April 1990
ISSN-0346-0661

REPORT from the CAPITAL

Supreme Court Justice with Baptist Editors

REPORT from the CAPITAL

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

Vol. 45, No. 4 **April 1990**

Articles

Features

Cover: The Honorable Harry A. Blackmun, associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, raises a smile during an off-the-record session at the BJC's Baptist editors briefing. In his remarks on topics that included church-state separation, Justice Blackmun, a committed Methodist layman, alluded to his Bicentennial speech on the religious clauses of the First Amendment (see REPORT, Sept. '87). Staff Photo

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

Subscriptions: Single rate, $8.00 one year, $15.00 two years; club rate (ten or more), $7.00 each per year; student rate, $3.50 one year, $5.00 two years; foreign, add $2.00 postage.

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On Freedom and Authority

Religious liberty is not something one can work at on the side. It's a full-time responsibility, and for that reason Baptists opened this Washington-based, religious freedom office. There's no question that state and religious institutions affect each other. The U.S. Constitution, therefore, with its "no religious test" protects the state and candidates seeking public office from undue pressure from the religious sector, while the First Amendment shields religion from government intrusion. That implicit principle of separation benefits all Americans—especially those of religious belief and the institutions that shelter them.

In an opinion piece in the *London Times*, Clifford Longley writes that "A legally established religion is evidently no longer what people are looking for: religion now belongs firmly in the realm of the private, the unofficial, the part of life reserved and withheld from state and national power." He observes that "Nowhere else in Europe does a religion by law established enjoy anything like the privileges the Church of England enjoys here" and then adds, "Anglican church attendance is now about 2.5 percent of the total population."

What happens in an environment that places all religious belief on common ground? Growth and pluralism. Southern Baptist Gary Leazer recognized that fact in remarks before convention leaders at an interfaith witness conference. He told the group that in America, 836 new religions have been started since 1940, 710 of them surviving. Baptists have prospered under such freedom of choice. But another Baptist Press news release spoke of Americans as "religious consumers," who "shop around" among denominations *and religions* (perhaps telling us where new religions originate) for something that satisfies their needs. There's no resting on laurels.

Baptists are an evangelizing people, determined not to quench anyone's spirit but to witness to the Truth that brought us into being. We survived persecution but, more importantly, increased in number and "works" because of another principle we hold dear—the priesthood of believers. As individuals, we have been taught to trust the leading of the Holy Spirit, and as congregations, to organize as autonomous bodies. Autonomy has led not to spiritual anarchy but to global interdependence with others of like mind. This has made us passionate in behalf of the gospel of Jesus Christ and wary of personal and institutional threats to the freedom that fires passion.

James Dunn touches on that concern. The 1990 National Religious Liberty Conference, with its theme "Spritual Roots of Freedom," will erect bridges of understanding to bring our Baptist and American heritages into laser focus. And the Religious Liberty Day observance communicates the truth that we're recreated in the image of the authority we adopt. For Christians, Paul's letter to the church at Colossae explicitly teaches our singular authority must be Jesus Christ. "Walking in Christ, Living by Faith"—that's the freedom to which we aspire and to which we have been set free. This issue of REPORT is devoted to such thoughts and experiences. □

Victor Tupitza

WASHINGTON OBSERVATIONS

news/views/trends

• **AN ATTORNEY FOR** the Mormon Church asked the nation's highest court to allow parents to deduct money they give to their missionary children as a charitable contribution.

The government's denial of such deductions "reflects a profound lack of understanding of the operation of Mormon missions," said Rex E. Lee of Provo, Utah, during oral argument before the Supreme Court.

The case involves Harold and Enid Davis, a Mormon couple from Idaho. Following the Mormon Church's instruction, the Davises provided financial support for two of their sons who were selected by the church as missionaries. When the couple attempted to deduct the money as charitable contributions, the Internal Revenue Service rejected their claim.

Lee argued that parents' direct support of their children's missionary activities meets the federal tax law requirement that, in order to be deductable, contributions must be made "to or for the use of" a charitable organization.

Rejecting the government's argument that such contributions primarily benefit the individual missionaries, Lee said: "Mormon missionaries are the church's mission program. The people they reach are the beneficiaries.

"These missionaries are no more beneficiaries than a nun is a beneficiary of the Catholic school where she teaches or a Red Cross volunteer is a beneficiary of donations to that organization."

But the Department of Justice, represented by Assistant Attorney General Shirley D. Peterson, argued that Congress has set forth a distinction between public and private charity. The statute in question, she said, requires that an exempt contribution be made to a qualified donee for use at its discretion.

