

January 1985

ISSN-0346-0661

REPORT from the CAPITAL



REPORT from the CAPITAL

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

Vol. 40, No. 1

January, 1985

Articles

- Advocates for Freedom 4
By Jeffrey Warren Scott
- Fidelity 7
By Hugh Wamble
- Our Great Gift to History 10
By Lowell Weicker, Jr.

- Views of the Wall 6
By Stan Haste

Features

- Washington Observations 3
By Stan Haste and Larry G. Chesser

- Views of the Wall 6
By Stan Haste

- News in Brief 7
By Larry G. Chesser

- International Dateline 12
By Victor Tupitza

- Correspondence 14

- Reflections 15
By James M. Dunn

- Reviews 16

Cover: We welcome this new year in a spirit of Christian optimism, prayerful and actively engaged as witnesses of God's grace and peace.

Executive Director: James M. Dunn
Editor: Victor Tupitza

Contributing Editors: John W. Baker, Stan L. Haste, Larry G. Chesser, Glenn Saul, Kenneth L. Smith, Gary McNeil, Jeanette Holt

Circulation Assistant: Gayl Fowler

REPORT from the CAPITAL is published 10 times each year by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, a denominational agency maintained in the Nation's capital by its nine member bodies: The American Baptist Churches in the USA, Baptist Federation of Canada, Baptist General Conference, National Baptist Convention of America, National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc., North American Baptist Conference, Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc., Seventh Day Baptist General Conference and Southern Baptist Convention.

Subscriptions: Single, \$6.00 one year, \$11.00 two years; Club Rate (10 or more) \$5.00 per each year; Student Rate \$2.50 single year. Foreign, please add \$2.00 postage.

BAPTIST JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC AFFAIRS
200 Maryland Avenue, N.E. Washington, D.C. 20002

More Church and State

Relationships between church and state, to no one's great surprise, are subject to never-ending interpretation and misinterpretations. The language of the First Amendment, terse but dynamic—produces some of the confusion. Yet, Senator Lowell Weicker observes succinctly, "The Constitution is not a self-enforcing document." And regarding the church-state issue, he adds, "each succeeding generation must shore up the wall." In this issue of **REPORT**, a preacher, professor and politician touch on church-state separation from their own perspectives.

The Constitution, as evidence of national confidence as well as an opportunity for malicious mischief, welcomes, indeed requires testing and proving. Some states approved its adoption on the condition that a bill of rights be added. The dedication of some Baptist preachers served to bring about the First Amendment.

Jeffrey Scott endorses lobbying as a method of mediating between majority and minorities' rights. He writes of Clarke, Backus and Leland, who demonstrated the power of citizen influence in redressing grievances in an area even as touchy as religion. They complained about taxing Baptists and others to pay salaries of Anglican and Congregational clergy (established religion) and were successful in bringing about the separation of church and state on the national level. We face a similar problem in the form of tuition tax credits, vouchers and tax deductions for the support of private education.

Additional First Amendment mischief results when revisionists challenge traditional legal and historical precedents while seeking government support for their religious views—e.g., tax benefits for religious schools or state-required religious exercises in public schools. Sometimes the challenge is obviously faulty—the claim, for example, that the "wall", like the emperor's new clothes, is pure imagination rather than historical fact. Hugh Wamble reminds us that the metaphor "wall", was constructed early and ably by Thomas Jefferson to express the reality of a First Amendment requirement.

America's great gift to history, writes Sen. Weicker, is the concept of church-state separation and the freedom of religion it guarantees. Troubled by the fusion of Christian fundamentalism with a so-called political conservatism, he finds this to be a form of radical extremism which must be resisted. Not that Weicker faults fundamentalist belief, which is a personal and a Constitutional right. Instead, he protests fundamentalism's attempts to coerce uniformity of belief. Often labeled a Republican liberal, Weicker demonstrates a large measure of conservatism in this address before the American Jewish Committee. □

Victor Tupitza

Catholics remain by far the largest religious group in the newly elected 99th Congress, but Episcopalians, Methodists and Baptists registered the largest gains in the recent congressional elections.

The biennial survey by Americans United for Separation of Church and State shows a total of 21 different faith groups will be represented in the new Congress, compared to 25 in the 98th. Only three members are unaffiliated with any religious group.

AU's Director of Research Albert J. Menendez cautioned that religious affiliation per se is only one determinant of a member's voting decisions. "On a few issues of strong religious connotation, such as school prayer and abortion," Menendez said, "a member's religion seems to affect his or her vote."

Menendez explained further that "Members of Congress often attend a church of one denomination while holding membership in a different one. Then, like many other Americans, they occasionally change their religion. All in all, it's a rather inexact science." ●

Studies of Martin Luther King, Jr., that rely on his published books "are simply not dependable or trustworthy, because King himself did not write many of the volumes, says a historian who will publish a major study on Dr. King's thought next year.

David J. Garrow, who teaches at the City University of New York, said King scholars have "gone down an error-strewn path" in trying to trace Dr. King's intellectual development through books actually ghost-written by his advisers or by professional writers.

Theologian James Cone of Union Theological Seminary, said the manuscripts and tape recordings of unpublished sermons preached by the late civil rights leaders and pastor at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, provide the most reliable source on the development of his thought. Dr. King gave four or five speeches a day, or 400 a year—some sermons were spontaneous, some written out—and only in the pulpit did King rely totally upon his own resources. ●

An official of the National Association of Evangelicals says it is unlikely that Congress, at its coming session, will send down a human life amendment to the states to ratify. According to Forest Montgomery, counsel for the NAE office of Public Affairs, prospects also appear dim for action on school prayer and tuition tax credits.

Montgomery gave "an insider's view" of 1985 politics, in Washington, at a "Day on the Hill" seminar sponsored by three evangelical organizations held at Trinity Lutheran College in Minnehaha Falls, MN. He said the fact that, at the last session Congress passed the equal access act, giving student religious groups access to public school facilities, has taken some of the pressure off the drive for a school prayer bill.

The last election, Mr. Montgomery said, "was remarkable for its emphasis on religion in politics. Although the issue got thoroughly confused, what came out is an awareness by the public that religion counts and that people have deeply felt needs and value systems that are not being addressed. Evangelicals, he said, "need to register to vote, to vote, and to become active. We are the salt of the earth. What an opportunity and obligation we have." ●

Advocates for Freedom

Clarke
Backus
Leland

... study of their
influence reaffirms
the Baptist heritage
of involvement in
the political realm.

Although the Baptist role in the painful struggle for religious liberty in the U.S. has been well documented, few have viewed the efforts of the early Baptist leaders as lobbying per se. This writer contends that Baptists learned early the importance of a personal representative or lobbyist to plead their case before government officials and bodies.

Baptists discovered that despite their small numbers, their views could be effectively aired by a skillful lobbyist. As the Baptist position was eloquently explained by the professional lobbyist, officials would gain an important understanding of the plight of this persecuted minority. In time, these efforts of advocacy would bring the religious liberty that was so desperately needed.

Three excellent examples of early Baptist lobbying can be seen in the work of John Clarke, Isaac Backus, and John Leland. These men might well be labeled the first Baptist lobbyists in America.

John Clarke

John Clarke was a contemporary of Roger Williams and while Williams is credited with the founding of the first Baptist Church in America at Providence, Rhode Island in 1639, Clarke is responsible for the founding of the second Baptist Church in America at Newport, Rhode Island in 1644.

Rhode Island was a haven for religious dissenters. In fact, it was the first of the colonies to offer the guarantee of religious freedom. In its early years, Rhode Island lacked the security of a Charter from the British government. This would become significant as rumors spread that Massachusetts was considering an attempt to annex Rhode Island and thus bring back the dissenters underneath the umbrella of establishment.

