, it is often useless to try to paraphrase him fairly, and best to let the reader sample the master wordsmith firsthand.

- "The nation has a much bigger bill to pay than a paralyzing budget imbalance, and that is the cost of defection from the Deity."

- "The mounting carnage of contemporary civilization, its poverty of spirit and lust for material gain, calls for a spiritual down payment on what belongs neither to Caesar nor to Madison Avenue nor to Wall Street."

- "Christians are citizens of two worlds, and the high price of neglect of cultural and political participation is that secular humanism or some other costly alternative will dominate the field."

- "Yet no discussion of church and state affairs should ignore the fact that what now needs repair is not government alone but the church as well."

- "A moment has struck for reverential awareness that democracy itself stands at a decisive crossroads in a watershed moment of world history."

- "To exhibit again the truths and ethical absolutes of revealed religion—not least of all that Jesus Christ is 'the truth'—and define the public behavior this implies for a secular culture that has reached a moral dead end...is now our demanding task. If we succeed...the once-familiar lyrics of 'The Star Spangled Banner' will sound forth again from a 'heaven rescued land' in praise of 'the Power'—not merely economic and military—that hath made and preserved us a nation."



# Presidential candidates

## invited to Memphis

By Lee Hollaway

All candidates for the U.S. presidency, including President Bill Clinton and Senator Bob Dole, have been invited to participate in the National Affairs Briefing scheduled for January 19-20, 1996, in Memphis, Tenn. At least four candidates had made firm commitments to attend, with several others still tentative in late November.

"Facing the Issues that Face America" is the theme of the meeting, which is part of an effort to set the agenda for discussion of social issues as they are impacted by historic Judeo-Christian moral and spiritual values in the 1996 elections.

"We believe that 1996 is a defining moment in America's journey in democracy and freedom," says Ed McAteer, the event's coordinator/convener. "America's destiny is at issue. The time-tested Judeo-Christian road map, set out by America's early leaders and embraced in the Mayflower Compact and other founding documents, is still a valid guide to be followed if America is to survive and prosper."

McAteer is founder and chairman of the National Religious Roundtable, which is the primary sponsor for the meeting.

In addition to confronting candidates with the ethical perspectives of conservative Christians, the briefing is designed to raise the political consciousness of evangelical Christians. According to the Christian Voters League, some 41 percent of eligible Christian voters did not vote in 1992's presidential election. The Christian Coalition estimates that one out of three voters in 1994 were evangelical Christians, but still 45 percent of evangelical Christians did not vote.

Planning for the event began

last spring with a telephone conference call in which more than fifty evangelical leaders participated. The group agreed in principle to an effort to impact government oversight and influence public policy.

Among the participants were representatives of the Christian Coalition, the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, Trinity Broadcasting Network, the National Right to Life Committee, the Eagle Forum and Concerned Women for America, along with prominent pastors/television preachers Jerry Falwell, Adrian Rogers and James Kennedy.

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**"America's destiny is at issue. The time-tested Judeo-Christian road map...is still a valid guide to be followed if America is to survive and prosper."**

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Others on the steering committee who are expected to take part in the two-day event include Donald Wildmon, president of American Family Association; Tim and Beverly LaHaye of Family Life Seminars; John Hagee, TV personality and pastor of Cornerstone Church in San Antonio, Texas; Judie Brown, president of American Life League, Inc.; Gary Bauer, president of the Family Research Council; and Wanda Franz, president of the National Right to Life Committee.

"We seem to have more potential speakers coming than we have slots," said McAteer. "And the candidates are still trying to confirm their itineraries, so we may be reshuffling the program schedule right up to the last minute." Sessions are expected to run from

noon until 10:00 p.m. both days.

A 2,000-voice choir, made up of representatives from at least 35 local choirs, also will be part of the program.

The history of the National Affairs Briefing dates back to 1980, when the first one was held in Dallas, Texas. Then-candidate Ronald Reagan addressed an audience of 20,000 persons, including 5,500 pastors, expressing his support for their moral and spiritual concerns.

Many observers consider the Dallas meeting a milestone in the reemergence of widespread evangelical participation in American political discussion.

McAteer hopes this year's meeting will surpass the one in Dallas both in attendance and as an "arena of ideas in which all presidential candidates may address these social issues."

He says the meeting is open to "all pastors, ministry leaders, denominational leaders, and vitally involved lay persons who impact Bible-believing constituencies, regardless of political party affiliation."

The 1996 briefing will be different from previous such meetings, McAteer believes, because of being scheduled ahead of party primaries and Democratic and Republican national conventions.

"We want them to know before they nominate their candidates, 'Here's how this bloc of voters feels about it.' We don't want them taking us for granted."

Tickets for the Friday and Saturday sessions at The Pyramid, an arena on the banks of the Mississippi River in downtown Memphis, are \$25.00. They may be ordered from the Roundtable at P. O. Box 11467, Memphis, TN 38111, or by calling (901) 458-3795 or 685-6542. Seating is on a first-come, first-served basis.



