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# REPORT from the CAPITAL

**S**ince the fall of 1983, the Baptist Joint Committee had worked closely with the Chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee and his staff on equal access. We came to admire, respect and rely on the strength, skill and savy of this Baptist Congressman from eastern Kentucky.

The fight for equal access underscored the Chairman's commitment to moral legislation. There was no stopping his dogged persistence. He was always saying, "you Baptists must stay here all night talking to Congressmen and letting your people know to call their Representatives."

Along with the attributes of moral concern, persistence and compromise, Mr. Perkins added humility to his achievements. After final passage of equal access, Mr. Perkins did not attend any press conference. "The Chairman does not go for this media recognition: the record will show who did what and he will get his due," a staff member explained.

Indeed the record shows that Carl Perkins was a champion. He fought the good fight, finished the course and kept the faith.



**Carl Perkins  
1912-1984**

***"I believe this legislation  
will do great things for  
the morals of the nation."***

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## REPORT from the CAPITAL

"... a civil state with  
full liberty in religious concerns"

Vol. 39, No. 8 September, 1984

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**Cover:** The tribute to the Honorable Carl Perkins, whom he came to know as a man committed to the support of a variety of moral and social concerns, was prepared by Gary McNeil of the BJC staff. For more on Mr. Perkins see Views and News Briefs.

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## Polls, platforms, planks

Looking forward to the first Tuesday in November, increasing numbers of Christian Americans will want to express their biblical faith while carrying out the requirements of good citizenship in the polling booth. How to translate belief into civic duty finds some answers in the article by Bill Hendricks. He examines three methods—a direct, the "Bible-tells-me-so" approach that requires determination and sensitivity to hear God's specific instructions on any matter. The second method, called "Norms within the Forms" evidences awareness of the complexity of the issues and the variety of responses and suggests there are enduring biblical principles for guidance in decision-making. Finally, Hendricks advocates a synthesis which brings an integrated whole. He challenges the committed to build political platforms that contain the supportive planks of grace and mercy, and to consider casting their vote in behalf of the disadvantaged.

Robert Linder recounts briefly but perceptively the nature of Israel's unique relationship to God but cautions against the temptation to build theocracies. Historically, these endeavors have substituted unmitigated religious authority for the graciousness of divine rule. All nations are under the sovereignty of God's care, yet even early Protestant leaders fell into the error of attempting to replicate Israel, with consequences familiar to students of history. Baptists and Anabaptists having experienced the grief that befell dissent to theocratic rule, in their timely wisdom insisted upon the separation of church and state. Linder believes, however that Christians in civil authority are no less channels of God's grace as it is extended to all people, and government will reflect Christian values to the extent these members of government commit themselves to these values.

Pastor David Meriwether in a sermon adapted for these pages takes the Biblical order of priorities—to God, the things of God, and then to the state only what belongs to the state—to lament the waning of regard for church-state separation. A major failure, he believes, is not state intrusion but rather Baptist ignorance which is intimately linked to the loss of Baptist identity. It is a theme to which this office will continue to return and which demands the attention of all who cherish religious liberty in its fullness.

Something new has been added to REPORT. With this issue we introduce PROBINGS, discussion starters that hope to remedy the lack of sensitivity to church/state values Baptists have tenaciously promulgated. PROBINGS seeks to raise awareness through informed discussion of articles and news features. It's no secret that by encouraging extended use of this publication in church classrooms and study groups we offer some practical uses to churches which now have subscriptions, and we look to add new individuals and groups. Present readers can be of invaluable assistance in helping staff achieve its goals. And give a subscription to someone you believe will benefit and thus help us on our way. □

Victor Tupitza

The BJC worked with many Congressmen in the push for equal access. Along with fellow Baptist and Congressman Carl Perkins (D-Ky), Trent Lott (R-Ms) contributed greatly as shown by excerpts from his floor remarks:

"Many members deserve credit for promoting this legislation...most of all Mr. Perkins. This has truly been a bipartisan effort, but then the protection of constitutional freedom knows no partisan lines."

"I urge all my fellow Members of Congress to vote for this bill...America's high school students need this protection of their freedom of speech and religion." ●

The choice as to whether or not a church may treat its staff members as self-employed for social security purposes is a one-time-only option, according to the BJC's legal counsel, John Baker. He notes that President Reagan has signed the Deficit Reduction Act of 1984 which includes the portion, now Sec. 3121(w) of the IRS code, which provides that if a church will certify that it has religious reasons for not paying its part of an employee's F.L.C.A. payment, it may exercise this option once only. Baker stresses that there is no option about whether staff members will be covered.

Technically, if a church is currently filing a Form 941, the quarterly S.S. report, and wants to continue treating staff as employees, no action is necessary. It should continue to file the 941. If the staff is not now covered by S.S. and the church wishes to have them covered, all it needs to do is file the Form 941. Social Security amendments of 1983 provided that all employees be covered as of January 1, 1984. If the church will certify that religious reasons prevented it from sharing S.S. payments, it may exercise its choice not to do so by filing Form 8274, and staff members must then file their own Form 941 quarterly and make the full payment.

Form 941 has been mailed to all churches the IRS could identify. The Form 8274 is in the mail to those same churches; a church which does not receive copies of these forms can obtain them from the local Federal Income Tax Service office or, in many cases, from the Post Office. ●

A number of denominations have joined with civil liberties groups and other concerned citizens to prepare to file a law suit challenging the appointment of and appropriation of funds for an ambassador to the Holy See.

In a recent address, the Apostolic Pro-Nuncio, Archbishop Pio Laghi stated "Some who favored diplomatic relations mistakenly tried to justify the American government's action by implying that it was entering into a diplomatic relationship not with the Roman Catholic Church as such, the Holy See, but rather with the sovereign Vatican City-State. Papal diplomacy rests essentially upon the spiritual sovereignty of the Holy See and not upon dominion over a few acres in the heart of Rome."

The target date for filing the suit is September 19. Among the plaintiffs are The American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. and the Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc. ●

The Rev. Everett Silven, who has had continuing confrontation with the State of Nebraska over the accreditation of teachers in his Faith Christian School, has apparently reached agreement with the State.

The State Board of Education has issued regulations which allow church schools to employ teachers who are not state certified. Mr. Silven is quoted as saying, "From our standpoint it's going to be a solution." ●

# Bible to Ballot

*Think constantly  
about voting on  
behalf of others*

Dr. Hendricks recently became professor of Christian theology and director of graduate studies at Southern Seminary. This article is an excerpt from "Each Christian and the Ballot," delivered before an (SBC) Christian Life Commission seminar in Washington, D.C.

## Seeking Biblical Guidance

I wish I could tell you there were a direct way from the Bible to the ballot. It would simplify our task enormously. There are those who see a direct way and who unhesitatingly claim that they have a franchise on it. The more complicated and honest Christian vision will recognize that this pluralistic culture of ours acknowledges gods many and lords many. Whereas we would seek the mind of Christ in all matters including the vote, it must be acknowledged that the mind of Christ is not always the mind of humankind, not even of those of God who claim to have a hold on it. There are three ways in which one can seek to vector from the Bible onto the ballot. That is, there are three methods and approaches whereby we can suggest that our religious state is informing our specific political decisions.

