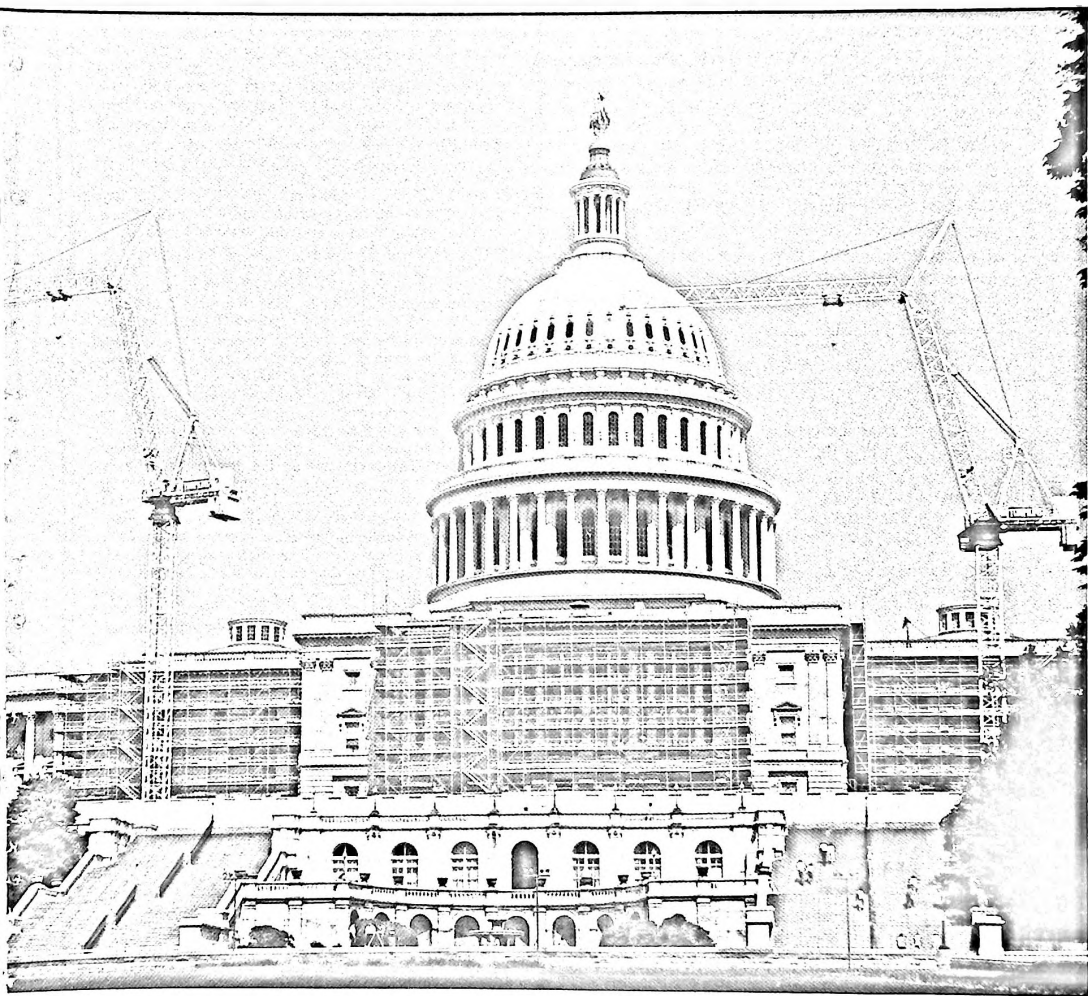


June 1985

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# REPORT from the CAPITAL



SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL  
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES  
Historical Commission, c/o  
Nashville, Tennessee

# REPORT from the CAPITAL

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

Vol. 40, No. 6

June, 1985

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**Cover:** Work progresses on reconstruction of the west wall of the United States capitol building. Construction of the capitol first began in 1793 when President George Washington laid the cornerstone of the first section on Jenkins Hill. Washington, D.C. architect Major Charles L'Enfant described the cite as "a pedestal waiting for a monument. [Staff Photo]

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## Tradition and Mission

Just when we're comfortable about who we are and what we're all about, an experience comes along that raises all kinds of doubt. That happened to Edwin Gaustad. A few years back, when he visited Newport, Rhode Island, he looked forward to retracing historic steps on the "sacred soil" of Baptist origins. Instead, he found that the town historians had provided witness to Jewish, Congregational, Episcopalian and Quaker antecedents—but nothing that pointed to a Baptist presence. Gaustad's article suggests we may not find it any easier to define and project a lasting Baptist identity in the 21st century, or that we'll escape unscathed at the hands of our critics ... or ignored.

That might be the good news and what Gaustad discovered in a scholarly work on "American Baptists" (that's all of us) the bad news. In *The Failure of American Baptist Culture*, the authors tell us our facts about Roger Williams are all wrong, and they hold Williams along with the rest of us responsible for the breakdown of American culture. Tolerance and pluralism, neutrality and individualism, as elements of soul freedom, are mislabeled and Baptists accused of "communalism", anarchy, and everything in between. It's one thing to be subject to the confusion from those outside the Baptist fold, far more disturbing when those within show no less sensitivity to those times and places which witness to the essence of Baptist purpose and identity. Today, we are hearing from those folks, too.

Liberty as mission? At first, the thought may seem novel, but upon examination it is solidly New Testament. Coming to "set at liberty" comprised the center of the mission self-awareness of Jesus. Ronald Taylor, head of American Baptists' international mission outreach, explores religious liberty in the context of public life and alludes to some ethical implications of missionary activity. He finds that traditional and current mission forms of outreach and experience are being supplemented by a new emphasis upon Bible study and other activities which build vigorous Christian community that encourages as it enriches the faithful.

The subject is so broad that it's not often one finds substance in the lament over the pervasive nature of secularism, particularly when it's directed at "those secularists." T. B. Maston, Southern Baptist ethicist and sage, cautions instead about the danger posed by the secular suitings admired and bought wholesale by religious folk. It impacts on religious liberty. His wisdom forms the basis of James Dunn's reflections on the church and its ethics.

Religious Liberty Day is observed by many congregations on the first day of worship in June, but there is nothing sacrosanct about the day or month. We still have planning materials on hand for churches that prefer a later date. Write today for your free poster and packet. □

Victor Tupitza

**The Supreme Court announced** it is adding a second abortion case, this one from Illinois, to its oral argument calendar for the term beginning next October. Its action follows the court's agreement to review limits that states may place on abortion.

Challenging portions of Illinois' 1979 abortion law and amendments added to that statute, the new case will give high court justices the chance to review two lower federal panels' decisions which struck down portions of the law.

State attorney general Neil F. Hartigan and several physicians contended the law was designed to prevent the administration of so-called "abortifacients"—including prostaglandin suppositories and injections—without specific notification to pregnant women that the procedures would result in abortion and the termination of "viable" fetal life.

Furthermore, the argument continued, the law was designed to protect "those women most likely to experience harm: those who unknowingly accept abortifacients and later learn that what they thought was a contraceptive or other medication in fact was an article violating their most deeply held beliefs."

On the other side, a group of physicians that successfully challenged the Illinois statute in a federal district court and then withstood a state appeal in the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals, accused Illinois of a "long history of enacting unconstitutional abortion laws." They also argued that the law foists "upon the patient the state's view that life begins at conception." ●

**A St. Louis, Mo. Presbyterian congregation** overcame its last hurdle in a five-year effort to maintain control of its property when the Supreme Court declined to accept the local presbytery's claim it owned the property. Members of Memorial Presbyterian Church voted unanimously in 1980 to sever ties with the United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.

The Presbytery of Elijah Parish Lovejoy sought to take control of the property, invoking a newly-adopted provision of the denomination's Book of Order. That provision declares that local property reverts to the denomination when a congregation decides to leave. Attorneys for the congregation, however, successfully argued at the Missouri Supreme Court that because the provision was written after Memorial's decision to withdraw, it was inapplicable.