To block this attempt, and to ensure a "lively experiment" of religious liberty, Williams and Clarke crossed the Atlantic to obtain a Charter from the Cromwell government in England. The men met with one delay after another. Williams finally returning to Rhode Island empty-handed, Clarke remained in England for 12 years trying to obtain the Charter. During that time, he represented the interests of Rhode Island in seeking a charter which would guar-

antee religious freedom. These lobbying efforts were for the most unpaid. In fact, Clarke went into considerable personal debt to finance his lobbying efforts on behalf of Rhode Island. He would be compensated for his efforts only after his death.

Clarke's lobbying methods included personal correspondence, meetings, conferences, speeches, sermons, and publications. His work *Ill News From New England*, which depicted the bitter persecution occurring in the colonies, was published during his stay in England in 1652 and did much to aid his cause.

Because of the lobbying efforts of Clarke, the Charter was granted to Rhode Island, and not only prevented the rumored annexation by Massachusetts, but guaranteed religious liberty for the first time in the Western world.

Upon his return to Rhode Island, Clarke continued his involvement in the political realm as an avid spokesman for religious liberty and other Baptist causes. He held a number of elected offices, culminating with election to the position of Deputy Governor in October 1669 and again in 1672.

Isaac Backus

Another example of early Baptist lobbying may be found in the efforts of Isaac Backus. Backus is considered by many to be the finest example of Baptist views on the separation of Church and State since Roger Williams.

It was Isaac Backus who, along with James Manning, took the lead in forming the Warren Baptist Association composed of Baptists from Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. The Warren Association selected Isaac Backus to represent it before the Continental Congress in 1772 on matters of religious liberty.

Backus may be cited as the first Baptist lobbyist to appear before a "federal" legislative body to urge religious liberty.

At a meeting of the Massachusetts delegation to the Continental Congress on October 14, 1774, he addressed the lack of religious liberty in Massachusetts. A four hour discussion culminated in the promise of John Adams to look into things for the Baptists. He did not seem convinced by Backus, and said that if the Baptists wanted to

*It was Leland who
extracted from Madison
the promise of the
Bill of Rights
which would guarantee
religious liberty...*

change the religious order in Massachusetts they may just as easily change the course of the sun in the sky.

Backus, not trusting Adams' commitment to the cause, presented his petition for freedom from taxes to support an established clergy to the President of the Continental Congress. Although it appeared as if the petition would pass, it was tabled at the last minute by what may have been the work of Adams.

Backus provides an excellent illustration of Baptist lobbying. He stood on the floor of the Continental Congress and boldly advocated the position of Baptists on religious liberty. Despite the fact that he represented a despised minority, Backus had some success in making contact with the leaders of his day, and even went as far as to draft legislation for consideration by Congress on the subject of religious liberty. It is not difficult to see why William McLoughlin, in an article in the *American Historical Review*, identifies Backus as the representative of Baptist thoughts on Church and State separation.

John Leland

John Leland, more than any other Baptist, had a direct influence on the Constitution and First Amendment due to his relationships with the prominent thinkers of his day. Like Clarke, Leland could play the role of the diplomat, yet like Backus he could be a fiery and eloquent speaker, whose greatest asset as a lobbyist, however, was the ability to cultivate personal relationships with prominent men.

Jefferson seems to have been attracted to the fight of the Baptists for religious liberty because of his friendship with Leland. He is said to have attended Leland's church to hear him preach on a number of occasions. That Leland influenced Jefferson may be surmised from the numerous letters of Jefferson to various Baptist groups. It

was in one of these letters, the letter to the Danbury Baptist Association, that the phrase "wall of separation" appears.

Leland may also have struck up a friendship with George Washington. Correspondence between the General Committee of Virginia Baptists, of which Leland was a prominent member, and Washington indicate that a friendship had been cultivated.

Of all of Leland's personal contacts, none was more significant than the one with James Madison. It was Leland who extracted from Madison the promise of the Bill of Rights which would guarantee religious liberty in exchange for support for the ratification of the Constitution as originally proposed. Without Leland's support of the ratification it appeared that Virginia would refuse to ratify the Constitution, effectively nullifying the wishes of the less prominent colonies especially if New York were to follow Virginia's lead.

Clearly the work of Leland was significant for the passage of the Constitution and First Amendment. He had a long and successful career as a lobbyist. He continued his work in the states of Massachusetts and Connecticut where he fought for religious liberty on the state level until his death.

From these examples, it is clear that the early Baptists learned the importance of having a special representative or lobbyist to plead their case. The office of lobbyist developed from the unpaid position of Clarke to a more sophisticated and realistic arrangement with Leland.

The methods of the lobbyists would improve over time. Leland seemed to have a keen awareness of the necessity of personal contact with legislators in order to effect change.

For Baptists today, this study of Baptist influence reaffirms their heritage of involvement in the political realm for purposes of achieving and maintaining religious freedom. Second, it shows the importance of focusing divergent Baptist voices in a way that can have the biggest impact upon decision makers. Last, it demonstrates that even a small persecuted minority can have a profound effect upon the course of a nation if it will speak out boldly and dare to be involved in the political process to facilitate change.

Today more than ever, Baptists need the patience and diplomacy of a John Clarke, the bold advocacy of an Isaac Backus, and the unwavering commitment to religious freedom of a John Leland. It is through the skill of the lobbyist that Baptists can have an important effect upon the legislative process. □

Quoting

Wilson Riles
The Center Magazine

When we were foolish enough in this state [California] to pass Proposition 13, it was devastating to the schools. One-third of the support for our schools was cut the moment it passed. But middle-class people found solutions. The city council in Beverly Hills voted six hundred thousand dollars for the local school board. All around the state, so-called nonprofit foundations were set up, people contributed to them, got a tax write-off, and the money went to the local school board... tuition tax credits—

What you are saying is that you are going to take tax money and give it to people to send their children to private schools. I want to know where all those good private schools are. And where are all those good teachers? The middle class can create these facilities. And if these schools are out there, and you have a voucher for them, how do you gain access? The exclusive private schools I know of do not want poor blacks or poor whites. Are you going to regulate them? If you don't regulate them, what happens to *Brown vs. Board of Education*? If you do regulate them, what is the difference between the so-called private schools and the public schools? I do not believe that we can place the onus for poor and ineffective schools on the backs of the poor. Every one of us has a responsibility to see that the public schools become effective schools, and that they are supported equitably for everybody. □

Desmond Tutu
Hope and Suffering

African and Black Theology must be concerned—and vitally concerned—with liberation because, as we have shown, liberation is a serious preoccupation at the present time and it is not seen as being an alternative to personal salvation in Jesus Christ. No, it is seen in Africa as the inescapable consequence of taking the Gospel of Jesus Christ seriously. Only a spiritually, politically, socially and economically free Africa, where Christianity today is expanding faster than anywhere else in the world, can make a distinctive contribution to the life of the body of Jesus Christ and to the world community as a whole. □

VIEWS OF THE WALL

Stan Haste



One day after pondering the constitutionality of state laws calling for silent prayer in public schools, the Supreme Court considered a battery of arguments in a pair of parochial aid cases that will determine if public funds may be used to send public school teachers into parochial schools to provide specialized instruction.

The case from Grand Rapids, Mich., will settle the question of whether states may fund such programs; the other, from New York City, will determine if a 1965 federal law providing remedial instruction by public school teachers in parochial schools violates the establishment clause of the First Amendment.

Grand Rapids

The high court agreed to hear the Grand Rapids dispute after two lower federal panels struck down the program, concluding it had the primary effect of advancing religion and excessively entangled state officials with parochial schools.

For the past eight years, the Michigan city's school board has leased space from parochial elementary and secondary schools to provide a wide range of services, including remedial and enriched courses in reading and math, as well as art, music and physical education courses. Under the program, public school teachers go into the leased parochial schools carrying signs reading "Public School," which are posted on classroom doors. In addition, religious artifacts and symbols are removed from classrooms before the public school teachers begin classes.