### A Direct Route

There are those who would affirm that there is in the Bible a complete and coherent system of doctrine, ethics, economics, science and human knowledge. This perspective feels that what is needed is the wisdom and/or the gall to discern what God has specifically said on every matter; to declare it unambiguously and definitively; to insist that all Christians follow it, for it is *the* Christian position. Such assurance is not without its proponents today and such proponents are not without their adherents. However, it must be acknowledged that this direct route from the Bible to the ballot overlooks several important things. It overlooks the complexity of the biblical materials and the contemporary world. It overlooks the fact that well-meaning believers of a variety of opinions can come up with answers, which are precisely the opposite of those given by any individual guru. It overlooks the fact that the element of human pride is involved in such dogmatic proclamations. It overlooks the fact that the mind of God is perchance greater than the human mind. It overlooks the intentional nature of scripture which is not a body of scientific knowledge, but is a revelation of God concerning his redemptive purpose for humankind.

The direct route method always utilizes a proof-text method of scripture. It more often relies on Paul than Jesus, for the specific structures of Paul's ethics seem more discernable and applicable than are the general characteristics and imperatives supplied by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. The direct route approach is in demand according to the complexity of the situation and the puzzlement of the voter who seeks others to untangle his/her issues and to give them guidance about his/her specific casting of the vote for particular persons and issues. This easy way is especially appealing when it is sanctified under the name of "The Christian View." Such is the straight-line-from-the-Bible-to-the-ballot perspective and those who utilize it overlook many things that went into the makeup of the Bible and many issues that are involved in the casting of the ballot.

### Norms Within the Forms

Many perceptive Christians have realized that if we are to seek the collective wisdom of scripture we must look for the general rather than the specific in matters which pertain to cultural situations. This view is called the "Norm within the Form" and has a serious and heavy recognition that all the biblical materials are historical and cultural in their conditioning as well as divine in their inspiration. This view espouses the perspective that the circumstances change, but the essential needs and the essential positions may be grounded in norms or principles that can be observed if one seeks to discern them and looks behind the particular forms in which the general expressed norms are couched. I certainly would advise those who are looking into the complex issues of local, state and national politics in 1984 to think in terms of looking for biblical norms rather than expecting specific biblical forms to inform and guide their voting procedures. This view presupposes that the individuals will try to discern both the intent of what the norms of scripture and the issues of the ballot are. This view differs from the direct one-to-one correspondence view in that it is aware that there are a wide variety of positions in scripture

Whereas the biblical materials are normative for us, we can also recognize that the interaction of our cultural with the biblical materials is a very involved and delicate interweaving of these various factors.

even as there are in the contemporary culture. This view is also aware that there are levels of relevance in biblical materials and levels of urgency in political issues in the culture. Therefore, this view can be and must be more tolerant of alternative positions even while seeking the biblical norms and determining which way the ballot is to be cast.

#### An Inevitable Synthesis

A third position, and one to which I am becoming increasingly drawn, is the view that we must see all our religious experiences and expressions as part of an inevitable synthesis involving a variety of situations. I am indebted for many of the insights of this paper to the superb work of Edward Schillebeeckx in his volume *Christ* issued by the Crossroad Press in 1981. Schillebeeckx, a contemporary, biblical, theological scholar, suggests that in the consensus which involves all of what we do there are at least six elements which must be taken account of and integrated together in a wholistic experience before we can say we are bringing our full life to bear either in the ballot or in the religious arena. Briefly and by way of popularization these six elements are:

- the relationship between the human community and the ecological environment;
- a corporate perspective of humankind;
- the inevitable connection of individuals with social and institutional structures;
- the conditioning of people and culture by time and space;
- the mutual relationship of theory and practice and the way in which these can be conjoined and disjoined;
- the religious and parareligious consciousness of humankind and how that interacts with all of the above factors.

... looking for biblical norms rather than expecting specific biblical forms.

What the recognition of this synthetic view means for the ballot is that a variety of issues must be considered. We must understand who we are and who we are in relation to all of those things with which we have to do. We must also understand that the biblical materials were born in this kind of context and that the guiding presence of God that was available to them is still available to us. I would want to insist that whereas the biblical materials are normative for us, we can also recognize that the interaction of our cultural with the biblical materials is a very involved and delicate interweaving of these various factors. This means that one cannot claim to find the mind of God through a direct pipeline or advertise the Christian position in all issues of the body politic. It also means that we cannot speak in terms of time-bound forms or even believe that norms are not without their involvements in the social, cultural, psychological and religious dimensions. What all of this comes down to is a matter of being aware that when we bring our religion into the arena of the ballot it comes in a variety of ways. We do not operate as *homo religiosus*, we operate as *homo integratus*.

The danger of supposing that we can compartmentalize our life is extraordinarily seductive. It would be comforting to believe that all of life is in the direct control of the Spirit. This is the utopia of Christian perfectionism. For most of us it is the eschatological hope; but in the present it simply does not exist. This means that as we come to the ballot we come aware not only of our religion, and informed by it but also with an awareness of the variety of circumstances and components which Schillebeeckx has suggested and that we have given some thought as to how these may fruitfully interact. Moreover, we did not come directly from the Bible to the ballot for there have been two thousand years of intervening Christian community. It is my contention that the experience of Christian communities and the various forms of relationships which have pertained between Christian community and civil governments has influenced us also according to the models we used in bringing the bible to the ballot.

#### Conclusion

Every Christian should be aware of and separate honestly the various layers of concern which go into the voting process. Christians who come to the ballot box must be aware that to choose to make a straight line and direct route from the Bible to the ballot box is either short circuiting the complexity of today's world or failing to deal with the full dynamic of the complete biblical revelation. Christians should be articulate enough to know and be the first to realize that this is our Father's world and that we have done badly by it. Our votes should be on behalf of His world and the common good rather than merely on behalf of ourselves. Christians should vote for that which brings maximum advantage for most people, to vote for the disadvantaged, and in the face of specific situations vote for immediate and remedial measures.

I should like to challenge some of you to think in terms of sensitizing influential Christians to build planks in local, regional and national platforms that will contain elements of grace and mercy, and others of you to think seriously about voting on behalf of others. We speak of living for others. By and large at the time of voting we do our voting in relation to ourselves and our desires. I should like to challenge still others to look more askance at those monarchs among us who are making the platforms of our policies and declaring unambiguously what is the Christian view in single issue voting situations. I would like to enjoin all to think seriously about your own individual responsibility in voting. Ask yourself the question if you could dare to be a person for others at the ballot box. □

**"Equal Access" legislation was signed into law by President Reagan on August 11 as part of math/science bill H.R. 1310 which cleared Congress in July.**

The First Amendment built "a wall of separation between Church and State."—Thomas Jefferson

## VIEWS OF THE WALL

John W. Baker



**T**he "I have some good news and some bad news" approach has become somewhat trite. However, when the good news is really excellent news, it seems apropos.

The equal access bill which Senators Hatfield and Denton added to the House-passed math/science education bill was accepted by the House on July 25 and was sent to the President for his signature. He has indicated that, in spite of reservations about the math/science part of the bill, he will approve it. Equal access has been detailed on this page several times. The bill as passed protects the establishment clause and yet affirms for public secondary school students the free exercise of religion and free speech rights guaranteed by the First Amendment. That's the good news.

A major part of the bad news is that Congressman Carl D. Perkins died on August 3, 1984—a week and a day after the equal access bill passed the House. If any one person can be given major credit for its passage by the House, that credit must go to Carl Perkins, the long-time chairman of the Education and Labor Committee. A behind-the-scenes view of actions on the Act illustrates his importance.

Perkins was responsible for much of the liberal social welfare legislation since 1960. A theologically conservative Kentucky Baptist who believed that schools had misapplied the Supreme Court's decisions in the prayer and Bible reading cases, he thought that those decisions had been interpreted to mean that religion does not have a legitimate role in public education.