In a 1979 case, Jones v. Wolf, the court upheld the right of states under so-called "neutral principles of law" to resolve church property battles when denominational ownership is unclear. The constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)—formed through the merger of the two large U.S. Presbyterian bodies—specifically provides that all local church property reverts to the denomination when individual congregations decide to leave. ●

**Postal rates for non-profit publications**, including Baptist state newspapers and local church newsletters, may rise significantly next fall because of budget cuts passed May 23 by the U.S. House of Representatives. Budget cuts pushed by President Reagan, the largest coming early in 1982, have already compelled these mailers to absorb repeated postage increases. Under terms of the president's proposed 1985-86 budget the subsidy would have ended this fall, except for \$39 million to benefit organizations that send materials to the blind. ●

# Toward a Baptist Identity in the Twenty-First Century

**I**n these latter days of the twentieth century, the denominational problem of identity is genuine and affects many groups besides Baptists. Baptists, however, appear to have more problems than most as they (or we) endeavor to locate that distillation, that essence, that defining difference that constitutes being a Baptist. Where does one go to find a Baptist identity? When does one find the essence of the Baptist heritage fully revealed? To what marvelous moment of the past do we as Baptists instinctively and collectively turn?

We do have lots of dates: Smyth's self-baptism in 1609; Baptists in Rhode Island in 1638 or 1639; the Philadelphia Baptist Association in 1707; the Triennial Convention in 1818, and so on. The only problem is that to mention any one of those dates does not cause the heart to sing or the eyes to mist; it only causes the mind to wander. No one date has the ring of 1066 or 1492 or 1776. One knows neither where nor when to go to escape the crisis of identity.

Just when the situation looks bleakest and most unpromising, God moves in mysterious ways to rescue us. The early Christian church was assisted in refining its theology, its ecclesiology, and its canon—in other words, its identity—by the fires of persecution. Now, in 1985 it might be assumed that this means of

rescue is not available to us. Where are the lions when we really need them?

I am happy to report, however, that Baptists are being persecuted once again, even in America. A recent publication has appeared with the title *The Failure of American Baptist Culture*. ("American Baptist" simply means Baptists in America; we cannot expect our persecutors to keep the names straight when we have so much trouble with them ourselves.) What is the "failure" of which this volume speaks? What we Baptists have done, it turns out, is create the prevailing culture in America, and that culture has clearly failed. While we may be ready to grant the second point, we might seek some clarification on the first one. According to several authors of this book, we are responsible for a good deal, most of it being evil, demonic, dangerous.

According to our modern persecutors, all Baptists embrace the gross error of affirming that the essential message of the Christian gospel is personal and subjective. Such "underlying presuppositions are devastating to civilization. They break down every sphere of society . . . [T]o contribute to the dissipation of civilization is not only inhuman but diabolical."

Is a little flavor of persecution beginning to seep through these words? The author continues: Baptist "separational theology which made them hyperindividualistic" has contributed to "anarchical tendencies." This hyperindividualism has also resulted in all persons being treated as equals, the inevitable result of this being "communalism, or communism." Third, such "separational theology" accentuates poverty, and pov-

erty means the "renunciation of the world."

Not content to be anarchists, communists, and impoverished renouncers of the world, Baptists insist on visiting still other plagues upon our fair American land, e.g., pluralism and "the myth of neutrality." This myth is an outgrowth of the doctrine of religious liberty which involves such dire results as having many groups propagate their own views, build their own churches, and send children to their own schools.

Religious liberty leads to religious neutrality which leads to anarchy. What our persecutors prefer, in contrast to the failed Baptist culture, is a "Bible-based social, political, and religious order which finally denies the religious liberty of the enemies of God." At that point, it will at last be possible to cleanse American culture of all Baptist impurities that have perverted and defiled it. Is there a measure of truth in all of this diatribe? Of course there is. Baptists, indeed stand for individualism above institutionalism, for the reforming prophet more than the conforming priest, for a pietism that is private and personal before it can properly become public and social.

Does such individualism have anarchical tendencies? If one hesitates to answer that loaded question, it may be altered slightly: Does such individualism have schismatic tendencies? Yes, we can now reply, over and over again. This Baptist individualism was nicely captured by the Reverend J. H. Jackson of the National Baptist Convention, Inc. When asked how he managed to stay president of that organization for so many years, he replied, "I know that ev-

Dr. Edwin S. Gaustad, delivered this address at the American Baptist Heritage Education Conference, Green Lake, Wisc., June, 1984. It has been adapted for inclusion in *REPORT*. Gaustad teaches at the University of California, Riverside.

ery Baptist pastor is a king, and I don't mess with their crowns."

Does religious liberty lead to indifference and the "myth of neutrality?" Yes and no. It depends on whose religious liberty is being talked about and whose neutrality one may be trying to insure. We must always, in the American past, distinguish carefully between those who demanded liberty of conscience because religion mattered so much from those who granted it because religion mattered so little. The traditions of Roger Williams and James Madison may both be noble, but they are quite distinct, and to mix them casually, carelessly, is to lose sight of the distinct reasons for which religious liberty was earnestly fought.

Then what about the "neutrality" that our detractors bemoan and blame us for? Surely religious liberty need not imply a neutrality of believers or of churches; equally surely, it does imply a neutrality of police powers and courts. At that latter point, neutrality is not some "myth" to be exploded, but a rare liberty to be cherished.

So some discriminations and distinctions must be made as we (1) recognize the truth in the charges levelled against us, but (2) also recognize the deliberate distortions and confusions introduced along the way. Baptists have had a long history of being deliberately misunderstood in order to be violently attacked. Continental Anabaptists were, of course, persecuted by everybody; Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists, princes. Therefore, when English Baptists came along, the simplest way to deal with them was merely to tag them with the epithet of "Anabaptists." Let the discredited name alone pull them down.

Baptists in New England suffered many things, but no crisis of identity haunted them. They always had plenty of enemies to let them know who they were. In the colonial South, Baptists were despised and condemned even when they were in remote places and could not successfully be banished. The dominant Church of England felt no more kindly toward these incendiaries of commonwealths, infectors of persons, and troublers of churches than the dominant Congregationalists in New England did. That was the golden age for Baptists: identity was clear and scorn was everywhere.

In the 19th century, the denominational focus grew more clouded as Baptists were no longer persecuted or oppressed. Rather they prospered and flourished, growing rapidly in New England, in the South, in the states in between, and most dramatically all along the expanding frontier. Baptists did well on the farmlands and in the cities; they appealed to the poor and to the well-

to-do; they recruited great numbers of whites and great numbers of blacks. And as they multiplied and expanded, so did the number of separations and recriminations, the schisms and the protestations; in other words, the identity crisis arose.

Baptists opposed slavery; Baptist supported slavery. Baptists were free; Baptists were enslaved. Baptists launched missions; Baptists opposed missions. Baptists rejected Darwin; Baptists incorporated Darwin. Baptists employed literary criticism; Baptists renounced literary criticism. Baptists were modernists, and Baptists were fundamentalists, and millions were somewhere in the middle.

In the 20th century, nothing grew more simple. We knew we still had enemies, but we were far from agreed on where to look for them. Within or without? In the political and economic realms or in the National Council of Churches? In hedonism or humanism? In accredited seminaries or in unaccredited Bible institutes? In order to answer these questions, what we obviously needed was some persecution.

Such blessing has been providentially given. And in seeing where our modern persecutors agree with our ancient ones, perhaps we can find essential clues to who and what we are. Perhaps we can find our way through or even out of the current crisis of identity. The principle clues, I believe, are two: 1) the individual and his or her own experience, and 2) the dominating culture (or state) and Baptist resistance thereto.

First, the individual's own experience—the experience of grace or won-



der or finitude or forgiveness or acceptance of being made whole. Charles Woodmason was right: that "vile matter ... what they call their Experiences" Baptists do tend to take seriously. In his letter to the London Baptists in 1651, Obadiah Holmes spoke of his "experimental knowledge." And in his Testimony written in 1675, he described how his own evangelical commitment grew directly, inevitably, out of his prior, personal, individual experience. "That which first moved me to entreat and beseech them to be reconciled to God was the consideration of God's mercy showed to my poor soul." A century later, Isaac Backus observed: "Much of what I have here written I knew experimentally before I

did doctrinally."

Doctrine does not make the Baptist, but experience does. The creed does not bring one to grace; it is out of grace that a creed, if any be needed, must come. Baptists in the 18th century were ridiculed for their non-creedal position. Only heretics, it was said, resist creeds. To which John Leland, the Virginia itinerant, had a sharp response: "It is sometimes said that heretics are always averse to confession of faith. I wish," Leland wryly added, "that I could say as much of tyrants."