Kenneth F. Ripple, a University of Notre Dame law professor who represented the state of Michigan before the high court, defended the Grand Rapids practices, declaring that "fairness" as well as establishment clause considerations are at issue in the case. He argued that Michigan has a compelling interest in providing broadly based educational opportunities for pupils in all the state's schools. Ripple insisted Grand Rapids school officials have been "particularly sensitive to the restraints of the establishment clause."

The fact that 30 percent of the city's school-age children attend a variety of parochial schools indicates a "long tradition of religious plurality," Ripple

said, and warned the court against "frustrat[ing] the intent of the local community" on establishment clause grounds. Children, not parochial schools as such, benefit from the program, he added. McConnell, who presented the Reagan administration views in the case, said public school teachers go into parochial schools "solely for sound educational reasons."

But University of Virginia law professor A.E. Dick Howard told the justices the Grand Rapids practices amount to a "palpable" entanglement of local school officials with parochial school personnel who together engage in a "joint exercise of authority."

The "cumulative effect" of the arrangement, he argued, is that public employees at public expense teach substantive courses on the premises of religious schools, thereby entangling church and state. Howard also noted what he called the "double benefit" flowing to parochial schools in Grand Rapids, saying they are enabled to enlarge their curriculum while at the same time administering the program entirely on their own premises.

The noted constitutional authority added that the presence of public school teachers engaged in a wide variety of course offerings enables parochial teachers to spend more time with fewer pupils, thus enhancing the church schools themselves. In such a situation, Howard insisted, it is the parochial schools rather than parents and pupils, that receive the actual benefits of the program.

Among numerous interested parties who filed friend-of-the-court briefs on both sides of the Grand Rapids case is the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. That agency's general counsel, John W. Baker, filed a brief arguing against the constitutionality of the disputed program. Baker's brief was joined by the American Jewish Committee and the National Council of Churches.

New York City

During arguments in the New York City case, the justices heard the federal government's top lawyer, solicitor general Rex E. Lee, defend a section of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) known as Title I. That provision of the historic law man-

dates that federal funds for remedial reading and math and guidance counseling for pupils in poverty-stricken areas be distributed in a "comparable" fashion between public and parochial schools.

Lee asked the high court to overrule a lower federal panel's decision earlier this year invalidating Title I benefits to parochial schools, arguing there are "no instances of Title I teachers advancing religion" in the 18 years the program has been in effect in the nation's largest city.

After passage of the law, he said, New York City school officials undertook a "common sense examination" of the best way to implement Title I and concluded there was no "significant risk" of excessive governmental entanglement with religion in sending public school teachers into parochial schools to provide the remedial instruction and clinical guidance. Lee concluded his presentation to the justices with a passionate plea that "it would be a real tragedy" if "such a successful program" were disallowed under the establishment clause.

Stanley Geller, a New York City attorney representing taxpayers who brought suit challenging the law, told the high court that while ESEA "is a good statute . . . there have never been enough funds" in Title I to service all eligible public school pupils in the city. He said he could not believe Congress intended such students be denied the benefits of remedial education in favor of parochial school pupils.

Geller also attacked the government's contention that no evidence exists of excessive entanglement of school officials with parochial schools benefiting from the program, arguing there is no proof of improper interaction because the city relies only "on the good faith and professionalism of the teachers" with no "system of surveillance." The program benefits parochial schools directly, Geller added, in that the public school teachers "can become the school personified."

Although the Grand Rapids and New York City cases were heard back to back, the high court will issue separate decisions in the disputes, probably sometime next spring.

continued on page 11

Figment or Fidelity

Is the "wall" reality born of experience and faithfulness?

I could hardly believe my eyes and ears on September 6, 1984, as I was watching CBS evening news on television. After newscasts respecting statements that day by President Reagan and his challenger, Walter F. Mondale, on religion, CBS showed a clip of an interview of one of Southern Baptists' most prominent and respected pastors. With my eyes I saw and with my ears I heard him say that separation of church and state is the figment of infidels' imagination.

Is church-state separation really a figment of the imagination—either infidels' or fidels'—Is there any substance to the principle? Or does it lack any basis in reality?

There, of course, is talk against church-state separation. But it seeks to undo reality, not to whip a figment of the imagination. Those who value separation of church and state cannot afford silence when this principle is under revisionists' criticism and attack.

The only confessions of faith ever adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention—in 1925 and 1963, respectively—contain a statement consistent with this principle, to wit:

Church and state should be separate. The state owes to the church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others . . . The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The Gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion.

A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal . . . As a teacher in a seminary of this Convention I heartily embrace the substance of the foregoing statement.

Baptists' role in advancing the principles of liberty of conscience, religious freedom or liberty, and church-state separation is conspicuous in historical annals. Historians uniformly recognize that Baptists' advocacy and activities were crucial to writing these principles into the constitutional and legal structure of the United States and of several crucial states, such as Virginia, Connecticut, and Massachusetts. The metaphor "wall of separation between Church and State" first appeared, to the best of my knowledge, in Thomas Jefferson's letter of January 1, 1802, to the Danbury Baptist Association. To be sure, a metaphor is a figure of speech, but it can effectively express reality by way of analogy.

In this century Baptists have sought to preserve and perpetuate what our predecessors sacrificed to establish. Our predecessors knew the hardships visited by church and state upon persons who, in obedience to consciences informed by Christ's lordship, refused to conform to a uniformity of religious belief and practice. We have inherited the blessings of church-state separation. History will not be kind to Baptists of 1984 if they subvert and sacrifice what Baptists of 1784 struggled to achieve—a free church in a free state.

The constitutional language which provides for church-state separation appears in the Non-Establishment Clause of the First Amendment: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion." This wording, the Supreme Court has said, was designed to prevent three "evils": Government's sponsorship of religion, its financial support of religion, and its active involvement with religion. Prohibited involvement is of two types: (1) political entanglement, whereby church seeks to use political clout to get government to benefit or assist the church in advancing the church's objectives; and (2) administrative entanglement, whereby the machineries of church and state mesh, so that there is intrusion of one into the other's precincts. The Non-Establishment Clause aims at preventing such intrusion.

Baptists have believed—and, in my opinion, history confirms—that both church and state fare best when each

serves its own ends without relying on the other to advance these ends. Religion, in particular, must beware the state's proffers of favor, lest religion become an "engine of civil policy," to use James Madison's metaphor.

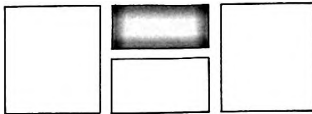
Church-state separation is important because it serves religious freedom, as set forth in the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment: "Congress shall make no law . . . prohibiting the free exercise thereof," that is, of religion. When there is union of church and state, either religion or government suffers, or both suffer, under the blending of the two. In this century of expansive government, often claiming omniscient powers and demanding loyalty, religion stands to lose when it becomes too close to or dependent on government.

Perhaps the most famous oration on this subject in the United States in the twentieth century was George W. Truett's "Baptists and Religious Liberty," delivered May 16, 1920, on the steps of the United States Capitol. Certainly it is the most famous address on the subject by a Baptist. His successor, W. A. Criswell, pastor of First Baptist Church, Dallas, was therefore in a noble tradition when, in his presidential address to the Southern Baptist Convention in 1970, he referred to "the cardinal doctrine of the Baptist faith (as) soul liberty, freedom of conscience, the right to believe anything and everything or nothing." Whereas infidels' may hold such views in common with Baptists and others, Baptists value them so highly as to want all people to enjoy and exercise them.

Church-state separation is not a figment of infidels' imagination but a reality born of experience and nurtured by several generations' faithfulness. It is fragile and therefore constantly requires alert attention, tender care, and supportive action to insure its perpetuation and diffusion in this country and abroad. □

Dr. Hugh Wamble, a former member of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, is professor of church history at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, MO.

News in Brief



Baptists among leaders urging African relief

Eleven prominent Baptists were among more than 160 U.S. religious leaders who urged President Reagan and Congress to take immediate steps—including an airlift of food and transportation equipment—in response to the famine in Ethiopia and other African nations.