Rep. Don Bonker introduced his equal access bill and, when the religious groups supporting equal access had generated congressional interest in the bill, Perkins pushed the bill through the subcommittee and the full Education and Labor Committee. He allowed few amendments from the Committee and, because he did not want any amendments on the floor which would cripple the bill or make it unconstitutional, Perkins chose to bring up the bill under a suspension of the rules—a device which limits debate and forbids amendments. The price he paid for going that route was that he had to muster a two-thirds vote for passage. The bill received 270 "yea"

votes but fell eleven votes short of the two-thirds approval.

Perkins called a strategy meeting of House Democratic and Republican supporters of the bill and religious groups who had worked for it. There, Perkins raised the possibility of the Senate attaching equal access provisions to a House-passed education bill.

In the Senate, Majority Leader Howard Baker insisted that Senators Hatfield and Denton work out a compromise on their pending equal access bills. That compromise was attached to the House-passed math/science bill and the entire bill was passed and sent back to the House.

Perkins asked for a conference. Opponents of equal access, however, persuaded the Speaker to rule that the equal access amendment was not germane to the math/science bill. He made a joint referral to the Judiciary Committee—the leadership of which opposed equal access—and the Education and Labor Committee. At this point many proponents of equal access thought that equal access was lost.

One of Perkins' colleagues who spoke about him in 1981 said, "Underneath that Southern gentlemanly, Kentucky mountain-type approach, Perkins is a master politician and parliamentarian." Perkins demonstrated the correctness of that evaluation as soon as the Speaker made his ruling. Perkins immediately informed the Speaker that he intended to bring up the bill on Calendar Wednesday, July 25.

Calendar Wednesday is a seldom used legislative procedure which allows committee chairmen to call up bills which the Rules Committee had not scheduled for floor action. Perkins used the rules to put his opponents on Judiciary on the defensive. They did not want the bill brought up on Calendar Wednesday, believing it might encourage other chairmen to call up other controversial bills and thus bypass the controls which the leadership has over the flow of legislation. Also, when push came to shove, they preferred the Hatfield-Denton compromise language to the Bonker version which Perkins would call up.

When the House recessed the next day for the Democratic Convention, the opponents of equal access, who conceded that Perkins had outmaneu-

vered them, tried to figure out ways to regain control. They saw they could not do so and agreed to bring up the Hatfield-Denton compromise under suspension on July 25. It was passed by the overwhelming vote of 337 to 77.

Perkins had carried the day but when someone congratulated him his response was that Bonker and Goodling (the ranking Republican on Education-Labor) deserved the praise for their work. He had only given them "a little procedural advice along the way."

The other bit of bad news was that the day before the House acted on equal access a three judge Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit in a 2-1 decision declared one kind of equal access unconstitutional.

On July 24 the court, in *Williamsport Area School District v. Bender*, No. 83-3284, held that the school had been correct in denying the group of students who wanted to read and discuss biblical truths and to pray access to the activity period that had been established for a number of years.

Basically the court held that the school had created a limited open forum and that the free speech rights of the students had been infringed. However, it found that the establishment clause had been transgressed (a) because the activities period occurred during the school day, and (b) because high school students were so immature that they would equate permission for a religious club to meet with state approval or sponsorship of the religion espoused by the club. Then in a balancing test the court held that in this case the protection against establishment of religion outweighed the free speech rights of the students.

The court's majority almost seems to have reached an *a priori* decision in the case and then attempted to muster a legal rationale for that decision. A motion for rehearsing *en banc* has been filed. If that fails an appeal will be made to the Supreme Court.

The decision in *Williamsport* will have little impact on Congress' equal access act. Congress provided for equal access before or after the school day and made clear that the religious clubs had to be student initiated and run without any degree of state approval or sponsorship. My opinion is the act will survive judicial scrutiny. □

Robert D. Linder

## Government and State in Christian Thought



**T**he Bible begins with God, and, for the Christian, all thought concerning human government must also begin there. According to the Bible there are two spheres in which human authority is exercised: among the people of God and among the people of the world in general. In the Old Testament Israel appears as a nation under God in a special sense, but the other nations of the earth are subject to him even though they may not acknowledge the fact.

According to the scriptural narrative, the authority exercised even by pagan kings was entrusted to them by the God of Israel. Similarly in the New Testament there is the company of the redeemed where the rule of Christ is gladly accepted. But there is also the Roman Empire in which the believers find themselves under civil jurisdiction. Still, this is also a realm where God's sovereign power is present, for the New Testament writers echo the prophets of the Old Testament in stating that every person should be subject to the governing authorities "...for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God." The authority of God exercised among his people is an anticipation of the final consummation of the purposes of God when every knee shall bow to him. That same authority mediated through the agency of human rulers is a standing witness to God's common grace, even to those in a state of rebellion against him.

However, in the biblical scheme the case of the ancient nation Israel was unique in that it was organized as a theocracy. Although the precise form of government varied during the nation's history, the underlying conviction was always there in the Old Testament that the Lord was the true ruler of his people Israel. No matter who exercised political rule over the nation, it is clear that ultimate authority belonged to God.

The consideration of government in ancient Israel and in the Christian

church at large down through history has not been a mere parenthesis in the discussion of the biblical view of the state. Apart from the positive value of stressing the ultimate authority of all human government, biblical principles can be related to wider political issues. In this connection many Christians have also failed to see the unique character of the theocracy in Israel, which has led to misguided attempts to organize nations on a theocratic basis. In a similar manner Christians have not agreed on how to apply principles of church government to society in general, using the laws of the church as a

divinely commanded inclusion of the Gentiles. There would no longer be a theocratic nation, but men and women of every tribe and country would be gathered into the church. The godly prince of the Old Testament finds his fulfillment in the Messiah, not in any temporal ruler. To look for a modern counterpart to David or Hezekiah is to miss the concept of the unique kingship of Jesus Christ. It may be that the ruler of a modern state is a true believer, but that does not give him/her the status that the theocratic concept requires, for in the kingdom of God there is only one monarch, Christ

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To look for a modern counterpart to David or Hezekiah is to miss the concept of the unique kingship of Jesus Christ.

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kind of blueprint for the laws of the land.

In the 16th century many of the Protestant Reformers were clearly dominated by the theocratic ideal—in one form or another, in whole or in part. Thus the godly prince of the Old Testament found his fulfillment in the Lutheran, Reformed, and Anglican ruler insofar as the magistrate was believed to have a responsibility to protect and nourish the church and to enforce the moral standards that the church declared. In its more ugly manifestation, the magistrate also assumed the further responsibility of defending the "truth" and resisting "error" to the extent of punishing offenders.

This concept of the state fails to do justice to the biblical understanding of the new covenant. It is true that there is in the Bible one covenant of grace. However, within that one covenant there is a period of preparation and a period of fulfillment. Therefore, when Jeremiah rejoiced in the prospect of the glories of the new covenant and when the writer of Hebrews discoursed at length on the implications of this new covenant, they were not using empty words. The Old Testament was a period when God was graciously at work, but it was still a preparatory period. It looked forward to the age of the Messiah, the period of fulfillment.

The restrictive national character of the old covenant was shattered by the

himself.

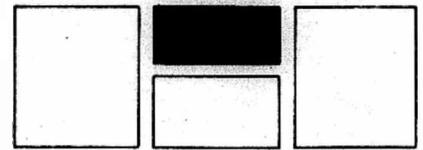
This is one of the main reasons that the Anabaptist/Baptist expressions of the Reformation movement insisted on the separate spheres of church and state. The church is the realm of God's special grace where God governs his people by means he has ordained and with the help of those whom the Holy Spirit endows with gifts for the task. The state, on the other hand, is the realm of God's common or general grace extended to all people. Although it is of divine authority, the government will reflect Christian standards only insofar as the members of the government themselves follow Christian values.