The testimonies can come from the present as well as the past. Harvey Cox, at the Baptist Joint Committee's 1983 National Conference on Religious Liberty, spoke of this personal, individualistic emphasis as the quality that makes Baptists different. Within the notion of personal conversion lies, Cox said, "a very sophisticated view of human nature and human history. 'If we can be born again, we can change; and if we can change, then human nature is not determined.' Many a Baptist pulpit, north and south, black and white, rings with the appeal to personal experience: ... Sometimes these appeals are not taken as seriously as they should be, and sometimes the rhetoric is only that, as the demand (from either left or right) for conformity in belief or behavior promptly forget or ignore that ultimate court of appeal: experience." Such an emphasis is seen as anarchy by our enemies but as the guarantor of relevance and vitality by ourselves. If only we had kept our eyes on the centrality of experience, how many unprofitable quarrels and struggles and schisms in Baptist history might have been avoided.

Second, our persecutors (both ancient and modern) do accuse us of being, one way or another, "incendiaries of commonwealths," to use the language of the 1645 law against "Anabaptists." Another somewhat gentler way of making the same point is found in an early Puritan tract by Edward Johnson. Johnson names New England's several religious enemies with whom the Puritans must "never make league." And in naming each one, he provides the defining essence of that particular group. For the Baptists, the essential features are not their mode or subject of baptism, not their opposition to a paid clergy, not their "enthusiasm" or "antinomianism." Baptists are the enemy because they "deny Civil Government to be proved of Christ."

Baptists, that ungodly lot, treat government as though it were a strictly human invention; no divine rights of kings, no bishops in the councils of state, no magistrates as God's appointed instru-

Continued on page 7.

## VIEWS OF THE WALL

—Stan Hastey



**T**he increasingly complicated and critically important area of churches and taxation was the subject of discussion in April by a panel of three experts during the annual meeting of the Historical Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Historical Society, an event co-sponsored this year by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. Held in Nashville, Tennessee, the meeting's theme was "Baptists and the History of Church-State Relationships."

All three specialists—Nashville attorney James P. Guenther, National Council of Churches official Dean M. Kelley and South Carolina state official Flynn T. Harrell—found common ground by agreeing the American tradition of exempting churches from taxes is constitutional and makes good public policy sense. But in tone and approach, each presented a distinct viewpoint.

Guenther, among whose clients is the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, warned participants at the conference local, state and federal governments "are frantic in their search for new revenues" due mainly to soaring federal deficits. "There is a growing willingness on the part of government to rethink all tax exemptions, including religious exemptions," he declared.

He further warned that just as the courts and the public now accept that churches may be sued for damages along with corporations, churches should prepare for the prospect of a thoroughgoing reexamination of the philosophy of tax exemption for religious institutions.

One limitation already codified by Supreme Court decision, Guenther noted, rests on the principle that an "overriding governmental interest"—such as the eradication of race discrimination—may cost religious schools their tax exemptions. That was the issue in the 1983 decision in *Bob Jones University v. U.S.*, he said.

"Now the churches, their institutions, and all the other charities of this country have been conscripted to achieve the public purpose," Guenther declared. "If they don't gee-haw with public policy, they lose their exemption."

He declared further: "Our Baptist institutions exist not to parrot public policy

but to proclaim and witness and minister to a world of people with needs and hurts. Our institutions do not exist to serve the shifting ideas of what has been called 'piety along the Potomac,' but to serve the eternal truths of a higher kingdom."

At the same time, Guenther urged Baptist institutions to claim tax privileges carefully, saying "Southern Baptists are in need of an apology for tax exemption" that is "theologically sound." Such rationale is needed "right now as we try to address Congress in the midst of the current tax debate," he said. But, he added, "If we are not careful, we'll come off as simply another special interest group fighting to protect its selfish purposes."

Arguing that "Southern Baptists have in their church-state philosophy a tradition steeped in integrity," Guenther said further: "We have said we will not trade free exercise of our religion for the beads and baubles of the great white father in Washington."

While "the bottom line dollar argument may be an acceptable standard to the world," he concluded, "I am not sure that it is to Christ's church."

Kelley, director of religious and civil liberty for the New York-based National Council of the Churches of Christ, decried the Supreme Court reasoning in *Bob Jones* and another decision announced one day before the justices upheld revocation of the South Carolina school's tax exemption two years ago. That reasoning was based on the novel legal idea that tax exemption amounts to a government subsidy.

While some may believe the court's shift is "technical and of little practical importance," Kelley warned, "they should contemplate a few of the long-term implications." First among them, he said, is the principle that "if tax exemption can be denied or revoked for 'violation of public policy,' then that becomes a sword of Damocles hanging over every voluntary nonprofit citizen organization which might find itself in disagreement with the policies of an incumbent administration."

Kelley, author of a 1977 book, *Why Churches Should Not Pay Taxes*, also asked, "If tax exemption is a 'subsidy,' then may the courts not eventually conclude that churches are not entitled to it at all?"

He argued further that if the "subsidy" logic is followed, the legislature is entitled to tax everything and "can discern how best to dispense such largesse." The view also assumes tax exemption is "a favor granted to a private organization for performing public services the state would otherwise have to perform," he charged, although it "is clearly inapplicable to churches, since they do not render a service which government (under the First Amendment) could supply if they did not."

Kelley contrasted the "subsidy"—or "tax-expenditure"—theory with what he called the "tax-base" rationale, the view that nonprofit organizations are not taxed "because they do not produce wealth."

Harrell, executive assistant for special projects to the attorney general of South Carolina, told of his conclusion "that the time is propitious for ... churches who can afford to do so to consider making some voluntary contribution, in lieu of taxes, for certain services received," including water and sewage disposal, sanitation and trash pick-up, street maintenance, and fire and police protection.

"It is the right and just thing to do," he insisted, "and it will enable us not to compromise our integrity." At the same time, "it would confirm the principle of religious liberty and help to assure the continued freedom of churches to exert their prophetic influence upon public policy."

While agreeing with another landmark Supreme Court decision, the 1970 decision in *Walz v. Tax Commission* upholding the constitutionality of local tax exemption for church property, Harrell underscored Guenther's warning that in the immediate future, "Pressures will continue for a reexamination of the favored status of tax exempt property."

He concluded: "I believe there will be growing sentiment for some contribution by churches and church-related organizations" for local services they now enjoy without cost, he declared.

Over the next decade, one of the dominant issues in the field of church-state affairs unquestionably will be that of churches and taxation. Warnings such as those heard in Nashville should not be taken lightly. □

## RELIGION, from page 16

major religious movements are given only a brief mention or at most a single chapter. This reader was left wanting to see a more in-depth treatment of some of the subjects, such as the changes in American Catholicism. This is not to fault Flowers, however, because he accomplished his purpose in documenting the various movements and trends. Bibliographic references at the end of each chapter will point the serious reader to a more in-depth treatment of each topic.

Of particular interest to readers of **REPORT** is Flowers' chapter on critical church-state issues. A valuable summary given on the major court cases of the 60's and 70's relate to separation of church and state. Flowers categorizes cases as being either under the establishment clause or the free exercise clause of the First Amendment. This chapter should prove useful for those who want a synopsis of the major church-state issues during these two decades.

Too brief attention is given to the rise of the New Religious Right and its political agenda. Of particular note, however, is the issue Flowers raises relating to Article VI of the Constitution. This article specifies that a religious test may not be applied to those seeking public office. Flowers suggested that the desire for a Christian America and the strategy of the New Right may be in violation of this provision. He is to be commended for raising this issue. It deserves more attention.

The most controversial chapter is the one on "The Causes of It All," where Flowers attempts to explain the reason for the popularity of conservative theology and conservative churches, including Neo-Pentecostalism and the cults phenomenon. He basically agrees with the rationale in Dean Kelley's book *Why Conservative Churches are Growing*. The

growing influence of conservatism is attributed to the fact that conservative groups are strict in their demands and provide members with meaning for their lives. More explicitly Flowers maintains that conservative religion provides authority, a comforting eschatology, and emotional healing for its adherents. There is obviously some truth in this assessment.

In his contention that conservatism is a rejection of a secular society, Flowers missed the "this worldly" nature of conservative religion. The resurgence of conservatism far from rejecting its culture, has given religious approval to materialism. Conservative theology tends to put its blessings upon success and consumerism. It endorses a life style that is basically middle class and one that has ignored the unpopular concepts of justice, sacrifice and responsibility for the use of wealth. Much of conservative religious political thought is based on "what I can get out of it" rather than "what I can give." The desire for a Christian America smacks of the desire for privilege for the haves and for a diminished role for minorities in society.

Flowers' assessment of the causes of changes in religion in the 60's and 70's is too limited.

