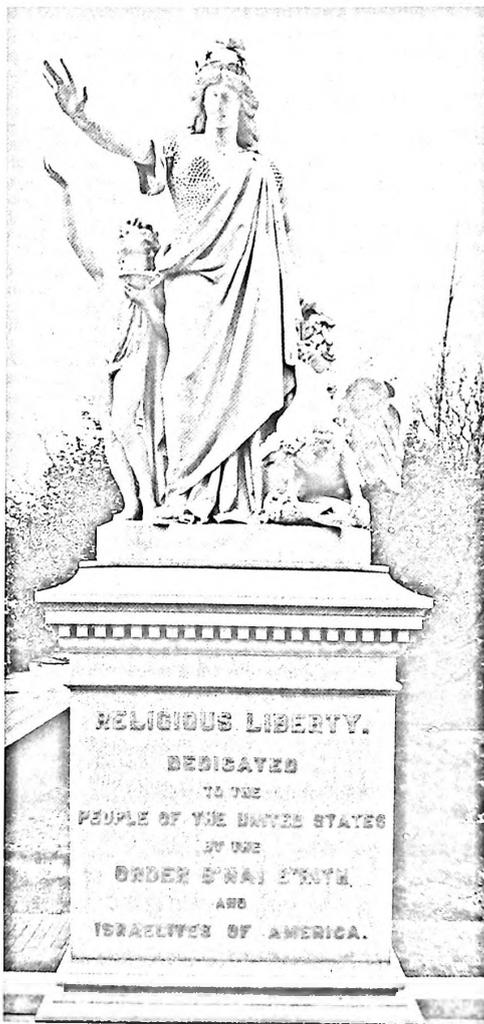


April 1987

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REPORT from the CAPITAL



**THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES
Historical Commission, SBC
Nashville, Tennessee**

REPORT from the CAPITAL

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

Vol. 42, No. 4

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Cover: "Religious Liberty" was created for the 1876 U.S. Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia by Sir Moses Ezekiel. The outstretched arm of the liberty figure points toward the Liberty Bell, symbolically welcomes visitors, and proclaims our nation's abiding commitment to religious freedom. (Photo by Cliff Hence, courtesy of National Museum of Jewish History)

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Religion "Deregulated"

If the Church of Jesus Christ cannot affect human lives and perhaps then the character of American society and social policy, it has a problem all the tampering with the Constitution can never resolve. The Constitution formalized for its authors (and for succeeding generations) their vision and intention for a politically and religiously free society. William Keucher, a long-time and astute advocate of religious liberty, observes that "America as a democracy under its Constitution is radically different from earlier, colonial experience; ... religion in America *was deregulated.*"

It has been clear since that time, writes Keucher, that, unlike in the colonial period, states no longer can establish churches and collect taxes from all citizens to support churches and clergy not of the citizens' choosing; there can be no religious test for public office or to qualify citizens to vote; and while clergy may continue to serve as magistrates, their judgment must not be constricted by their theological understanding. Keucher notes that the failure to distinguish between the colonial American experience and that of today results in mass confusion.

Confusion among Baptists today over the nature of freedom in Christ, resulting in an insistence upon uniformity of belief, is a concern to Robert Seymour. Especially grievous are the often veiled attempts to abridge individual liberties or local church autonomy. Historically, Baptists have stood at freedom's forefront espousing conscience as the reserve of God's holy activity. What may be true technically — that no one actually advocates that Baptists adopt a creedal statement — may not be true in fact. Still, intense pressure toward conformity comes from outside as well as from within Baptist circles. Seymour correctly points out that *Baptist* itself spells freedom — from an unfettered pulpit to a royal priesthood of believers freely searching the scriptures with God's Spirit as their interpreter. And that has always been too much for self-appointed religious authority.

Dean Kelley in an article on the teaching of values in our public schools suggests the broader dimensions of the issue, many of which are far too often overlooked. Public schools can and should teach those moral values supported by consensus — "do not steal, do not cheat," etc., says Kelley. On sectarian issues such as creationism, the school cannot take sides. A third group of moral issues, on which there is no consensus, must be neither promoted nor dismissed high-handedly. Teaching of moral values calls for sensitivity.

Religious Liberty Day. On the first day of worship in June 1987, congregations of the eight national Baptist bodies unite in worship, thereby observing religious freedom in America. To assist in planning that celebration, the Baptist Joint Committee prepares materials available at no cost. Write today, using the coupon found on page sixteen. □

Victor Tupitza

During a stormy debate among Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee members over proposed civil rights legislation, Sen. Lowell P. Weicker, a Republican, declared he is willing to play "hard ball" on the measure, adding that game is better than the "no ball" played during the years his party held control of the Senate.

The Connecticut senator, who during the committee's hearing on the Civil Rights Restoration Act said he is "aggrieved" such legislation has not yet been passed, promised to support — both substantively and procedurally — the efforts of committee chairman Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., to obtain swift passage of the measure.

The bill would overturn a 1984 Supreme Court decision, *Grove City v. Bell*, that narrowed application of four federal civil rights laws.

Supporters say the legislation would restore the civil rights laws' previous scope by applying the anti-discrimination bans to the entire institution as was Congress' original intent. Opponents contend it would broaden the scope of the laws, especially in the area of abortion rights.

Disputes over abortion stalled similar legislation during the last two Congresses. Debate among members of the Senate panel, to which the measure was referred, may foretell comparable roadblocks in the 100th Congress. ●

Representatives from the Internal Revenue Service and Department of Treasury told a House subcommittee they do not favor a "wholesale change" in the law governing lobbying and political activities by tax-exempt organizations.

The two officials recommended members of the Ways and Means Oversight Subcommittee work to clarify and balance current regulations. ●

The Golden Rule may be taught in public schools if it is not specifically attributed to Jesus Christ, a federal judge told a Christian citizenship conference in Nashville.

Speaking at West End United Methodist Church, Judge Thomas Wiseman said "the Golden Rule is not the exclusive property of Christianity. It is a basic tenet of Taoist, Buddhist, Confucian, Moslem, Brahman, and Judaic theologies."

The judge said teaching the Golden Rule poses a problem with the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment to the Constitution when it is taught "because Christ said it. That's establishment." ●

The Supreme Court has agreed to decide if states may deny unemployment compensation benefits to workers who are fired for using the drug peyote in religious observances.

Two employees of an alcohol and drug abuse prevention and treatment center in Oregon were discharged after admitting they used the drug in ceremonies of the Native American Church. The employees, who agreed in writing to abide by the center's philosophy of total abstinence from alcohol and drugs as a condition of employment, claimed federal law protected their use of peyote in religious ceremonies. ●

A textbook publisher has responded to criticisms about its treatment of religion in history books by promising to make "significant changes" in future publications.

Laidlaw Educational Publishers, based in River Forest, Ill., is preparing a supplementary text on the "religious influence in the United States" and will include more such references when its current texts are revised in the future, said Herbert R. Adams, the firm's chief executive officer. ●

A Constitutional Initiative: Religion Deregulated to Set Conscience Free

In 1987, American citizens will celebrate the two-hundredth anniversary of their Constitution. I suggest such a celebration should include a reading of the Constitution by every citizen — including the Bill of Rights. Such a reading would lead us to see that America as a democracy under its Constitution is radically different from earlier, colonial experience. One of those radical differences is that under the Constitution, religion in America *was deregulated*.

In colonial America, religion had been established by law. Ministers of religion also served as civil magistrates as if the colonies were a theocracy. The right to vote or to hold public office was restricted to such persons who were members of the established church in that colony. Religious dissenters, while required to pay taxes to support churches and religious views in which they did not believe, were disenfranchised from enjoying full civil liberty or universal suffrage. In addition, dissenters were often subject to fines or imprisonment because of their refusal to allow individual conscience to be coerced by the power of the state. Obadiah Holmes was publicly flogged because his religious views as a Baptist differed from the established religion in his colony. Henry Dunster was removed from his office as president of Harvard College because of his Baptist sentiments. Roger Williams, banished from the Massachusetts Colony, was led to secure a charter establishing the colony of Rhode Island. There, church and state were separated and religious freedom was guaranteed to all citizens, whatever their religious affiliations or beliefs.