The "definiteness of the beneficiary" is the key to deductability, Peterson said. If a gift favors a definite beneficiary, she added, it is not deductable.

Peterson told the court she does not think a donation would be deductable even if the donor made it to the church with the stipulation that it be used to support a specific individual.

• **A LOBBY FOR** private, nonprofit organizations says federal tax policies have made it harder for Americans to give to charity.

The Independent Sector, in testimony before the House Ways and Means Committee, said tax reforms enacted by Congress in 1986 have led to a slower pace of giving at a time when charitable organizations are getting less help from Washington.

At issue is the impact of the 1986 Tax Reform Act on contributions to nonprofit institutions, ranging from churches and colleges to food pantries and homeless shelters.

A spokesman for the coalition of 690 nonprofit organizations said changes in tax laws have had the effect of slowing the rate of increases in charitable giving. Before the tax overhaul, per capita giving had increased by 11.2 percent in 1986 and 8.7 percent in 1985. Since then, the rate of increase has fallen considerably, to 1.4 percent in 1987 and 3.2 percent in 1988.

One of the tax-law changes cited was the phasing out of charitable deductions by people who do not itemize deductions on their tax returns. Some 72 million Americans, nearly all of them modest- and middle-income taxpayers, fall into this category. They constitute the most generous group in the country, contributing a higher proportion of their income than more affluent households. Two-thirds of all giving comes from households with incomes of $40,000 a year or less, he said, citing a 1988 Gallup survey on charitable giving. (RNS)

• **A FORMER EMPLOYEE** of a health food store that pressured its workers to join the Unification Church has received a $30,000 settlement from the parent corporation.

The complainant, who is Jewish, began working part time for the True Nature Health Food Store in Illinois in October 1985 and was given a full-time position in January 1986. He was fired in June 1987 and told the reason was because the store had financial problems.

Evidence produced on behalf of the former employee, however, indicated that the same store manager told another worker that the store preferred to employ members of the Unification Church. Several other former employees said they were pressured to join the church and sent on religious retreats. (RNS)

J. Brent Walker

Spiritual Roots in Radical Faith

A Baptist Walk among the Amish

What a peculiar lot they appear to be—a people sent "back to the future" from the late 17th century. Actually they are our not-too-distant kinfolk in the family of faith. They can teach us Baptists a lot about how we used to be and serve as a benchmark for judging how much we have changed.

Their men wear dark, natural-fabric sack suits with no lapels, solid-colored shirts (usually white or pale blue), heavy steel-shanked footwear, and a black or straw broadbrimmed hat. Their full beards look a bit truncated because they wear no moustaches. Their women don solid-colored dresses of simple design, with capes and aprons, floor-length skirts, and long sleeves. Their long hair is braided and tucked under bonnets.

They drive gray horse-drawn carriages, some adorned anachronistically with bright orange triangular reflectors on the rear panel. Their fertile farm land is checkerboarded by meticulous rows of crops, dotted with simple white frame houses with green window shades, and squared off with roughly hewn softball diamonds. Mules power their farm equipment, lanterns light their homes, and one-room school houses educate their children—but only through the eighth grade. They worship God in home meetings, not in church buildings, and in high German, not the more colloquial Pennsylvania Dutch dialect.

Who are these kind, quaint folk? They are the Old Order Amish—sometimes called the "quiet in the land."

I must fess up that, until recently, my knowledge of the Amish was rather spotty. I had read about them in law school. (In *Wisconsin* v. *Yoder*, the Supreme Court ruled that the free exercise rights of the Amish exempted them from compulsory education laws after the eighth grade.) I had seen the movie *Witness*. (I cheered with the rest of the audience when Harrison Ford—a cop in Amish clothing—cold-cocked the unsuspecting town bully in defense of the peaceful Amish.) And, although I had studied in church history about their theological and cultural forebears, it was not until this past November that I learned firsthand about the Amish.

I was asked to lead a retreat for the youth at the First Baptist Church of Silver Spring, Maryland. The retreat was to be held in "Amish country"—in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Among the several topics of discussion that I was charged with leading was the relationship between the Amish and contemporary Baptists.

What an assignment! No 20th century Baptist I knew bore much similarity to the Amish. Quite to the contrary. Neither Rauschenbusch's social gospelism, Fosdick's evangelical liberalism, Norris' narrow fundamentalism, Marney's Christian humanism, King's civil activism, Falwell's moral majoritarianism, nor even the good tobacco farmers and cattle ranchers I pastored in rural Kentucky showed any sign of similarity to the Amish. So, my work was cut out for me.