On the whole, however, his book should be a welcome edition to those seeking to understand America's way in religion. The chapters on Black theology and the feminist movement are helpful in understanding the sources of these movements. The chapter on the charismatic movement helps to clarify the divergent streams within this movement. From Flowers research comes a picture which sheds light on the continuing saga of religion in strange times—namely the 1980's. □

Glenn Saul

## Identity, from page 5

ments, no baptized foreign policy or sanctified political platform. Government, Baptist would agree, is to be obeyed, but government, Baptists would assert, is not to be bowed down before.

As we stumble toward the 21st century, Baptist identity in this counter-cultural area seems both serious and severe, especially in the United States. Now, *everyone* speaks favorably of separation of church and state; *everyone* endorses religious liberty. Since these once frightening phrases have now become so respectable, so trite, it is important that Baptists not trivialize their own historic position. John Leland speaks to us once more: "Persecution, like a lion, tears the saints to death, but leaves Christianity pure; state establishment of religion, like a bear, hugs the saints, but corrupts

## Christianity."

The modern Baptist incendiary or anarchist or merely critic is not, however, one who is simply negative and carping, not one who rebels for the sake of rebellion, not one whose great role in life is to prevent any vote from ever being unanimous and any meeting from ever being brief. The Baptist counter-cultural force is critical, but it is also constructive. There is a Christian word to affirm as well as a Christian warning to proclaim. The Baptist dissenter is more than a member of the loyal opposition; she or he is a member of the loving opposition as well: a tough love when necessary, a softer one when appropriate.

If there is no criticism, no dissent, no judgment, no prophetic voice, then America's churches fall into that trap of "playing at Christianity" that

## Quoting

Robert McAfee Brown  
*Biblical Concepts of Idolatry*

**T**here is now an unmistakably clear conflict between our own government and most of us here present. I say most of us here present advisedly, for we know that within this assembly there are informers, members of the FBI or other representatives of the government, who are here not because of sympathy with our concerns and the plight of the political refugees we are trying to help, but are here solely and explicitly to betray us and the refugees by engaging in surreptitious taping of our remarks, in order to gather evidence that can be used against us in court.

It is sad but true that our government is not present tonight as an instrument of justice for oppressed peoples, but as a vehicle of repression; our government is here to intimidate, to frighten, to spy, and to destroy, if it can, the humane concerns we are trying to express.

So when a stranger comes up to you smiling, asking your opinion about sanctuary, and law-breaking in the name of conscience, and displays interest in what specifically your local church is doing, remember that he may be a government employee whom your tax dollars support, who is here in the role of hypocrite, wearing a mask and representing himself as the opposite of who he truly is. This is a favorite device in totalitarian nations that our own nation has now adopted. I hope some of the government informers who are here will feel increasing twinges of conscience at becoming betrayers of other human beings because their government orders them to do so. To them I say: when you tell lies in the service of what your government tells you to be the truth, you have already betrayed the truth. You don't need to do it. You can say "no" to this destruction of the integrity of your lives. □

Sen. Edward M. Kennedy  
Liberty Baptist College speech

**T**he separation of church and state can sometimes be frustrating for men and women of deep religious faith. They may be tempted to misuse government in order to impose a value which they cannot persuade others to accept. But once we succumb to that temptation, we step onto a slippery slope where everyone's freedom is at risk. □

Kierkegaard found so repulsive—that is "transforming everything into mere words." He also complained, "... For one certified hypocrite there are 100,000 waddlers, for one certified heretic, 100,000 nincompoops." There you have it: a clear choice. Would you rather be an anarchist or a nincompoop. □

# News in Brief

## Church joins state to sponsor conference on religious liberty

WASHINGTON

**T**he often-overlooked plight of persecuted religious believers throughout the world reached the highest levels of attention here as the Reagan administration joined with Christian and Jewish groups in sponsoring an international "Conference on Religious Liberty."

But the April conference quickly turned into a forum for attacks on major religious bodies and resulted in sharp responses from officials of the National Council of Churches. Mainline churches came under severe criticism for allegedly ignoring religious oppression in communist countries, and for refusing to participate in the gathering—as well as for their positions on peace and economic issues.

About 200 delegates from 17 countries gathered at the State Department for what was billed by organizers as an unprecedented conference. The sponsoring groups, an unusual coalition, consisted of the State Department's Human Rights Bureau, conservative critics of mainline denominations, the leading evangelical association, major Jewish groups, and conservative Catholics.

Throughout the gathering, many of the 22 speakers cited religious liberty as the "cornerstone" of all human rights, but warned that it has come under increasing attack in many parts of the world.

In examining possible action to promote religious liberty, Arthur Gay, immediate past president of the National Association of Evangelicals, called for a permanent organization in the United States to monitor religious freedom around the world.

"We must mobilize our communities to insist that this freedom be available to all," he said, declaring also that the mainline churches and their critics "must come together" on the issue.

However, by the close of the gathering, several speakers and delegates voiced concern that the persistent shots fired at mainline churches had gotten in the way of planning action in behalf of religious freedom. The attacks centered, in part, on the absence of mainline religious leaders from the meeting.

Arie Brouwer, general secretary of the NCC, explained that the conference had listed him as a speaker before he even received an invitation.

*"When church and state organically join in a conference room of the State Department to caricature and then castigate other religious groups who are not even present, then the question of religious freedom in America becomes a high agenda item ... The issues at stake are far too serious to have them submerged in a sea of political maneuvering, especially when it is as open and blatant as it has been for the past two days in Washington."*

—[Leroy C. Hodapp, in a letter to State Dept.'s Elliot Abrams.]

Brouwer also cited an "irony in a conference on religious liberty being co-sponsored by an agency of the state and selected religious groups." He said this was objectionable because "matters of religious liberty concern themselves with points of tension between church and state."

"The irony deepens when one notes that neither the National Council of Churches nor the U.S. Catholic Conference (of bishops) has been consulted in making the arrangements for this conference," he added.

Peter Berger, a widely-respected sociologist of religion at Boston University, accused mainline religious groups of regarding religious liberty "as a luxury, if not frivolous," and as less important than economic rights. He called the church's stance on religious liberty a "major scandal of our time, an outrageous and disgusting phenomenon."

David Jessup, a founder of the Institute on Religion and Democracy, cited the "trend away" from direct religious persecution and toward efforts by governments, including those in Cuba and Nicaragua, to manipulate and "cultivate" church support for their agenda.

The attacks prompted dissension even among the conference speakers. Michael Bourdeaux, of Keston College, objected to Mr. Berger's remarks, saying he believes advocates of religious liberty should conduct their work in "a relatively calm atmosphere of dialogue." He cited a need to work "with" the church bodies rather than "attack them from the outside."

Although most of the speakers concentrated on religious oppression in the

Eastern bloc, several others from countries such as the Philippines, Venezuela, and South Africa—whose regimes are backed by the U.S.—called attention to growing persecution of religious "activities" and social work seen as threatening by their governments. □ RNS

## IRS restrictions curtail non-profits' activities

WASHINGTON

Current restrictions by the Internal Revenue Service have "sharply curtailed" the right of religious and other nonprofit groups to engage in political activity, according to lawyers for the nation's Catholic bishops.

The legal counsels criticized IRS regulations which have expanded the definition of what constitutes illegal "intervention" into political campaigns by tax exempt organizations, threatening many current practices by churches.

Dean Kelley, director of civil and religious liberties of the National Council of Churches, said he "strongly agrees" with the assessment and raised the possibility of the government using the tax code as "a tool to restrict" social action by churches, as it did during the Vietnam war.

The center of the controversy is the IRS code which prohibits partisan political activity by churches and other nonprofit groups. In principle, the IRS has allowed the groups to educate voters about issues and positions taken by candidates for public office, as long as they express no bias in doing so.

It is a little-noticed IRS "interpretation" of the code which is "so restrictive" that voter education is of little practical utility, the legal advisers said. □

## Elder—sanctuary worker begins 150-day sentence

BROWNSVILLE

Convicted sanctuary movement worker Jack Elder was greeted by "Welcome Home" signs and hugs as he arrived in San Antonio to begin a 150-day sentence in a federal halfway house for illegally smuggling Salvadorans into the country.

Mr. Elder's co-defendant, Stacy Lynn Merkt, was sentenced to 179 days in





prison. Her conviction is being appealed, and she is out on bond but under a gag order that prevents her from speaking about the movement.

Mr. Elder had refused the conditions of an original sentence of two years, probably because it would restrain him from speaking out about the sanctuary movement, an effort in which about 180 U.S. church congregations are involved in shielding Central American refugees from immigration authorities. □

## Religious influence used to push political agenda

WASHINGTON

President Reagan has shown new awareness of the influence religious organizations have on the making of U.S. foreign policy, and apparently has set out to play some religious groups against others in advancing his agenda.