Dr. Keucher — pastor, educator, author — served as a member of the Baptist Joint Committee for nearly two decades and has carefully monitored church-state relations throughout a 40-year ministry. Currently, he is president of Central Baptist Seminary in Kansas City, Kan. He was also president of American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.

The revolutionary desire of people in the colonies to be freed from the tyranny of the British Crown gave rise to a similar agitation for people to escape the tyranny of religious persecution and absolutism. The adoption of the Constitution with its subsequent Bill of Rights led to the *dise*stablishment of churches and the deregulation of religious views and practices which had prevailed in the colonies.

Baptists, Quakers, Jews, and people of *other* religious persuasions and of *no* religious persuasion joined forces to secularize the state, disestablish the churches, and deregulate religion. Consequently, religion in constitutional America enjoys a free marketplace for its ideas and practices without being either aided and abetted by law or weakened and diminished by legislation. The First Amendment of the Bill of Rights assures a fair field for all religion because no church or sect or denomination is favored by coercive power of government. Congress was prohibited either from establishing any religion or by acting to prohibit its free exercise.

The deregulation of religion, under the Constitution, provides positive benefits which have prevailed across these decades. For one thing, government is restrained from intruding upon the rights of conscience. Government is restricted from mandating religious policies or programs. Government is prevented from using its power either to coerce the conscience in its beliefs or practices or to punish citizens for their religious beliefs and practices or lack of them.

Under the Constitution, all citizens enjoy equal rights which include the free exercise of religion. Each person has a free and voluntary choice in believing or not believing, praying or not praying, worshiping or not worshiping. Legislation or state power which compels the human conscience or coerces another believer or nonbeliever can never be true worship. Historically, Baptists have understood that and have pleaded the rights of the free conscience, not for themselves alone, but also for people of other religious



faiths and persuasions and for persons who do not profess any faith at all. It would seem preposterous if Baptists who refused to coerce the conscience of their own infants by baptizing them would be willing now to call upon the power of the state to legislate and mandate religious practices for other persons in violation of their free and voluntary choice.

In President Reagan's 1987 State of the Union message, a peculiar note was sounded. For the first six years of his administration, the President's program has been dedicated to *deregulation* in business and commerce and science and education and in the daily affairs of human life. As the President has said it, again and again, his goal is to get big government off the backs of the American people. How strange that the President, who has persistently pursued his goal of deregulation in these *other* fields, could be heard asking Congress to take some action to *regulate* religion and to get government on the backs of people in authorizing or mandating religious devotion and practices in public schools. The President affirmed such action was needed by Congress to put God back into the classroom from which God had been expelled.

Such a view about the nature of God does not represent Christian theology. Christian faith affirms that God is omnipresent; he is already present in every schoolhouse as much as he is present in every churchhouse. He is present in the White House, even as he is present in your house or my house. God is not like a checker, waiting to be moved about from space to space and square to square by human initiative or by legislative decree.

Voluntary prayer is a *natural* right which each person *already* enjoys. It was not granted to us as citizens by government decree or by the power of the state. *Voluntary* prayer or worship cannot depend upon legislative action or governmental support. If the right to pray or worship were viewed as a gift given to each citizen by congressional action or by

... use of government force or power to enforce or to favor religious devotion or practice ... represents an unwarranted intrusion into sacred precincts where the Spirit of God, alone, should operate in the human soul ...

legislative program, the right would be in jeopardy. What a legislative body, such as Congress, can give, it can also take away! But, no person who understands history and who treasures individual soul competency and the rights of a free conscience would be ready to grant to the state any power to give or to take away what belongs already to each citizen as a natural right, endowed by the Creator as inalienable.

Mr. Reagan's plea for the use of government force or power to enforce or to favor religious devotion or practice is a violation of each citizen's constitutional First Amendment guarantees. More than that, it represents an unwarranted intrusion into sacred precincts where the Spirit of God, alone, should operate in the human soul in its relationship to its Maker and its Redeemer.

The question arises, "Why would the President be interested in getting government off our backs in every other human province, while he expresses the desire to regulate religion and to put government on our backs to legislate, enforce, and, ultimately, to control by means of pains and penalties, the rights of individual conscience which must be inviolate and free?"

The only answer which makes sense is that the President has been ill-advised by zealous persons who have encouraged him to call America back to life as it was lived in colonial America. There, indeed, religion was established. There, government could be used to favor and support one set of religious views and practices which gave some believers certain rights and benefits denied to others who did not believe or practice in the same way.

By confusing colonial with constitutional America, these persons hold an erroneous vision about our history. We do not want a nation where it is possible to use government power to jail or to fine persons for believing the wrong thing, or for worshipping the wrong way, or for praying on the wrong day, or for using the wrong liturgy, or for not being re-

ligious at all! Advisers to the President must not understand the radical difference the Constitution has made in establishing America as a democracy with equal rights guaranteed to all citizens, regardless of their religious beliefs, affiliations, professions and practices.

This difference between colonial and constitutional America is clearly illustrated by the language of a treaty, negotiated during the administration of George Washington, our first president. The treaty was subsequently ratified by the United States Senate and proclaimed by President Adams on June 10, 1797. Among other stipulations, the treaty acknowledged the following:

Article 11. As the government of the United States of America is *not*, in any sense, founded on the Christian religion [and] as it has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion, or tranquility of Musselmen, ... it is declared by the parties that no pretext arising from religious opinion shall ever produce an interruption of the harmony existing between the two countries [emphasis added].

That language, in this early treaty, should make clear what our Founding Fathers believed they had done in 1787! America, established under the Constitution as a democracy, had radically different premises from those which had pertained among the colonies. Under the new Constitution, all religions were given a fair field for their beliefs precisely because free exercise was guaranteed to all persons without the use or encouragement of governmental persuasion or power. Only those who have forgotten the penalties and persecutions which religious dissenters suffered before these constitutional guarantees could be really anxious to see America return to its colonial experience when people were taxed to support religious views contrary to their conscience and when access to the political franchise was given or withheld on religious grounds. It was for that reason the Sixth Article of the Constitution prescribes that no religious tests are to be used to qualify persons to run for or to hold public office in America's democracy.

Today in homes, in churches, in synagogues, in mosques, and in temples, each American citizen enjoys the right to worship freely and to pray unmolested in his or her conscience. At the same time, other citizens have the right to freely refrain from any religious profession or practice, unmolested in their unbelief. People in America may be confessed Christians of varying denominations;

they may be Jews or Buddhists, Mormons or Mohammedans; or they may choose not to profess any belief at all; they may be agnostics or atheists. The American way, under the Constitution, provides and protects both the free exercise of religion and the tolerance and respect a free, dissenting conscience deserves.

In reading our early documents, it is evident that some years passed before God was referred to by name by America's elected national leaders. Described as "gracious parent" or "wise benevolence" or "overarching providence," yet without mentioning the name of God, He was no less present in our history and national affairs. No further act of Congress is needed. Religion now is free and voluntary. The role of religion in our nation would be weakened and not strengthened were it to depend upon legislative measures and the coercive power of the state.

In this bicentennial year of the American Constitution, it would be well for Baptists in America and for other Christians and those who have no religious persuasions at all to touch base with our constitutional history so as to preserve and strengthen the rights of a free conscience and of individual liberty. Under the Constitution, religion was deregulated. It deserves to stay that way. Only when the human conscience is free, unforced by legislative means or penalties, is the conscience able to truly worship and follow God. □



RELIGIOUS
LIBERTY
DAY
JUNE 1987

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

VIEWS OF THE WALL

Oliver S. Thomas
General Counsel



One of the things that makes life so interesting, and so difficult, is that our decisions are rarely clear-cut. So often the choice is not between good and evil but between good and good, if we're lucky, bad and bad, if we're not. Innumerable shades of relative good and evil only complicate an already difficult decision.