# Light from the Capital

## Supreme Court debates homosexual rights case

The issue of homosexual rights elicited stiff questions from and indirect debate among the justices of the U. S. Supreme Court during oral arguments in one of the new term's most divisive cases.

The questioning by justices during the arguments caused concern among some supporters of Colorado's Amendment 2, the first state provision opposing homosexual rights.

In the Oct. 10 oral arguments, Associate Justice Antonin Scalia and Chief Justice William Rehnquist questioned why the state's voters should not be able to exclude homosexuals from receiving civil rights protection as a class. Associate Justice Anthony Kennedy, however, joined other justices, such as Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Stephen Breyer, in seemingly questioning the validity of such an amendment. Kennedy sometimes votes with such conservatives as Scalia and Rehnquist.

The Court is not expected to announce its opinion in *Romer v. Evans* for several months. It promises to be one of the most fervently awaited opinions of the 1995-96 term. The decision also may be a pivotal one in the escalating battle over one of American culture's most hotly debated issues.

The case was accepted by the Supreme Court at the request of the state of Colorado and Gov. Roy Romer after the Colorado Supreme Court ruled as unconstitutional a 1992 initiative prohibiting current and future local or state laws granting civil rights status to homosexuals. In a 6-1 vote announced in October 1994, the Colorado court upheld a lower-court ruling against Amendment 2. In its opinion, the court said Amendment 2 violated the rights of homosexuals and bisexuals to equal participation in the political process.

Rehnquist wondered why "fencing out Mormons who engage in polygamy" was any different from

the case under consideration. Jean Dubofsky, representing homosexuals and affected cities in the case, said *Romer v. Evans* deals with "personal characteristics."

Scalia compared classifying homosexuals as a class deserving protected status with providing protection to blue-eyed people or bigamists. More than once, he aided Colorado Solicitor General Timothy Tymkovich when he was questioned by other justices.

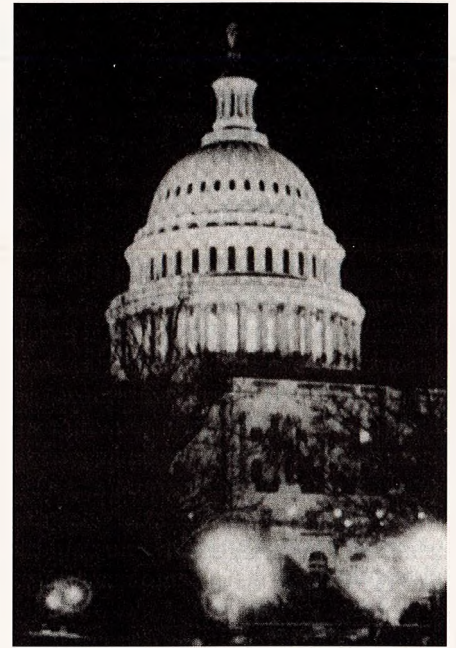
When Breyer asked Tymkovich if Amendment 2 would prevent police departments from fighting "gay bashing," Scalia asked the solicitor general if there were not a law against bashing all people, not just homosexuals.

Ginsburg questioned whether there had ever been a law in American history which specified one group could not be provided civil rights protection. It was doubtful the women's right-to-vote movement would have succeeded had an initiative been allowed to stymie the grass-roots effort, she said.

Michael Whitehead, general counsel of the Christian Life Commission, said homosexual activists "do not seek participation in the political process. They seek a dissenter's veto over the political process. This is a very anti-democratic lawsuit dressed up to look like a defense of the democratic political process.

"It is anti-democratic to say that a majority of the people in a state cannot amend their constitution to remove certain subjects from the whim of local legislatures. That is the nature of constitutional law and the power of one level of government to preempt action by lower levels of government."

The CLC, which opposes any attempt to legitimize homosexuality, signed onto a friend-of-the-court brief written by the Christian Legal Society. It argues Amendment 2 protects religious freedom in a way religious exemptions would not. The Colorado court said such exemptions would provide adequate



protection. Focus on the Family, National Association of Evangelicals, Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod joined the CLC and CLS on the brief.

Among those filing briefs on the other side were the Human Rights Campaign Fund, the country's largest homosexual lobbying organization; NAACP; National Education Association; American Bar Association; AFL-CIO; People for the American Way; and the states of Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nevada and Oregon.

Citing a lack of a federal role, Attorney General Janet Reno decided in June not to have the Department of Justice file a brief in the case. Some homosexual rights advocates expressed displeasure with the Clinton administration's refusal to join the case on their side. A White House spokesman confirmed the President still opposes Amendment 2.

Colorado voters approved Amendment 2 with 53 percent of the vote. It overturned homosexual rights ordinances already in force in Denver, Boulder and Aspen. Southern Baptist leaders in Colorado were among those publicly supporting the amendment during the '92 campaign. The executive board of the Colorado Baptist General Convention unanimously endorsed it.