But the president's most recent maneuver has led to serious embarrassment for the administration, with the Vatican taking the highly unusual step of publicly refuting his claim that Pope John Paul II [as against the American Bishops] supports the president's policies toward Central America.

Until now, the president's often-criticized mixing of religion and politics has been largely in connection with domestic issues and on the side of fundamentalist Christian groups.

The latest move demonstrates that Mr. Reagan also recognizes religious groups as prominent actors in the foreign policy debate, and he has personally allied himself with "neoconservative" critics trying to change the mainline churches' stands. Normally, it is the religious groups which lobby the government to adopt certain policies. However, as churches get more deeply involved in foreign affairs, administration officials have increasingly made it their business to pressure the churches. □

## Graham traces revival from 'Ike' to Reagan

DALLAS

Evangelist Billy Graham believes the religious revival that has forged its way across the nation in recent decades has gone full circle from where it began in 1952—at the door of the White House.

"When Dwight D. Eisenhower was elected president, we didn't have much

in the way of spiritual statements from the White House," Graham told 2,300 people attending a fund-raising dinner for Dallas Baptist University.

"Ike didn't know much about the church," Graham said. "He had never been baptized, never joined the church."

Graham said Mr. Eisenhower told him he would not join a church at that time, but would if he were elected president. He was baptized in 1953 and received into membership of National Presbyterian Church, Washington, D. C., the only president to be baptized after taking office. □

## Union Seminary to divest in protest of apartheid

NEW YORK

The board of directors of Union Theological Seminary, one of America's most prestigious ministerial schools, voted to divest itself of holdings in companies with "major direct involvement" in South Africa as a protest of the policy of racial separation.

Students and the administration have been outspoken in their protest of the policy of racial separation in that country.

Directors gave their investment committee the task of defining what actually constitutes the transacting of business with South Africa, as well as the job of deciding on a schedule for divestment.

The seminary's endowment totals about \$33 million; no estimate was given of the portion that might be eventually divested. □

## Church-registered voters turned out in '84 election

WASHINGTON

Low-income people who were registered to vote by church groups ended up voting in far greater numbers than the general population, and cast their ballots overwhelmingly for Democrat Walter Mondale in the 1984 elections, according to a survey released here.

The survey was commissioned by the Churches' Committee on Voter Registration, an ecumenical body which says it registered 234,000 voters last year, in 16 states.

Debra Livingston, director of the Committee, said the survey data counters the widely held view that low-income people who are registered do not turn out to

the polls in high numbers.

"We now have conclusive evidence that voter registration drives are efficient and effective," she said, adding that the data shows that "new registrants are not disenchanting" with the political system.

The survey also found that the primary reason given for registering to vote was "duty as a citizen," and that the key issues in voting were education, unemployment, treatment of poor people and taxes. □

## PA military info bill runs into opposition

HARRISBURG

Pennsylvania House Bill 370 now before the legislature, which would require public high school administrators to provide the names of graduating seniors to military recruiters, ran into opposition by the state council of churches and religious peace activists.

Paul Gehris, director of the Office of Social Ministry of the church council which is trying to defeat or amend the measure, said proposed amendments would "really turn the bill inside out" and make participation in military recruitment "volitional and intentional."

The American Baptist minister added that some who oppose the bill also consider it to be racist because public schools in cities like Philadelphia and Pittsburgh have a large minority enrollment. If minority youth are the main targets of recruiting, Gehris said, it would be "a review of who went to fight in Vietnam." □

## Fear of filing tax called 'a legitimate phobia'

NEW YORK

The Rev. Bundy Bynum, a United Methodist minister in South Carolina who did not file federal income tax returns for 25 years, says that the Internal Revenue Service has been "understanding" because the IRS regards "fear of filing" as a "legitimate phobia."

During his first pastoral appointment, when his salary was \$3,600, he owed the IRS \$75, which he did not have. "I was scared to death. For years thereafter I blocked it out of my mind," and had lived the past 25 years in "increasing fear. I had a knot in my stomach every time I went for the mail." □

One of the great privileges of overseas mission service is the opportunity to penetrate another culture, thereby becoming aware of the degree to which one's own ideas and perceptions are shaped by language and culture.

An issue like religious liberty, reflecting as it does both societal and spiritual values, can be expected to be subject to diverse perceptions in different parts of the world. These perceptions depend on complex factors of cultural origin and rise from the current socio-political context.

A question in world mission inquires about the role of the missionary in situations where religious liberty is at issue. This role has changed through the years, but it is always tempered by the status of the missionary as a guest of the state authority. While the identification is primarily with the Christian community, the relationship with the controlling authority of the host nation cannot be overlooked.

The missionary not only identifies with the Christian community, but adopts a responsive stance in support of that community as it seeks to deal with problems clearly identified as issues of religious liberty. Care must be taken not to encourage unrealistic initiatives by the local Christians through careless, casual conversation. An ethical problem is created when the potential consequences for the churches are far more serious than they are for the missionary.

It must be recognized that the Eastern bloc nations make up a major part of the world, a situation resulting in great tension because of the traditional Marxist view of religion and the existence of a totalitarian state apparatus. In this case, religious liberty becomes a major component of mission itself; churches in the west must give sensitive and sympathetic understanding to cultural tradition and to the socio-political context within

# Liberty as Mission

Religious liberty  
becomes part  
of the  
broader question  
concerning the  
relationship between  
religion  
and public life

which the church in the east finds itself.

There is a range of religious liberty issues related to world mission that depend upon the way religious liberty is defined or understood. Religious liberty, sooner or later, becomes part of the broader question concerning the relationship between religion and public life. Consider the following six levels of religious liberty which constitute progressively greater involvement of religion with society or public life:

The first level, freedom to believe or freedom of conscience, represents the complete privatization of religion and might be seen as a trivial level of freedom since it would be almost impossible to restrict. However, it has enormous spiritual significance and can have a special meaning in certain cultures. In Zaire, where it is widely believed that thoughts or beliefs can influence events, freedom to believe is taken very seriously.

A second level of religious freedom would be freedom to practice one's faith at a personal level. This can pose a question in the United States, where the destructive practices of certain sect groups are concerned. More typical is the difficulty of evangelical Christians in Nicaragua who are strongly pacifist and who therefore resist the military conscription law.

The third level grants freedom to gather for worship. Problems typical of this level are illustrated by the requirement that churches be licensed or registered, as in many of the Eastern bloc countries. Freedom to promote the faith or evangelize constitutes a fourth level, one strictly limited in many countries by the role of a dominant religion. It is typical of some Muslim countries.

Still another, the fifth level, includes the freedom to minister to persons in need. Again, limitations grow out of political implications in countries where the government feels threatened by any large scale movement which gains the goodwill of the population.

The sixth level consists of the freedom to seek implementation of religious values in whatever model of society may exist, and includes the right to challenge the model itself. This obviously is most

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Dr. Taylor is executive director of the Board of International Ministries, the American Baptist Churches, USA. This article is an adaptation of his presentation before the Roger Williams Fellowship in Rochester, NY.

threatening to state authority.

If by religious liberty we mean that all six of these levels of freedom should be in place, then it must be recognized that in most parts of the world religious liberty is not in very good shape. I believe the West is uniquely privileged in spite of the many problems and the real dangers in current assaults on religious liberty. Generally, our problems arise only at level six; yet, even there a remarkable degree of freedom exists. In the Eastern bloc as in many other parts of the world, problems arise at the lower stages and become virtually intractable at the higher levels.

However, we should not take excessive comfort in our apparent privileged position, since the issue of Christian values in public life in the West is of great importance to world mission. This is so because of the heavy influence of the western churches on mission and the great impact of the United States, particularly on the political and economic life of people throughout the world.

Moreover, this is becoming an increasingly important issue in recent years because of the rise of the national security state. In these states the political and economic interests of the population are subordinated to the security interests of the West, with the interests of the United States at the hub. The dynamic which has arisen goes something like this: the U. S. encourages or even installs an authoritarian government which is capable of controlling events; the government becomes oppressive and engages in human rights abuses; local groups, including the church, object to these abuses, resulting in an oppressive overreaction by the state; churches in the U.S. then support the foreign church, which may place them in conflict with U.S. government policy. While there are limits on what the government can do, the church may find itself under attack by ideological groups—like the Institute for Religion and Democracy, for example.

We can see the strong relationship between religious liberty in the U.S. and in many other parts of the world. Life is not really so simple, if we take seriously the need for the church to be involved in the public domain.