What's true in life is also true in the law. The rights of the individual must be weighed against the interests of society in an effort to create a just and equitable framework on which to construct an ordered society. This balancing of competing interests is particularly important on issues pertaining to the separation of church and state.

One exceedingly difficult problem involves the provision by religious organizations of what some might refer to as "secular services." Examination of a \$100 million federal program to shelter the homeless illustrates the tension that may arise when trying to balance two very important societal values: assisting the disadvantaged and preserving both religious liberty and its institutional guarantor, the separation of church and state.

Without question, homelessness has become a major problem in the United States. The number of homeless people in the District of Columbia alone is up 500 percent over last year.

Most of the service providers sheltering homeless people are religiously affiliated. These religious organizations have the commitment and the experience necessary to do the job. What's more, they are good at it. When it comes to sheltering the homeless in a cost-efficient way, the government simply does not measure up to the private sector.

For example, *The Washington Post* recently reported that the District of Columbia is spending over \$3,000 per month to shelter one homeless family. Admittedly, this is an extreme example, but the point remains: private organizations would never permit that kind of extravagance to take place and could shelter a dozen families for half that amount.

Unfortunately, private organizations alone have not been able to solve the problem. They simply do not have the necessary financial resources to respond to homelessness on a comprehensive, nationwide scale.

But the federal government does.

Recognizing that the private sector is more efficient at sheltering the homeless

but that the public sector has more available resources, Congress has created a program designed to channel public monies to the institutions that can best help the homeless. The vast majority of these institutions are religiously affiliated.

The obvious problem with such a program is that the First Amendment prohibits government funding of religion. Specifically, tax dollars cannot be used to promote or to inhibit religion. A line of Supreme Court cases, however, holds that religious organizations may receive government funds as long as they are used *solely* for nonsectarian purposes. While many of us might question the underlying rationale behind these decisions (i.e., that it is possible to isolate and fund certain nonsectarian activities of religious organizations), the Supreme Court has indeed adopted this position, and Congress is acting accordingly.

Fortunately, the Court has acknowledged that some religious institutions such as primary and secondary schools may be so "pervasively sectarian" that it is impossible to isolate and fund any secular, nonsectarian activities. But the Court has refused to apply this blanket prohibition to colleges and universities, and probably it would refrain from applying it to most religious charities as well.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) was assigned the difficult task of administering the emergency shelter program without violating the separation of church and state. Apparently, things ran smoothly until last summer when a halfway house for drug addicts and alcoholics run by the Salvation Army was denied funding for encouraging its clients to seek spiritual nurture. While HUD rightly decided that the use of public monies to encourage spiritual growth violated the establishment clause, the decision set off a chain reaction resulting in the denial of funds for numerous programs around the country run by religious organizations but not promoting religion. The result was a hue and cry from a large number of religious organizations no longer able to provide what they considered to be wholly secular services for the poor.*

*It should be noted that many religious groups, including Baptists, consider sheltering the homeless to be part of their religious, as opposed to secular, activities. Because the

HUD's initial response was to suggest that these religious organizations form separate secular corporations to which the government money could flow. The problem with such a suggestion was twofold. First, many of the grants amounted to less than \$10,000, thus making the relative cost of forming a separate corporation prohibitive. Second, most likely the same people would be serving on the boards of directors of both the religious and the secular corporations, leaving the underlying problem unsolved. A mere cosmetic change in corporate structure would not ensure that the public funds were being put to secular, nonreligious use.

In the meantime, Congress had become concerned that HUD was administering the program in a way that defeated the intent of legislation designed to help the homeless and that misinterpreted the relevant constitutional provisions concerning the separation of church and state. A House subcommittee chose to address the problem in the committee report that will accompany this year's reauthorization bill. It is clear that the subcommittee is firmly committed to a partnership between the federal government and nonprofit organizations, including religious ones, for the purpose of meeting the secular needs of the nation's poor.

Sensing a blurring of the line of separation between church and state and the possible adverse precedential effect that such an action might have, the Baptist Joint Committee worked with a coalition of several organizations to suggest guidelines that would allow religious groups to shelter homeless people in a way that conforms to the First Amendment. Five principles emerged that will be incorporated into the subcommittee's report.

1. No person applying for funded services shall be discriminated against on the basis of religion.
2. No religious instruction or counseling and no religious worship will be provided or encouraged in connection with the provision of secular, non-religious assistance.
3. No sectarian or religious symbols may be used in the portion of a facility

motivation for Baptists and Catholics alike is religious in nature, the distinction seems to be the manner in which these services are offered.

Federal Judge Bans 'Secular Humanist' Textbooks: Case Divides Community

WASHINGTON

used to provide secular services unless such symbols previously had been permanently affixed to the facility.

4. All federal funds must be accounted for separately from all other funds of the institution so that the federal government will not have to monitor the general accounts of the religious organization.

5. Any real property that is owned by a religious organization or an organization with religious affiliation and that is rehabilitated with federal funds must be permanently dedicated *solely* to secular purposes. If the property is sold, the proportion of the proceeds of the sale attributable to the federal grant (up to a maximum of the federal grant plus interest) must be repaid to the federal government or dedicated to secular purposes.

Obviously, such a program leaves something to be desired on both sides of the issue. Church-state separationists like ourselves are somewhat uncomfortable with any government aid flowing through religious organizations, especially when it may involve capital improvements. On the other hand, many religious groups insist that the restrictions attached to the funds are excessive and burdensome.

Two important values: religious liberty and compassion for the poor.

A balance was struck. A decision was made.

Let's hope it was the right one. □

A federal judge has banned thirty-seven American history, social studies, and home economics textbooks from Alabama schools on grounds they teach the religion of "secular humanism" in violation of the First Amendment.

In a 111-page opinion issued March 4, Judge W. B. Hand of the U.S. District Court for Southern Alabama sided with more than 600 plaintiffs in Mobile, Alabama — including parents and school-teachers — who claimed the challenged books ignore Christianity and other faiths while teaching anti-Christian, humanistic values. The decision, which is expected to be challenged in the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals, applies only to Alabama schools.

The bitterly contested case, which divided the religious community of Mobile to the point that some plaintiffs and defendants belonged to the same congregations, dates to the 1982 challenge of an Alabama law that mandated the observance of silent prayer in the state's public schools. Ishmael Jaffree, a self-described agnostic and parent of two children enrolled in Mobile schools, challenged the silent prayer statute as an unconstitutional establishment of religion.

Judge Hand ruled against Jaffree in January 1983 in a celebrated opinion that included the assertion the First Amendment does not apply to the states and that Alabama could, if it chose, establish a state religion. On appeal, however, the 11th Circuit reversed Hand's decision. In June 1985, the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed the reversal.

In his March 4 opinion banning the challenged textbooks, Hand said he had reserved the right in the earlier decision to reopen the record to determine if secular humanism was being taught in Alabama schools in the event higher courts did not sustain his ruling in the Jaffree case.

Saying he had been "overwhelmed by the volume" of testimony proving the presence of secular humanism in the textbooks during the second trial — conducted over a twelve-day period last October — Hand cited the pervasive influence of a number of humanist educators over the last half century. Primary among these, he wrote, was the noted humanist John Dewey.

Hand said he agreed with the assessments of some "expert" witnesses during the trial that the general condition of American public education is "abomin-

able" and that primary and secondary schools are in a "mess."

He described the textbooks banned in his ruling as "deplorable," particularly American history volumes that "discriminate against the very concept of religion, and theistic religions in particular, by omissions so serious that a student learning history from them would not be apprised of relevant facts about America's history."

The banished series of social studies texts, he said, "relegates religion to other cultures, other times and other places," while the challenged home economics books advocate "humanistic psychology."

Hand ruled that taken together, the books amounted to an unconstitutional establishment of secular humanism as the approved religion of the state and a denial of the free exercise rights of parents who claimed their own religious values were denigrated or ignored.

