

# REPORT from the CAPITAL

1600



John Clarke

1700



John Leland

1800



John Mason Peck

1900



Walter Rauschenbusch



George Truett

2000



Isaac Backus



Luther Rice



Harriet Tubman



Joseph Dawson

*restless for religious liberty*

**-BAPTIST CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE  
AMERICAN TRADITION**



Roger Williams



Martin Luther King, Jr.

**SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL  
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES  
Historical Commission, 555  
Nashville, Tennessee**

**RELIGIOUS LIBERTY DAY • 1989**

Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs

# REPORT from the CAPITAL

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

Vol. 44, No. 5

May 1989

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**Cover:** The first day of worship in June annually is the designated day for the observation of religious liberty among Baptist churches cooperating with the Baptist Joint Committee. Art and design for the poster and the "testimonies" page is the work of Baptist artist William Kreitlow.

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



**C** Northcote Parkinson would have been proud of the Baptist Joint Committee. But then if all organizations were as fully and efficiently engaged as this office, he might never have become famous as the author of a series of incisive "laws." Parkinson observed first that "Work expands to fill the time available for its completion." He also noted that "Expansion means complexity, and complexity means decay." And, "The number of people in any working group tends to increase regardless of the amount of work to be done." How uninspiring a muse the BJC would have been for Parkinson in his creativity.

In view of these laws, the eight U.S. Baptist groups that maintain this Washington office have no reason for self-doubt. Look at their staff. It took some doing to get it assembled for the photographer (another to gain consensus on which of several prints to use). You can see that it's a coats-off, hands-on operation, lean (but never mean), and certainly with no evidence of expansion in spite of the scope and seriousness of its assignment.

Subjected as it is to the legalese and bureaucratise that pass for communication ("let me make this clear") in the nation's capital, the staff disproves another law. It constantly transforms the complex and the obscure into the clear and the comprehensible. Legal counsel Buzz Thomas, research assistant Rosemary Brevard, and journalist Kathy Palen all contribute to that objective by their intelligible handling of law and legislation. And who could find either obscurity or ambiguity in the Texas-twanged REFLECTIONS of our executive director, James Dunn?

As for work expanding to fill time, the question is highly inappropriate. One might question whether a seven-person staff should even be entrusted with as broad a responsibility. The dimensions of its task affect every Baptist in America. Not every person who claims the First Amendment guarantee of "free exercise" wants to abide by its "no establishment" clause. Preserving that distinction in itself would present staff with as much as it could handle, a flexible working day notwithstanding.

Pictured above (sitting, r to l: James Dunn, Kathy Palen, Susan Hill; standing, r to l: Buzz Thomas, Gordon Northcutt, Rosemary Brevard, Victor Tupitza) we're Baptists from north, east, south, and west, all nurtured in the spirit of biblical grace and freedom, and dedicated to religious liberty as an expression of our commitment to Jesus Christ. □

Victor Tupitza

● **SEVENTEEN NASHVILLE BAPTIST** churches are among congregations that have filed a counterclaim to a lawsuit from the city's metropolitan government.

Last December, the city government sought to tax 141 tax-exempt properties -- including parsonages owned by the Nashville Baptist churches -- which the city claimed were not used for religious or charitable purposes.

The churches' counterclaim asked that the tax assessor "be enjoined from making assessments of the defendants' parsonages so long as only one exemption per church congregation has been claimed; that all assessments of the defendant church parsonages together with any property taxes, penalties, and/or interest due thereon for the years 1986, 1987, and 1988 be declared null and void; and that any property taxes, penalties, and/or interest paid by any of the defendant churches for their respective parsonages be refunded." (BP)

● **THE BOARD OF Aldermen** of New Haven, Connecticut, has launched an investigation of the awarding of city funds to churches.

The investigation was prompted by the discovery by two aldermen that almost \$25,000 had been given to help renovate First Calvary Baptist Church.

In addition, the local newspaper reported the city had agreed last year to pay \$25,000 for renovations to a building owned by St. Bernadette's Catholic Church, whose members include the city's mayor and his top aide. (RNS)

● **CHURCHES AND OTHER** religious groups in Oregon must begin paying state unemployment compensation taxes for lay employees.

The Oregon Supreme Court recently ruled lay employees are eligible for unemployment compensation benefits. The ruling does not affect ministers, who are exempted by law. (RNS)

● **IN RESPONSE TO** a lawsuit filed in federal district court, officials of a public school in Omaha, Nebraska, have agreed to allow a fifth grader to read his Bible in school.

The suit was filed last December on behalf of the student who was told by his teacher and principal that he was forbidden to read his Bible during a free reading period. (RNS)

● **OFFICIALS OF RELIGIOUS**, human rights, and law enforcement organizations in ten states have joined efforts against an apparent increase in the harassment and violence spawned by hate and supremacist groups.

Authorities say the groups not only promulgate racial supremacism and a separate nation within U.S. boundaries for white Aryans, but also intimidate, vandalize, maim, and murder.

The joint counteracting effort is directed against the growing movement of young "skin-heads," as well as the continuing presence of more traditional hate groups. (RNS)

● **ADVOCATES OF HOME** schooling in North Dakota have learned the state's governor is to sign a bill that would permit home education.

The bill would require parents with only a high school diploma to be monitored by certified teachers. Those with college degrees who pass a state-administered test would be free of the monitoring requirement. Legislators said they would schedule hearings at a later date to develop rules governing the state's role in overseeing home education.

North Dakota is the only state that has held out against allowing children to be educated by their parents. (RNS)

● **PRISON SECURITY RULES** outweigh religious freedom when it comes to wearing beards, a federal district judge has ruled in Phoenix, Arizona.

The judge said two state prison inmates must shave off their beards despite a claim that their Orthodox Jewish faith requires the beards.

The judge said "quick identification of inmates is necessary to identify participants in prison disturbances, to prevent escapes, and to apprehend those inmates who do escape."

He said the inmates' "religious practice must be balanced with legitimate penological concerns." (RNS)

1600 1700 1800 1900 2000



John Calvin



John Leeland



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**RELIGIOUS LIBERTY DAY • 1989**

**John H. Armstrong**

the dawn of the Protestant Reformation it was still a truth largely neglected by both the church and the state. The idea of a "free church in a free state" was virtually unthinkable to those reared in a sacral society that for centuries had blurred the distinction between the two. But beneath the surface of a society in which the church-state marriage had existed for centuries new winds were blowing through the hearts of some of God's people.

It was in such a time that King James I, the son of bloody Mary, forced many of these people, called Separatists, to seek asylum in Holland. From there, after interaction with Dutch anabaptists on the continent, one congregation sailed for America in 1620 and settled Plymouth Colony. Another congregation, that had formed in the year 1607 under John Smyth's oversight, became convinced of believer's baptism. This congregation, according to most historians, became the first Baptist church as we use the term today. And from this small group some twelve folk were led to return to England in 1611 under the leadership of their pastor, Thomas Helwys. They settled in a place called Spitalfield, just outside of London. From this humble beginning the Baptist movement in England was launched. Helwys, who died in prison because of a book he wrote on religious liberty and addressed to King James I, thus brought the distinctively Baptist concern for religious liberty to his native land.

It seems that almost from the beginning this movement of baptized believers dreamed of a society of laws in which all people were free from state interference in matters of conscience. They were firmly rooted in the concept of what became known as the principle of "soul liberty." By this concept they meant the freedom of every person or group from human dictation, social coercion, or governmental control in all matters relating to faith and religious expression. This idea found expression in the separation of the institutions of church and state in the United States over 175 years later. This year, 1989, marks the 200th anniversary of James Madison's proposal of the First Amendment's guarantees to the new constitution of the United States. This "Bill of Rights," so-called, was perhaps the greatest Baptist contribution to the religious liberty now taken for granted by almost every American. To that story we turn our thoughts.