In other words, a Christian who reaches a position of authority in the government will be motivated by his faith in the same way that a Christian in business is influenced by the standards of integrity and righteousness that are a natural part of being Christian. This means that a Christian politician will not attempt to submit a nation which includes both believers and unbelievers to a pattern of conduct which properly belongs to believers only. The separation of church and state not only is a corollary to the doctrine of religious freedom but is also rooted in the biblical teaching that there are two realms: secular government and the spiritual household of God. □

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Dr. Linder is professor of history at Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS. He has served two terms as mayor and on the city council there, and is a member of College Heights Baptist Church. This article appeared in the *Southwestern Journal of Theology*; abridged, it is used by permission.

# News in Brief



## House clears Equal Access for president's signature

WASHINGTON

Reversing its May vote on equal access, the U.S. House of Representatives easily passed legislation making it unlawful for public secondary schools to deny students wishing to meet for religious purposes the same rights provided other voluntary, student-initiated groups.

By a lopsided 337-77 vote, House members agreed to equal access language attached in the Senate to a bill authorizing training programs for math and science teachers. Then, on a 393-15 vote, the House accepted the remaining Senate amendments to the math-science bill (H.R. 1310), clearing the measure for President Reagan's signature.

Both House votes easily surpassed the two-thirds majority requirement under the procedure used to consider legislation. The same procedure, which provides for one hour of debate and permits no amendments, was tried on a similar equal access measure sponsored by Rep. Don Bonker, D-Wash. The 270-151 vote on May 15 was 11 short of the two-thirds needed for passage.

Changes in the Senate-passed version produced more than enough switches in the House to hand Rep. Carl D. Perkins, D-Ky., Rep. William F. Goodling, R-Pa., and Bonker, primary sponsors of the legislation, an easy victory. Even key House opponents called the revised, Senate-passed version a significant improvement over the measure considered in May.

Unlike the original version which provided equal access for voluntary religious meetings during "non-instructional periods" before, after and during the school day, the final version protects such meetings only before and after school. Its language was broadened to bar discrimination on the basis of "religious, political, philosophical or other" content of speech at student meetings.

The final version further prohibits discrimination against student groups on the basis of their numerical size and bars "nonschool persons" from directing, conducting, controlling or reg-

ularly attending such meetings. The final draft also assures that nothing in the bill "limits the authority of schools to maintain order and discipline on school premises, to protect the well-being of students and faculty and to assure that attendance of students at such meetings is voluntary."

Like the earlier versions, the final bill requires that meetings be voluntary and student initiated and that school personnel be present only in a non-participatory capacity and that they be prohibited from influencing the form or content of any prayer or religious activity.

Also like the original proposal, the measure passed by Congress protects equal access only when a school has a limited open forum which it defines as "whenever such schools grant an offering or an opportunity for one or more noncurriculum-related student groups to meet on school premises during noninstructional time." □

Larry Chesser

## Silent prayer rider passes House

WASHINGTON

One day after it cleared "equal access" legislation for President Reagan's signature, the U.S. House of Representatives approved language protecting the rights of "individuals in public schools" to "participate in moments of silent prayer."

By votes of 378-29 and 356-50, the House attached silent prayer language offered by Rep. Steve Gunderson, R-Wis., to a bill reauthorizing 11 education programs. Before becoming law, the Gunderson amendment will have to survive a conference with the Senate which did not include any similar provision in its bill and then be signed by President Reagan.

The potential impact of the Gunderson amendment in local schools was disputed with House members in disagreement over whether it permits anything more than what is already allowed under the law.

But in further explaining Gunderson's intention, an aide told Baptist Press the Wisconsin representative interprets his language to permit a teacher to call for a moment of silent prayer but would not permit school boards or states to structure a regular moment for the ritual. □

## Court rules against voluntary student group

WASHINGTON

A federal appellate court has ruled that a group of high school students in Williamsport, Pa., was properly denied permission to hold religious meetings on school premises on an equal basis with other non-academic, extracurricular student groups.

Ruling one day before the House of Representatives gave overwhelming approval to a federal equal access bill, the Third Circuit Court of Appeals in Philadelphia reversed a federal district court judge who earlier ruled for the students.

The 2-1 decision came in a case considered by church-state observers as the "cleanest" legal test to date of the free speech right of high school students to participate in on-premises meetings where the speech content is religious. An appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court is expected.

In its decision, the Third Circuit Court majority ruled that the Williamsport Area High School principal and the local school board were justified in denying permission to an interdenominational student group called "Petros" to use the school cafeteria during an extracurricular activity period scheduled twice weekly during the school day. If it had granted permission, the panel ruled, the school board would have created an unconstitutional establishment of religion. □

## Churches object to zoning rule on homeless shelters

MOUNT VERNON

Local religious leaders have appealed a county zoning decision in this Washington, D.C., suburb which bars the use of churches as shelters for the homeless because it is not a "religious" activity.

The Fairfax County, Va., zoning chief issued an opinion recently saying that places of worship can be used for Bible study, choir practices and Scout troops. But providing shelter to the homeless is distinct from the "principle use of a house of worship," it said, and is prohibited without a special permit.



"They are trying to define what is and is not an appropriate ministry of the church. And that is a violation of the First Amendment," the Rev. Vin A. Harwell, of the Mt. Vernon Presbyterian Church, said in an interview. "Sheltering the homeless is as much a part of what we do as our Sunday worship."

The program, which drew much local publicity, sparked complaints to the county, and Yates issued an opinion called "Interpretation Number 52" which separates religious from non-religious activities of churches and synagogues.

The Board of Supervisors last January passed a resolution praising the churches for the shelter effort and urging others "to come forth with aid as needed so that the homeless in our midst might find shelter and comfort and a sense of our care and concern for them."

Almost identical disputes in New York and New Jersey have led to state court decisions on the side of the churches. □

## Religious elements cast evident in Olympic games

LOS ANGELES.

The man credited with the 1896 revival of the Olympic Games borrowed religious rituals and rhetoric to give the event a spiritual cast.

But German theologian Jurgen Moltmann criticized the modern Olympic religion as "an idealistic dream factory and an opium for the people."

Calling the Olympic movement "a religion of the 20th Century," a religion with universal claim that unites in itself all the basic values of other religions, he nevertheless cautioned that "the religious feelings and energies of the masses are directed toward another object. In the Olympics, humanity celebrates itself, worships itself, offers itself, and rewards itself."

Moltmann believes that the "true religious dimension in sports" is that athletes are not technicians turning out products that others use, but artists who do something over which others can rejoice.

For Baron Pierre de Coubertin, the man who brought the Olympic Games into the modern era, "Olympism" was more than an organization, said

## Analysis

## Drift toward identity

Church-state actions by the U.S. Supreme Court in its recently concluded term reflected a drift to the right as an emerging conservative majority took firm control of the nation's highest tribunal.

After more than a decade of struggling to find an identity of its own following the so-called liberal court of the late Earl Warren, the court of current Chief Justice Warren Burger now bears the unmistakable imprint of his more cautious strict constructionism. At the same time, in case after case involving sensitive church-state questions, the Burger court has moved aggressively away from strict separation.

This trend, which has picked up momentum over the past several years, is now clear. Last term the court gave its stamp of approval to the practices of keeping legislative chaplains on the public payroll and upheld for the first time the constitutionality of tuition tax deductions for parents who send their children to sectarian elementary and secondary schools.

In its most widely publicized church-state case this term, a bare majority of five justices ruled that cities and towns may sponsor Christmas nativity scenes without violating the Constitution's ban on an establishment of religion.