"Secular humanism is religion for First Amendment purposes because it makes statements based on faith-assumptions," he ruled, adding: "A statement that there is no transcendent or supernatural reality is a religious statement."

Secular humanism is a religion, he wrote further, because it has texts considered sacred — the much-publicized Humanist Manifestos I and II and the Secular Humanist Declaration. It maintains an institutional structure in the form of such organizations as the American Humanist Association, the Council for Democratic and Secular Humanism, and the Fellowship of Religious Humanists, and through such publications as *Free Inquiry*, *The Humanist*, and *Progressive World*.

"The most important belief of this religion is its denial of the transcendent and/or supernatural: there is no God, no creator, no divinity," Hand concluded.

He also criticized textbook publishers, saying they "are more concerned with their pocket book than anything else."

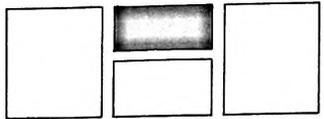
As for the parents who brought the challenge, Hand said their case did not "represent an attempt of narrow-minded or fanatical pro-religionists to force a public school system to teach only those opinions and facts they find digestible." Furthermore, theirs was not "an attempt by anyone to censor materials deemed undesirable, improper or immoral," he wrote. What the parents sought instead, he concluded, was "objective education, not partisan indoctrination." □

Stan Hasteley



RELIGIOUS
LIBERTY
DAY
JUNE 1987

News in Brief



Florida to ask churches to begin paying sales tax

TALLAHASSEE

Unless the Florida legislature changes its mind, churches in the state will have to begin collecting sales tax on many of the services they provide.

Weddings, funerals, retreats, even Valentine's banquets may be subject to sales tax when the law goes into effect July 1. Critics have charged the new tax policy will make churches the agents of government.

The Sales Tax Exemption Repeal Bill, passed by the legislature last fall, is intended to increase state revenue by shortening the list of organizations and professions that are not required to charge their customers sales tax for their services. Churches and other nonprofit organizations are among those who have lost the exemptions.

Private schools will be hard hit as well when the tuition they charge students becomes taxable. The president of Stetson University, which is owned by Florida Southern Baptists, said taxing private college tuition "would be like raising tuition five percent." State-owned schools are to remain exempt under the policy.

In passing the law, the legislature also created the Sales Tax Exemption Study Commission, which since December has been evaluating the impact of the new law and considering whether to reinstate any of the exemptions. The group's recommendations will be reviewed in April by legislators, who then will decide if any alterations need to be made in the new law.

Church activities subject to taxation have not been determined. The law does not require churches to pay taxes on goods and services they buy, however, since nonprofit organizations are themselves tax-exempt. Neither would churches be required to charge sales tax on items they sell, such as books and tapes, because religious groups already enjoy a sales tax exemption on tangible goods.

Oliver Thomas, general counsel for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, said Florida's new sales tax policy poses serious constitutional questions. "One of the major reasons for the religion clauses of the First Amendment is to guard against excessive entanglement between the church and state," he said. "This is precisely the type of entanglement the

First Amendment intended to prevent.

"Anytime you have this sort of governmental monitoring of the internal affairs of the church, you create the possibility of a nightmare," he added. "Can you imagine a tax commissioner snooping around the corner to see if you are collecting sales tax on your Wednesday night supper?" □

Greg Warner

Committee approves bylaw change on representation

WASHINGTON

Alterations in the size and composition of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs moved a step closer to completion in March as the agency's executive committee approved a necessary bylaw change. Final approval of the proposal is expected in October when the full Baptist Joint Committee is to meet here.

The new representation formula is to include an increased Southern Baptist presence on the committee. The number of Southern Baptists on the BJCPA will rise from fifteen to eighteen under the new plan.

According to a formula earlier approved by the SBC Executive Committee,

those representatives will be the SBC president, the presidents of the Executive Committee, Foreign Mission Board, Home Mission Board, Annuity Board, and Sunday School Board, and twelve at-large members elected by messengers to the annual convention. In addition, the executive director of the SBC Christian Life Commission will be an ex-officio, nonvoting member. The new formula must be approved by messengers to this year's SBC annual meeting.

At present, the fifteen Southern Baptists on the BJCPA include the convention president, nine heads of denominational agencies, and five at-large members.

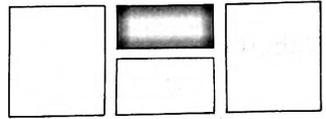
Other features of the new representation plan include a provision that no proxy voting is to be permitted in the future and that no participating body may have more than one-third of the total membership. Overall, the new plan provides for up to fifty-four members.

Besides the Southern Baptist Convention, other member bodies given additional seats on the committee are the Baptist General Conference, from its present three to eight, and the North American Baptist Conference, from three to six.

Those losing seats will be the American Baptist Churches, from fifteen to nine, and all three participating black bodies. Both the National Baptist Convention of America and the National Baptist Con-



Warren Magnuson (center), general secretary of the Baptist General Conference, listens to discussion on a proposed bylaw change during the March meeting of the BJCPA executive committee. The meeting marked Magnuson's last as a member of the committee. Magnuson, who is to retire from his post with the Baptist General Conference in June, has served on the Baptist Joint Committee for eighteen years.



vention U.S.A. Inc. will lose members, from the present allotment of fifteen seats each to three and one, respectively. The Progressive National Baptist Convention will drop from five to three. The Seventh Day Baptist General Conference also will drop, from three to one.

The new formula is based on both membership and financial contributions, with the incentive that smaller groups may increase their representation by contributing larger amounts.

In another action, the BJCPA Executive Committee approved a proposed 1987-88 budget of \$632,625.

Executive Committee members also gave approval to BJCPA cosponsorship of a 1988 religious liberty conference to be held at First Baptist Church, Providence, R.I., the first Baptist congregation in America. Other sponsors will be the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. and the American Baptist Churches of Rhode Island. The June 5-7, 1988, conference will commemorate the 350th anniversary of the founding of the historic congregation. □

Secretary Bennett backs modified voucher plan

WASHINGTON

Acknowledging congressional opposition to his original education voucher proposal, Secretary of Education William J. Bennett appeared before a Senate subcommittee to urge consideration of a new "limited voucher" plan.

The use of "Compensatory Education Certificates" (CECs) is an option called for by the Reagan administration's proposal for reauthorization of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act of 1981, which is due for congressional action. Through the two chapters of that statute, the federal government provides funds to meet special educational needs of economically and educationally disadvantaged children and to improve the overall quality of elementary and secondary education.

In November 1985, Bennett introduced a voucher proposal that would have allowed parents of disadvantaged children to obtain vouchers that could be "spent" at the public or private school of the parents' choosing for special compensatory services, general tuition, or a combination of the two. Under current Chapter 1 guidelines, federal funds go to public schools providing compensatory services for eligible children.

Bennett told the Senate Subcommittee on Education, Arts, and Humanities the new proposal would allow state and local education agencies to decide whether to use CECs, emphasizing the certificates "would not be available to parents on demand."

The secretary said the modified vouchers could be redeemed for compensatory services only, not for general tuition.

In addition to increasing parental choice by allowing parents who receive CECs to determine at which school they would redeem the certificates, the new proposal also would "remedy discrepancies in assistance to disadvantaged private school children caused by the Supreme Court's Felton decision," Bennett said.

In that decision, the Supreme Court held unconstitutional New York City's program of sending public school employees into private schools to provide specialized services under Chapter 1.

Bennett testified the number of private schoolchildren participating in Chapter 1 has declined by about twenty percent since the Felton decision and the cost of serving those students has increased significantly.

When questioned as to the constitutionality of using federal funds to purchase services from private — including church-related — schools, Bennett said there would be no entanglement problem since private schoolteachers, not public schoolteachers, would be providing the services within the private schools.

Although addressing the constraints imposed by the Felton decision, another reauthorization bill — sponsored by Sen. Claiborne Pell, D-R.I., — does not include any provision for vouchers. Pell, who chairs the education subcommittee, said he intends for his proposed legislation to "serve as the vehicle for reauthorization." □

Bill proposed to curb violence, vandalism

WASHINGTON

A bill introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives would impose federal criminal penalties for damage to religious property and injury to persons in the free exercise of religious beliefs.