**"I** will make them conform themselves, or I will harrie them out of the land...." The speaker? King James I of England. The time? Early in the seventeenth century. The people at whom he directed his intolerance? Religious nonconformists who believed in a growing idea of religious liberty which saw the church as a separate institution from the English state, and thus not under the control of the monarchy. This 'heretical' notion of religious liberty was dangerous stuff! It must be stopped, and with due force if necessary.

But the teaching and influence of Jesus had touched the consciences of a few hearty souls. It would eventually alter even the thoughts of multitudes of non-Christians as well. Our Lord, in quoting the prophet Isaiah, applied the

prophetic words to himself and thus read,

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (Luke 4:18, 19, NIV)

In the same account we hear Jesus' application of those words to himself when in verse 21 he says, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." Very openly and consciously Jesus takes upon himself, as the Messiah, the functions described by Isaiah. He has come, he announces, "to proclaim freedom for the prisoners ... to release the oppressed."

The idea of liberty developed ever so slowly in the ancient world and even at

## The Basis and Beginnings of Religious Liberty

It has always been the conviction of Baptists that religious liberty and the resultant idea of church-state separation grows out of the New Testament teaching on "soul liberty." The basis for this belief is grounded in passages, for example, as Luke 4:16-30; Galatians 3:28, 5:1; Romans 13:1-7; and Acts 5:29. Basic concepts of "soul liberty" can be found in both the First London Confession (1644) and the Second Confession (1689). The General Baptist Confession (1660) speaks to this matter as well. And the Philadelphia Confession (1742) and the very important New Hampshire Confession (1833) also address the teaching plainly.

Baptists argued from scriptures, from logic, and from historical observations, that nothing could be more plain than this — each person, who must stand before God in judgment, must be allowed to worship and seek God "free of external constraint and coercion." This applied to all persons, including unbelievers of all types, as Helwys so clearly wrote in his treatise to King James I. Though many had sought to articulate similar ideas in the past, none had done so quite as clearly as the Baptists. Of them the great American historian Bancroft wrote, "Freedom of conscience, unlimited freedom of mind, was from the first, the trophy of the Baptists."

## The Rise of Religious Liberty

In the providence of God it became the work of a young Puritan minister, Roger Williams, who immigrated to New England in 1631, to sow the seed of soul liberty and religious freedom on the continent. Here the great experiment was to take place and the first free state, which provided freedom for religious view of all kinds, was to take root. Another historian has written of Williams, "He began the first civil government on earth which gave equal liberty of conscience...." Roger Williams, expelled from Massachusetts for his belief that "the doctrine of persecution for cause of conscience is most evidently and lamentably contrary to the doctrine of Jesus Christ," settled in what became Rhode Island. Here was established the town he called Providence, in the belief that God had so led him. And there it was that the first Baptist Church in America was planted.

Williams may well be called the

## It has always been the conviction of Baptists that religious liberty and the resultant idea of church-state separation grows out of New Testament teaching on 'soul liberty.'

"Apostle of Religious Liberty," but he was certainly not alone in helping guide the developing colonies toward becoming a "free state" established on principles which included "religious liberty" and not merely "passive tolerance."

Obadiah Holmes was whipped in 1651 for the crime of refusing the scripturalness of infant baptism. And Governor Winthrop's journal includes an entry in which he refers to the barbarous flogging of a Mr. Painter for refusing to have his child baptized. Winthrop wrote, "He was very poor; so as no other but corporal punishment could be fastened upon him, he was ordered to be whipped." The famous Puritan minister John Cotton helped to try and convict John Clarke, the pastor of the second Baptist church, formed in Newport, Rhode Island (1644). For what crime? Denying infant baptism, which Cotton called a capital offense. And in 1654 Henry Dunster, the president of Harvard University, was indicted, tried, and fined for the expression of Baptist opinions. He was forced out of office. So much for academic freedom!

It was left to another generation of Baptists, in cooperation with powerful thinkers and writers such as Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, to give birth to a land of genuine "religious liberty." To that establishment of a "free church in a free state" we now turn.

**Religious Liberty Established in America** Two Baptists play a major role in the ultimate establishment of the Christian principle of complete religious freedom.

Isaac Backus (1724-1806), a Baptist minister from Massachusetts, labored tirelessly to influence the cause of the

independence of the colonies from England. Later, he sought to influence his own state to ratify a bill of rights for their constitution but did not live long enough to see his state finally disestablish the church in 1833. He did see his influence greatly affect the Baptists in understanding and setting forth the increasingly accepted idea of the separation of church and state. His essays on these subjects are still models of clear Baptist thought and New Testament sagacity.

It was another New England Baptist, John Leland (1745-1841), who helped most significantly to establish religious liberty in America. Leland moved south to pastor in Virginia where he became a key figure in the thought and action of James Madison, the architect of the Bill of Rights proposed in 1789 to the first Congress. It was through his efforts that Madison became convinced that a clearer guarantee of religious freedom was needed in the new constitution. It is significant that the First Amendment, adopted in 1791, reads in part, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...." This idea was the result of almost two centuries of Baptist effort to influence the state to recognize the distinctly New Testament idea of religious freedom.

But where are we today? We hear much about "original intent" when we speak of interpreting the Constitution, yet some of those who speak most often of intent have failed to understand or study carefully the "original intent" of the framers of the Bill of Rights and the Constitution on the whole matter of religious liberty and the separation of church and state. The patriot Wendell Phillips said that "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." I sense personally that this was never more true for Baptist than it is in 1989. Dr. Glenn Hinson has written, "The most serious danger for soul liberty is to assume that there is no danger." I soberly concur. Will we, whose heritage is replete with the sufferings necessary to establish religious liberty, give it up on the altar of indifference, misunderstanding, or even gross distortion? God forbid! □

Dr. John H. Armstrong is pastor of Trinity Baptist Church, Wheaton, Illinois. He is an ordained minister of the Baptist General Conference.

## VIEWS OF THE WALL



Oliver S. Thomas  
General Counsel

"Self brag is half scandal," my East Tennessee father used to say. Begging his pardon, the Baptist Joint Committee has had such an impressive list of accomplishments over the past year I am willing to risk a little scandal in order to get the word out.

Arguably, the most significant and controversial church-state issue in the United States today is religion in the public schools. Recent textbook studies confirmed that religion was receiving short shrift, and Americans from all walks of life have criticized what they perceived to be a lack of strong values education in the schools. Widespread confusion over Supreme Court decisions and litigious advocates on both sides of the issue had teachers, school administrators, and textbook publishers gun shy. On one side were those who would chase every vestige of religion out of the public schools; on the other were a handful of zealots who wished to convert the schools into an evangelistic arm of their particular church.

In the midst of this hostile environment, the Baptist Joint Committee, along with our colleagues at the Americans United Research Foundation, was able to forge a consensus among groups as diverse as the National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, the National School Boards Association, the National Council of Churches, the National Association of Evangelicals, and the Christian Legal Society. The result of our efforts was a concise, understandable set of guidelines for teaching about religion in the public school curriculum that has been endorsed by Protestants, Catholics, and Jews alike.

Because of its balanced approach to teaching about religion in a way that is both constitutionally permissible and educationally sound, the brochure has been a stunning success. Now in its third printing, it has been front page news in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and scores of other newspapers across the country. Already, the coalition that published the document is talking about other possible projects that would add further clarity to this potentially volatile issue. The observance of religious holidays and the teaching of origins are two issues that may merit further attention.

On a similar note, the Baptist Joint Committee is serving on the five-member development committee for the

nation's first major curriculum project to teach about religious liberty in the public schools. Sponsored by the Williamsburg Charter Foundation, the curriculum will be piloted in five key states beginning in September. A spin-off of the charter itself (which the BJC both signed and helped draft), the project is titled "Living with Our Deepest Differences: Religious Liberty in a Pluralistic Society."