The church in the Philippines is one of those national security states. It is instructive to examine two events which occurred with the Convention of Philip-

pine Baptist Churches last year and their response to those events.

In February, 1984, the five staff members of the Urban Industrial Mission of the Convention (an education and development program for farmers and farm workers) were arrested. The Convention prepared a statement in order to clarify its interpretation of events taking place and the responsibility of the church with regard to those events.

The statement clearly identifies the crisis as being due to corruption, mismanagement, extreme economic polarization and the general failure of the government to provide a sense of justice. It rejects violence but declares that loyalty to the Kingdom of God must supercede loyalty to the political community. It establishes that the mission of the church is to all people, rich and poor, oppressor and oppressed. It reiterates a rather traditional Baptist position on church-state relations, then courageously prophetic, declares: "A duly constituted government is a government where sovereignty resides on the people.... A leadership which violates this principle does not deserve the cooperation of the people."

The Philippine church encountered difficulties [with the government] because of its effort to assert the rule of God in all areas of life and to minister to the very poor in their midst. Since these ministries can be viewed as threatening to those who control and benefit from the poor, one can question whether the power structure will allow such ministries to go forward unchallenged. The situation is further complicated by increasing militarization and repression by the government.

Much is said about the mission of the poor, a source of hope for our cultural dilemma particularly with regard to the Christian Base Community model emerging in Latin America. Vatican II established that the church is not separate from the world. At Medellin in 1968 and then at Puebla in 1978, the principles of Vatican II were applied to the realities of the Latin American situation. There have been excesses, to be sure, almost inevitable given the intensity created by the extreme polarization of the context. But there have been creative and hopeful signs for all.

Made up principally of the poor, these Christian Base Communities provide fellowship and mutual support in the midst of their weakness. Bible study is

central in seeking understanding and rejecting the assumptions imposed by the powerful. Dangers lay ahead, but they give hope for the existence of an uncompromised community directed by biblically-based understanding. This movement possesses unusual potential for success because it has been born in the suffering of the poor who clearly are engaged in a struggle with the "principalities and powers."

Yolanda Bertozzi, after describing the pastoral work of the church in Central America, explains: "The biblical text contains inexhaustible riches of meaning, deeper than our deepest experiences, for it is the Word of God. Bible reading gives meaning and direction to the life of the community."

In the midst of testing there is a remarkable optimism among these communities. Bertozzi states it succinctly:

"This missionary understanding of the church and Christians in Central America is a sign that the Kingdom of God is among us. Once again the church is being persecuted and massacred and is suffering the death of its pastors and lay members. The church is not suffering from hardening of the arteries. It is not dead. It is alive. And through it, hope and abundant life are pulsating.

Religious liberty is a crucial issue in world mission. But the greatest restriction of all on our capacity to fully engage in the mission of Jesus Christ may be self-imposed and, therefore, disobedience and sin. □

## *Soul Freedom* Baptists Living Their Biblical Faith



Observe Religious Liberty Day

# INTERNATIONAL DATELINE



## Baptists supply rice by Thailand policy reversal

BANGKOK

**T**he government of Thailand broke a five-year export ban in April so Southern Baptists could buy 1,100 tons of rice seed from Thai farmers and ship it to ease hunger in Cambodia.

The Thai export license was the first one granted for strategic commodities to be sent to Cambodia since the Vietnamese-backed Heng Samrin Regime came into power in Cambodia, according to newspapers in Bangkok. The act was touted as a significant departure from government policy.

Marvin Raley, the missionary doctor leading Southern Baptist efforts to relieve immediate hunger needs in Cambodia, said the action should be viewed as a work of God and a testimony to the power of prayer.

The seed was bought by Southern Baptists with help from relief agencies Oxfam America and World Concern. Special approval for the shipment had to be received from the U.S. State Department because of an American trade embargo against Cambodia. □

## Rome silences Fr. Boff; book endangers doctrine

VATICAN CITY

Brazilian theologian Leonardo Boff, who was accused by the Vatican of endangering Catholic doctrines by promoting Marxist-oriented ideas, has been ordered to undergo a period of public silence.

In a statement, the Vatican press office said that during the period of serious reflection, expected to last one year, Father Boff will abstain from all activity as a writer, columnist and public speaker.

Father Boff is a major proponent of liberation theology, and holds that the Roman Catholic Church must aid the world's poor in a struggle for social and economic justice.

In March of this year, the Vatican's Sacred Congregation for the doctrine of the Faith (formerly, the Holy Office of the Inquisition) declared that Father Boff's book, *The Church: Charism and Power*, "endangers the sound doctrine of the faith."

In his book Father Boff described the church's hierarchical structure as merely

a "result of the need to institutionalize" that leads to "repression of the freedom of diverse thinking within the church."

## Believer's baptism a sign of two lives converging

RUESCHLIKON

Baptists may understand and interpret their unique heritage as a variety of Christian people by looking to the unity and variety of Pentecost, a theological professor told spring graduates at the Baptist seminary here.

Prof. James M. McClendon, Jr., of the Church Divinity School of the Pacific in Berkeley, California, said because Baptists are part of a great and distinct stream of people, "we should not be called anabaptists or free churches people, but 'baptist with a small b'."

Dr. McClendon suggested three different approaches to this "baptist vision." Some lean toward a biblical view; others to liberty or liberation; and still others to community or discipleship. Stating that "I favor the first, the Bible, but it requires a 'reading strategy'," he said, "We are the disciples of the Gospel story; its Lord is our Lord and the kingdom it proclaims is the kingdom coming now."

Citing illustrations from the Swiss brethren, Dutch anabaptist martyrs and Baptist pioneers such as Carey, Fuller and Roger Williams to trace the practice of believer's baptism, Dr. McClendon said, "Baptism is a prophetic sign of the convergence of two lives: that of Jesus and our own." □

## Naming of new Cardinal draws diverse comment

SAN JOSE

In Costa Rica, the Ecumenical Committee for the Defense of Religion and Worship in Nicaragua said that the naming of Archbishop Obando as a cardinal "constitutes the recognition and support of the martyred church in our country," and a "reverse for the divisionist attitude of the theology of liberation and the Marxist-inspired popular church."

When asked about the expectations on improving relations between the church and the Sandinista government, Costa Rican Archbishop Roman Arrieta

Villalobos said "Everything will depend on the attitude of the Nicaraguan government." He added that the Sandinistas "should be aware that the ecclesiastical mission is basically one of service to man and the defense of human dignity without distinctions."

In contrast, Protestant theologian Juan Stam, a visiting professor at the Biblical Seminary here, said Archbishop Obando does not have the stature or qualifications of some other prelates.

The naming of the Nicaraguan, he said, "was a political action . . . , a political measure against the Sandinistas." Stam charged that "the very pope who warns Latin Americans against the temptation of seduction by ideology is clearly the most ideological pope of the 20th century, and this is strictly an ideological appointment." □

## AI reports release of prisoners; files brief

Prisoners of conscience in Bangladesh and Haiti have been released while another in Yugoslavia remains in detention, *Amnesty Action* reported, following a request encouraging readers to continue their letter writing.

Like the newsletters of Amnesty organizations in other countries, *Amnesty Action* provides writing instructions and brief case histories of prisoners who have been jailed by their governments for exercising fundamental human rights or because their beliefs or ethnic origins were considered to be "undesirable."

While Amnesty does not claim credit for successes in protecting human rights it does provide updated information that tracks prisoner cases and its volunteer groups continue to work for the release of those still imprisoned.

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Amnesty International USA has filed an *amicus curiae* brief before the U.S. Supreme Court urging that Haitians incarcerated in Immigration and Naturalization Service detention facilities be treated as refugees under U.S. and international law.

The classification would protect several hundred Haitians currently held by the INS from detention policies which discriminate on the basis of country of origin or race.

The case, *Jean v. Nelson*, involves Haitians who fled their homeland because of widespread human rights violations



committed by the Haitian government in recent years. The violations, documented in Amnesty's recent report on Haiti, include imprisonment for peaceful expression of opinions, unacknowledged detention, long-term detention without trial, torture and mistreatments of prisoners, killings and "disappearances." □

## Belgian Baptists object to 'head of state' visit

GLAIN

The Rev. Guy Mahieu, pastor of a Baptist congregation in Glain, Belgium, and Mr. S. Liberek, president of the Evangelical Alliance, jointly signed a letter to the prime minister and the presidents of the two parliamentary houses listing the objection of Belgian evangelicals to the scheduled visit of Pope John Paul II.