Moltmann. "This is the first and essential mark of the old and new Olympism: to be a religion." □

## Reagan's religious remarks gathered in book of quotes

ANAHEIM

A collection of President Reagan's statements on religious matters is being rushed into print by a conservative Protestant publisher, which said it hoped to have the book ready by the Republican National Convention in August.

Tyndale House Publishers think this book, titled "Ronald Reagan: In God I Trust" and edited by a Republican campaign worker, will do well in religious bookstores as well as in the general market.

The book will consist only of Reagan's remarks, arranged by topics,

The crèche, Burger wrote, is no more than part of a larger display that has an essentially secular purpose. Such decisions indicate without question that the traditional line of demarcation between church and state is being significantly altered.

When the Court returns to the bench the first Monday in October for the 1984-85 term, three tricky church-state cases will be waiting for argument and decision.

Highlighting the church-state docket is a dispute over an Alabama law which provides for a moment of silent prayer or meditation at the beginning of the school day. The court's decision in that case may also determine the legality of a similar federal law both houses of Congress are expected to pass this summer.

Also set for review next term is a policy of the Grand Rapids, Michigan school board of leasing classroom space from parochial schools to provide special education programs to pupils inside church-related schools.

Finally, the high court has agreed to decide whether Connecticut law ordering employers to give their workers a day off each week for religious observances violates the First Amendment ban on an establishment of religion.

□Stan Hastey

from his radio talks and speeches at meetings such as the National Association of Evangelicals, National Religious Broadcasters and National Prayer Breakfast, according to a senior vice president at Tyndale. □

## Cuomo urges proper use of religion in politics

WASHINGTON

In a *Washington Post* story Aug. 4 New York Gov. Mario M. Cuomo said religion has a proper place in political debate, but warned "only the fundamentalist phase" has received much of an airing in political debates this year.

Cuomo said that religion and politics are "in danger of being co-opted by a single religious group" and that the subject should be more widely debated.

He cautioned that the subject should be handled deftly, without any suggestion of a need for uniformity. □

## Priorities in Paying

**O**f the distinctive beliefs that Baptists hold, perhaps the most distinctive is "the separation of church and state." Our peculiar beliefs about the relationship of the church and the state are the most treasured in our Baptist heritage because they have been purchased at the great price of persecution and even death at the hands of hostile governments.

It is ironic, then, that such a unique and loved identity should be threatened in our time, not by an attack from the state but from our own ignorance and loss of Baptist identity. Confusion has led Baptists to think the most un-Baptistic of ideas and approve the most un-Baptistic of policies about religious activity in government.

The phrase "separation of church and state" does not come from a church source at all, and that is our first clue to its meaning. Madison and Jefferson, in their political writings, used the phrase to denote that the church and the state should not interfere in each other's business. This is not the Baptist position. At the time of the American revolution there were two different groups who wanted "separation." The vast majority of colonists wanted to be free from compulsory membership and taxation for a state church because they did not want to have anything to do with religion. By the most generous estimates, less than twenty percent of all Americans in the Revolutionary period had regular affiliation with any church. When "religious liberty" was discussed, the vast majority wanted to be free from religion.

Baptists were part of a religious minority. They wanted religious liberty because they wanted freedom for religion. They wanted to be able to worship and live by the tenets of their

faith without interference from government, and they were willing to grant that same right to any other religious group, even ones that disagreed with Baptists. They had lived under persecution from church in alliance with government; they had been banished from towns in New England and forced to pay a church tax in Virginia. They wanted religious independence as well as political independence. So they joined in political coalition with the people who had no interest in religion, and lobbied for the First Amendment which granted religious liberty. Baptists have never believed that "separation of church and state" meant freedom from religion—but independence of the church from the state."

Jesus knew nothing about separation of church and state. He lived in a land where religious power had tried for centuries to assume political power, but, instead, had been dominated by foreign political powers with their own religions. Jesus never preached about the separation of church and state; it would be anachronistic to read that principle into the past. In fact, some of his most serious criticism was directed at religion's political and economic injustice. He did say "Pay to the Emperor what belongs to the Emperor, and pay to God what belongs to God."

The church and state both belong to God, so there can be no ultimate separation. The issue is in the "priority of paying"—the ranking of our loyalties. Because the church is the location of our loyalty to God and the place where we learn to do God's will, the church always stands above the state. The government can never try to influence the life of the church by trying to tell the church what she owes to God. But the state is never free from the church's influence because Christian faith has much to say about the proper time and ways for God's people to do their "paying to the Emperor."

I want to propose two rules for the relationship between church and state.

**"All right, then, give government things to government, and God's things to God." (Clarence Jordan's The Cotton Patch Version of Luke and Acts.)**

The first is obvious: the church is independent of the state. The state must never be allowed a position to force the church in any way, except in so far as the church is involved in privileges granted by the state. The state can neither advance nor hinder one religion over another; the state cannot advance religion in general.

At the same time, the church can take no favors from the state. As soon as it accepts favor the church also accepts the burden of responsibility and regulation. The church must "pay the Emperor" like anyone else. That is why the church should pay taxes on any of its assets not used directly for religious purposes. The church must be treated like any other group in society and not have preferential treatment nor should it be penalized.

Most of us believe in this doctrine of independence in theory, but we have problems with its application. For example, many people want the state involved in the issue of prayer in the public schools. This means they want the state to do the church a favor by advancing religion outside the church. Unbelievably, many of these same people are Baptists. Yet, as soon as the state grants the privilege it assumes the right, even the obligation, to enforce laws related to public education. Baptists gladly accept the responsibility for the religious education of children in their own churches.

The worst of Baptist sins is to allow political figures to manipulate religion for their own position and popularity. We want no favors from government, nor will we sell the religious liberties of our souls even for what appears to be the advancement of our own churches.

Secondly, the state is never independent of the church. They err, who say that the church has no business in politics, that "separation of church and state" means that the church must have nothing to do with the state. There can be no ultimate "separation" when both church and state belong to

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The Rev. Meriwether is pastor of Chatham Baptist Church, Chatham, Virginia. He is a doctoral candidate in religion at Duke University.

God. The issue, again, is in the priorities of paying—and the church comes first.

That means the church has much to say about how the state does its paying to God. Taking no favors from the state, the church remains free to address the state. Rather than avoiding political life, it should be our task to teach others how to be involved in the moral direction of the nation as part of Christian duty.

When we take political debate out of the church, we generally lose the consciousness that we are Christians *whenever* we are involved in political discussion. When we discuss political issues, we should deliberately question how our loyalty to Christ informs our perspective on the issue. We must do this before we do any thinking about our allegiances to any political party or interest group. So, the church should sponsor education on all sides of issues in politics and it should sponsor forums where candidates have opportunity to respond to questions important to the church. The church should be concerned about legislation that affects the moral, physical and social life of the nation. It has been a political lobbyist for legislation on gambling and alcohol, and should be just as active in laws for feeding the hungry, protecting the widows and orphans, and promoting the general welfare as well as providing for the common defense. The state cannot be independent from the church.

The reason for our political involvement is clear: Baptists are a visible body of believers who have made their profession that Jesus Christ is the only Lord of their living. Baptists serve their Lord so that the world of their living becomes more like the kingdom of their Lord. Baptists believe that the nation answers to God for its life, and the nation's life is measured by the justice and mercy of the Kingdom. Baptists believe that the church is the conscience of the nation, that it must have freedom for religion so that it can remind the nation of the ancient roads in which people must walk. □



# Freedom is Fragile

... yet profoundly resilient.

Take great comfort knowing that religious liberty has been made secure through the sacrificial commitment of our Baptist forebears. However, don't neglect your role in an active witness to freedom of conscience.

We are asking you to add your name and support to that of other Baptists who have covenanted together to preserve and, if need be, to defend freedom of religion—the crown of all freedoms.