On an unrelated but equally important issue, the BJC has played a critical role in fashioning a new relationship between churches and the Internal Revenue Service. A committee of attorneys representing many of the nation's major religious denominations now meets regularly with the commissioner of exempt organizations and his staff to discuss issues of mutual concern and to work toward constructive solutions. The BJC is chairing that committee. This ongoing dialogue already is bearing fruit that previously could have been obtained only through expensive litigation. Some are calling this new phase of relations with the IRS the most significant church-state breakthrough of the '80s.

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**It is our deep conviction that religion should continue to play a prominent role by informing and shaping public policy.**

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On the conference circuit, the BJC has been more active than ever, promoting and explaining Baptist views on important church-state issues. Harvard, Notre Dame, and our own Baylor University are a few of the prestigious institutions where the Baptist Joint Committee staff has been in the spotlight.

Currently, we are serving on the steering committee chaired by Judge Arlin Adams of the U.S. Court of Appeals, Third Circuit, to plan one of the most promising church-state conferences in years. Cosponsored by the American Bar Association, Baptist Joint Committee, U.S. Catholic Conference, National Council of Churches, National Association of Evangelicals, and Christian Legal Society, the conference will focus the nation's attention on the critical issues

surrounding religion in the public arena. It is our deep conviction that religion should continue to play a prominent role in informing and shaping public policy, and the 1990 conference should help to accomplish this objective.

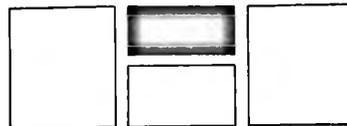
Few realize the important role of the BJC in assisting our fellow Baptist agencies. Providing counsel to Baptist seminaries on antidiscrimination laws, serving as a government liaison for the pension boards, and interpreting Supreme Court decisions for the mission boards are examples of the services rendered by the BJC during 1988.

On the state and local levels the BJC is also at work helping Baptists resolve difficult church-state problems. In Mississippi, we are actively working with the state convention and legislature to ensure that churches are not subject to sales and use tax. In Louisiana, we are helping protect Baptists from intrusive IRS investigations. In Texas, we represented Baylor University before the Internal Revenue Service. In California, Colorado, and other states, our office of general counsel is providing similar assistance and legal expertise.

Finally, our articles on practical church-state problems have been enthusiastically received and published nationwide. We were the first to warn Baptists of the dangers of failing to screen child care workers; we alerted churches to the need to adopt and follow well-written bylaws in order to avoid possible lawsuits that increasingly are arising from church business meetings; and during the 1988 presidential campaign we interpreted to the churches the Internal Revenue Code's rather complex restrictions on political activity. We continue our vigilance not only by monitoring Congress and the courts but also by screening literally every set of regulations that comes out of the federal agencies.

In spite of these accomplishments, the BJC is facing a frontal assault from key leaders in the Southern Baptist Convention. They have lobbied a proposal through the convention's Executive Committee that would establish a separate, exclusively Southern Baptist voice for religious liberty in the nation's capital. Fortunately, the convention as a whole must approve the measure at its annual meeting in Las Vegas and again in New Orleans in 1990. If the Executive Committee is successful in its effort to defund the BJC, one wonders who the real losers will be. □

# News in Brief



## Supreme Court agenda reveals variety among church-state cases decided

WASHINGTON

The Supreme Court has dealt recently with several cases involving church-state issues.

### Clergy Malpractice Suit

The high court refused to review a dispute that has been described as the nation's first clergy malpractice suit.

That decision leaves standing a unanimous ruling by the California Supreme Court that individuals who are not licensed as counselors or therapists cannot be held legally liable for failing to provide proper advice or to refer their counselees to licensed therapists.

Walter and Maria Nally sued Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, California, because their son, Kenneth, committed suicide in 1979 after receiving counseling from members of the church's staff. The Nallys charged the staff members with malpractice for failing to urge their son to seek psychiatric help or to inform them he was contemplating a second suicide attempt.

### Refusal of Sunday Employment

The Supreme Court unanimously reaffirmed an individual's right to refuse Sunday employment based on personal religious beliefs.

The court overturned an Illinois court decision that denied unemployment benefits to William A. Frazee, who refused to work on Sunday because of his "personal faith in the Lord." The state panel rejected Frazee's free exercise claim because he was not a member of an established religious sect with a tenet or belief against Sunday work.

Writing for the court, Justice Byron R. White said, "Undoubtedly, membership in an organized religious denomination, especially one with a specific tenet forbidding members to work on Sunday, would simplify the problem of identifying sincerely held religious beliefs, but we reject the notion that to claim the protection of the free exercise clause, one must be responding to the commands of a particular religious organization."

None of the Supreme Court's previous decisions in cases involving individuals who refused to perform certain work because of religious convictions relied on

whether those individuals' refusals were based on a specific church tenet, White wrote.

"Our judgments in those cases rested on the fact that each of the claimants had a sincere belief that religion required him or her to refrain from the work in question," he continued. "Never did we suggest that unless a claimant belongs to a sect that forbids what his job requires, his belief, however sincere, must be deemed a purely personal preference rather than a religious belief."

### Religious Use of Peyote

For the second time, the high court will hear a case involving the religious use of the drug peyote.

The court ruled almost a year ago that it could not decide whether the U.S. Constitution protects the religious use of peyote by Native Americans in Oregon until that state's high court determined if the practice violates Oregon law.

Last October, the Oregon Supreme Court held that while state law makes no exception for sacramental use of the drug, "outright prohibition of good faith religious use of peyote by adult members of the Native American Church would violate the First Amendment directly and as interpreted by Congress."

The dispute arose when two drug counselors were fired for ingesting small amounts of peyote during rites of the Native American Church.

After being dismissed from their jobs, Alfred L. Smith and Galen W. Black applied for state unemployment compensation benefits. The Employment Division of the Oregon Department of Human Resources denied their requests, ruling the men were ineligible because they were fired for work-related "misconduct."

A state appeals court and the Oregon Supreme Court held that denying unemployment benefits violated the men's First Amendment right of free exercise of religion.

After considering the case, the Supreme Court sent it back to the Oregon high court for a determination of whether state law protects the religious use of peyote. At the same time, a majority of the justices suggested the First Amendment's free exercise guaran-

tee does not apply generally in cases where criminal laws are violated.

### Employment of Chaplains

The Supreme Court refused to review a dispute over whether public hospitals may employ chaplains.

The justices rejected the appeal of three Iowa residents who claimed the employment of chaplains by publicly supported hospitals violates the First Amendment's religion clauses.

The high court's action leaves standing a decision by the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals that upholds the constitutional right of public hospitals to employ chaplains.

The appeals court rejected a challenge that the hiring of a chaplain by Broadlawns Medical Center — a county public hospital in Polk County, Iowa — constituted an establishment of religion. Rather, the court found the hospital's action had the secular purpose of enhancing "its wholistic treatment approach to patient care."

In addition, the Eighth Circuit held the hiring of a chaplain was a permissible accommodation of hospital patients' free exercise of religion rights.

### Challenge to Zoning Ordinance

A church's challenge to a county zoning ordinance was rejected by the high court.

The justices turned down an appeal from Messiah Baptist Church in Jefferson County, Colorado.

In 1974, the congregation purchased an eighty-acre parcel for the purpose of building new church facilities. But the property was in a zoning district that did not allow the construction of church buildings.

The county's board of commissioners rejected several requests by the church for an exemption from the zoning ordinance, which allowed only residential and agricultural use.

The church sued the county in 1980, charging the county had violated its members' right to the free exercise of religion.

The Colorado District Court ruled the zoning was based upon valid, neutral criteria and applied fairly to church property.

The Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed, holding the ordinance had not infringed upon a protected liberty and was substantially related to the health, safety, and general welfare of the county's citizens. □

# Diplomatic ties with Church an affront to Constitution's 'No Establishment' clause

Closeted word, appearing in a national weekly religious newspaper and thereby commanding little attention, broke the silence surrounding President George Bush's intention of submitting for congressional approval the name of a new ambassador to the Roman Catholic Church. Here is a repeat of the 1983 history-making episode, when President Ronald Reagan succeeded where his predecessors Roosevelt and Truman had failed.

Unlike diplomatic relations in the nineteenth century, when the United States related to the pope as political ruler of the then extensive Papal States, the current relationship has been established between this government and the pope as head of a major world religion. The was confirmed by the Apostolic Pronuncio to the United States, Archbishop Pio Laghi, who declared: "You recall the confusion and controversy that arose in the media at the time it was announced that the United States and the Holy See intended to re-establish diplomatic ties. Some *mistakenly* tried to justify the American government's action by implying that it was entering into a diplomatic relationship not with the Roman Catholic Church as such, the Holy See, but rather with the sovereign Vatican City-State."

A "See" is the seat of a bishop and of course "Holy" is an inherently religious term. The president's diplomatic interest was not in this tiny population of about one thousand persons, but presumably in the church whose headquarters can be found in Vatican City.

Looking back upon this controversial appointment, one might do well to ask these questions: Why does the president want an ambassador to the Holy See? Should the president necessarily have such diplomatic relations? How can we oppose the president's intention to name an ambassador? To examine the administration's rationale for maintaining diplomatic relations, one must wade through all of the usual political rhetoric and arguments. Although several reasons were given by President Reagan at the time he appointed Wilson to that position, no real advantage to the United States has been evident. Any possible

benefits accrued by way of a personal envoy of the president were in no way increased via the diplomatic pouch. What then are some reasons for the appointment?

It must be admitted that diplomatic appointments are not made in a vacuum. Political considerations come into play in the appointment process. Reagan's first appointment in 1983 was announced at the time of the important upcoming presidential elections. Some observers saw this to be a move calculated to woo to the Republican Party, traditionally Democratic-voting Catholics. Opponents of this theory argued that more votes would have been lost than gained by this political ploy. Protestants should have been up in arms about this move, but such was not the case. Despite criticism, the theory may hold up, especially when the popularity of Pope John Paul II is considered. The pope held the attention of the media worldwide by his numerous travels, his stand on behalf of world peace, and his anticommunistic posture. Moreover, his appearance on the cover of *Time* and other news magazines brought him wide celebrity. He was liked by Catholics and Protestants alike. For the Reagan administration to have "rewarded" these popular stands and a popular pope was a clever political move in the year preceding a major election.

A second reason given for the appointment was that it facilitated the purpose of intelligence gathering. The Vatican has been called a "global listening post." Administration spokespersons claimed that the Vatican served as a collection point of valuable information. One danger becomes obvious immediately. If the Vatican functions as a "listening post," then local priests and religious workers may legitimately be considered suspect, "spies" who must report to the Vatican hierarchy. The illegitimate use of church and clergy has had repercussions in the United States, where now the Central Intelligence Agency is barred from using religious workers (and missionaries) in other countries to gather information. Apparently, neither Reagan nor now Bush have qualms about the Vatican utilizing means and sources denied the U.S. government.

A third suggestion is philosophical. Administrations past and present evidence varied philosophical understand-

ing of the principle of church-state separation. Operating under a wooden interpretation of the establishment clause of the First Amendment, the Reagan administration felt free to do what it pleased in the area of religious liberty as long as it believed it was not thereby establishing a national church. Consistent with this philosophy are its reasoning regarding diplomatic relationship with the Holy See, proposals for tuition tax credits, and the push for state-sponsored prayer in public schools. This view of the establishment clause is far from that of Madison and particularly Jefferson, whose "wall" of separation lends itself to preserving the integrity of the institutions of church and state.

Building upon a questionable platform, the Reagan administration faced the challenge of succeeding where others had failed. Truman, who was the last president to attempt naming an ambassador to the Holy See, encountered vigorous opposition from Baptists and numerous other individuals and religious bodies. This outcry of public opinion put to rest an idea whose time clearly had not come.

How could Reagan, therefore, hope to win where Truman lost? The strategy at the time of Reagan's first ambassadorial appointment in 1983 took advantage of a most favorable social environment. The pope was and remains a popular figure worldwide. Reagan, himself, was proving to be one of the most highly trusted and best-liked presidents of this century. In this friendly climate and motivated by the factors listed above, the president in addition cleverly sheltered the legislative process from public scrutiny until his appointment became a *fait accompli*. The truth of this is a matter of public record. And now Bush appears to have adopted similar tactics.

On June 30, 1983, the chairman of the House Finance Committee, Clement Zablocki, introduced H.J. Res. 316, which called for repeal of the 160-year-old ban on the funding of formal relations with the Vatican. The House neither held hearings nor floor debates on this vital issue. On September 22, Sen. Richard Lugar attached the Zablocki resolution to a State Department authorization bill then being debated on the floor. Without hearings in the Senate, the bill was passed by a voice vote — one can

The Rev. Scott is pastor of Wisconsin Avenue Baptist Church, Washington, D.C., and a Ph.D. candidate in American church history at Baylor University.

call it an anonymous vote, since no senator was put on the record. Upon clearing the conference committee and then the full Congress, the bill was signed by an eager president who within months confirmed a long-standing rumor that William Wilson would become his choice for the office. Wilson was confirmed by the Republican-dominated Senate.

Wilson's resignation some years later provided Reagan with a second opportunity to heed critics by withholding a new nomination or to name a successor. Since little had changed, a popular president acted on political, intelligence-gathering, and philosophical grounds to rush through a second appointment with minimal opportunity for public comment. Frank Shakespeare was confirmed to the office following a brief hearing during which only two members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee were present and then approval by the full Senate. The process took less than three weeks.

The final question to be addressed comes at the very moment when word has come that President Bush will submit his nominee for diplomatic posting to the Holy See. "Can we pick up the pieces?" Looking back at previous attempts to block official relations with the Roman Catholic Church, I am reminded of that often quoted adage that the price of liberty is constant vigilance. Religious liberties will not be removed in one stroke of a pen, not even with a signature that approves an appointment we believe to be unconstitutional. Liberties erode, gradually, perhaps unnoticeably, and thus the need to be ever alert.

We must be reminded as pastors and congregations, citizens all, that the actions of our elected representatives in Washington become *our* actions. Had there been more concerned Baptists doggedly persuing every hint and rumor that the United States under President Reagan was intent upon re-establishing diplomatic relations with the Holy See, that desire might have been thwarted. Instead, mass silence, partially the result of a manipulated public, was acted upon as though it meant broad approval. Baptists were not alone in their concern over the church-state entanglement; Roman Catholics were among those who opposed the move.

The almost casual testimony of then-Deputy Secretary of State Kenn W. Dam, before a House of Representatives appropriations panel as it considered a request for funding a full diplomatic mission to the Vatican, was particularly alarming. Dam observed that sending an ambassador to the Vatican would allow the United States "to influence the political positions" of the Holy See.

Continued on page 14

## President introduces Candidate for Holy See Embassy

The president, taking to the diplomatic trail, is now planning an ambassadorial appointment to the Holy See/Vatican, that six-square miles of territory in Rome ruled over by the head of the Roman Catholic Church. Baptists have long been in the forefront among those who dispute the president's need of such diplomatic relationships. It is viewed as a violation of the spirit of the U.S. Constitution, if not its letter, and as a practice of reaching into the purses of American taxpayers to give special place and power to religion and its representatives. Such an example sends a message to the world that the United States, known as a bastion of church and state separation, does in some sense favor one religion over all others.