A similar bill — also introduced by Rep. Dan Glickman, D-Kan., sponsor of the current bill — passed the House last

year, but was not acted upon by the Senate.

"The problem of violence aimed at religious property and the exercise of religious beliefs has not abated," Glickman said during a press conference. "It is still a serious problem."

The bill would establish federal penalties up to life imprisonment and up to \$500,000 in fines for interstate violations of damaging religious property or obstructing persons' free exercise of religion.

At the press conference with Glickman were representatives from the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and the American Jewish Committee.

In an issued statement, Oliver S. Thomas, Baptist Joint Committee general counsel, said: "Because religious freedom is guaranteed by the federal constitution, it is altogether appropriate for federal authorities to act when religious freedom is threatened. By passing this bill, Congress can ensure the highest possible protections for the free exercise of religion." □

Court hears arguments in Jews for Jesus dispute

WASHINGTON

An attorney for the city of Los Angeles tried to convince the Supreme Court that his city's Board of Airport Commissioners did not exceed its authority by forbidding the messianic Jewish group, Jews for Jesus, from distributing its literature at Los Angeles International Airport.

Assistant City Attorney James R. Kapel asked the high court to uphold a policy implemented by the commissioners explicitly forbidding "First Amendment activities" inside the airport, a policy aimed at keeping religious proselytizers from approaching incoming and departing passengers with their appeals. The policy, Kapel argued, is a "reasonable time, place, and manner" restriction on free speech.

Pressed repeatedly by several of the justices, Kapel insisted the policy does not unduly restrict free speech and falls within the commissioners' "right" to restrain otherwise protected activities because they are not "airport related."

But Jews for Jesus attorney Jay Alan Sekulow insisted, "There is no justification for a sweeping ban" on those activities such as that imposed by the airport commissioners. □

Noncreedal Christians

Baptists have a distinguished heritage and have made a profound contribution toward defining the place of religion in this country. Although we were a minority at the time of the framing of the American Constitution, we were pivotal in our influence toward establishing the principles of separation of church and state and guaranteeing the right of every citizen to worship God freely, according to the dictates of conscience.

Freedom is the big word in our history and heritage. Our hero is Roger Williams who accepted banishment from Massachusetts rather than compromise his conviction that everyone should have the right to worship as he or she chose; his Baptist spirit found fertile soil in Rhode Island and the founders of this new state declared: "We will not have our conscience in the control of humans; we will have absolute liberty to think for ourselves, speak for ourselves, and believe for ourselves." Religious pluralism and diversity of faith were welcome, and any attempt to impose beliefs by law or to establish conformity in the church was forbidden.

Everything that is basic to being a Baptist translates into liberty: priesthood of believers, soul competency, autonomy of the local church, freedom from the state, a free pulpit, and an open Bible in the hands of all the people who are encouraged to study and interpret it for themselves under the personal guidance of

God. Find a real Baptist and you will find someone who cherishes freedom. And it was a feisty Baptist preacher by the name of John Leland whose passionate persuasion for liberty led James Madison to incorporate the spirit of our heritage into the founding documents of our nation.

We Baptists have been a non-creedal people, never imposing articles of faith as a test of membership. This does not mean that we regard belief as unimportant but rather that we consider freedom of conscience more important. Our tradition puts more emphasis on *doxa* than on *dogma*; and respect for each other's personal religious expressions and feelings have been regarded as more important than abstract theological principles.

Did you know that the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia is inscribed with a verse of Scripture from Leviticus? It reads, "Proclaim liberty throughout the land unto all the inhabitants thereof." Baptists say "Amen" to that not only in the secular sphere but also within the structure of the church. Renounce liberty and you are no longer a Baptist. And Baptists never claim for themselves what they would deny to others. If we limit the freedom of others, we are rejecting our Baptist heritage.

A turn to the right is evident at many levels and in many places in America today. I am convinced that our controversy is but a symbol of a much broader effort to attain a new national religious establishment based on a Christian interpretation of the American experience. A proliferation of evangelical groups cutting across denominational lines is committed to re-Christianizing America and are convinced that we have been victimized by a secular-humanist conspiracy to eliminate God and Christian values from our culture. Obviously, our way of life has been changing from predominantly rural to urban, and it is not surprising that this transition has been unsettling for many folk who are nostalgic for the more simple life of the past. It is a well known sociological observation that when the traditional beliefs of a society cease to be a part of the everyday tapestry of culture, they become the agenda for a movement.

Such a movement has emerged. Every day's newspaper reveals that our public schools and our court systems are under constant attack. A court case is currently being waged in Tennessee to stop any expressions of tolerance toward other religions in the classroom and to make it

clear that Christianity is the only true faith. And, ironically, teachers are now becoming so intimidated about making any reference to religion that our textbooks are being distorted by their failure to give religion any credit for its impact on American history!

The movement monitors every vote in Congress and issues what it calls a "moral report card" to rate the Christian responses of our elected officials. Doctrinal belief is becoming a test for public office, and the power of such pressure is revealed by the response of the United States President himself who sent a letter of congratulations to a denominational president expressing gratitude that "so many of the proud liberal myths have shrivelled up and look as though the next strong wind should blow them away." I am reminded of a judgment made by that great Swedish sociologist Gunnar Myrdal several years ago about segregation and the American Church. He said, "When the culture around it changes, the church will also change." It is not a very complimentary conclusion, but considerable evidence supports it.

Baptists have a noble history and more than any other group can take credit for the guarantee of freedom of religion in our Constitution. Let us not be apologetic about our heritage. We do not try to be different for the sake of being different but because we know Baptists are free to shape their own faith and life. We believe that "Where the Spirit of the Lord is present, there is freedom." □

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Dr. Seymour, pastor, preached this sermon on Anniversary Sunday at Binkley Memorial Baptist Church, Chapel Hill, N.C. His text was "Where the Spirit of the Lord is present, there is freedom (I Cor. 3:17)."

Teaching Moral Values in Public Schools

There are three kinds of moral issues that young people need to learn about, but public schools should have a different role with respect to each kind.

1. There are some moral issues on which there is wide consensus in the population at large: do not kill, do not steal, do not cheat, do not lie, do not hurt others, etc. Public schools can and should teach these.

2. Others are "sectarian": Sunday/Sabbath observance, "creationism" versus evolution theory, giving preference to members of one's own faith, conscientious objections to blood transfusions, germ theory of disease, and coeducational gym classes, etc. Public schools cannot properly "take sides" on these. Where there is wide secular consensus on one side (i.e., evolution, vaccination for infectious disease, etc.), the public school should not abandon the generally accepted position, but should leave as much room as possible for individual differences.

3. There are some moral issues on which there is no consensus in this society at this time: abortion, birth control, sexual morality, drugs, "mercy killing," etc. These the public schools can teach about without violating the religion clauses of the First Amendment (that is, without adopting or sponsoring one view against another and without infringing the free exercise of religion of those who differ on these for religious reasons), but they should be examined very sensitively, so as not to do an injustice to views held by large — and mutually opposed — sections of society.

With respect to the first group of moral issues, the public schools would be failing in one of their most important responsibilities if they were to neglect to make clear, by precept and example, that antisocial behavior is unacceptable, let

alone if by supposed neutrality or indifference they were to appear to condone or support such behavior. With respect to the third group of moral issues, public schools can warn children of the dangers of alcohol, drugs, teenage pregnancy, etc.

It is not the function of the public school to invoke *theological* sanctions for moral, or against immoral, behavior. There are many nontheological sanctions that can appropriately be cited for most of the obvious forms of antisocial behavior: e.g., it is unsuccessful in the long run; it will cause one to be distrusted, shunned, or discredited; it is illegal; it is self-destructive; etc. The most effective sanction of all is the school's firm and enforced policy that such behavior is not acceptable on school premises and will not be tolerated.