Progressive National Baptist Convention general secretary C.J. Malloy Jr. read the statement issued by religious leaders representing 55 national denominations and agencies at a Capitol Hill press conference Nov. 29. The press conference was convened by Bread for the World, a Christian citizens' lobby which focuses on hunger.

Other Baptist signers included James M. Dunn, executive director, Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs; Robert C. Campbell, general secretary, American Baptist Churches/U.S.A.; Warren Magnuson, general secretary, Baptist General Conference; Coretta Scott King, president, Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Social Change; Jesse Jackson, president, National Rainbow Coalition, Inc.;

Also, R. Keith Parks, president, Southern Baptist Convention Foreign Mission Board; William R. O'Brien, executive vice president, SBC Foreign Mission Board; John Cheyne, senior consultant for human needs, SBC Foreign Mission Board; Foy Valentine, executive director, SBC Christian Life Commission; and David Lockard, director of organization, SBC Christian Life Commission.

"I have known hunger and some misery," Malloy said before reading the statement, "but I am thankful to God I have not known starvation and utter despair."

Malloy noted PNBC had already given \$7,000 in relief aid to African nations and expected to provide more.

In their statement, the religious leaders said they were distressed that "three years after the onset of the drought, assistance still has not reached the majority of seven million people facing starvation in Ethiopia or many of the 150 million people suffering in all of sub-Saharan Africa."

The document declared: "To admit that several million people have died

from starvation in Africa is an international shame; to realize that thousands of mothers and fathers watched helplessly as their infants and children wasted away, without an adequate and enthusiastic global relief effort, is a human tragedy of the highest magnitude."

Because of concern that conventional delivery methods will not get food and other supplies to famine-stricken areas soon enough, the religious leaders joined Bread for the World in calling for an airlift to deliver "food and transportation equipment—including trucks, helicopters, and maintenance materials—to points of urgent need."

They further urged Congress to make passage of a comprehensive Africa relief and recovery package "the very first item on the 1985 congressional agenda." □

Baptist Peace Fellowship adds Canadians, intern

GRANVILLE

The Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America (BPFNA)—an umbrella group formed this year to facilitate peacemaking efforts by Baptists—has expanded its organization to include Canadian Baptists and named a new intern to work out of its Atlanta headquarters.

The Canadian participation, announced at a Dec. 7-8 executive committee meeting of BPFNA, brought to three the number of Baptist bodies with representation in the organization formed last March by American and Southern Baptists.

In addition, BPFNA president George Williamson, pastor of First Baptist Church, Granville, Ohio, said the intraBaptist organization is talking with representatives of other North American Baptist groups about participation.

Ken Sehested, named BPFNA executive director in October after working six years as director of education for SEEDS magazine and hunger ministry, announced the hiring of Texas pastor and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary student Kyle Childress as a full-time intern for 1985.

Childress, a native of Stamford, Texas and pastor of Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church, Franklin Texas, worked

previously as an intern for the Christian Life Commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Sehested commended Childress' ability to communicate the biblical call for discipleship on peace and justice issues in a traditional local church.

"Kyle is sensitive to the task of articulating peace and justice concerns in deeply biblical terms," Sehested said.

During its meeting, the BPFNA also approved sponsoring a national seminar on "Parenting for Peace and Justice" tentatively scheduled in Atlanta next fall. □

Supreme Court rejects trio of church appeals

WASHINGTON

Three churches, including an independent Baptist congregation, lost their legal bids in disputes with state and local governments when the U.S. Supreme Court rejected their appeals.

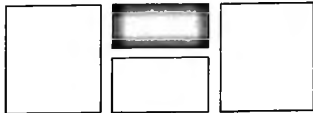
In unsigned orders announced Nov. 13, the court without dissent refused to review a Nebraska Supreme Court ruling that North Platte Baptist Church, North Platte, Neb. must comply with state regulations to keep its parochial school doors open.

The congregation was one of about 20 Nebraska congregations that defied state laws requiring teacher certification in all schools in the state, public and private. The overwhelming majority of church-related schools were already in compliance with the requirement, but North Platte Baptist Church refused to go along on grounds the state had no authority to require teacher certification. (83-1974, *North Platte Baptist Church v. Nebraska*)

Another local congregation, First Assembly of God Church of Alexandria, Va., likewise failed to convince the justices to review a zoning dispute with the city over a church school.

Last June the U.S. Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals held that zoning restrictions attached to the church's special use permit to operate its school did not violate the First Amendment's establishment of religion clause because they had the strictly secular purpose of promoting public health, safety and welfare.

For its part, the church argued unsuccessfully that the First Amend-



ment's free exercise of religion clause encompassed its right to operate a school on its property to further its ministry without government interference. (84-445, *First Assembly of God Church v. City of Alexandria, Va.*)

In a third action, the high court also rejected the appeal of a nonprofit church corporation that owns and operates a commercial television station in Hartford, Conn. The church, Faith Center, was denied property tax exemption by the city of Hartford.

The church took the city to court but the Connecticut Supreme Court held the city acted within the law and dismissed the church's contention that the denial constituted an excessive entanglement of government with religion and violated its free exercise of religion. (84-260, *Faith Center v. City of Hartford*) □

Amicus brief asks court to decide 'equal access'

WASHINGTON
Led by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, religious groups representing more than 100 U. S. denominations with some 80 million members have asked the U. S. Supreme Court to uphold the right of secondary school students to conduct on-campus religious meetings, provided they are student-initiated, student-controlled and not sponsored by public schools.

In a friend-of-the-court brief filed Dec. 13 in the case of *Bender v. Williamsport Area School District*, Baptist Joint Committee general counsel John W. Baker asked the high court to overturn a lower federal panel's ruling that a student-run religious group in Williamsport, Pa. High School was not entitled to meet during a designated extracurricular activities period.

"Many of those persons who are responsible for operating our nation's public schools have either failed to read or have grossly misread this Court's decisions," Baker wrote, referring to the high court's 1962 and 1963 decisions invalidating state-sponsored devotional exercises. "As a result, many school districts have assumed or have been persuaded that all religious activities in the public schools, even when the state is not involved in those activities, are unconstitutional."

Baker, whose brief was filed for the Baptist Joint Committee, National Association of Evangelicals, National Council of Churches and Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), also asked the court to review the Williamsport case in light of congressional passage this year of the Equal Access Act guaranteeing students the right to meet on school premises for religious purposes.

The Williamsport case, the third such dispute to reach the Supreme Court in recent years, originated when local school administrators denied permission to an evangelical student group, Petros, to meet on an equal footing with other student groups in the central Pennsylvania town's high school. Williamsport school policy set aside two one-hour periods weekly for such extracurricular activities.

But when student Lisa Bender and a group of her friends asked permission for Petros to meet, the school principal said no. After his denial was upheld by the school board, the students went to court.

Although a U. S. district court judge upheld the students' right to meet, the

Third Circuit Court of Appeals reversed, leading to the appeal to the high court.

Twice before, in cases from Lubbock, Texas and Gunderland, N. Y., the court has refused to review courts of appeals rulings that likewise held against religious groups in their efforts to meet on school premises.

But the earlier cases, according to Baker, "had factual and/or historical problems which made them hard cases." In contrast, he argued, the Williamsport dispute involves legal issues that "are clear and thoroughly evolved."

Without Supreme Court resolution of those issues, Baker elaborated, school officials "find themselves in a 'Catch 22' situation" in which they may be sued if they permit the gatherings or if they refuse to permit them.

"In order to prevent a flood of litigation from both sides of the issue," Baker concluded, "it is essential" that the high court resolve the matter.

When the justices will decide whether to hear the case is unknown. □

Regan's tax plan would affect churches, clergy

WASHINGTON
The comprehensive tax reform plan put forth by the Treasury Department would provide a disincentive to charitable contributions and adversely affect churches and clergy.