The person whose name is being floated as the new ambassador is a Knight of the "Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and Malta." Sovereign in this case means that the order has the status of sovereignty among the nations. It currently maintains its own diplomatic ties with forty-six countries, up from twelve in 1962, with international headquarters near the Vatican in Rome. The grand master of the order, whose selection must meet with the approval of the pope, has the Roman Catholic Church rank of cardinal.

Internationally, this select order of Roman Catholics numbers about ten thousand. The American Association of the "Knights of Malta" (as the order is commonly called) is second only to Italy in total membership. The Knights of

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*Thomas P. Melady, U.S. ambassador to Uganda and Burundi, 1972-1973, is President George Bush's leading candidate to become the new U.S. ambassador to the Holy See, according to a news item in the National Catholic Reporter.*

*The publication named the White House as the source for the information. Press representatives at the White House acknowledged the accuracy of the early report, but told REPORT that word of the nomination has not "come down to us as yet, nor has it gone to the Senate for its action."*

*President Bush introduced Melady at a reception in the White House as the next U.S. ambassador to the Vatican. Melady was knighted by Pope Paul VI in 1968 and by Pope John Paul II in 1983. He is a member of the Knights of Malta, a centuries-old international fraternal and social Catholic organization with its own diplomatic representation as an independent state.*

Malta was formed during the First Crusade, in 1089, when Roman Catholic Europe was fighting a holy war against Muslims and attempting to retake Jerusalem.

Having failed in that endeavor, the order moved its headquarters to the island of Rhodes, which it then ruled for several centuries. Upon losing that island also, it moved to Malta, an island it owned and ruled until it was lost to Napoleon. At one point afterwards, the order tried to negotiate with the newly formed United States of America to buy land somewhere in the territories that it then would form into a separate and sovereign entity — a kind of nation within a nation. After James Madison informed the order that was not possible, it eventually established its international headquarters in Rome.

The present grand master of the order, Andrew W. N. Bertie, was elected in 1988. He is avowedly seeking men who would become "professed Knights of Justice," the elite of the elite. These men would remain in the world, but would take the traditional vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

Obedience to whom? Traditionally and historically, to their superior in the order, but ultimately to the pope. In the Roman Catholic Church and its orders, tradition and history usually weigh heavier than democratic ideals, as many Catholics in otherwise democratic nations are finding out under the present pope.

Any proposed representative of the United States to the Holy See should represent the interests of the United States as a whole. If, as in the present case, that person is a member of an order whose religious and political loyalties are to a church, the possibility of conflict of interest is apparent. Especially is this true in this case where one of the highest ideals of the religious order is obedience to the head of the Roman Catholic Church.

The United States does not need ambassadorial relations with any church. The person whose name has surfaced as the nominee for the appointment may be fully qualified for diplomatic posting. But in this instance, the relationship itself is constitutionally suspect and the person suggested to occupy the office too encumbered by his religious commitments. □

Robert Adams

**F**or over half a century now the Baptist Joint Committee has fearlessly preached liberty! Standing faithfully in the center of the historic Baptist witness to religious freedom and soul freedom and biblical freedom and church freedom, the BJCPA has refused to budge on fundamental Baptist convictions. Thank God!

Often misunderstood and sometimes even maligned,



the Committee, under courageous leadership, has stood toe-to-toe with those who would dilute, distort and destroy our religious liberties.

What a legacy to every present-day Baptist. And to every American. I am debtor and so are you. Debtors to this Committee for guarding the golden Baptist vision — a vision of freedom of conscience, separation of church and state, and religious liberty. I intend in as many ways as I can to pay my debt. Join me, won't you?

**Walter B. Shurden**  
Callaway Professor of Christianity  
Mercer University, Macon,  
Georgia



**I**t is important that the Southern Baptist Convention and all the other major Baptist bodies in this country present a united front for black and white Baptists. One of the most positive contributions of the Baptist Joint Committee is its unifying effort among African-American and primarily Anglo groups of Baptists.

During a time of deep divisions, tragic polarizations, and damaging perceptions, we Baptists dare not turn aside from our shared commitment to soul freedom. As a member of the United States House of Representatives, I am grateful for the tie that binds. May we never be seen as weakening it.

**The Hon. William H. Gray, III**  
U.S. House of Representatives (D-Pa.)

# restless for religious liberty



**I** am grateful for the Baptist Joint Committee. It is an indispensable and highly effective Christian witness in Washington, faithful to the Gospel, expert in advancing the free exercise of religion, trustworthy interpreters of the separation of church and state.

**The Hon. Mark O. Hatfield**  
U.S. Senate (R-Ore.)

**F**or the past 200 years, the people of the United States have enjoyed the right to worship freely or not to engage in worship at all — without encumbrances imposed by government authority at any level. And for some fifty-odd years, the Baptist Joint Committee has well represented eight U.S. national Baptist groups in the nation's capital with the single-minded purpose of safeguarding that liberty for all Americans.

May this group of courageous Baptist men and women serving in our behalf continue to ensure that God's things and those of Caesar will not be intertwined to the point at which either dominates the other or manipulates the other for its own selfish purpose. Such was the vision of our ancestors and the intention of our denominations in their cooperative mission in Washington.

**Len Sehested**  
Lecturer, Teacher, Missionary



WE BAPTISTS GOTTA  
STICK TOGETHER —  
AFTER ALL, NOBODY  
ELSE WILL HAVE US!



**H**aving received prayer requests as always, my pastor then suggested we break out of our tunnel vision to include persons and causes beyond our congregation. His words "tunnel vision" did not conjure up an image of something dark and narrow, but rather started me thinking about an example of long-standing cooperation — one that I associate with the Baptist Joint Committee.

My service on the Baptist Joint Committee for more than a decade gave me opportunity



to rise above tunnel vision and to feel a oneness with Baptists from eight other conventions, as together we considered matters of religious liberty and church-state separation —

unquestioned principles we Baptists hold in common.

Our impact in the nation's capital is intensified because of our single but collective voice. There is no mistaking the long history of Baptist commitment to religious liberty — it's so obviously present in the "jointness" of the Baptist Joint Committee. We thank God for its witness.

**Alma Hunt**  
Woman's Missionary Union,  
SBC  
(Executive Director, Emeritus)



**A**dvocates extraordinary" describes the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, gallantly guiding and guarding our religious freedom. It is the channel of communication and cooperation through which Baptists give concrete and courageous witness to their cardinal commitment to soul liberty. We need the continuous support of all Baptists for the BJCPA best to protect our heritage.

**Marvin C. Griffin**  
Pastor, Ebenezer Baptist Church  
Austin, Texas  
Chairman, Baptist Joint Committee

**A**s a former member of Congress from Iowa, I know how important it is to be able to "work both sides of the aisle" if one is to succeed politically. The Baptist Joint Committee is an effective advocate for religious free-



dom and our precious principle of church-state separation, because the staff works with people from both parties and all perspectives without compromising the high principles that are a sacred trust given to them by the Baptists of this nation. We Baptists of all conventions need to continue to cooperate. Together we have real strength — a standing coalition for freedom.

**The Hon. Fred Schwengel**  
President, United States  
Capitol Historical Society,  
Founder, Republican  
Heritage Foundation

**T**he Baptist tradition in America promotes the free exercise of religion and prohibits governmental encroachments on it. Today, many — including some Baptists — want the government to do the churches' tasks while others care too little about religious freedom.

When we non-Baptists look to an agency which will work for promoting what is proper and prohibiting what is not, we single out first the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. It is well poised to represent Baptists and all the rest of us.