If there are students and parents who desire education that includes theological sanctions or the affirmative promotion of faith-related norms that are not shared by the general population, they may need to avail themselves of the opportunities for private and parochial education.

Public schools do not need, however, to shy away from acquainting students with the fact that there are differing views on moral issues, particularly in the second and third categories. This can be done by *attribution*, i.e., by reporting that "some people believe that abortion is always wrong; other people believe that in some cases, it is the least objectionable choice." Two ideals should be kept in mind in explicating such beliefs and practices: objectivity and neutrality. Objectivity means to describe and explain the beliefs and practices in ways that would be viewed as accurate by those who believe and practice them; neutrality means to do so without expressing or implying (even by tone or voice) that such beliefs and practices are either laudable or lamentable, either fanatic or frivolous. (As with other human behavior, their effects can, however, be reported and evaluated, where known, in a nonjudgmental spirit.)

When public schools refrain from endorsing one or another moral view among those in the third category competing for acceptance, they are sometimes accused of teaching "secular humanism." Of course, it is constitutionally impermissible for public schools to teach an ideological system of belief such as that outlined in the *Humanist Manifesto*. But they are not teaching any system of belief when they simply remain silent on some subject, or when they permit students to *discuss* it without the school itself endorsing one view or another.

When students continue to probe moral issues with a series of questioning "why?"s, the point may be reached at which the public school teacher must say, "People have strongly differing convictions on this matter; we have explored it as far as we can in an institution that must be responsible to all of the people; you should discuss it further with your families or others whose advice you respect." That is not secular humanism, indifference, or relativism; it is *neutrality*. It is the proper and necessary stance for the public schools in the second and third category of moral issues (but not in the first).

The public schools must resist those on both sides of the religious spectrum who press a two-valued logic that operates like a toggle switch: either on or off. Those on one end of the spectrum insist that if the school is not teaching *theism*, it's teaching *atheism*; those on the other end insist that if the school permits or enables students merely to *discuss* religious beliefs, it is *endorsing* those beliefs. Both ends overlook the "excluded middle": between the total endorsement of religion and the total exclusion of religion there is a wide range of possibilities, some of which come close to the ideals of neutrality and objectivity. Although human beings may not attain *perfect* neutrality or objectivity, they can strive to *approximate* them, which is the only proper course for public schools in a society that has wisely prohibited the government from endorsing or pro-

Continued on page 14

Dr. Kelley is Director, Religious and Civil Liberty, National Council of Churches of Christ. Used by permission of *Religion and Public Education*, journal of the National Council on Religion and Public Education.

INTERNATIONAL DATELINE



Soviet Christians still to benefit from reforms

MELBOURNE

In a remote region of the Soviet Union an old man is dying. People from a dozen surrounding villages trudge through the snow to his bedside. They can hardly fit into the house, let alone squeeze into the bedroom. Incense and the sound of incantations fill the air. The "dying" man, impressed by the attention, makes an abrupt recovery.

Those present are actors in a ploy to circumvent the government's ban on religious activity other than in registered churches — whose memberships are deliberately kept low. An exemption allows religious ministrations in the homes of those who are too ill to come to church. An Orthodox priest, who discovered the loophole, has made it his business to send emissaries to locate bedridden persons, then to let it be known that a service will be held on such and such a date in the bedroom of Mr. X.

The Rev. Michael Bourdeaux, director of the Keston College Center for the Study of Religion and Communism in Kent, England, reveals the ruse in a soon-to-be-published book titled, "Ten Growing Soviet Churches." The chapters formed the basis of the Moorhouse Lectures which Mr. Bourdeaux recently delivered here.

In 1952, while Mr. Bourdeaux was on national service in Britain, a commanding officer picked him for an intensive Russian language course. Later, while training for the Anglican priesthood, he became an exchange student at Moscow University. He spent much of his spare time seeking out Russian Christians, of whom he wrote in a book, "Opium of the People."

Keston College was founded in 1969 and has the official support of the Anglican and the Roman Catholic Churches, as well as of the chief rabbi of the British Commonwealth. Its publications, including the periodical "Religion in Communist Lands," are regarded among the most accurate and authoritative sources of information about religious and civil liberties, or the lack of them, in the Soviet Union and other East bloc countries.

Asked his opinion of the end of the Siberian exile of Andrei Sakharov, the scientist and civil rights leader, Bourdeaux replied, "I think it would be a mistake to say this is just a sham. Clearly (Premier

Mikhail) Gorbachev would like to have greater economic stability for the Soviet Union and a more successful internal system. It is pretty obvious he would like to spend less money on arms. To do these things he wants legitimately to come to some form of agreement with the Americans.

"How deep does it go? What has happened so far affects three or four people only. One must be very cautious. As far as Soviet Christians are concerned — and there are at least 50 million of them — I have to say that Christians in the Soviet Union have not yet benefited in any tangible way.

The Keston College director said he "would like the world's religious as well as political leaders to say to Gorbachev, 'You've shown good will, we don't want to discredit you, but you have not tackled the basics. The laws must be changed.' Unfortunately, they were made under Lenin, and Lenin's laws are hard to change." □ Alan Gill, RNS

Civil liberties group challenges school funding

OTTAWA

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association told the Supreme Court of Canada that full funding of Roman Catholic high schools in Ontario by the provincial legislature is discriminatory.

"Any law that grants an unequal distribution of education funds to one religion or religious denomination violates a section of the (Canadian) Charter of Rights and Freedoms that guarantees fundamental freedom of religion," said Larry Taman, counsel for the association.

He said full funding of Catholic schools, which is also practiced in Alberta, Quebec, and Saskatchewan, "cannot pass muster under the Charter" because it deprives other religious groups of the same opportunity to educate their children in their own schools.

In February 1986, the Ontario Court of Appeal upheld the provincial law which extends public funding of Catholic schools to the end of grade thirteen. This ruling is being challenged by an alliance of public schools and other groups.

A brief from the school alliance said that "freedom of religion under the Charter requires that the state refrain from involving itself in religious or sectarian matters in order to protect against government intervention upon religious liberty." □

Church outreach broad but membership declines

WEST BERLIN

The eight regional Protestant churches in East Berlin are continuing to maintain a level of social services unknown among churches in other East bloc countries, according to reports published here.

At the same time, however, the churches are losing members and increasingly face censorship of their publications by the government.

Health and welfare institutions of East German Protestantism, unique in the East, are prospering. Church observers say it is significant that the institutions serve not only the sick and elderly, but also children. Local congregations maintain most of the 19 Protestant children's homes and 278 day care centers.

Protestant church membership, though in decline, stands at 6,435,000, just under forty percent of the population of the German Democratic Republic (East Germany). When the Marxist state was founded immediately after the Second World War, sixteen million, or ninety percent of the population, were Protestants.

The most recent incident of government censorship involved a publication of the Lutheran Church of Mecklenburg. An article reported on concern among church leaders in Hungary about the conditions of Hungarian Christians living in Romania. According to reports, the Mecklenburg church was forced to replace the entire article. □

Jewish community gains under changes in Italy

ROME

Representatives of the Italian government and of the nation's Jewish communities have given preliminary approval to a new relationship between them.

The "understanding" or "intesa," the full text of which is yet to be made public, is designed to replace old legislation dating back to the Fascist period between the two world wars when Roman Catholicism enjoyed special privileges.

The new agreement is in line with Italy's 1947 constitution, which puts all religions on the same plane.

"It is a good understanding that embodies consensus and comprehension with regard to our problems and which



NEWS-SCAN

seeks to meet the needs of all Italian Jews," said Tullia Zevi, president of the Union of Jewish Communities.

The "intesa" would recognize Saturday as an official day of rest of any Jew who does not want to work on that day and who is prepared to make up the hours between Monday and Friday. It would also recognize all other Jewish holidays and allow Jews taking oaths to swear with their heads covered as prescribed by their religion.