Under the plan unveiled by Secretary of the Treasury Donald T. Regan, deductions for charitable contributions would be allowed only after they exceed two percent of the taxpayer's adjusted gross income. Church leaders and other non-profit institution representatives have expressed concern this change would significantly curtail charitable giving if enacted.

Also, under the Treasury Department plan, clergy housing allowances would be shelved by striking from the Internal Revenue Code a 1954 provision designed to create tax equity in clergy housing.

By doing away with clergy housing allowances altogether, the Treasury proposal would resolve a nearly two-year dispute over a 1983 IRS decision to deny clergy the normal deductions

for mortgage interest and real estate taxes to the extent these expenses were paid from a tax-exempt housing allowance.

Secretary Regan's massive set of recommendations, filling three thick volumes, has been presented to President Reagan for review. The president thus far has given no indication which of the many proposals he will accept before sending a comprehensive tax reform package to Congress early next year. □

Evangelicals urged to add voice to war-peace debate

WASHINGTON
The nation's evangelical Christian institutions have made little or no contribution to the public debate on war and peace, according to a report issued by the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) which announced the launching to a new program to raise the level of debate among evangelicals.

In its report the NAE called upon evangelical colleges and seminaries to "bring distinctive evangelical perspectives to bear" in the debate. □

Our Great Gift to History



*by the light
of religious liberty
we must make our journey*

The freedoms of speech and religion secured by the First Amendment to the Constitution laid the foundation for a nation where no one ideology or theology would dominate to the exclusion of others. And for more than 200 years, that foundation has spared us the sectarian violence visited on so many other countries. Whether we look at Lebanon, Northern Ireland, Iran or India, the lesson is the same—don't mix government and religion.

The world has just witnessed the tragic assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Her death was greeted by some of her countrymen with the cheer: "Long live the Sikh religion." Now it is not my place to take sides in that nation's religious strife, nor do I mean to assume a holier-than-thou attitude. But I believe we must realize that there but for the grace of our Constitution go you and I. Senator Sam Ervin used to quote from the opinion of Chief Justice Walter P. Stacy of the North Carolina Supreme Court in *State vs. Beal*, "for some reason, too deep to fathom," wrote Stacy, "men contend more furiously over the road to heaven, which they cannot see, than over their visible walks on earth. It would be almost unbelievable if history did not record the tragic fact, that men have gone to war and cut each

other's throats because they could not agree as to what was to become of them after their throats were cut."

History records it, and current events confirm it. Yet here in the United States some people still aren't convinced. The new fusion of Christian fundamentalism with a so-called political conservatism has been branded the most potent political force in the nation today. Potent it is. Conservative it is not. For if the goal of this movement is to Christianize America, then it must be seen for what it is—a form of radical extremism which we all—liberal and conservative, Christian and Jew alike—must resist.

I don't fault the fundamentalists on what they choose to believe or how they interpret the Bible. I fault them for attempting to foist that interpretation off on the rest of us via our public schools. People who practice fundamentalist politics and have school prayer at the top of their legislative agenda talk of a return to "traditional values." I say to them that here in the United States there is no value more traditional, more central to our way of life, than that of separation of church and state. It is our great gift to the history of the world. For as Theodore White put it, "Never in civilization, since the earliest ziggurats and temples went up in the mud-walled villages of prehistoric Mesopotamia, had there been any state that left each individual to find his way to God without the guidance of the state."

During the 97th and 98th Congresses, there were repeated attempts to dilute—and in some cases outright destroy—this quality which has distinguished our society from all others. There have been bills to strip the federal courts of jurisdiction over school prayer. During floor consideration of the Fiscal Year 1985 Appropriations bill for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education,

Excerpted from a speech to the American Jewish Committee by Lowell Weicker, U.S. Senator from Connecticut.

Silent Prayer

The Constitution is not a self-enforcing document. Each succeeding generation must shore up the wall of separation between church and state or else it will come tumbling down.

Senator Helms offered an amendment which would have in effect provided for organized school prayer. We were able to change the language to read "individual" and not "group" prayer—which is, in fact, the law of the land. Nowhere does it say an individual cannot pray. The amendment was dropped in its entirety in conference on the bill.

A similar scenario took place on the House side when a "voluntary school prayer" amendment was added to the Education Act Amendments. After I objected the House/Senate Conference on H.R. 11 deleted the reference and sent the bill to the President free of school prayer language.

I very much resent these back door raids on the Constitution. At least one thing good can be said for the proposed Constitutional amendment on school prayer that was defeated last March: for once the correct procedure was being used. But since that effort came up 13 votes shy of a two-thirds majority, the school prayer proponents have had to resort to highly questionable tactics that threaten to undermine not just the First Amendment but the separation of powers as well.

What is worse is that these radical rewrites of our Constitution have been put forward as good, old-fashioned morality. How can a little prayer hurt? we are asked. For one answer, I will defer to eight-year-old Justin Ross, who earlier this year wrote to the White House about his experiences at a school in Canada. "In my school," writes Justin, "we had to say a prayer. Some of the children stood in the hall instead of saying the prayer. Everybody thought they were bad. One boy told me that I was going to Hell. Please don't make people hate me because I am Jewish. I do not hate you because you are not Jewish. It made me feel terrible to say the prayer."

The child speaks with the voice of

authority. I can remember when I was growing up and Protestantism was de facto the official religion in the United States. So that to be a Roman Catholic or a Jew or anything but some main line Protestant denomination meant you were different, and by the definition of the times, discriminated against.

In his opinion on *McCullum vs. Board of Education* in 1948, Justice Hugo Black discussed the special role public schools play in our society. "Designed to serve as perhaps the most powerful agency for promoting cohesion among a heterogeneous democratic people, the public school must keep scrupulously free from entanglement in the strife of sects," wrote Justice Black. "The preservation of the community from divisive conflicts, of Government from irreconcilable pressures by religious groups, of religion from censorship and coercion however subtly exercised, requires strict confinement of the State to instruction other than religious, leaving to the individual's church and home, indoctrination in the faith of his choice."

The Constitution is not a self-enforcing document. Each succeeding generation must shore up the wall of separation between church and state or else it will come tumbling down. The decisions of the courts did much to strengthen that wall in the early 60s. Now it is up to us to see that those decisions are not undone by a simple legislative majority. One thing is certain: we will have our work cut out for us in the 99th Congress. . . . The attack on the First Amendment has been bipartisan in nature. So must its defense be bipartisan.

. . . What we are all fighting for is the freedom to interpret life and the world around us as we choose. Our purpose in banding together as a nation is not to promote Catholicism or Judaism or Buddhism or the faith of Islam but to ensure that as individuals we are free to find our own way to God. The Statue of Liberty holds up for all the world to see a lamp—not a cross but a lamp. And it is by the light of religious liberty that we must continue to make our journey. □

After oral arguments on one of the nation's most emotionally-laden subjects over the past generation, the U.S. Supreme Court must now decide if state laws providing for silent prayer and meditation in public school classrooms violate the Constitution's ban on an establishment of religion.

Attorneys on both sides of the issue presented their views to all nine high court justices Dec. 4, one lawyer declaring silent prayer and meditation a "common sense accommodation" of religion, but another insisting, "This is not the business of the state."

Hanging in the balance is an Alabama law enacted in 1981 that reads: "At the commencement of the first class of each day in all grades in all public schools, the teacher in charge of the room in which such class is held may announce that a period of silence not to exceed one minute in duration shall be observed for meditation or voluntary prayer, and during any such period no other activities shall be engaged in."

Except for the specific mention of prayer, the law restated an earlier statute, adopted in 1978, calling only for meditation. According to evidence received by a lower federal court, the primary sponsor of the new law, a state senator, sought the new wording "to promote religion and religious practices."

A group of Mobile parents, headed by Ishmael Jaffree, objected to the new law, challenging the provision for silent prayer in a federal district court in Alabama. At the time Jaffree, a father of five, had three children in Mobile public schools.