The letter listed religious reasons for the protest, but added, "it is not possible for us to join the political discussions which may take place nor to admit that the leader of an institutional church may be received as a head of state."

The United Protestant Church of Belgium, with some 35,000 members in 100 parishes, has also given notice of objections within its local churches. □

## Capital punishment a moral, political choice

UNITED NATIONS

In a paper on the abolition of capital punishment in the UN's Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice newsletter, French Minister of Justice, Robert Badinter says that the issue of capital punishment is not one of law-enforcement effectiveness, but solely of a moral and political choice and of one's concept of justice.

"It has been demonstrated by all the research conducted by criminologists that there is no significant connection between crime and the death penalty," the article says. In the French experience, this is true with respect to ordinary crimes, and to terrorism as well.

"One essential goal in the entire historical evolution of justice," he said, "has been to move beyond personal vengeance; this cannot be done unless the *lex talionis*, the law of retaliation, is rejected." The issue comes to the moral values of society, Badinter concluded. □

## YWAM workers face prison for evangelistic efforts

KAILUA KONA, HAWAII

A total of 24 Christians, 14 of them associated with Youth With A Mission (YWAM), were arrested last month in Nepal and accused of illegally spreading the Christian faith, the evangelical organization reported here.

Those involved are from Holland, Switzerland, Singapore, the United States, Bangladesh, India, and Nepal. All are free on bail and face prison sentences of up to six years.

They were arrested on the complaint of a Buddhist priest who objected to the evangelical work. Hindus who convert to Christianity or Islam in the Hindu kingdom of Nepal receive prison sentences, but the law is silent in regard to Buddhism.

YWAM faces an appeal of prison sentences given two staffers in Greece who were fined and sentenced to three-and-one-half year terms in prison for proselytism. A suit was filed by the mother of a Greek Orthodox youth who had been given a bible by them. □

## Unemployment may lead to greater social upheaval

BIRMINGHAM

Bishop Hugh Monteiore, commenting on a study recently released by the Church of England, predicted that the next generation in the country will experience more disruptive social upheaval than followed the industrial revolution in Britain over a century ago.

"To give the impression that widespread unemployment was here to stay would be unpopular with voters," the bishop said. "But the church which has, or ought to have no vested interest in any particular aspect of society has a contribution to make." He said politicians were unwilling to make plans for a society which provided a fuller life for a large number of unemployed. □

There was an overall rise of more than seven percent worldwide in Scripture distribution last year by Bible societies belonging to the United Bible Societies, and New Testament distribution went up by nearly nine percent.

United Bible Societies distributed a total of 12,077,852 Bibles and 13,241,007 New Testaments. □

## NEWS-SCAN

**B**aptist World Alliance representative at the UN, Eleanore Schnurr, was honored at a meeting of the BWA executive committee for her outstanding service and personal commitment. Mrs. Schnurr has worked as a NGO with BWA since the mid-70's and before that with American Baptists.... Speaking in favor of the UN Convention Against Torture, Representative A. C. M. Hamer of the Netherlands said, "I know of no delegation that is not against torture. Yet the practice of torture continues, and the United Nations has a moral duty to provide for an effective implementation of the standards it sets".... The Rev Vasily E. Logvinenko was elected president of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the USSR at the 43rd Congress in Moscow. He has served as senior pastor of Moscow's Second Baptist Church.... A resolution urging an immediate nuclear freeze on the development, testing, production and deployment of nuclear weapons was presented to the UN Under-Secretary-General Jan Martensen in behalf of the Baptist World Alliance. It calls upon the major powers "to forswear first use of nuclear weapons" and "to create an atmosphere for a reduction in arms and greater international harmony".... Kenya and Zimbabwe have removed themselves from a list of African countries needing emergency famine relief. Kenya met its needs by using its reserves and with new purchases of food; Zimbabwe enjoyed an excellent harvest.... William Graham III (Billy's son) said "Samaritan's Purse, which works with local churches in relief efforts, plans to help Lebanese Christians who are destitute and 'have no one to help them.'" His organization is purchasing mattresses, blankets and small cooking stoves to aid between 30,000 and 40,000 Christians who have fled from advancing Moslem and Druze forces.... Baptists in Great Britain, in editorial *Comment by the Baptist Times*, were reminded "that a sure knowledge and understanding of the past was the key to a wise perception of the future." The article laments "ignorance of the good scriptural and historical reasons why Baptists have always maintained that it is the whole church of gathered believers which has the competence to discern the will of the Lord." □

# CORRESPONDENCE

Reader response extends dialogue and thereby helps to focus and clarify the issues. Letters must carry both signature and address of the writer and should not exceed 200 words. We reserve the right to edit for length.

I am happy to see that the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs has been active in favor of equal access. Probably no Christian denomination has been more forthright in its support of separation of church and state than the Baptists, and your participation in the debate should allay many fears that equal access is really an establishment of religion. Have you taken a position on the moment of silence cases? For your information, I am representing the New Jersey Council of Churches in its opposition to the New Jersey Moment of Silence Law. [The Committee has not officially stated a position on the various state "silence" programs, but opposes state-initiated religious exercises.]

Donald L. Drakeman  
Clifton, NJ

I would appreciate it if you could send "Baptists: Living their Biblical Faith" to me at the address below to use on our commemoration of Religious Liberty Day.

I have appreciated the activities of the Joint Committee over the years in preserving a vital perspective of religious liberty from our Baptist perspective.

D. Andrew Kille  
San Jose, CA



• Edwin Gaustad asserts that Baptist identity can emerge from the scorn and criticism of their enemies. What effect has such persecution had on Baptist thought and purpose? And the charges of hyper-individualism, communalism and anarchy—do they grossly exaggerate? Suggest how experience and individualism form counter-cultural forces.

• Ronald Taylor lists six levels of religious freedom, including among them the "freedom to seek implementation of religious values" and the "right to challenge the model (of society) itself." In challenging our government, churches sometimes involve themselves in internal problems related to religious liberty abroad. What are potential pitfalls in such activities for U.S. missionaries and for Christians in countries where reli-

Less than five minutes after receiving my February issue of REPORT from the CAPITAL, I noticed the ad on the back cover about the Free! Religious Liberty Packet. I was so excited that I immediately got my pen and paper to write for two of these packets—one I want for the newly elected interim pastor and one for a young Baptist minister in Macon County.

Thanks for such an informative magazine you send to all who subscribe.

May McCoy  
Franklin, NC

Recently, I obtained a copy of your publication "Religion in the Public School Classroom." I was very impressed with the pamphlet and would like to have a copy sent to my parents.

As a Christian and a Southern Baptist, I appreciate the quality work that you are doing in order to preserve religious liberty in our nation.

Karen S. Cole  
Orange, VA

I appreciate you and your staff. Through the years as a pastor, I have always appreciated the information provided by your office and it helped me to understand many issues of church and state that otherwise would have caused me difficulty.

Robert U. Ferguson  
Little Rock, AR

gious liberty is less extensive. Explore how these complications may be a consideration for U.S. Christians when they confront our government.

• New Briefs tells of concern for persecuted religious believers throughout the world; a recent State Department-sponsored conference focused on that, but even more. It expressed such considerable criticism of U.S. "mainline" denominations and church bodies that Michael Bourdeaux, whose Keston College studies religious freedom globally, shared his dismay over the attack. What about the propriety of government taking the initiative to co-sponsor a religious conference. Should it have invited, as it did, only its "friends" but not its supposed "enemies" within the religious community to share in planning? How is it that the newcomer, Institute on Religion and Democracy, obtained instant credibility with this administration, while the older ecumenical bodies still encounter suspicion if not hostility? Who's the piper, what's the tune? ☐

I have been a regular reader of REPORT from the CAPITAL and have enjoyed its many fine articles. The work of the Joint Committee is so vitally important and the issues you bring to our attention certainly should concern all of us.

Norm Finney  
Nashville, TN

Every issue of REPORT FROM THE CAPITAL carries items of real interest and value for me. In the April issue, Charles Z. Smith's article, "No Criminal Intent" is particularly newsworthy. My thanks for it and the whole publication month after month.

Ralph R. Tingley  
Sioux Falls, S.D.

## FREE! Religious Liberty Packet

### SOUL FREEDOM

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Why should churches that are no different from their culture care about maintaining the freedom to critique society?

## REFLECTIONS

James M. Dunn  
Executive Director



**"T**he threat of secularism to liberty and to the church and its freedom is particularly acute when and where it has become a religion." These words of T. B. Maston in 1968 were a forewarning of the furor faced today.