Challenges to First Amendment guarantees of religious exercise and non-establishment arise subtly and with convincing innocence. You need to be informed if you are to detect them.

Baptists provide necessary resources through the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. We publish **REPORT from the CAPITAL**, a monthly newsmagazine that explores religious liberty issues and their implications. Most of our information comes directly from oral arguments before the Supreme Court and the decisions of that court, Congressional actions, and administrative rules and regulations.

Frankly, we need you as a subscriber and a committed friend of the Baptist Joint Committee and of religious liberty.

Take a moment now to enter your personal subscription to

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**REPORT from the CAPITAL**

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# INTERNATIONAL DATELINE



## Global issues touch on rights, debts, ecology

The UN Human Rights Commission is expected to receive a report on human rights in Afghanistan, and will have the opportunity to call up a controversial resolution on Poland.

On Afghanistan, where the Soviet occupation has allegedly had an adverse effect on human rights, the Commission at its early 1984 session adopted by a substantial margin a resolution calling for the appointment of a Rapporteur. An investigator, the Rapporteur may be likely to report factual findings at the coming Human Rights session.

The Commission tabled by a narrow margin a resolution on Poland. Under rules, however, any member of the Commission may call the matter up and it is believed that one of the western nations will do so.

The recently held conferences for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on two of its most troublesome subjects—Namibia and the Palestine question. Eleanor Schnurr, a Baptist World Alliance volunteer at the UN-New York office, attended as an observer at the meetings on Palestine.

Many Baptists of the world are concerned with the fate of the almost 5-million displaced Palestinians and with the future of Jerusalem. BWA has not adopted a policy statement on the two issues.

Representatives from Bikini Atoll in the Pacific ocean have told the UN Trusteeship Council that, in the absence of a clean-up, their island will not be habitable for as long as 125 years because of atomic contamination. Clean-up costs, according to the group, would be three-tenths of 1 percent of the cost of conducting weapons tests.

The fast-growing problem of countries unable to meet their scheduled external debt payments will soon demand greater attention of the world community.

The debt problems are usually accompanied by decreases in output, higher rates of unemployment, and steeper inflation. This is accompanied by falling real wages, "a source of disquiet," according to an article appearing in the UN's publication, *Development Forum*.

The issue is neither a request for monetary grants, nor an attempt to effect changes from capitalism to communism or vice versa. It is an issue of whether the world can live, long-run, without some greater attempt on the part of the "have" nations to make it possible for the "have not" nations to straighten out their economies and their balance of trade. □

## Export values not arms, British Rabbi counsels

SYDNEY

Modern Israel should export spiritual values rather than guns or oranges, the Chief Rabbi of the British Commonwealth, Sir Immanuel Jakobovits observed at a press conference here.

He told reporters that he speaks as a rabbi, verbally underline the word, not a politician. Judaism, he said, always a tiny minority has held out for 4,000 years against odds which no other group of people or believers has had to face.

To do this their "secret weapon" must have been "moral," which conveys a lesson for modern Israel. "If Israel is not a moral society, dedicated to the aspirations of the prophets as its national goals, one might as well throw in the sponges," he said.

For this reason he opposes the sale of arms by Israel as a revenue-earner, denounces ultra-nationals—we are a people of God—and condemns the ill treatment of captured terrorists and minorities. □

## Cardinal pressures state for liberties, amnesty

MANILA

Cardinal Jaime Sin, archbishop of Manila, declared in a pastoral letter read from church pulpits that it was "noble and patriotic" for citizens to demand abolition of authoritarian decrees and powers and to call for amnesty for political dissidents.

In swift response, the Philippine government rejected the cardinal's call, cabinet ministers contending that general amnesties had never worked.

Officially, the government says there are no political prisoners. Those imprisoned are usually described as subversives, criminals or members of the military wing of the outlawed Communist Party. □

## Countercharges mark church-state tension

VATICAN CITY

Nicaragua's embassy to the Holy See launched a harsh attack on the Vatican and on Nicaraguan Roman Catholic leaders and denied reports that the Marxist government in Managua is persecuting Catholic priests.

Its statement criticized the Vatican's diplomatic office in Managua for letting the city's archbishop (Miguel Obando y Bravo) promote and lead an "illegal" demonstration. It also defended the government's decision to expel 10 foreign priests and to order the trial of a native clergyman suspected of ties to American-backed anti-Sandinista rebels.

"The government of Nicaragua is not against the church, but it is against anyone who places in doubt the ideals of the revolution and the bases on which the new state is being constructed," said the embassy. "Therefore, it is also against all uses made of religion aimed at creating an artificial conflict between the church and the revolution."

Pope John Paul II had expressed "strong disapproval" for the expulsion of the 10 priests and "close participation in the suffering of that church, which continues...to proclaim its commitment to promoting the rejection of violence in the country, and a continuation along the path of dialogue and reconciliation." □

## Evangelicals protest use of state funds for visit

MONTREAL

An association of 2,000 Protestant churches has attacked the use of \$24 million of Canadian government money to finance Pope John Paul II's visit to Canada in September.

The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada said in a statement that it objects to "the granting of government funds to any religious leader whose visit is to promote his religion, be he from Rome, London or Iran, be he Billy Graham or the Pope."

Ottawa has allocated the funds saying the Pope is head of state as temporal ruler of Vatican City, a defense called "a moot point" by the evangelical group.



## NEWS-SCAN

Baptist churches and the Salvation Army are among the members of the evangelical fellowship. □

### Resistance meets plan to discredit Christianity

NAIROBI

Sudan's Catholic bishops have issued a pastoral letter to help church members resist "a well-sustained program to discredit Christianity" in the predominantly Moslem country.

With almost one million members, the Roman Catholic Church is the largest Christian body in the Sudan. The two million Christians make up about 8 percent of the total population.

Last year, President Gaafar Mohamed Nimeiri made Shari'a Moslem law the norm for all citizens, a move criticized by eight Sudanese Christian leaders; they called it an "often-brutal traditional Islamic way of administering justice."

In responding to allegations that Christianity "is the cause of division and instability," the bishops remarked, "We seem to have very short memories. Several coup attempts have been organized by Moslems; and some attempts were very bloody. Yet nobody ever blamed Islam for creating instability."

They also charged that the imposition of Shari'a law has led to situations in which Christians are penalized for not accepting Moslem religious practices. In some cases, "Christians are called to take the oath of allegiance on the Koran, thus exposing them to the accusation of disloyalty if they refuse to do so." □

### Commons defeats synod over church appointments

LONDON

An unexpected clash between the state church and the state erupted here when the House of Commons defeated a proposal which had the overwhelming approval of the general synod, the parliament of the Church of England.

The proposal was to abolish a 550-year-old process for appointing bishops once they had been named by the monarch. This requires a dean and chapter of the vacant diocese to "elect" the appointed person.

The "election" process was attacked as an expensive farce when it was de-

bated in the synod. It was pointed out that the church authorities had never refused to confirm the crown's choice since the Reformation.

Instead, the church asked the House of Commons to replace this by a simpler system under which the crown would ask the archbishop of the province to consecrate the chosen man—or in the future, possibly a woman. □

### All-union Council plenum plans 100th anniversary

MOSCOW

Some 100 representatives of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the USSR took part in a plenum to move along with plans for 100th anniversary celebrations in Leningrad and Novo Vasilievka in October.

The plenum adopted a six-page message to the Union's churches leading up to the anniversary, which included an historical review as well as encouraging future directions in evangelism, education, unity and reconciliation. □

### Suspicion excusable, says Scholar of anti-Semitism

SYDNEY

Zwi Werblowsky, professor of comparative religion at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, one of whose interests is a learned study of anti-Semitism, agreed that "we are not very balanced—we detect small anti-Semitic rats even where there are none."