**Martin E. Marty**  
Professor, History of  
Modern Christianity  
University of Chicago

# INTERNATIONAL DATELINE



## Church Movement voices concern over transition

HONG KONG

Looking forward to 1997 when Hong Kong becomes part of the People's Republic of China, Evangelical Christians here are encouraging their "co-workers in Christ" not to abandon their work in that area.

The Hong Kong Church Renewal Movement urges Christians to sign the "Mission Hong Kong — 2000" statement, which calls for continued commitment to China after the Communist-dominated government takes control.

The statement says, "Because of Christ's respect and care for the people, the church in Hong Kong should bear special concern for the human rights problems in China and the future of the now-British colony.

W. G. Yu, general secretary of the movement, said it is hoped that a petition bearing some 24,000 signatures sent by human rights activists demanding release of political prisoners will lay the groundwork for an enduring Christian network.

The Mission Hong Kong — 2000 statement lists seven issues facing the churches: immigration, a leadership vacuum, "spiritual wounds," mission, evangelism, the information explosion, and the future of China. □

## Middle East leader scores tendency to ignore Lebanon

The Middle East Council of Churches issued an appeal to churches and ecumenical organizations around the world to urge warring factions in Lebanon to "undertake sacrifices that would initiate between them a constructive process of dialogue leading to a solution."

Gabriel Habib, general secretary of the council, recounting the results of the massive fighting, charged that the international community "has tended to ignore or neglect Lebanon on the ground that it is too difficult to understand or too dangerous to approach."

He asked also for donations of medical supplies, blankets, and mattresses for those whose homes have been destroyed and for assistance in establishing an emergency preparedness fund for food and other necessities.

Beirut newspapers reported a spiritual

summit meeting of Lebanon's six principal religious communities which resulted in their agreement on fundamental political guidelines for bringing peace. Implementation would rest with Lebanese politicians. □

## UN forces needed to forge Namibia-So. Africa peace

The Council of Churches of Namibia has issued a call for an increase in the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the country after bloody fighting marred the April 1 starting date for transition to an independent nation.

Meanwhile, church leaders also criticized the conduct of U.N. Transitional Assistance Group (Untag) representatives in Namibia for having allowed a "notorious" South African battalion to be deployed along Namibia's border with Angola.

The World Council of Churches in Geneva issued its own statement which suggested that a delay in deployment of Untag forces "has created a void which has been exploited by the South African occupation forces."

Under terms of U.N. Security Council Resolution 435, rebel South-West Africa People's Organization guerillas fighters for Namibian independence were to keep their forces north of the bordering Angola. South African troops stationed in Namibia were to be confined to their bases.

A U.S. State Department spokesman said Washington continued to oppose any increase in the size of the U.N. peacekeeping force. (RNS)

## Reform in Hungary to mean church-state separation

KESTON

Hungarian Justice Minister Kalman Kulcsar, speaking to Keston College at the beginning of public discussion about plans for the proposed 1990 new law on religious affairs, called for church-state relations to be conducted according to the "rule of law."

He admitted that during the period of "socialist legality" (i.e., the Kadar era) it was possible for the state to "forget" about its constitutional obligation to uphold religious freedom and the separation of church and state.

Kulcsar, who was appointed to the post last year to supervise the reform of Hungary's legal and political system, said the "door was open" but the churches must indicate that they want real separation.

The termination of state subsidies would be one consequence of separation. He told his audience that he and his colleagues believed that in addition there would be no need for continuation of the State Office for Church Affairs. □

## Baptists offer input into proposed USSR freedom law

MOSCOW

"What should the law be like?" The question raised of religious leaders in the Soviet Union over the proposed New Law on Religious Freedom revealed an openness to religion previously unheard of and unreported in the press of the USSR.

The two-page spread in *Moscow News* also showed growing the recognition being given to all church bodies and included the suggestion of Vasily Logvinenko, president of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists.

Logvinenko, in his "possible paragraph" to the new law, proposed, "Religious organizations shall be given the preferential right to use previously confiscated religious buildings and property in relation to other organizations."

Church leaders were in essential agreement that the new law must enforce the constitutional protections under church-state separation and not remain subject to the arbitrariness that has characterized its interpretation and enforcement over the past fifty years. [REPORT, April 1989, carries an analysis of the proposed legislation.]

One of the more noteworthy developments in the church-state field has been the apparent support for change by Konstantin Kharchev, the chairman of the Council for Religious Affairs.

In the article, Kharchev said he saw the new law as a "good omen of the changes that have taken place" and declared that believers should enjoy "full equality with atheists." He affirmed church leaders in their pursuit of the "status of juridical person for the church," which would give religion statutory recognition. □



## Polls follow perestroika, as USSR citizens become initiated in elections and the democratic process

First the Politburo, then politicians, then perestroika, and now opinion polls.

Earlier this year, on the eve of the first democratic election in the Soviet Union, the international English-language edition of *Moscow News* published a revealing poll of its readers.

More than 800 persons responded to what also may be one of that nation's first opinion polls. Their answers to ten glasnost queries reveal a sophisticated political savvy, despite more than seventy years of social conditioning to the contrary.

More than eighty percent of the respondents said they feel the speed of Secretary General Mikhail Gorbachov's reform movement is too slow.

Why? One-third say it's because of poor management and government monopoly; 27 percent blame the lack of personal responsibility for decisions.

Fifteen percent favor complete democratization, including observance of all personal rights and liberties, plus free, independent trade unions.

Despite unprecedented progress under perestroika, forty percent say the government's administrative system is unchanged; thirty-seven percent criticize continued centralized planning by rigid monopolistic ministries and departments.

Because citizens would, for the first time, have a voice in who represented them, *Moscow News* asked its readers for suggested agenda items.

The poll shows the Soviet citizen is hungry for food and for rights. Forty-one percent say the most urgent problem facing the government is the food supply and the status of Soviet agriculture; thirty-nine percent want the people's deputies to address human rights and full democratization.

While only eight percent favor progressive laws for the Soviet press, ninety-five percent want the Soviet media to give its own assessment and analysis of political speeches.

Attacking a tradition of Soviet secrecy, forty-one percent favor the government's releasing statistics on how many people live below the country's subsistence level.

The editors examined the roll of the deputies who would be elected.

With memories of the KGB no doubt fresh in mind, almost fifty percent say the deputies should be appointed to standing commissions on state security.

Two questions strongly favored by U.S. observers failed to draw much attention. For instance, only five percent approve of de-Stalinization.

Less than a third responded in detail to what could be the pivotal question: how those who answered understood the government's responsibility to the people.

About 68 percent of the replies came from Moscow, about ten percent from Leningrad, according to Vitaly Tret'yakov, the newspaper's political analyst. Most respondents were between thirty and sixty years of age and had a high level of education. Bill Clough

## Scots urged to develop tax-funded church schools

STIRLING

An Edinburgh University chaplain has urged the Church of Scotland to establish its own network of schools to overcome what he sees as the loss of Christian influence in nonsectarian schools.

Robert Anderson called on the Presbyterian denomination, the nation's largest, to use legislation recently enacted in Britain to gain block grants for the funding of church schools. He cited the Roman Catholic Church's educational system of schools as the model to follow.

Anderson said, "The dismissal of Christian influence to the periphery of school life has led to an almost irreversible decline in character formation and behavioral standards." He said he believes this is "responsible for the attendant social horrors of crime, divorce, alcohol abuse, and drug addiction." □

## NEWS-SCAN

Turning spears into pruning hooks?