But, I experienced an epiphany. After some study, I found that actually the Amish and Baptists are ecclesiastical and spiritual relatives—cousins, maybe, if not siblings. And, the extent of the difference today graphically demonstrates how far Baptists have come (or gone) over the last 350 years.

The Amish trace their lineage back to the radical wing of the Protestant Reformation. Their ancestors sought a more dramatic break with the Catholic Church than did other reformers. Along with a complete separation of church and state, their most distinctive belief and practice was believer's baptism. Hence, they came to be known (pejoratively by their detractors) as "Anabaptist"—which means to "baptize again."

Anabaptism rose out of the Swiss Reformation in the early 1520s. Conrad Grebel, George Blaurock, Felix Mantz, and others became disenchanted with how willing Ulrich Zwingli was to meld his theological reforms with Zurich city council politics. They also believed that a true New Testament church was composed of regenerate believers who were baptized with water upon their voluntary confession of faith in Christ. In January 1525, these Anabaptists formally broke with Zwingli.

Despite some diversity in belief and practice, the Anabaptists were uniformly the victims of severe persecution. Both Catholics and Protestants (including Zwingli himself) hounded, drowned, burned, and beheaded them. After Grebel died of a plague, Zwingli had Grebel's father beheaded. Mantz, with hands and feet bound and body held in a fetal position by a steel rod, was dumped into the icy waters of the river Limmat. And Blaurock, holding up his finger as a prearranged sign to his friends that he still followed Christ, was burned at the stake.[1] Most other Anabaptists fared no better, and, understandably, their early antipathy for the merger of church and state was strengthened by the ungodly torture and destruction that the amalgamation of those two realms unleashed.

But obviously many survived, driven into hiding and exile. Remnants managed to immigrate to various parts of Europe, including the Netherlands. In Holland, a Catholic priest, after grappling with doubt over the propriety of infant baptism, eventually came to accept and preach a gospel of repentance and believer's baptism. Impressed by the long-suffering faithfulness of the Anabaptists, he was, finally, rebaptized and reordained in 1534. His name was Menno Simons.

Menno served as a preacher, missionary, and organizer in Holland for 25 years. The authorities sought to kill the gentle Menno, but they never succeeded. Although most of the groups spawned by the Anabaptist movement did not weather the persecution or the vicissitudes of history, the followers of Menno Simons—the Mennonites—did. They are the most visible surviving remnant of the radical reformation.

It was from these Mennonites that the Amish came. In the late 1600s, a Swiss Mennonite bishop, named Jacob Amman, lead a retrograde movement within the church. Objecting to what he thought were liberalizing influences within the Mennonite church, he in-

sisted on strict adherence to a confession of faith, particularly the "ban"—the practice of shunning excommunicated members.

The Amish as well as the Mennonites continued to suffer persecution. So, both gladly accepted William Penn's invitation to come to Pennsylvania where they could live in peace. The Amish first came to Pennsylvania in the late 1720s and to Lancaster County in the early 1760s. The Mennonites settled in Germantown, Pennsylvania, in 1683. Since the, both the Amish and the Mennonites have continued to exist but periodically have split into various conventions, conferences, and sub-denominations.

Contrary to what some believe, Baptists did not originate with the Anabaptists. Nevertheless, the history of Baptists was influenced by and had much in common with the Anabaptist-Mennonite-Amish tradition.

Most historians today trace Baptist roots, not to the radical wing of the 16th century reformation (i.e., Anabaptism), but rather to English separatism of the 17th century. John Smyth, a Cambridge-educated Puritan, pastored a separatist congregation at Gainesborough. Fleeing persecution, he led part of his congregation in 1607 to Holland. (The other Gainesborough remnant became the nucleus of the "Pilgrim Fathers" who took passage to America on the Mayflower.)

In Holland, Smyth and his congregation came into contact with a group of Dutch Mennonites. Perhaps as a result of the witness of these Mennonites, Smyth began to question the validity of his separatist church and, more particularly, its practice of infant baptism. Thus, he disbanded his church and started a new one based on a profession of faith in Christ and believer's baptism. Smyth baptized himself and then baptized the others. But Smyth continued to fret over the efficacy even of his self-baptism and entertained notions of joining the Mennonites. Although he never did, after his death a remnant of his followers apparently were rebaptized into the Mennonite fellowship. Another group within the Smyth church, led by layman Thomas Helwys, sailed back to England and established what historians believe to be the first Baptist church on English soil.[2]

Thus, Baptists arose independent of Anabaptism, although Anabaptism may well have affected Baptist faith and practice. Moreover, irrespective of the extent of influence, Anabaptists and early Baptists clearly had much in common, and their belief and practices were similar in many ways.