He feels this attitude, though unfortunate, is excusable, and that today, in a Christian-oriented western culture, there is an assumption that Judaism is inferior, that its religious observances are mechanical, whereas Christianity, having "surpassed and fulfilled" the Mosaic tradition, offers genuine spiritual life.

### GERMAN BAPTISTS ON GUILT

RUESCHLIKON

West German Baptists issued a "Declaration of Guilt" for their behaviour during the Nazi period. The statement said, "shame and grief fill us, especially when we consider the persecution and the mass extermination of the Jewish people. □

Religious leaders, many of them officials of U.S. church agencies, called upon **President Augusto Pinochet** to halt the "suffering of the Chilean people caused by the practices of torture." Their letter to the Chilean president demanded an end to "secret detention centers" and urged him to control the abuses carried out by security agents... Church investment in South Africa will cease for **Rhode Island American Baptists**. At their annual meeting the ABC/USA body voted to divest following the lack of success in efforts to influence policy through shareholder meetings. The Baptists also reaffirmed church-state separation as a "legal guarantee and source of support for religious liberty... Discrimination on the grounds of religious belief, and equally of lack of faith, should be prohibited by law, says the Anti-discrimination Board in **New South Wales, Australia**. A study revealed that even those who suffered religious discrimination were surprised and shocked to find that it still existed... *Pravda*, the Community party newspaper, is voicing serious concern about **religious influence** among minority Soviet populations. Vigorous efforts to stamp it out have been called for on the charge that foreign enemies of communism use religion to bolster nationalist sentiments among Christians and Moslem believers... A **Dutch millionaire** says he plans to turn his private corporation into a publicly held corporation and donate the \$150 million proceeds to charitable projects in the Third World. **Piet Derksen**, a devout Roman Catholic, said "My wealth has been like a stone around my neck." He believes his action will help spread the word of God... The new general secretary of the World Council of Churches, **Emilio Enrique Castro**, says he was "converted"—not from one church to another, but to Jesus Christ" while a teenager. He was pastor of Methodist churches in Bolivia and Uruguay, and has taught at numerous seminaries... Some **4,000 young Baptists from 60 countries** were urged by Argentine President Raul Alfonsin not to rest in their support of religious liberty, which he termed the fundamental liberty for all other liberties. "Claim that liberty for your nation and always act as agents of reconciliation and peace."

# CORRESPONDENCE

Reader response to the actions taken by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and to the feature material found on these pages contributes to dialogue and helps sharpen our understanding of the issues. Letters, signed and with full address, should be kept to 200 words. Editors reserve the right to edit for length.

I have just read a report of the passage of the Hatfield-Denton equal access bill in the Senate. The margin of victory is indicative, I believe, of the effectiveness of the BJCPA. I appreciate the vigor with which you have waged a three-year battle on behalf of the equal access principles. You have served the constituents of the Baptist Joint Committee very well.

I have no problem supporting both the agency and its director because of the effective job they do in keeping our churches informed and our concerns represented in Washington.

**Tim L. Reddin**  
Hot Springs Village, ARK

... regarding the matter of diplomatic exchange between our government and the Roman Catholic Church... it certainly needs to be resolved by the withdrawal of the representative to the Vatican. I support the strong case you have built opposing this violation of church/state relations.

**Earl Potts**  
Montgomery, AL

[your leaflet] "Religion in the Public Classroom" contains vital information which should be made available to teachers as well as school board members. Won't someone get these facts before the general public? Most teachers don't know their rights in the use of the Bible and are afraid to move in any direction.

**Rhodalee Hailey**  
Carthage, TN

[The suggestion that this pamphlet be placed in the hands of public school educators is most timely, particularly in wake of the equal access legislation recently voted into law. Written by BJCPA legal counsel John Baker, this pamphlet provides valuable information on freedoms and restrictions relating to religion and the public schools.]

You do outstanding work in keeping us informed. It is unfortunate that some others do not see the invaluable service you do in helping us to make intelligent decisions in the "gray areas" of church and state.

**David E. Ezekiel**  
Defiance, OH

I want to add my voice to those in support of the continued strong witness of the Baptist Joint Committee. I may not always agree with a particular stand that you take, but I applaud your active defense of the freedom of religion and the separation of church and state.

**Roger Gilbert**  
Whiteville, NC

Keep up the good work! We Southern Baptists like to claim kinship with the Anabaptists, viewing them as heroes of the faith. But we seem to have forgotten what they stood for (freedom of conscience under God) and what killed them (religious intolerance.) We also pay lip service to Christian unity, but you're about the only thing we do jointly. [Ed: Along with the Baptist World Alliance]

**Mike McWilliams**  
Dallas, TX

An excellent issue [July-August REPORT] ... the SBC Convention sermon by Russell Dilday. A powerful and prophetic word! I just wanted to lob in a bouquet and express appreciation for your Dawsonian stance and style. "Religion and Politics are too important not to be controversial."

**James V. Davison**  
Birmingham, MI

Keep up the good work. Your efforts are appreciated.

**Bob Sandifer**  
Selma, AL

## PROBE

Why does Dr. Hendricks conclude that there are no simple "Bible-to-ballot" directions to guide Christians in casting their vote? Doesn't the Bible provide direct, self-interpreting answers to questions of ethics, government, etc.?

"Norms with Forms" draws the Bible into decision-making beyond the direct approach. Express this second method in terms of its strengths or weaknesses.

Is "holistic" a concept familiar to you? Hendricks, drawing on theologian Schillebeeckx, offers it in a synthesis of the above two methods to bring religious experience to informed voting. What new elements does this bring to the discussion of Christian political responsibility?

If one begins by asserting God's sovereignty over all creation (a holistic assumption) why not favor a theocracy in which the rule of God's law informs and conditions all other law?

How can one distinguish between the Kingdom of God in the preaching of Jesus and the theocratic ideal as expressed in ancient Israel? Is it simply a matter of grace vs. law?

Madison, and Jefferson who gave us the phrase "wall of separation," are called upon to support differing, often conflicting points of view. Must we regard that "wall" as impenetrable?

And what of the state's neutrality toward religion in light of religion's need to witness to its values in national life? Does the mere fact that the church uses the political process violate the integrity of that wall.

Many Baptists believe the essence of religious liberty includes both freedom for religion as well as freedom from religion? Do you agree?

"Equal access" legislation, argued on the basis of free speech, allows student religious groups to meet in public schools. How does it affirm free exercise and yet not violate the First Amendment prohibition against establishment of religion?

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From fast food franchises, designer everythings and national television we receive our blended identities, like so many briquets of pulverized individuals.

## REFLECTIONS

James M. Dunn  
Executive Director



**"T**o show that there ain't no real Baptists anymore" is why Will Campbell says he wrote *The Glad River*. Alas, he has something.

Search for Baptists who see themselves as nonconformists. Ask fellow church members how they understand separation of church and state. Quiz those of our own denominational label on their grasp of "soul freedom" and "religious liberty." Test the friends in Baptist life by the distinctives that marked Baptists in the past.

Do you wonder how any self-respecting Baptist could possibly favor government-written prayers for little school children? Were you surprised at the relatively weak wail that went up when the President of the United States appointed an ambassador to the Roman Catholic Church? Can you believe that some folks who call themselves Baptists actually want tuition tax credits for private and parochial schools?

One does not have to look far to find the more obvious answers. The forces at work in society that blur individuality and promote anonymity affect us all. Being a Christian does not grant one immunity from those silent shapers of modern men and women.