—Tom Strode



# Dodson to focus on truth, love

When Will Dodson begins working in the Christian Life Commission's Washington, D.C., office January 15, he will be focused on two objectives on Capitol Hill.

"In working with government leaders, I have two hopes: First, that I convey the views of our constituents as clearly and persuasively as possible; and second, I hope that everything I do would reflect the love of Christ," Dodson said. "We are called upon to always speak the truth and always to speak it in love."

For Dodson, it has been a whirlwind year which has resulted in his opportunity to share the truth and love of Jesus in Washington as the CLC's new director of government relations and associate general counsel. Only a year ago, he was a county judge in Lubbock, Tex. By Jan. 15, he and his family will have moved twice in order to fulfill their commitment to follow God's will.

In March, only four months after his election to a third four-year term as county court judge, Dodson announced his resignation to attend seminary and to prepare for what he believed would be some type of work advocating biblical principles in the public policy arena.

After moving with his wife, Denise, and their children, Allison, 7, and Andrew, 5, to Wake Forest, N.C., Dodson began his studies at Southeastern Baptist Theological



**Will Dodson**

Seminary with summer school. Shortly after summer school ended, he received a call from Richard Land, whom he had met in the fall of 1994 and counseled with before deciding to enter seminary.

Land, president of the Christian Life Commission, called to tell him James A. Smith, CLC director of government relations, had resigned to enter seminary. Land asked Dodson if he would pray about the position.

Will and Denise decided it was God's will for them to accept the challenge. The CLC board elected him in September.

"For about two years, the Lord

has been directing events toward our serving Him in full-time Christian service," Dodson said. "In the past year, those events began to move very rapidly. God has done wonderful things in preparing my heart and that of my wife to invest our lives in Christian service.

"Our initial shock when Dr. Land contacted us turned into joy and excitement over the possibility of working in this capacity.

"I have long admired Dr. Land and the work of the CLC and am excited to work with him and the CLC staff for the Southern Baptist Convention. Our views are consistent with his and those of our Southern Baptist Convention family."

Dodson, 39, remained at Southeastern in the fall and plans to complete his master of divinity degree while working for the CLC.

In addition to serving more than eight years as a judge, Dodson was an assistant district attorney in Lubbock for four years and an appeals court briefing attorney for a year.

He received a bachelor of arts degree from Texas Tech University in 1978 and a law degree from Baylor University School of Law in 1981.

Dodson placed his faith in the Lord Jesus and was baptized at the age of ten. From his childhood, he was a member of Southcrest Baptist Church in Lubbock.

## Join CLC on-line

Subscribers to SBCNet, the Southern Baptist Convention's data communications network, may receive information on ethics and religious liberty issues from the Christian Life Commission and also "talk" with CLC staff members.

The CLC posts on a regular basis a number of items in the General Ministry B Forum of SBCNet, which is found on CompuServe, the computer on-line service. These include alerts about pending federal legislation, statements from news conferences, commentaries, as well as articles from its regular publications, *Light* and *Salt*. In addition to accessing such items in the CLC library of the B Forum, subscribers may communicate with CLC staff in the B Forum message section.

Free SBCNet membership kits are distributed by the Baptist Sunday School Board. They are available in DOS, Macintosh and Windows versions and may be ordered by calling 1-800-325-7749.

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## Available Resources

The destruction brought on by alcohol and other drug abuse is to be found in every city, town, and village. Similarly, the demoralizing, dehumanizing, and unchristian blight of racial prejudice wreaks its destruction all about us.

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Southern Baptists emphasize **Race Relations Sunday on February 11, 1996**, and **Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Sunday March 17, 1996**. We have comprehensive resources available to assist you in observing these emphases. We urge you to order beautiful *four-color bulletin inserts* and *posters*, *fresh sermon briefs*, *pamphlets*, *tracts*, *books*, *booklets*, and *videotapes* to help you help the people of your congregation think biblically and decide wisely on these life issues, and to grow in the vitality of their faith.

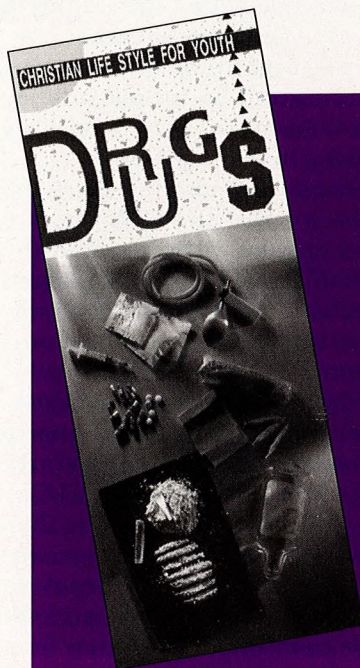
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