From Bonn, West Germany, comes a report that the Soviet cruiser Mikhail Suslov will be converted into a floating eye clinic at a cost of some twenty-five million (about \$13 million, U.S.) marks. Now docked in the port at Bremerhaven, the cruiser-cum-clinic will perform the kinds of eye surgery pioneered by Svyatoslav Fyodorov. Expected to sail by June, the vessel will call at Mediterranean and Black Sea ports.... The Bulgarian Embassy in Athens, Greece, certified before International Amnesty "Group 27" that the Bulgarian Pentecostal conscientious objector Emil Kalmakov has been released from prison. He had been sentenced to a three-year term for refusing induction into the armed forces.... Nineteen Catholic priests in Transylvania registered their complaint over the Romanian government's antireligious policies, including imposed limits on seminary enrollment, refusal of permits for building churches in new urban developments, the shortage of Bibles and other religious literature, and discrimination against the faithful in academic, artistic, and public life. Perestroika has made little headway within the Ceausescu bureaucracy.... Controversy about Chinese Bishop Ding Guangxun, the well-known Protestant who is regarded by some in the West as sincere and independent and by others as an agent of the government, has been tempered somewhat by the Bishop's criticism of new laws restricting religious activities. A letter to the Religious Affairs Bureau in Peking, Bishop Ding and summarized by *China News and Church Report* clarified his position by questioning of policies of the Communist Party and his claim that it sometimes sends members into the church as "atheist church leaders." He assumes, however, that it is a Christian duty to support the party and to obey the law.... Religious books and articles can be sent from Canada to "friends and relatives" in the USSR, according to a new agreement and parcel program announced in *News from Ukraine*. The list of approved items includes "articles of religious worship and religious origins — icons, crosses, rosaries, Bibles, Koran, and the Talmud, among others." Other categories approved for shipment encompass clothing, electronic goods, household needs, and foodstuffs. □

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**Hometown, from page 16**

We started to sing some songs, and my father then revealed something to me that already I had suspected: rifles that he had collected had been secretly smuggled to the Haganah.

During his nearly five years of active military service, he had obtained some rifles as "war souvenirs." I never asked how or where he acquired them. For three years they remained unused and lay in a box in our attic. On my last visit to the attic, I noticed the rifles were gone.

On May 17, I went to my weekly Boy Scout meeting at the First Baptist Church, still highly excited and intensely worried about Israel. Like so many other Jews, those two emotions have never left me.

The Southern Baptist scoutmaster pulled me aside and congratulated me on the new Jewish state. "I really believe it's in God's plan to have a state of their own. I'm going to pray for Israel, and Jimmy, if Israel ever needs any help, tell your mother and father to call on me." I knew he was a hunter, and I felt like asking him if he had any extra guns to give to the Haganah, but I thought better of it.

Because childhood memories often are decisive in shaping a person's values and principles, I often think about my youthful encounters with Southern Baptists. This especially is true because a key part of my professional duties with the American Jewish Committee is to observe and work with the Southern Baptist leadership.

During my college and rabbinical school years, I defended Southern Baptists when they were stereotyped and caricatured by North American Jews who did not share my boyhood experiences. Jews often used epithets like "crackers" and "rednecks" to describe them, but these terms simply did not square with my own encounters with

**Southern Baptists.**

I always admired the historic Southern Baptist commitment to church and state separation and the Southern Baptist Convention's traditional emphasis on the individual's free pursuit of spiritual truth. I felt close to the Southern Baptists I met when I was an Air Force chaplain. They thought of themselves as a misunderstood minority that insisted on preserving certain traditional values even in the face of the majority's ridicule and intolerance. It all sounded so familiar.

That is why I look with some sadness upon North America's largest Protestant denomination of fourteen million members as it goes through its own brutal "civil war."

For well over 200 years Southern Baptists have stood with other like-minded religious groups, including the Jewish community, in upholding pluralism and in advocating progressive social justice concerns, such as a strong position on church-state separation and a vigorous advocacy of the Constitution's First Amendment guarantees. To lose such a major ally at this critical moment in North American history would be an incalculable loss. □

**Diplomatic ties, from page 9**

Sensing the inappropriateness not only of the diplomatic relationship, but also of the United States' intention as stated by Dam, the executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee, James M. Dunn, voiced strong opposition in a press statement that called it an "arrogant and blatantly violative posture." He declared that both the relationship and the stated intention of shaping the church's political positions were "contrary to everything we mean by the separation of church and state."

A new opportunity presents itself — an opportunity to preserve the integrity of the "no establishment" clause of the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. Today, new bridges of trust link Americans of all religious persuasions in a climate that frees those who sincerely regard ambassadorial relations with the Roman Catholic Church or with any other religious body, to challenge that practice as an infringement upon the Constitution. The pieces are in the hands of concerned Americans.

Despite the Supreme Court's refusal to hear the last case, when American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. was denied standing before the Court, opposition to this president's declared desire to maintain such diplomatic relations is a time to voice dissent. That is precisely what Roger Williams, John Leland, and Isaac Backus would have done and would encourage us to do by their own example. □

*Register Citizen Opinion 1989*

The election of a new president results in major administration changes, in addition to the revised Senate and House membership and committee assignments. Register Citizen Opinion contains that information, with addresses, telephone numbers, and much more. Its suggestions will enable you to communicate directly and effectively with government. (Expected off the press for April mailing. Order today!)

Singles copies, \$1.00 each; 10-99 copies, \$.75 each; 100 or more, \$.50 each. All prices include postage. Send orders to: Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002.

... We at the Baptist Joint Committee are genuinely touched, humbled, encouraged, and kept at the task by your sincere interest, your prayers, your tangible evidences of support.

## REFLECTIONS

James M. Dunn  
Executive Director



President Bush, speaking to the Gridiron Banquet, said "They say I'm indecisive. I don't know about that." It should not come as a surprise to regular Report readers to learn that "they" say that I'm undiplomatic. I don't know what turkey would say that sort of thing.

Oh, I do, of course, and there would be some slim basis for the assessment, but as a rule we at the BJC are too busy to give much time to evaluating our diplomacy or lack thereof. I've not often given this column over to navel gazing or personal pulse taking. Just now, however, may be the time to meet head on the question I/we hear a few dozen times each day, "How are you?" Or, more precisely, "How are *you*?"

First, thanks for asking. We "hired hands" at the Baptist Joint Committee are genuinely touched, humbled, encouraged, and kept at the task by your sincere interest, your prayers, your tangible evidences of support.

Then, for those who might be puzzled by this report, here's a word of explanation. At the intersection of church-state relations today, one finds a good many people who by the kindest evaluation must be seen as convenient adjusters to new tensions between church and state. Compromise is their advice. Timid affirmations begin, "I believe in the separation of church and state, but..." The adapters come in three broad categories, not in air-tight compartments and not mutually exclusive. Most accommodationists on church-state separation are revisionists, nonpreferentialists, and/or reconstructionists. For want of more space and more careful analysis, which will be on this page in months ahead, a thumbnail identification of each will have to make do.

Revisionists aren't convinced that the founders believed in church-state separation. They prefer their own versions of the Old World model of church-state relations, and so, they rewrite history.

Nonpreferentialists are eager to get public money for private purposes. They support tuition tax credits, vouchers, and the "teen chastity act" with government aid for church-related sex education. They covet some sort of state sanctions for religion and are willing, at least in theory, to allow it for all religions.

Reconstructionists want to go back to the "good ole days" of Christian America that never were and never will be. Some would even make the Bible the law of the land. Theocracy is actually the ideal and, as I say, a good many advocates sound as if they would like to be Theo.

As you can imagine, the accommodators are not particularly happy with the Baptist Joint Committee. The BJC holds rather to the perspective of the more responsible Baptist historians: Backus, Baker, Barnes, Brackney, Estep, Gaustad, Handy, Hinson, Hudson, Latourette, Leonard, Linder, Maring, May, McBeth, Moehlman, Olson, Patterson, Pierard, St. Amant, Gardner Taylor, Torbet, Wamble, James Washington, Woyke, etc.

Hence, and thirdly, since a minority on one end of one political party dominates one of our conventions, it has become politicized. Secular politics sway if not dominate the agenda of that convention's relationship with the BJC.