Between sessions during the retreat, we were given a guided bus tour of Lancaster County by a Mennonite college student. In addition to pointing out sites, she gave a helpful thumbnail lecture on Mennonite-Amish doctrine. She said that the basic beliefs and practices could be summed up and easily remembered by the acrostic B-A-S-I-N:

*B*eliever's church. The church is an autonomous gathering of regenerate believers who have decided to be disciples of Jesus Christ. No one becomes a church member automatically as a result of birth or cultural heritage. It requires a voluntary decision to join.

*A*dult baptism. As a corollary to their view of church as a gathered community, baptism had to follow an informed, heartfelt commitment to Christ. Early Anabaptists practiced affusion (pouring) or sprinkling, instead of dunking. Most contemporary Mennonites-Amish still do.

*S*eparation of church and state. This perhaps was the Anabaptists' most far reaching contribution to the modern world.[3] Their view of church and insistence on a voluntary response compelled this belief. An early Anabaptist saying went, "faith is a work of God and not of the heretics' tower."[4] The Anabaptists had learned their lesson well: when the state and the church got mixed up together, the church became perverted and people got hurt.

*I*nvolvement. The early Anabaptists believed and the Amish today believe strongly in mutual involvement in each other's lives. Because they have been shunned by the world, they have withdrawn from the world and rely on each other to make their way. Their early evangelistic fervor was tempered by persecution, and today their witness is born mainly through the testimony of their communal lifestyle.

*N*onresistance. Most early Anabaptists followed the way of nonviolence and nonresistance. Certainly this is a hallmark of modern Mennonites-Amish. Nonresistance was and is more than pacifism in the limited sense of refusing to fight a war. It involves every aspect of life and carries a positive imperative to be peacemakers.

These Anabaptist tenets are similar to what the early English Baptists believed and how they practiced their beliefs—although few Baptist have ever adopted the extreme pacifism that has typified the Mennonite-Amish tradition.

But how do we stand today? It is always risky to say what a diverse group like Baptists believes and to generalize about how its members practice their faith. Nevertheless, some observations can be made. Most Baptists still adhere to the basic principles that our English Baptist ancestors shared with the Anabaptists. Unfortunately, many of these historic principles are being compromised or repudiated by some Baptists.

The cherished concept of local church autonomy and congregational church governance are often violated with impunity. We now have hierarchically-arranged denominational structures that sometimes go beyond *assisting* the local church's ministry and attempt to *dictate* to it. Local church decisions to ordain women are met with the withdrawal of fellowship from local associations, and church decisions about commissioning missionaries are stymied by unyielding, denominationally dictated creedalism.

Like the Anabaptists and Mennonites, we believe that baptism is an initiatory ordinance that follows a voluntary confession of faith in Christ. But in our rush to succeed in the missionary enterprise, we often become practical pedobaptists—baptising our young before they could possibly appreciate the full gravity of a commitment to Christ.

For some Baptists, the concept of church-state separation is simply a tool to be used to the advantage of a particular theological and political agenda. That is, they want to keep church and state separate when the state seeks to burden the church; all bets are off, however, when the issue of state *support* of the church is discussed. Those Baptists who now support governmental aid to parochial schools and church-run child-care centers are glaring examples of a marked departure from Anabaptist and Baptist distinctives.

The idea of mutual priestly involvement in each other's lives is being lost too. The doctrine of the priesthood of all believers becomes attenuated when interpreted to mean that none of us *needs* a priest, instead of, as it should be, that each of us *is* a priest to each other. Moreover, the authoritarian leadership model that is so popular today in some Baptist churches and the resolution passed by the Southern Baptists in San Antonio on the priesthood doctrine represent a near revolutionary departure from this hallowed reformation concept.

Finally, unlike the Mennonite-Amish, most Baptists no longer abjure the surrounding culture. We have outgrown our sectarian heritage and dissenting tradition. And with this new status we have developed an establishment mentality to the degree that many Baptists now identify more closely with the Puritan John Cotton than with the Baptist Roger Williams.[5] Far from the historical tendency of Baptists and Anabaptists to withdraw from and critique culture, Baptists now embrace culture, along with its models of success, leadership, and politics. In a word, as Carlyle Mar-

Continued on page 14

VIEWS OF THE WALL

J. Brent Walker
Associate General Counsel

The metaphor that lends its name to this column has taken quite a bashing lately. Some people cry that the "wall of separation between church and state" is a modern concoction of secular humanists who are out to eviscerate our religious heritage. Others point out that the words "separation of church and state" are never even used in the United States Constitution, as if that fact somehow settles the issue.