U.S. district judge Brevard Hand upheld the law last year, ruling the Supreme Court erred in its landmark 1962 and 1963 decisions outlawing state-prescribed religious devotions in public schools. Judge Hand attracted widespread attention by holding that states, unlike the federal government, are free under the First Amendment to enact official religions if they wish.

But the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals reversed Hand's decision, ruling that the 14th Amendment's guarantee of "equal protection of the laws" makes applicable to the states the constraints on the federal government set forth in the First Amendment.

In oral arguments before the high court, none of the three participating attorneys mentioned Hand's reasoning, drawing the battle line instead over whether silent prayer laws are needed.

INTERNATIONAL DATELINE



General Assembly rejects constitution of So. Africa

UNITED NATIONS

The General Assembly of the United Nations, in one of its first acts of the fall 1984 session, adopted a resolution which rejected the new constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA), and condemned RSA for persisting with the further entrenchment of apartheid. The vote was 133 to 0, with two abstentions (United Kingdom, United States).

Alan L. Keyes, an American representative, said in the debate that the United States joins in condemning the inherent injustice of apartheid, but he expressed revulsion at the "violent rhetoric" of the resolution. More significantly, he observed that it is not within the competence of the United Nations to declare the constitution of any member state to be "null and void."

The constitution sets up a tricameral legislative body, with very little power, in which there is one "house" of whites, one of coloureds (mixed race), and one of citizens of Asian (Indian) descent. No provision is made for blacks, who constitute the majority race, to be represented. The plan ensures white control of the electoral college, and of most councils and committees, where the usual representative ratio is to be: 4 whites, 2 coloureds, and 1 Asian.

Since 1948, the white Afrikaners, rather than the English-speaking whites, have dominated the politics of the Republic. □

Catholic Church loses 'sole religion' status

ROME

Italy and the Vatican have initiated an agreement that will radically change the church-state relationship here, and will greatly alter the financial status of Italian priests and of Catholic Church property and organizations.

The agreement, part of a bilateral treaty or concordat still subject to final approval by the Italian parliament, establishes that, in 1990, Italy will stop guaranteeing and contributing to the salaries of Roman Catholic clergy.

The new agreement abolishes many tax-exemption privileges enjoyed by such church-run institutions as hospitals. It restores to the Italian church the right to sell previously "frozen" church property, but requires that the Italian state be given first option to buy.

The complete concordat, once it receives parliamentary ratification, will replace a treaty that fascist dictator Benito Mussolini signed with the Vatican in 1929. The new pact will eliminate many privileges Mussolini granted in an attempt to win church support, and it will end Roman Catholicism's status as "the sole religion of the Italian state."

If, as expected, Parliament approves the agreement, a five-year transition period will begin Jan. 1, 1985. In 1990 state contributions to priests' salaries in Italy will become optional and dependent on the preferences of Italian taxpayers.

Starting in 1990 Italian taxpayers will be permitted to deduct up to the equivalent of \$1,100 from their annual tax payments for contributions made to the Catholic Church.

They will also be able to request on their tax forms that their portion of a tax money fund the state reserves for aid to special charity, religious or social causes, be given to the Catholic Church. □

Anglican Church seeks greater independence

LONDON

The archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Robert Runcie, has made it clear that the Church of England will not tolerate parliamentary interference that could threaten its increasing independence from the state.

In a keynote speech to the General Synod, the church's own parliament, meeting here, the archbishop said it would be impossible to accept any attempt to undo the achievements that have been secured in the self-governing of the established church.

Dr. Runcie said the Church of England was especially angry about Parliament's summer rejection of proposed legislation to reform the appointment of bishops.

In that confrontation, the church had proposed to do away with a costly and

complex procedure introduced by Henry VIII for rubber-stamping the sovereign's nominees for an episcopal vacancy. But Parliament threw out the church synod's proposal.

The wrangle between the Church of England and the British government over the bishops' increased involvement in secular and political affairs has escalated into an open confrontation between church and state.

John Gummer, chairman of the Conservative Party, said that the authority of the bishops was episcopal, not technical. "They can no more pontificate on economies than the pope could correct Galileo on physics," he told a big congregation in the University Church of Great Saint Mary's, Cambridge.

Support for the churches' involvement in politics has come from Bishop Desmond Tutu, the new bishop of Johannesburg, and Nobel Peace Prize winner. He told an overflow congregation at Saint Paul's Cathedral here that a God who required a separation of the two would be "an aloof figure dwelling in an Olympian vastness unconcerned about his people." □

Methodists deliberate Bishops holding office

NEW YORK

At a meeting devoted largely to addressing world problems and public issues, the Council of Bishops of the United Methodist Church held a sober, closed-door discussion about the controversial political involvements of one of its own members. They went into closed session to discuss the question of whether a bishop should ever hold political office. The focus of their concern was Bishop Abel Muzorewa, a member of the parliament in Zimbabwe, and the leader of an opposition party that is strongly critical of the government of Prime Minister Robert Mugabe.

Bishop Muzorewa was attending his first council meeting since being released from prison in September. He was detained by the Mugabe government without charge for almost a year. At the time of his detention, the 59-year-old churchman was described by government ministers as a suspect in intrigues with the white-minority government of South Africa against the Zimbabwe government.



NEWS-SCAN

The council scheduled a half-hour executive session to consider the question of bishops holding political office, after Bishop Arthur Kulah, of Liberia, said in an open session that he would like the bishops to discuss "whether a bishop should be a member of parliament."

Some of the council's eight African bishops have in previous meetings expressed the opinion that bishops should not be involved in secular politics.

Some U.S. church leaders have said privately that the church in Zimbabwe has suffered from their bishop's opposition political role and that they believe Bishop Muzorewa should either resign from the episcopacy or get out of politics.

According to United Methodist press officer Tom McAnally, the bishops said they had agreed not to report what was discussed at the session. □

Israeli cabinet urges USSR to allow emigration

JERUSALEM

Israel has called on the Soviet Union to ease restrictions on the two million Jews in that country, and allow them to emigrate to Israel.

In its first discussion of Soviet Jewry in years, the Israeli cabinet said it "identifies with Soviet Jewry and shares in its struggle of national existence and emigration to Israel."

Israel also urged the Soviet Union to "put an immediate end to the persecution and imprisonment of Jews; to allow them to study the language of their people and their religious and national heritage, and to permit the hundreds of thousands of Soviet Jews seeking to emigrate to Israel to fulfill their desire."

The Jewish activists, who were in the Soviet dissident movement before they emigrated to Israel, said that while Soviet Jews were facing the most intensive anti-Semitic crackdown since the days of Josef Stalin, Israel was responding with little more than lip service. About 400,000 Soviet Jews, the activists say, have expressed the desire to leave for Israel.

Yosef Mendelevich, who served 11 years in Soviet prisons for trying to hijack a plane out of Russia, said the crit-

icisms were valid. He said that, despite Israeli statements of concern for Soviet Jewry, there has never been a government panel empowered with searching for ways to press the Kremlin to release Jews who want to emigrate for Israel.

The number of Jews who have emigrated from the Soviet Union this year is the lowest in 20 years. In 1979, more than 51,000 Jews emigrated; this year the number so far is about 700. □

Cities enact ordinances for disinvestment

Boston and New York, two large American cities, have enacted municipal ordinances which mandate the withdrawal of pension and other municipal funds from investment in companies which do business with the Government of the Republic of South Africa.

The Executive Committee of the US Conference of Mayors (an unofficial group of which many American mayors are members) has shown a strong sense of support for disinvestment, and has directed the Conference staff "to work diligently on this issue" in the coming weeks, it was reported at a recent meeting in the Church Center for the United Nations.