As with Italian Protestants, the official Jewish view is that no religious instruction in public schools should take place. But a 1985 agreement with the Italian Catholic bishops provides for a supposedly optional "hour of religion" that officials of the Jewish community believe is currently being applied in a discriminatory way. □

Day of Remembrance set to honor Armenian Genocide

WASHINGTON

The 100th Congress and President Reagan have designated April 24 "National Day of Remembrance for the Victims of the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1923."

One and one-half million people of Armenian ancestry were victims of the genocide perpetrated by the government of the Ottoman Empire, prior to the establishment of the Republic of Turkey. □

ANC, SWAPO ban affects SACC presence at Lusaka

JOHANNESBURG

Representatives of the South African Council of Churches (SACC) who are planning to attend a May ecumenical conference in Lusaka, Zambia appear to be on a collision course with the government.

At the heart of the brewing controversy is attendance by representatives of the banned African National Congress (ANC) and SWAPO (Southwest Africa Peoples Organization), a liberation group operating in Namibia.

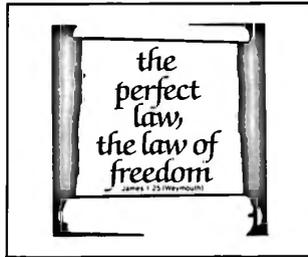
The proposed meeting, sponsored by the World Council of Churches' Program to Combat Racism, already has been condemned by government newspapers and church groups supporting the government.

The government, acting under new emergency regulations, in recent weeks

prohibited newspaper writers from even analyzing the ANC and its strategy because such writing was viewed as promoting the aims of the organization.

The theme of the Lusaka conference on May 4-8 is "The Search for Justice and Peace in Southern Africa." About thirty South African church representatives are expected, including the Rev. C. F. Beyers Naude, general secretary of SAAC.

Dr. Naude stated that members of the liberation groups include many young people who still are members of churches in South Africa. He said SACC would decide later this month whether it would send a delegation. □



'Food for Life' bill would alleviate poverty

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Poverty takes a child's life every fifty-three minutes in the United States, according to Bread for the World (BFW), a Christian citizens movement in the United States.

Encouraging support of "An Offering of Letters for Women, Infants, and Children" (WIC) campaign, BFW noted that "we live in a nation where thirteen million children live in poverty."

BFW pointed out that for every dollar spent on WIC for prenatal care and nutritious foods, up to three dollars in hospital costs could be saved. Its recent evaluation in Missouri found that each WIC dollar saved eighty-three cents in Medicaid costs in the first thirty days following birth, proving highly cost-effective.

Bread for the World calls for support for the "Food for Life" legislation introduced in Congress early in March. That would add 300,000 additional participants to be served by WIC next year. Another five million are estimated to need WIC but cannot participate. □

Alexander King, a cofounder of the Club of Rome in 1968, foresees increasing unemployment as one of the worldwide trends. The Club's 1972 book, "The Limits to Growth," focused on the problem of nonrenewable natural resources. King is now trying to dispel the myth that tomorrow will be much like today, according to a Christian Science Monitor columnist. King believes the terms *unemployment* and *underemployment* must be replaced with the less pejorative *sense of occupation* because the future will call for less hours spent in productive work. . . . Declaring that "my Christian brother has suffered enough," New Zealand-born Athanasius Hart spent the 25 days of Advent locked in a six-by-seven-by-eight-foot cage at St. Sepulchre's Anglican Church, London. His dramatic support for imprisoned Soviet Orthodox believer Alexander Ogorodnikov called attention to the latter's health care problems. Baptist Union General Secretary Bernard Green has been joined by church leaders and academics in an appeal for clemency to Soviet Ambassador Leonid Samyatin. . . . The convent at the site of the Nazi death camp at Auschwitz will close on the heels of protest from Jewish organizations. A fund-raising project for the convent called it "a spiritual fortress and a guarantee of the conversion of strayed brothers from our countries, as well as proof of our desire to erase outrages so often done to the Vicar of Christ. . . . From the lead article titled "Nothing Normal about this Normalization," the human rights newsletter HELP & action observed that "the [Polish] regime keeps trying one way and another to woo at least the toleration, if not the active allegiance of its dispirited people." Polish writer Adam Michnik summarizes the national mood as well as any: "Instead of having socialism with a human face, we live under a communism which had its *teeth knocked out*." . . . A graduation service for eight students of the Baptist Theological Seminary of Eastern Cuba was called a "notable ecumenical event," according to the publication *Correo Bautista*. Two of the eight graduates represent the Free Will Baptist Convention of Cuba. That body's seminary has been closed for several years, but may reopen this year. □

Religion and Politics

The question of religion and politics is largely the question of how power is used to achieve the objectives of one in reference to the other. Politicians often use religion to achieve objectives. Similarly, Christians must be involved in politics to achieve worthy objectives in the world. There are some specific presuppositions that give guidance to how Christians can make decisions to achieve our religious objectives. For example:

- God has a special concern for the widow, the orphan, the sojourner, and the oppressed. Christians have to take this concern to heart when they support or oppose specific social policies.
- Religious liberty with the freedom to choose one's own belief means specifically that no politician or state should be able to control or define our faith.
- Every political system is of this world and is under the judgment of God. Any idolatry of political or economic systems is an affront to the one true God.
- God loves peace and is grieved when individuals or nations go to war.
- The church can be involved in debate on public policy or moral issues as long as it seeks no selfish gain.

- The religious politician should concentrate on the practice of his faith and should avoid claiming God's absolute endorsement of his particular policy decisions.
- Christian faith should be protected but neither propagated nor enhanced by the power of the state. We reject the concept of a "Christian America" which depends on the power of the state for the implementation of Christian values. We want to evangelize America, but only by God's power and grace. □

Texas Baptist Convention Bulletin

Teaching, from page 11

mulgating any religion or irreligion and has thus avoided the problem of whose religion will dominate and the religious wars that follow therefrom.

The public school should not pretend that religion does not exist, or is somehow not to be mentioned in public; neither does it need to take a pietistic approach to religion, treating it as sacrosanct and immune to comment or criticism. The key test for public schools in all such matters should be *fairness*. It should strive to be *fair* to the faith commitments of millions of people in hundreds of different denominations and

faith groups. That can be done, not by ignoring them, but by treating them (all) with interested but dispassionate objectivity and neutrality. □



- William Keucher writes about the "American experiment" from a religious point of view. According to his article, when (and what) did America offer something (that was) novel in the world history of religion: in the colonial period or in the constitutional era? Describe how he sees current events leading away from the "American experiment" in religion. Use Robert Seymour's essay to provide more evidence of this, to use Seymour's words, "turn to the right."
- Dean Kelley, writing about the inculcation of morality, advocates public schools exploring the "excluded middle" — that area between total endorsement of religion and its total exclusion. Pretending you are a public school official, explore ways you could effect teaching about religions without endorsing them. What (or

who) would be your main obstacles?

- In his discussion about public money flowing through private agencies for the benefit of a target group, Oliver Thomas (VIEWS) illustrates the special set of problems and restrictions to be overcome. Assume Secretary of Education William Bennett comes to your class and argues that Thomas has given a perfect rationale for his school voucher program. Cite evidence that, while these two appear to be the same in principle, they are in fact very different in principle, practice, and ends.
- If James Dunn (REFLECTIONS) is correct, the Executive Branch has explicitly violated the Constitution by having diplomatic relations with the Holy See. We have officially recognized one church, he writes. According to criteria set out by William Keucher elsewhere in this issue, is the president trying to practice constitutional principles, or colonial ways of thinking? Or, is he safely within that "excluded middle" Dean Kelley advocates?

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This political venture by the present administration grants preferential treatment. This *de facto* establishment of religion gives us only one officially recognized church.

REFLECTIONS



James M. Dunn
Executive Director

It's working exactly as intended . . . the exchange of ambassadors between the United States of America and the Roman Catholic Church. Kenneth Dam, a State Department spokesman, said in February 1984 that the purpose of the arrangement was "to influence the political positions" of the Church. It's working.