Actually the phrase "wall of separation" is neither new nor born of 20th century secularism. It was coined by Thomas Jefferson in his 1802 letter to the Danbury Connecticut Baptist Association. Indeed, Jefferson's phrase was adumbrated more than a century earlier when Roger Williams spoke of "the hedge or wall of separation between the garden of the church and the wilderness of the world." And while it is true that the precise phrase "separation of church and state" does not appear in our Constitution, the language and spirit of the First Amendment commend its usage.

One might observe that the phrase "separation of *powers*" is not specifically mentioned in the Constitution either, but who would gainsay its constitutional status? And how many Baptists do you know who have become Unitarians because the New Testament nowhere expressly refers to the "trinity"?

Some of this antiseparationist rhetoric is pandered by a few ultraconservatives in their effort to advance a right-wing religio-political agenda. But much of it stems simply from a misunderstanding of the issues on the part of well-meaning Christians. Let me try to clear up some of the confusion.

"Religious liberty" and the "separation of church and state" are two crucially important concepts in the realm of church-state relations. Religious liberty is essentially a theological concept rooted squarely in the idea of "soul freedom." It affirms that our creation in the image of God means that we are made to have a relationship with Him. For the relationship to be genuine, it must be based on love and free choice. Each of us is free and competent to say "yes" or "no" to God—unimpeded and uncoerced by either civil or ecclesiastical authority. Religious liberty, then, is a gift from God that we accept or reject as free moral agents.

The "separation of church and state" is a post-Reformation, distinctively American political corollary to religious liberty—a hedge by which we seek to implement and ensure the continuation of that liberty at the constitutional level. It is the means to the end of religious liberty. Separation of church and state affirms that the church and the state have different functions to perform and constituencies to serve and that this differentiation promotes both a free, pluralistic state and a healthy, robust church. As Stan Hastey has rightly pointed out, "Religious liberty comes before separation of church and state, both in historical sequence and in theological importance."

The "separation of church and state" is a post-Reformation, distinctively American political corollary to religious liberty—a hedge by which we seek to implement and ensure the continuation of that liberty at the constitutional level.

Moreover, many people commonly, but mistakenly, connect the separation of church and state with the First Amendment's establishment clause and link religious liberty with the free exercise clause. They then play one off against the other by associating the establishment clause with the promotion of secularity and free exercise with the encouragement of religiosity.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The doctrine of church-state separation flows from *both* of the First Amendment's religion clauses. Both clauses have the overarching purpose of promoting religious liberty. Both affirm the truth that religious liberty is encouraged, not just by the enforcement of the free exercise clause, but also through staunch respect for the establishment clause. Religion is better off, in the long run, when it declines governmentally doled out benefits, as well as when it resists governmentally imposed burdens. Thus, the two religion clauses—establishment and free exercise—should be read as parallel and complimentary, and the doctrine of church-state separation should be seen as subserving both of them.

Another reason why the doctrine of church-state separation has fallen upon hard times, even among well-intentioned Christians, stems from a confusion between the separation of church and state, on the one hand, and the relationship between *religion* and *politics*, on the other. The constitutional requirement of keeping church and state separate does not necessitate a divorcement of religion and politics. Church-state separation does not mandate the complete secularization of the public forum, nor does it insist upon the privatization of religion. Religious people have just as much right as any other citizen to seek to vend their convictions in the market place of ideas and to convert their religious ethics into public policy if they are able. This is part of what being "salt" and "light" is all about.

Thus, to believe in and champion institutional and functional separation of church and state does not mean that Christians have to relegate their discipleship to acts of private piety or concede the public square to those who would debunk the Christian message. We not only may speak, we must speak, if we are to be faithful disciples.

Finally, the doctrine of church-state separation does not mean that the church and the state never touch or overlap. There is, in Martin Marty's words, a "zone of interaction" between church and state. Indeed, the very test by which the Supreme Court judges establishment clause cases shows this to be true. Under the so-called *Lemon* test, as long as a law or governmental act has a valid secular purpose, it may *also* have a religious aspect. The test further requires that the *primary* effect neither advances nor inhibits religion. A collateral or secondary religious aspect does not offend the First Amendment. The test thirdly condemns only *excessive* entanglement between government and religion, not *de minimus* interaction.