(Eleanore Schnurr, Baptist World Alliance representative at the UN-New York, was in attendance at the meeting, to hear Mayor Raymond L. Flynn of Boston and Mayor Edward Koch of New York on the subject.) □ BWA

Asked to waive tuition, church asks for state aid

VALETTA, MALTA

The academic year began seven weeks late for 20,000 students here, after local Roman Catholic Church officials decided to submit temporarily to a free schooling law passed by the island's socialist government.

A bitter dispute erupted last spring, when the government passed a bill in Parliament requiring the church to provide education free-of-charge in its secondary schools. The church, saying it supported the principle of free education, refused to accept the bill on the grounds that it could not afford to waive tuition fees. □

Mexican and Southern Baptists in Mexico City joined in treating burn patients following the natural gas disaster. Four Baptist churches and mission points are located in the vicinity of the exploding fuel tanks. Personnel of a Baptist-sponsored medical clinic were among the 100,000 persons evacuated. . . . For Christians in the Soviet Union, the Bibles are coming, 10,000 of them in the Russian language. A cooperative endeavor, the paper came from northern England, the Bibles were printed in Germany and will be transported through Poland. . . . South African Bishop Desmond Tutu expressed deep distress "that Israel, with the history of the Jews so fresh, can collaborate with the South African nationalists who are carrying out policies that are so reminiscent of Hitler's Aryan madness." The Nobel laureate asked, "Do we learn from history that we don't learn from history?" Tutu spoke at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. . . . Terrorism in Central America has drawn the protest of Baptist leaders. The BWA's Gerhard Claas and BJC's James Dunn condemned as "gross violations of basic human rights" the kidnapping of Nicaraguan Baptist youth leader Marcia Chamorro and the abduction of San Salvador pastor Miguel Castro Garcia. American Baptist officials held little hope that Chamorro was still alive, and report that Castro is now in Mexico. He is said to be anxious, however, to return to El Salvador. . . . It's a new day for Baptists in Spain. A group of 18 pastors from the Brazilian Baptist Convention visited that country to preach in churches of the Baptist Union of Spain. . . . "One of the most serious problems for Christian witness today is how the churches can evangelize on their own when the culture which used to evangelize for them no longer does so." In testimony by Raymond Fung, World Council Evangelism Secretary to staff executives he defined a secularized society as "one whose dominant culture does not facilitate religious commitment." Fung was previously associated with the Baptist Convention of Hong Kong. □

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 am continually astounded by the lucidity with which you express yourself in "Reflections."

The following statement in your October column is a good example: "Fear of modernity, the desire to revive a day that never was with values it never possessed is an immoral nostalgia." If one considers the political spectrum to be a continuum with radical being to the left and reactionary to the right, your definition of "fear of modernity" can properly be applied to "reactionary."

I had always defined reactionary in less refined terms; for it seems to me that reactionaries want to return to an undefined time and place but take indoor plumbing and air conditioning with them.

Needless to say, you pricked my dormant thought processes and helped shake off a little rust.

Charles W. Simpson
Nacogdoches, TX

All the feature articles in your September 1984 issue were helpful to me as I prepared various presentations this fall on religion and politics in the election campaign. David P. Meriwether's "Priori-

ties in Paying," in particular, contains numerous passages helpful in clarifying the essence of church-state separation.

Many people seem to hold misconceptions of the source and meaning of the "wall of separation." Even Martin Luther, source of many of these misconceptions among Lutherans because of his theory of Two Kingdoms, stated that it is in the individual that church and state are united.

Bonnie L. Voss
Wisconsin Conference of Churches
Madison, WI

I know you have received many compliments on the Statue of Liberty cover—may I add mine?

The excellent photograph
The preparation of the plate
The printing—every tiny line and area dark on light or light on dark is not lost.
The feeling, expression and of course the Editorial comment.

Gladys Shira
Ocala, FL

As an active Southern Baptist and seminary graduate I am alarmed at the number of Christians who seemed to agree with the Moral Majority in the way they voted Tuesday. Those of us who take the Bible quite seriously and disagree strongly with the interpretations and tactics of Jerry Falwell and that entire mentality must quickly arise while we still have the Religious Liberty to do so, and proclaim that there are many of us who see clear Biblical values being ignored by the Moral Majority.

In a spirit of love we must articulate to the American people the Biblical values we

hold dear such as Religious Liberty, concern for the poor, justice, equality and peace. Our witness as compassionate and tolerant people is at stake if we allow Mr. Falwell to be perceived as Christianity's spokesman on Biblical values.

David R. Currie
Austin, TX

I thought "Reflections" by James Dunn in the Oct. issue was about the best handling of the subject that I have ever read. Thank you, James Dunn.

Culbert G. Rutenber
Austin, TX

NOW AVAILABLE:

The Equal Access Act Guidelines
Several religious and civil rights groups—some of which supported the Act and some which opposed it—drew up these guidelines for implementing it in accordance with law. To obtain a copy, send a self-addressed envelope to the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, 200 Maryland Ave., NE, Washington, D.C. 20002.



• Jeffery Warren Scott writes about early Baptist lobbyists, and emphasizes the necessity of personal contact with legislators in order to effect change. What are advantages and disadvantages of professionals developing relationships with legislators and their staffs? Have you ever lobbied (contributed money, written or phoned a legislator)? What do you think is appropriate activity for a pastor regarding issues and elections?

• According to Hugh Wamble, "When there is union of church and state, either religion or government suffers, or both suffer, under the blending of the two." Think of examples—contemporary and historical—that illustrate Dr. Wamble's

assertion and discuss whether one institution tends to suffer more than the other.

• Senator Lowell Weicker makes note of the movement toward "traditional values." Respect for authority is a traditional value but so was slavery at one time as was child labor. For over a thousand years the state church was also a tradition. But with church-state separation the American experiment established a new tradition. What makes a tradition and can you list principles for evaluating them. Identify Baptist traditions which were incorporated into the First Amendment?

• Stan Hasteley explains two parochial cases involving instruction by public school teachers in church-related schools. Does the First Amendment prohibit this practice, which some interpret simply as a means of relieving church schools of a substantial financial responsibility? If aid is provided what can the state then require of private schools beyond the currently accepted standards of health, safety and teacher certification.

Order Form

REPORT FROM THE CAPITAL

- _____ Single subscription \$6.00 per year
- _____ Single subscription, 2 years \$11.00
- _____ Club rate (10 or more) \$5.00 each
May be sent to separate addresses)
- _____ Student rate \$2.50 per year
- _____ Student rate, 2 years \$4.00
(Must be accompanied by payment)
- _____ Foreign, please add \$2.00 postage

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____
_____ Payment Enclosed
1/85 _____ Bill Me

The preaching of the gospel in its earliest recorded form, in its essence, is simply a recounting of the historical record of Jesus Christ...

REFLECTIONS

James M. Dunn
Executive Director



Who cares a hill of beans for history anymore?

We all should. Without a sense of history we do not know where we have been. We have no idea how to assess where we are and we lack the first requirement for guessing where we may be tomorrow.

Yet, the absence of a sense of history is not our only collective void. We seem to have less and less knowledge of facts about the past, even the recent past. This fall I was speaking and listening on college campuses in Oklahoma, Colorado, Maryland, North Carolina, West Virginia and Virginia. Bright-eyed, well-dressed, socially-sophisticated students opened their mouths and revealed grand canyons of ignorance about church history, about our nation's history, especially about the history of ideas and beliefs.

One shouldn't be too surprised, particularly when the example provided by so many among the elder generation shows so little respect for the study of history. This has not always been the case. George W. Truett, one of Baptists' greatest champions of church-state separation, in his sermon on the east steps of the nation's capitol on Sunday, May 16, 1910, declared: "It behooves us often to look backward as well as forward... The occasional backward look would give us poise and patience and courage and fearlessness and faith." The mood to minimize the lessons of the past infects too many public figures, so that Truett's successor at First Baptist Church of Dallas, Texas, W. A. Criswell could offer this response to a question on church-state relations: "I believe this notion of the separation of church and state was the figment of some infidel's imagination." And popular sociologist Peter Berger recently told a New York conference that he has no time to bother with history.