Item: The endorsement of Robert Bork for the Supreme Court. The BJC has *never* endorsed a candidate or nominee.

Item: The passionate opposition to civil rights legislation. The BJC has never opposed any civil rights bill.

Item: The partisan identification of the convention's recent leaders in the 1988 elections.

And so, you ask, how are you? Are you coping?

We're OK. Although it's dangerous to be this open; it sounds a little schmalzy in cold print; it's woefully incomplete and no more than illustrative. We're OK, and here's why.

This staff of Oliver Thomas, Victor Tupitza, Kathy Palen, Rosemary Brevard, Susan Hill, and Gordon Northcutt, following our policy board, really believes in what we're doing. We favor cooperation of all brands of Baptists, not control or domination by one group. We speak to and act on principle not out of partisanship. We reject the majoritarianism that is insensitive to minorities. We actually want to remain true to the best of Baptist distinctives: soul freedom.

Then we find great joy in having made tangible documentable contributions to the missions ventures of all nine bodies. The international endeavor alone makes it worth it all. Overseas ministries reach out from all Baptist bodies, but 1988 statistics from two of those bodies illustrate their magnitude:

	Southern Baptist	American Baptist
Related Churches	19,199	10,118
National Christians	2,105,066	1,685,640

Who could fail to be excited about serving as a liaison in Washington for these and the other global involvements of Baptists.

Next, it's fun to see the warm humanity and family spirit of all breeds of Baptists, as I did last year when, with North American Baptists at Calgary, we watched John Binder try to ride a horse. What a sight!

Beyond that, one experiences heart-warming gratitude when leaders like Dr. E. E. Jones and C. J. Malloy, Jr., lead the National Baptist Convention of America and Progressive Baptists to increasing engagement with the larger Baptist family and remarkable maturity in church-state relations. It doesn't hurt that in the process both Conventions have almost doubled their financial support of the BJC, seeing the need to maintain a strong witness together.

Then, the BJC *amicus* brief in the *Frazer* case was a sign of our solidarity with our sabbatarian Seventh-Day Baptists and our dogged determination never to see the consciences of a minority violated, however small that minority may be. The courage and persistence of Seventh-Day Baptists will move anyone to stick with them.

Finally, if you'd been with me at the pastors' retreat for the Minnesota Baptist Conference (Baptist General Conference) you could not take your assignment lightly. What a tender fellowship! The vulnerability, the honesty, the sharing and caring for one another, the sympathizing tear, the determination to guard real religious liberty could not leave any conscious individual untouched.

The sparks of hope for the future are stirred and resolves not to waver are strengthened by the students whom we visit and who visit us. The most recent group was brought to Washington by Drs. Scott Key and Tim Luther from California Baptist College. What characters!

So, despite bizarre accusations, grotesque attempts to secularize this old office, tales told that we know to be untrue, and a strange self-sufficiency on the part of a few folks, the staff of the BJC is OK. Thanks for caring. We're OK. □

## A. James Rudin

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## MY HOMETOWN

Mention my hometown, Alexandria, Virginia, to most people and the usual comment is "Oh yes, it's part of Washington, D.C." And, indeed, it is a suburb of the capital, with its own Georgetown-like "Old Town" that includes a collection of charming Colonial and Federal period townhouses. Today Alexandria real estate is considered "hot" property, but it was not always so.

When I grew up in Alexandria during the 1940s and '50s it was a small Southern town dominated by a Southern Baptist ethos. Its 30,000 residents were incredibly self-conscious of their community's long history (it was founded in 1749), and they were especially proud of the town's two most famous former residents: George Washington and Robert E. Lee. While John Kennedy and Richard Nixon also lived in Alexandria for a brief time during the 1940s, they clearly were not of the F.F.V. (First Families of Virginia). Neither were the Rudins of Pittsburgh who migrated to Alexandria nearly fifty years ago.

My father, following his army duty at nearby Fort Belvoir, had a dental office on Alexandria's main street, not surprisingly called King Street. Since Alexandria had been both a Colonial town and a center of revolutionary activity. Its street names were a pleasant historical mixture: King, Queen, Duke, Prince, Princess, Royal, and Pitt streets crisscrossed with Patrick, Henry, Washington, and Lee streets.

Forty years ago Alexandria, like thousands of other Southern communities, was a highly segregated town. But it carried out its racial segregation with a certain patrician élan. After all, the "colored people" also had lived in the town for 200 years; they first had been the slaves of Washington and Lee, and after 1865 they became the servants of the grandees of Southern aristocracy.

The synagogue my family belonged to and supported with great fervor was founded in 1859. Temple Beth El was a small two-story redbrick building on North Washington Street, a half block from the well-known Episcopal Christ Church where Washington, Lee, and

other famous folks had worshiped. I clearly remember one Sunday morning in 1942 or 1943 when, for security reasons, our Hebrew school class was canceled because President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill were attending services at the church.

But Christ Church, even with its rich history, did not have a monopoly on the Christian community. In my day, the town's cultural, political, and social power was overwhelmingly Southern Baptist. Many of my classmates' parents belonged to the large First Baptist Church, which also was on Washington Street. Alexandria's Roman Catholic population was quite small.

My Boy Scout troop was housed at First Baptist; my boxing coach at the Alexandria Boys Club was an ardent Southern Baptist (my career as a pugilist was short-lived once my mother learned of my interest in entering the Golden Gloves competition), and so were many of my schoolteachers, including the unforgettable Miss Faye. Yet despite living in this Southern Baptist sea, I can recall no attempts by any Southern Baptist to convert me to Christianity.

Three personal incidents involving Southern Baptists will remain with me forever. In the second or third grade at Maury School, our teacher insisted on reading a selection from the New Testament to us every morning. Concepts and principles such as church-state separation and the First Amendment were not part of an eight year old's data base. And looking back on it, I see they obviously were not part of my teacher's concerns either.

But my parents sharply protested to the teacher about the New Testament readings, and her response was to make me and the two Roman Catholics in our class leave the room while she read to the remaining Protestant students, who were mostly Southern Baptists. We three "exiles" comprised about ten percent of the class, and naturally we felt humiliated at being singled out for special treatment.

The school principal, who also was a Southern Baptist, quickly intervened when she learned from some parents of the teacher's action. I still remember her sharp words to the teacher: "You mustn't do that to children. Everyone's

equal here, and besides Bible reading is for your church and your home. You know we Baptists don't believe it belongs in the schoolroom."

It was as clear an explosion of traditional Baptist doctrine on the separation of church and state as I have ever heard. We exiles soon rejoined our class, never to be segregated again, and the New Testament readings abruptly ended as well.

I always admired the historic Southern Baptist commitment to church-state separation and its traditional emphasis on the individual's free pursuit of spiritual truth.

Once during the sixth grade, a student began yelling anti-Semitic epithets at me and at a Jewish girl who was in my class. I got into a fistfight with him, but still the anti-Semitic remarks persisted.

Finally one day, the teacher kept me and the offending boy after class, and she berated him, "What church do you belong to?" she asked. It was a natural question for that time and place, as normal as asking one's name and address. The boy mumbled the name of a local congregation.

"Then you're a Baptist like I am, right?" she asked the eleven-year-old boy. "Yes," he whispered. "Well, young man, Christians, especially Baptists, must never hurt Jews in any way. And besides, we Baptists have been attacked by other Christians. God doesn't want you to do this ever, ever again, and neither do I."

On May 14, 1948, my family attended Sabbath services at Washington Hebrew Congregation, and in the midst of prayers the rabbi dramatically announced that President Truman had just given official recognition to the new state of Israel. Right after the services we went over to the "embassy" of the new state. Actually, it was the Jewish Agency building, where a large group of Jews had gathered on the sidewalk.

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