Former Chief Justice Burger said it well in a case upholding property tax exemptions for churches and other charitable institutions. There he declared that, short of tolerating governmentally established religion or governmental interference with religion, there is some

"room for play in the joints productive of a benevolent neutrality which will permit religious exercise to exist without sponsorship and without interference." *Walz* v. *Tax Commission*, 397 U.S. 664, 669 (1970). Yes, when government is "benevolently neutral" toward religion, there is indeed some "room for play," and church and state do come into contact now and then without violating the First Amendment.

Thus, church-state separation and religious liberty are not antithetical concepts engaged in a philosophical tug-of-war. Rather separation is the means to the end of liberty. Moreover, the wall metaphor has never meant—and certainly in today's crowded world does not mean—that church and state should be hermetically sealed off from each other with the state engaged in public affairs and the church flushed to the backwaters of privatized religion. Nor does it mean that Christians, when impelled to do so by their religious ethics, cannot speak out on public issues along with the rest of the political community.

I hope that when open-minded Christians understand this more-balanced, less-caricatured view of the separation of church and state, they will have a renewed respect for this hallowed constitutional principle and come to see that it actually benefits, rather than inhibits, churches and religion in America. □

Quoting

Joseph L. Conn
Church and State

After a year in office, the Bush administration still seems woefully ambiguous about its direction on the constitutional issues of church and state.

In the last few months the White House has been under increasing pressure from the Christian Right and the Catholic parochaid lobby. These components of the Republican coalition say they helped elect George Bush and now they want political payoffs.

Recent events illustrate their goals. According to a report in a recent issue of *Christianity Today*, television evangelist Pat Robertson and an assortment of other evangelical activists met late last fall with White House officials, including President Bush, and demanded that evangelicals get their "fair share" of administration appointments.

White House personnel chief Chase Untermeyer to his credit told the gathering that the Constitution forbids any religious test for public office. Bush appointees share conservative political views, he said, but it's impossible to identify job applicants by religion.

A Roman Catholic parochial school delegation was similarly disgruntled by a recent meeting with U.S. Secretary of Education Lauro Cavazos. While Cavazos pleased the group by calling parochial schools part of his "educational choice" campaign, he pointedly stopped short of endorsing tuition tax credits, vouchers, or other immediate governmental aid.

The Rev. Thomas Gallagher of the U.S. Catholic Conference complained that the meeting had few "practical results" and vowed to press the administration for greater influence in educational policy.

These incidents came at about the same time as a presidential appearance at a Catholic cardinals dinner in Washington. President Bush told the assembled prelates that he opposes abortion, favors prayer in public schools, and will fight for child-care legislation that funds church-related centers.

All these instances strongly suggest that the Bush administration is attempting to continue the Reagan administration policy on the so-called "social issues": that is, support Religious Right goals in speeches, but realize that they can't be accomplished in reality.

Unfortunately for the Bush administration, that kind of policy seems to be wearing thin with those it is meant to placate. President Bush lacks the charisma that allowed Mr. Reagan to pull off such political sleights of hand. The sectarian lobbies have grown tired of talk; they want action.

Thus, the Bush administration has come to a point of decision. The president needs to muster the courage to tell these groups that their goals are unwise and unconstitutional, not to mention politically unattainable.

The polls show that President Bush is quite popular with the American people. He doesn't need to play to the Christian Right or the parochaid lobby. In fact, kowtowing to sectarian lobbies would likely hurt, not help, with most Americans. Conservative San Diego Republicans recently helped elect Democratic underdog Lucy Killea to the California legislature when she declined political demands placed on her by Bishop Leo Maher.

In the short term, a Bush policy of firmness and support for church-state separation would incur the wrath of the sectarian forces, but it would also win him points from the majority of Americans for courage and wisdom. □

(*Church and State* is the publication of Americans United in Silver Spring, Maryland.)

Kenneth Dean
First Baptist, Rochester, New York

What do you think of when you hear the title of this offering, "America for Christ"? I suppose it brings different thoughts to the minds of different people.

One of the ways in which I serve our denomination (American Baptist) is as representative to the Commission on Christians and Jewish Relations. This work always comes to mind, for in many ways this title sounds very much like a proselytizing effort. And in some ways it is. We do carry the message of Christ to the individual. As I have lived with this question over the years, finally I have come to learn that to make a witness for the Christ does not necessarily mean that I am twisting someone else's arm to have my religious experience.

Another thought that comes to mind has to do with the 19th-century Manifest Destiny in which there sometimes was a fusion of the cause of the Christ with the national identity. This, too, gives me problems, yet there is a sense in which this should be an OK thing. Where it is not OK are those points in which our government takes positions and actions that are in direct conflict with the claims of the Gospel of the Christ.