John C. Bennett suggested in *Christians and the State* that secularist religion became a threat "as it developed a pretentious ideology that offered its own answers to religious questions."

Maston challenged "a more insidious and hence more dangerous threat to religious liberty that comes from secularism within our churches." We have, he felt, church members only slightly less secularized than the public that is at odds with the church. The church itself is little less secularized than the culture surrounding it. "Many of our churches identify with and have become defenders of the culture," Maston laments.

Church leaders decry any civil disobedience for conscience's sake. Pastors act as if they are the CEO of a corporation. Deacons actually see themselves as the "governing board." The modest meeting house has become the "church plant."

Why should churches that are no different from their culture care about maintaining the freedom to critique society? Why should anyone give to a church that seems interested only in self-perpetuation? How can one expect spiritual strength from a church that is dedicated to the "bottom line" mentality of our age?

Maston presciently wrote:

*The secularization of the church expresses itself in various and even contradictory ways. The church uses, to a distressing degree, secular methods to attain worldly success. The greatness of a local church is frequently measured by the number of its members, the improvement of its physical facilities, and the size of its budget. One result of this kind of emphasis is that there are evidently many unredeemed people in our churches, with the rest of us considerably less mature than we should be. In turn, the unredeemed and the immature are a constant threat to religious liberty in the world and in the church. There can be no assurance of the preservation of religious liberty in our nation apart from churches composed of redeemed, spiritually maturing men and women who will defend the right and accept the responsibility of religious liberty.*

Long before the present hand wringing about "secular humanism" Maston saw that the real problem is the secularization of the churches. The drive for success, status, size and fame infects the religion of Jesus Christ.

It is expected in many churches, particularly the larger, 'more successful ones,' that every recommendation from the pastor, deacons, or any committee will be accepted without any questions. There is little liberty to differ, at least publicly.

*Religious liberty is largely lost within the house of her 'friends.' How can we expect to preserve it in the nation and the world if we do not preserve it within the company of the redeemed?*

"Some churches with fine buildings have attempted to domesticate God. They tend to be self-centered and in love with themselves," Maston charged. He saw, correctly, that the most powerful engine in the push toward secularism is the secularization of the churches. How ironic that many who express such fears of secular humanism are precisely the most "show biz" pastors, the most success-oriented churches, the most credentialed, freedom-denying theologians, the most big-business-defending pawns of politicians, the most statistically sensitive materialists in the religion game.

Years ago T. B. Maston was prophetically speaking out against the secular credo of success. He saw clearly that the desire for secular success "posits a real threat not only to religious liberty but also to the vitality of the Christian movement."

In this as on many other subjects T. B. Maston was ahead of his time. It is proper that he should receive the "Brooks Hays Memorial Christian Citizenship Award" presented by the Second Baptist Church of Little Rock, Arkansas, June 30, 1985.

He was born November 26, 1897 in Jefferson County, Tennessee and is known primarily as a professor of Christian Ethics at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary from 1923 to 1963. He is also known for his dozens of books, hundreds of articles and thousands of students reflecting the contribution of his life and thought.

His entire approach to Christian ethics was peculiarly suited to Baptists. He did not accept unquestioningly the traditional approaches, rather, he fashioned a practical, political, philosophical biblical approach to the study of Christian ethics.

Bill Moyers says, "When I'm asked to define Christian ethics, my best answer is Tom Maston. He showed us that the theater of Christian ethics is not the pulpit, the classroom or the counselor's corner, but all of life."

Now there's an antidote to secularism.

Thank God for T. B. Maston, long may he teach. □

# REVIEWS



## THE ABOLITION

By Jonathan Schell, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984, \$11.95, 173 pp.

Jonathan Schell, in his new book, *The Abolition*, has intensified and updated his earlier depiction of the "fate of the earth" as heading toward "extinction." Schell's shocking, literate, well documented, and highly readable case for the word, "extinction," has carried the force of prophetic revelation. In *The Abolition* he acknowledges that the peace movement has so far been clearer about what it is against than what it is for. He also criticizes his earlier tentative proposal of world government as a solution. In the new book Schell calls on the peace community to unite behind a new, positive, radical, but, he says, "realistic" political program. The only positive alternative to "extinction," says Jonathan Schell, is "abolition."

Throughout the book, Schell takes issue with the recent controversial Harvard study, *Living with Nuclear Weapons*. The latter purports to prove that the bomb, for good or ill, is with us to stay. "Living with nuclear weapons," say the Harvard scholars, "is our only hope." The only hope in that, Schell responds in his new book, is extinction. Hope there is, he says, however, of abolition.

He agrees that we have experienced a sort of fall from innocence, and will never again be free of the knowledge of nuclear technology, the potential to create nuclear weapons and the potential for extinction. He also agrees that the only foreseeable hope is a policy of deterrence, in which the power of the one side balances that of the other. But here ends the agreement, and begins the radically new proposal. He proposes a "weaponless deterrence," a balance not of offensive power, the deterring terror of mutual assured destruction, but a balance of defensive power.

Since, he argues, the nuclear nations know how to create a nuclear arsenal, and since the only end to the spiral of advancing nuclear capacity is extinction, there is only one reasonable solution. That is for all the nuclear powers to agree to

rely, for their offensive capacity, on the knowledge of nuclear technology. It is to abolish all nuclear weapons, with the expectation that the mutual potential for nuclear power is as much a deterring balance of power as the mutual possession of fifty thousand nuclear warheads. His argument is compelling.

This proposal for a positive political program of abolition assumes two implied if unspoken hypotheses: 1) that the fact of the nuclear arsenal is of itself a fatal predicament, and 2) that the bomb is an independent phenomenon, separable from other social realities and from the dynamics of human nature. Schell has made an almost overwhelming case for the former of these, but not for the latter. There is also the implication that a solution, because it is rational, is therefore "realistic." That, of course, has never been true. On the other hand, a rational proposal ought to be the basis for political discussion, so this one deserves to be wrestled with.

The proposal is that the super powers agree that the nuclear reality makes war obsolete. Since war has always been the final arbiter of international disputes, we are therefore simply bereft of such an arbiter. There is in fact no arbitration to be done. So whatever irreconcilable differences there may be between us, they will simply have to remain unreconciled, at least until such time as we find a more agreeable way to get beyond the impasse. So what he proposes is an acceptance and a reification of the international status quo.

There is only scant mention here of fear of an insidious, malignant, and invisible spread of communism, and no mention at all of the international cry for justice. The assumption is that we can simply stop everything where it is, abolish nuclear weapons, and live this way until we agree on more positive and peaceful changes. The proposal is deterrence without justice, whether justice be conceived of from the right, as the right to bourgeois political and economic freedoms, or from the left, as the right of the masses to the basic necessities. Herein is perhaps its most serious problem.

This new proposal should serve sev-

eral important functions. It should underscore the immanence of extinction as our predicament. It should challenge the peace movement toward a positive political program. More negatively, it will tend to confirm the suspicions of the black and third world communities that the peace movement is inherently elitist. Schell's proposal is to reify the current balance of power, and the current multi-form reality of injustice and oppression. There is the implication that once reified, negotiation for progressive change can go on just as well as now. Maybe so, maybe not. Schell's proposal should therefore intensify the discussion on the relationship between armed conflict and justice.

Schell is the author who, in *The Fate of the Earth*, called us to acknowledge the radicalness of our predicament. In *The Abolition* he challenges us to accept the necessity of a radical solution. □

George Williamson, Jr.

## RELIGION IN STRANGE

**TIMES: The 1960's and 1970's**

By Ronald B. Flowers, Atlanta: Mercer University Press, 1984, \$18.50, 242 pp.

In *Religion in Strange Times*, Ronald B. Flowers has done a real favor to those who are interested in the ins and outs of American religion. He has chronicled in a summary the religious phenomena of the 1960's and 1970's. The author was attempting to pull together the major changes in religion during these two decades in a way that "makes sense" to a general audience.

Flowers is professor of religious studies at Texas Christian University. He is a member of the board of trustees of Americans United for Separation of Church and State and has co-authored one other book on church and state.

The strength of the book is also its weakness. That is, in moving from the civil rights movement of the 60's to feminist theology as articulated in the 70's, an enormous amount of material is covered. The weakness is that some of the

Continued on page 7.

## REVIEWERS

Dr. Williamson is pastor of First Baptist Church, Granville, Ohio and president of the North American Baptist Peace Fellowship. Dr. Saul, a REPORT corresponding editor, teaches Christian ethics at Golden Gate Baptist Seminary.

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