An excellent article reviews in remarkably candid terms accomplishments of the U.S.A. as we lobby the Pope. Read for yourself "Three Years Later: U.S. Relations with the Holy See" by Thomas J. Reese, *America*, January 17, 1987.

The philosophy is blatant. Marten Van Heuren, director of the State Department Office of European Affairs on December 17, 1986 said: "The nature of what we do with the Vatican is no different from the nature of what we do with, say, Italy or France."

Our investment is substantial. With over two million tax dollars annually dedicated to shaping papal politics, with a staff of over thirty people, the operation is a far cry from the personal envoys of the past.

William A. Wilson boasts of U.S. victories in the diplomatic field:

- *S.D.I.* — The President's Strategic Defense Initiative is one area that the United States has explained to the Vatican. "This lobbying effort appears to have been successful since a negative report on S.D.I. prepared by the Pontifical Academy on Science appears to have been suppressed."
- *Neutron Bomb* — According to Ambassador Wilson, we explained "what the weapon really is . . . so that the Holy Father would not make a statement that was not consistent with the way we saw things."
- *Military Buildup* — Mr. Wilson thinks the Holy Father understands the philosophy behind our military strength.
- *Central America* — Wilson says "we are very sensitive to the concerns of the Holy Father" on this matter. The ambassador contends, "Our government is being confused about the issues because of the theory of liberation theology. . . . Cardinal Ratzinger and the Holy Father have been excellent in their handling of that issue."
- *Aid to the Contras* — "I have never heard any adverse comment from the Vatican on this issue so I have to assume that they are in favor of it," reasons Wilson.

Other subjects cited by Wilson as concerns of his office include "the Middle East situation," "the possibility of diplomatic relations between the Vatican and Israel," drug trafficking, immigration, human rights, and family planning. Reese says Archbishop Laghi, the Pope's ambassador to the United States, considered positive the move by the United States government not to support with foreign-aid funds any family planning programs that include abortion.

It is obviously true that the Holy See, world headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church, is also attempting to influence policies of the United States government. Yet, oddly, one point at which many Americans would likely agree with the Church's stated position, her plea for religious freedom, is not on the State Department agenda. Mr. Van Heuren of Foggy Bottom says, "The Vatican wishes to do whatever it

can to safeguard the ability of Catholics to practice, to worship according to their beliefs. You will not find that in any American list of goals and objectives." Why not?

Whether you agree with the Pope, the President, or neither, whether you lean toward the views of the Vatican or American Roman Catholic bishops (frequently not the same), surely you see problems with the richest and most powerful nation in the world having an official voice in the highest councils of any church. Every affirmation of success in our lobbying campaign is a testimony to the wrongness of the arrangement. Every evidence of our government having shaped the Pope's pronouncements is an indictment of such entanglements and a violation of high principle in the First Amendment. The scheme is working as intended but that doesn't make it right or good or fair.

Since March 7, 1984 when Mr. Wilson was confirmed as ambassador to the Holy See, our country has been living in a sin against the Constitution. This nation has been practicing a lie about separation of church and state because we are unequally yoked with a church. This is an unprecedented reversal of adherence to our no-mixing rule regarding organized religion and the institution of government.

This novel new policy is a grave violation of the pivotal rule of equality before the law for all religious groups. This political venture by the present administration grants preferential treatment. This *de facto* establishment of religion gives us only one officially recognized church.

Like it or not, whatever the intent, our blessing the Pope with an ambassador drags the United States government into theological struggle over the legitimacy of the papacy, an age-old Christian controversy, into political power plays within the Roman Catholic Church, and into the international machinations of Rome with all her vested interests.

How strange the recent refusal of the United States Supreme Court to review the decision in the case *American Baptist Churches v. Ronald Reagan!* By a strained denial of "standing" to twenty national religious groups and a rigid interpretation of the "separation of powers" doctrine, the courts refused to deal with serious questions.

Is the President of the United States above the Constitution? Can the Chief Executive, even in the conduct of foreign policy, ignore the law?

Two hundred years ago Samuel Stillman, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Boston, commented on such matters: "If the magistrate destroys the equality of the subjects of the state on account of religion, he violates a fundamental principle of a free government, establishes separate interests in it, and lays a foundation for disaffection to rulers and endless quarrels among the people."

Stillman again: "The authority of the magistrate is derived from the people by consent — it is limited and subordinate — and so long as he exercises the power with which he is vested, according to the original compact, the people owe him reverence, obedience and support" (emphasis added).

In this year of celebrating the Constitution, it is the prayer of this writer that we may champion again the rule of law and the adherence to it of all public officials, especially those in high places. □

Anniversary Program Honors Baptist Forebear

Soaking wet from a cold rain on Sunday, March 1, I entered late the annual meeting of the Samuel Stillman Association of the American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts. Reports, ballots, and budgets were being read and accepted according to Robert's Rules of Order. I spread out my wet coat and tried to get the water droplets off my glasses without making smudges. I wasn't sure the meeting would be worth the trouble of not finding a parking space very near the First Baptist Church (FBC) of Boston. Before my wet self could get comfortable in one of the back pews, the newly ordained ministers of 1986 were welcomed and the business meeting was adjourned.

Several people moved in and out at the front, and a bass viol began playing. About 175 people absorbed the solemnity of the eighteenth century Baptist church that Mike Gorajec's playing recreated. We were guided through the progression of the music in that era until, finally, we reached the point when the singing of hymns with organ accompaniment was permitted. And we sang. Dr. Bruce Herrick, minister of music at FBC, led us through "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" and "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name."

This was Samuel Stillman's 250th birthday celebration. I had practically forgotten about my wet coat as Dr. Millon Ryder, pastor of FBC, entered in



l to r: Tom McKibbens as Oliver Hart; Karen Kispert (Clerk of FBC/Boston) as Hannah Stillman; Mark Heim as James Manning & Dale Karasek as Thom Baldwin.

colonial garb and introduced himself as Shem Drowne. A good friend of Dr. Stillman, Drowne was a deacon at FBC during Stillman's pastorate there (1764-1807) and the renowned weather-vane maker of the period. (One of his famous weather-vanes tops Faneuil Hall; the grasshopper, repaired by his son Thomas, is still there.) Other guests joined Shem in sharing their love and admiration of Stillman: Dr. Thomas McKibbens, pastor of Metropolitan Baptist Church in Cambridge (Southern Baptist Convention), as Oliver Hart, Stillman's baptizing and ordaining pastor of South Carolina; Karen Kispert, Ph.D. candidate at Boston University, as Hannah Stillman, his wife who bore him fourteen children, five of whom died as infants and seven of whom died as adults before Stillman; Dr. Mark Heim, professor at Andover Newton Theological School, as James Manning, a scholarly friend of Stillman, pastor of First Baptist Church in Providence, R.I. and founding president of Rhode Island College (which became Brown University); and Dale Karasek, youth director of Emmanuel Gospel Center, as Thomas Baldwin, close colleague and the pastor of Second Baptist Church of Boston.

After an interlude of a "Who's telling the truth?" game in which the eighteenth century guests examined and described several significant items in

Stillman's life, John Odams, pastoral intern at FBC, entered as Samuel Stillman. Refreshments and birthday cake combined with fellowship gave my damp body a chance to dry out and be warmed.

Hymn, scripture reading, offering, solo by Joyce Lucia, and prayer preceded the speaker of the day, Dr. James Dunn, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. Revealing several of Samuel Stillman's life struggles and victories, Dr. Dunn gave listeners a new understanding and appreciation of the history of American Baptists. Not only was spiritual growth evident in the history presented, but the endurance and the revival today of the scriptural and evangelical principles taught by Stillman were also evident.

Samuel Stillman is buried in the Old Granary Burying Ground in the Stillman-Binney tomb. A slight and sickly man of only ninety-seven pounds, Dr. Stillman was a powerful preacher who influenced Baptists, missions, higher education, and government with the message of Christ.

Venturing into the rain to return to my car wasn't as bad as arriving. I'm glad I went to the celebration. □

Linda T. Hurd

Linda Hurd is a free-lance writer in Somerville, Mass.

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