Still, I stand with the commitment, "America For Christ." One of the lessons I learned at the divinity school was that one of the strengths of the American system of government and organization of society has to do with the separation of church and state. This separation is there so that each institution may exist in freedom within the context of a vigorous dialogue.

The separation of the two institutions was never intended to mean that religious values should not be communicated to the governmental process. Rather, the two institutions functioning separately with clear identities are in a position to communicate how we go about expending our resources and making our witness to the greater world. □

News in Brief

BJC committee to examine representation formula

WASHINGTON

A special committee has been appointed to evaluate how member bodies are represented on the Baptist Joint Committee.

During its March 5 meeting, the BJC executive committee appointed its officers to serve as a bylaws change committee. That committee is to examine the agency's bylaws and recommend whether changes should be made in the formula used to determine representation on the BJC.

The current plan automatically allows each of the BJC's nine member bodies one representative. Additional representatives are gained by contributing to the BJC operating budget.

The formula provides that for each quarter of a percent of the budget contributed, member bodies gain one representative, up to a total of eight beyond the first representative. Then, for each additional five percent of the operating budget contributed, another representative is gained, up to a total of nine beyond the first nine.

Under the current plan, the BJC can have up to 54 representatives.

In establishing the special committee, executive committee members agreed that any change in the current BJC representation formula should take into consideration four principles:

— The jointness of the BJC should be maintained.

— Although some relationship should exist between financial contributions and the number of each body's representatives, contributions alone should not determine representation.

— No member body's number of representatives should dominate the BJC.

— The number of representatives to the BJC should be kept at a practical size.

Members of the BJC executive committee said an evaluation of the agency's representation formula is appropriate in light of a proposed cut in Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program unified budget funding, as well as increased contributions from groups such as the Southern Baptist Alliance and state Baptist conventions.

Members of the committee are John Binder, executive director of the North American Baptist Conference; Landrum P. Leavell, president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary; Tai D. Shigaki, an American Baptist layperson from St. Paul, Minnesota; and Charles G. Adams, a Progressive National Baptist Convention pastor from Detroit, Michigan.

A change in the BJC's bylaws would require that committee members receive a 30-day notice of the proposed change and then approve it by a simple majority.

The next full meeting of the BJC is scheduled for October 1. □

Judge tells department to stop 'off-the-top' aid

LOUISVILLE, Kentucky

For the second time in three months, a federal judge has told the U.S. Department of Education to stop a procedure that granted students at religious schools more remedial education funds than those enrolled in public schools.

U.S. District Judge Charles M. Allen ruled the federal agency must stop its "off the top" method of allocating remedial education funds under which local school districts were told to give first priority to private schools.

A similar ruling was issued in December by Kansas City Judge Joseph E. Stevens, Jr., in another case.

In the Kentucky case, known as *Barnes v. Cavazos*, Allen said the use of the off-the-top method for leasing mobile vans for instruction at religious schools "reduces the amount of funds available for public school students by over $187,000."

Allen narrowly upheld the placement of the vans adjacent to religious schools and approved the use of state funds to subsidize instruction at sectarian institutions for "neglected and delinquent" adolescents. He found the three schools in question in the case are not pervasively sectarian. **(RNS)**

Christian Science couple acquitted in son's death

LOS ANGELES

A Christian Science couple whose 15-month-old son died after they failed to provide medical treatment for him have been acquitted on charges of involuntary manslaughter and child endangerment because the child had showed brief bursts of recovery.

Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Robert Thomas ruled the periodic points of recovery shown by young Seth Glaser raised a reasonable doubt as to whether the child's parents, Elliot and Lisa Glaser, were grossly negligent by using only religious healing methods before the child died of acute bacterial meningitis in March 1984.

A 1976 California law provided a religious exemption to requirements that parents must provide medical care for their children. The California Supreme Court has ruled the exemption applies only to the felony charge of failure to provide basic necessities and that it does not offer immunity from prosecution on other charges.

Thomas said he based his ruling on the specifics of the case and found there was insufficient evidence to convict the Glasers. **(RNS)**

North Carolina judge sued for praying in courtroom

CHARLOTTE, North Carolina

The North Carolina Civil Liberties Union has filed a federal lawsuit against state District Court Judge H. William Constangy, demanding that he stop praying aloud at the start of each court session.

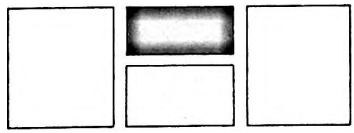
A hearing has been set for May in the suit, which legal experts said was the first time they had heard of a judge's being sued for praying.