The religious rightists argue that the founders did not really mean it when they wrote: "no law respecting an establishment of religion." These latter-day skewers of history insist that all Madison and Leland wanted was freedom from favoritism for one sect over another.

Both the President and the Vice-President of the United States have contended that the writers of the Bill of Rights only wanted to protect the church from the state, not to guard the state from domineering religion. Seems as if they've forgotten a large hunk of history.

In Edwin Yoder Jr.'s review of *Rousseau: Dreamer of Democracy* he points out that Rousseau's "blinkered version of Genevan history ignored the actual past to conjure up an ideal one." That for Jean-Jacques Rousseau "history was primarily a convenient fable, 'poetic' in essence, and might as well be shaped by fancy as need suggested." This same mentality reigns.

Without a good bead on history it is easy to lose touch with reality. Eudora Welty attributes to television much of our present uprootedness from historical hitching posts. She says, "I remember when man landed on the moon, I called my cleaning woman in to watch it on television. 'You should see this,' I told her. And she said, 'Now, Miss Eudora, you know that ain't true.'"

This disconnectedness from what is only one of sev-

eral dangers that go with neglecting history. Since we live in context, history is the air we breathe. Without some awareness of what has been we don't understand the boundaries of the playing field. We cannot see our place in the string of events.

Political manipulators are always ready to victimize those who do not realize the importance of history. Cynics say "you can fool all of the people some of the time and some of the people all of the time, and that's good enough." Those who have not the first tool for evaluation, those without the sense of proportion that comes with the timeline of history are prime targets, super suckers for the revisionists.

Christians are especially responsible for giving attention to the history of the Faith. William Temple contended that Christianity is the most materialistic of all the world's religions. He spoke not so much of economics (though that case might be made) as that Christians take seriously the stuff of life, the body, the time and place. Even our hope for the future is rooted in memory of the past... "on a hill far away stood an old rugged cross."

Throughout the history of Israel the prophets reminded God's children that they had been brought out of the land of Egypt. G. Ernest Wright's classic textbook on the Old Testament is entitled *The Book of the Acts of God*. The event plus the interpretation of that historical happening combined to be understood as the revelation of Truth from God... not just "a truth" but "Truth."

Christians of all stripes share a belief that God invaded history in the life, work, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and as Otto Cullman contends Jesus became the "hinge of history." The preaching of the gospel in its earliest recorded form, in its essence, in the bare essentials is simply a recounting of the historical record regarding Jesus Christ. "I love to tell the story, 'twill be my theme in glory, to tell the old, old story of Jesus and His love."

We cannot therefore dismiss a necessary and high regard for history with the attitude of still-to-be-educated sophomores who cry, "why memorize a lot of useless dates?" It's not that simple.

Why? Because for Christians to study history is constantly to be reminded of the Creator of history, the purposes of creation and the great historical event just celebrated at Christmas: Emmanuel, God with us. We need to respond to the challenge, the discipline, the implications that reside in the historicity of our faith.

We'd better give a hoot about history. Even now we seem to be drifting like the guys in a story Ernest Campbell tells. Two men lived in a houseboat tied to a harbor dock. One night while they slept a storm came up that ripped their boat from its moorings and carried it out to sea. In the morning when one of them woke up and went on deck he could hardly believe his eyes. He roused his roommate saying, "Wake up, wake up, we're not here anymore."

A bit of history offers a chart and compass when you discover that you're not here anymore. □

REVIEWS



OF GOD'S AND MEN

Eileen Barker, Editor. Macon, GA:
Mercer University Press, 1983, 347 pp.

To open the cover of this volume is to embark on an intellectual journey into the fascinating realm of the new religious movements. A wide range of groups, including the more "mainstream" (e.g., Jehovah's Witnesses, Pentecostals, and even the Moral Majority) and the more "outlandish" (i.e., Divine Light Mission, Unification Church, etc.), are viewed from various sociological perspectives.

This volume is a collection of eighteen essays delivered at the 1981 meeting of the British Sociological Association, Sociology of Religion Study Group. Although these are academic

papers, they are not beyond the grasp of the non-technically oriented reader. Contributors are largely either English or North American, but the Netherlands and Germany are also represented.

The editor, who provides in the preface a short synopsis of each, has arranged the papers "roughly according to the degree of generality with which they are concerned." The first two essays, dealing with types of conversions and the supposed "fragility" of unconventional beliefs, set the stage for what follows.

Several articles touch on religion and politics. The moral majority is the subject of two papers. Another compares new religious movements with left-wing political activist groups of the

early twentieth century. Two articles discuss anti-cult movements in various countries and site varying understandings of church/state relations as a significant factor in societal toleration of new religious movements (see especially pp. 177ff, 210). Sectarian groups in the Third Reich is the subject of another significant essay. Its author observes that theologically conservative groups are most likely to resist a totalitarian regime, whereas the political survival of a sect is determined by its willingness to compromise theologically.

Although several articles are of marginal quality, as a whole *Of God's and Men* combines a collection of essays which are both helpful and interesting.

Stanley J. Grenz

RELIGION IN THE PUBLIC

SCHOOLS: An Introduction.

By Richard C. McMillan. Macon, GA:
Mercer University Press, 300 pp.

In the two decades since the Supreme Court decisions of the 1960's pertaining to mandatory Bible reading and prayer, religion in the public schools has become a crucial church-state issue. Richard C. McMillan, who has taught at Averett College, Mercer University School of Medicine and Southeastern Baptist Seminary, suggests that academic courses about religion offer the best solution to this problem. This thesis is targeted to clergy serving in local congregations, for they "can exercise substantial influ-

ence in the community with respect to the relationship of religion to public education."

The book's seven chapters offer both a historical perspective on the problem and advice for action in the contemporary situation. McMillan introduces the reader to the background out of which the American experiment in church-state (or "religion-government") separation emerged, the development of the current legal definition of religion, and the various forms which the relationship between religion and public education has assumed in United States history. A lengthy but useful chapter is devoted to the relevant Supreme Court rulings of the last 40 years.

McMillan's own proposal centers on

public school religious education which is "objective and secular," designed to inform and enhance free choice, rather than coerce. Key elements in such a program are curriculum, classroom, and especially capable teachers.

Both the book and the author's specific program are insightful. However, utilization of the experience of religious education in other lands (e.g., Germany), absent in the book, would have been helpful. In the end, the reader is left unconvinced that the dangers inherent in religious education in the public schools can be sufficiently avoided so as to result in a program which is truly objective and secular.

Stanley J. Grenz

ROGER WILLIAMS AND

MARY:

A Drama for Three Players

By Albert Johnson, New York:

Friendship Press, 48 pp., \$.95, 1957.

Still available, this touching drama brings to life Roger Williams and his wife so that we live through their immigration from England and their banishment from Boston for Roger's stand for democratic government in both the church and the colony.

You share Mary's tears as they are ordered to leave Salem in the midst of a fierce winter storm and her relief when the sentence is delayed until Spring as the authorities recognize that that would mean certain death.

Yet we are reminded of the apostles in the fourth chapter of Acts as Roger is forbidden to teach in public or gather groups for prayer yet cannot refrain from being a bold witness.

The play gives a new appreciation for Roger's sense of justice as he insists

that the Indians should be paid for land on which to build a church.

You will share Roger's dream for a new colony "where men will be free to worship God according to the dictates of their conscience," and where "every man will have a free and equal voice in his government."

The play is written so that it can be read rather than recited and may be used as a sanctuary drama rather than with elaborate costumes and scenery without lessening its impact. (G.F.)

Reviewers

Dr. Grenz is associate professor of systematic theology and Christian ethics at North American Baptist Seminary, Sioux Falls, S.D. and a member of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

19980 MAYLTJ K
DR. LYNN E. MAY JR.
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
127 NINTH AVE..N
NASHVILLE, TN

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Riverdale, MD
Permit No. 5061

37234