Americans are mobile, uprooted. Every year one-fifth of the population moves. We are an urban people, crowded together. Even Texas, thought of as the wide-open spaces, has 84% of her people living in cities. All of us are victims of rapid technological and social change. The computer age, the nuclear era and the television-dominated day still have our heads spinning. We have barely accepted the idea of *Future Shock* before being caught up in *Megatrends*.

The homogenization of culture is but one of those intractable aspects of our times that makes us feel like the product of a people processor. From fast food franchises, designer everythings and national television we receive our blended identities, like so many briquets of pulverized individuals.

Baptists have never been insulated from the swirl of social forces. In fact, because of our local church autonomy, our democratic governance, our simple, plain proclamation of the Gospel, our accessible worship available to the uninitiated and our urgent evangelism we tend to be close to "the people." We are typically in touch with our culture and should be. We are out there in everyday life where the folks are, not locked away in a college or a cathedral. And so, we suffer the anomie, the depersonalization and all the pangs of our increasingly secular society. That is not all bad, but we also tend to reflect the culture, to echo the tune, to mimic the mood of our times. Sometimes a Baptist can be like that little lizard, a chameleon changing with the background.

This explains, to some degree, what has happened to real Baptists. We are at least camouflaged by and in our culture. See John Lee Eighmy's *Churches in Cultural Captivity* to dig around that idea some more.

Forces at work in the churches have also made it harder to find real Baptists. The rapid growth in

Southern Baptist life has brought in a generation of church members with little awareness of their heritage. Since 1950 the largest Baptist body in the United States has doubled, from 7 million members to 14 million members.

An ignorance of history and church-state relations present in the general population has spilled over into the churches. "Seventy-seven percent of Americans polled in 1980 said they didn't know what is included in the First Amendment." (*The Washington Post*, July 4, 1984) Ask the deacons in your church to identify Roger Williams or John Leland. Then check the B.H.Q. (Baptist History Quotient) of the young adults you know.

Further, leaders in all the Baptist conventions and conferences lament the failure to educate about Baptist history, doctrinal distinctives, religious liberty and its safeguard, church-state separation. Baptist General Conference officers, North American Baptist Seminary professors and Valley Forge types of the American Baptist Churches all agree that we've defaulted on our responsibility to pass on the torch of liberty so carefully tended by our forebears.

Then, it is popular today to say "I'm a Christian first, only secondarily a Baptist." There is a certain ecumenism that is actually a cover for theological sloth. There is a protestation of ecumenicity that is fundamentally dishonest but popular and acceptable.

Our incarnational religion came to us through particular people. The fleshed-out nature of Christian faith demands specificity. To affirm a distinct tradition, to know who you are and from whence you come doesn't threaten or minimize our capacity for cooperation with other Christians. Indeed, the ecumenical dish for today should probably be a tossed salad rather than some melting-pot casserole.

What then do we do if real Baptists have anything to offer and we can't find any real Baptists? So much needs to be done that the modest start suggested here is disproportionately puny. Yet, the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs is this year making an intentional, deliberate effort to help Baptists recapture our heritage. We project a focused effort to reaffirm religious liberty and church-state separation as Baptist distinctives. We offer a crash course in the application of Baptist principles to the political process and governmental affairs. We claim the initiative in affirming our identity.

*Report from the Capital* becomes more basic curriculum material with this issue. Camera-ready clips for church bulletins are available. Teaching and discussion aids will be in each copy. Circulation dramatically increases. Core libraries on religious liberty are available for participating churches, along with video tapes, a hot line for current information. A network of Baptist lawyers and other lay leaders is developing.

"Ain't no real Baptists anymore." Maybe not, but we are prime candidates for resurrection. □

# REVIEWS



## REVIVE US AGAIN:

A Sojourner's Story

By Jim Wallis, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983, 192 pp.

Jim Wallis was the type of all-American boy who keeps popping up in all those articles about the post-World War II baby-boom generation: the son of an evangelical pastor, a bright young teenager with the potential of becoming the "boy most likely to succeed," everyone's favorite son, the inheritor of the American dream.

Then the dream fell apart. He began to encounter contradictions between this American dream and his Christian faith. Raised to believe in the equality of all people before God, he was shaken to find that during the turbulent sixties both his nation and his church were unabashedly racist in their rejection of Blacks. Close on the heels of this disappointment came the realization of an even greater contradiction: his nation, founded on ideals of democratic self-determination, had become engaged in an immoral war.

In seeking to proclaim the Christian call to mercy, justice, and peace in the face of the destabilizing, demoralizing, polarizing Vietnam conflict, he found the church, instead, to be more concerned with adhering to a false idea of "patriotism" which included a denial that Christian faith had anything to do with the issues of war, poverty and racism.

Angry, frustrated, sensing betrayal, Jim Wallis found that in his hours of need his church had abandoned him. He began to question the very roots of his faith in a quest for truth that took him to the depths of despair and alienation before he was able to begin a long journey to experience anew the radical claims and promises of the New Testament and the gospel it proclaims.

Encountered anew by Jesus Christ, he finds the proclamation of the Kingdom of God which dawns in triumph over the systems of oppression and injustice. The way of Jesus overturns the assumptions of the Right, Left and Middle and presents a genuinely new option for both our personal and political lives. He calls for a life lived for God, for neighbor, for the poor and even for enemies. Through the Sermon on the Mount Wallis began to find his way back to service in a community of faith.

*Revive us Again* speaks to all of us who are disappointed in and/or angry with the hypocritical lip-service which so often passes for Christianity and who feel that there must be more to faith than simple affirmation of traditional confessions or participation in civil religion. Wallis takes us through the painful crisis of faith which results in a transforming encounter with God in Jesus Christ in a way that leads him to re-evaluate our old assumptions about God, Christ, faith and Christian responsibility as they relate to life in America today. □

## THE SPELLBINDERS, Charismatic Political Leadership

By Ann Ruth Willner, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984.

This book presents an excellent analysis of charismatic political leadership in world affairs, using as its chief models or examples, Gandhi, Hitler, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Sukarno, Mussolini and Castro.

In using the word "charisma" or charismatic, the author utilizes the term in its dictionary sense—"a personal magic of leadership arousing special, popular loyalty or enthusiasm (for a leader)." While there is no reference to the biblical terms for the "gift of the Holy Spirit," one cannot read this book and escape the obvious similarities, correlations, and overlappings between the two concepts.

A deliberate effort is made to refrain from value judgments and moral evaluations in describing the above mentioned leaders. The reason is obviously to achieve an objectivity in the reader's mind with respect to methods and techniques of the charismatic personality, rather than the end results. Willner trusts us to know the difference be-

## REVIEWERS

Michael Litaker, a first-time reviewer, is pastor of First Baptist Church, Saluda, NC. Carroll Arnold, out in Tucson, AZ, writes prolifically on a variety of subjects.

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tween Hitler and Gandhi, but both had charisma of the highest order.

One chapter, on the Invocation of Myth, is particularly fascinating in showing how leaders use the myths, stories, traditions, history and heroes of their nation's past to enhance and forward their own cause and personal power.

The book, an excellent review of history, most illuminatingly shows how the Ayatollah Khomeini, certainly charismatic enough, identified himself with ancient myths and the history of Iran and Persia to overthrow the Shah and entrench himself in power.

One misses any analysis of Martin Luther King, another prime example of the kind of charismatic leadership the author is describing. King is mentioned only tangentially as a disciple of Gandhi.

Every preacher should read this book. It affords a splendid rationale for what they are already doing. Laity should read this book in order to keep the preachers honest.

Ruth Ann Willner, the author, is a professor of political science at the University of Kansas. Her scholarship and scholarly apparatus is impeccable; Kansas is most fortunate. □

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