The 47-year-old judge, who was appointed last year, has declined to give his religious affiliation or to be interviewed about the case. He has continued to pray aloud in his courtroom each day.

Although Constangy doesn't force anyone to pray in the court, the Civil Liberties Union and other plaintiffs in the case say it is unfair to force people to appear in court and listen to a prayer that might not reflect their religious beliefs or lack of them.

"I'm sure he has a hard job and looks to pray for guidance, but it's different when he puts on that robe, because he's representing the state," said attorney Sharon Samek, a public defender who is named as a plaintiff.

Kathleen M. Arundell, another public defender who is a plaintiff, said public prayer makes a statement about the judge's religious beliefs in a courtroom where he is supposed to appear impartial. **(RNS)**



City landmarks law upheld in St. Bartholomew's case

NEW YORK

A federal judge has upheld the New York City landmarks law in response to a challenge from St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, which has been trying to obtain permission to build an office tower over its property since 1981.

Proposals from the church to erect a 47-story office tower have been rejected three times by the city's Landmarks Preservation Commission. The commission says the project would damage the architectural uniqueness of the church, which officially has been designated a landmark building. Leaders of the parish say the church needs the money it would obtain from renting space in the office tower to continue social service programs.

Federal Judge John Sprizzo upheld the constitutionality of the landmarks law in 1987. In his more recent ruling, he said the law can be enforced in the St. Bartholomew's case because it does not "interfere with the free exercise of the religious beliefs of any church that is designated a landmark."

Sprizzo said the church failed to show it could not carry out its charitable and religious activities in its existing facilities. Lawyers for the church have contended the landmarks law violates church-state separation because it infringes on the church's rights to the free exercise of religion and protection against the seizure of property. **(RNS)**

Court upholds defamation judgment against church

ANNAPOLIS, Maryland

Defamation of character and invasion of privacy judgments against a Lutheran church in Montgomery County, Maryland, have been upheld by that state's court of appeals.

Ginny Ann Smith sued St. Luke Evangelical Lutheran Church in Silver Spring, Maryland, and David Buchenroth, a pastor, alleging he maliciously spread unfounded gossip that she was having a sexual relationship with an associate pastor while she was associate director of youth ministry at the church.

Smith alleged Buchenroth went through her personal letters and discovered notes that he thought confirmed the relationship between Smith and the associate pastor.

Buchenroth took the notes to the associate pastor's wife and to Smith's mother.

The wife, after talking to her husband, told Buchenroth she did not believe her husband's relationship with Smith was sexual.

Buchenroth then retracted his allegations and promised to keep quiet about his suspicions. But he soon repeated the charges to two members of the congregation.

Smith then began receiving unsettling telephone calls and mail and was fired in 1984.

After a two-week trial in 1986, a Montgomery County jury awarded Smith $228,904 in compensatory damages and $108,000 in punitive damages. Both Buchenroth and the church, which was brought into the case as Buchenroth's employer, appealed.

While the Maryland Court of Special Appeals upheld the verdict against Buchenroth, the state's second highest court threw out the judgments against St. Luke, agreeing with the church's attorney that the church should not have been forced to pay Smith's attorney's fee and that the trial judge erred in awarding preemptory challenges.

The Maryland Court of Appeals, in a 4 to 3 decision, reversed the Court of Special Appeals. **(AP)**

O'Hair suing evangelical groups over fund raising

WASHINGTON

Madalyn Murray O'Hair and her Society of Separationists are suing two evangelical Christian organizations for portraying her in a "false light" to raise money.

In addition to naming Beverly LaHaye and her Concerned Women for America and Robert Skolrood and his National Legal Foundation as defendants, the suit also cites the Gannett Corporation and *USA Today*.

In a feature that appeared June 17, 1988, *USA Today* reported that O'Hair was planning a new campaign to have the word "God" removed from U.S. currency. Skolrood and his Virginia Beach, Virginia-based foundation subsequently placed a full-page ad in the July 22, 1988, edition of *USA Today*, expressing concern about the O'Hair campaign and asking for contributions to oppose it.

The foundation also solicited signatures on petitions to present to the White House opposing the O'Hair campaign. It said it collected more than 100,000 names in the effort.

Subsequently, LaHaye and her Washington-based organization sent letters to supporters asking for contributions and signatures on postcards to be sent to O'Hair, informing her they were opposed to her efforts while "praying for her salvation."

The well-known atheist and her organization filed suit against CWA and the National Legal Foundation in a Texas district court. David Roth, general counsel for the Society of Separationists, said the suit charges that the defendants "used Ms. O'Hair's public persona as a device to raise money." **(RNS)**

Judge rules university cross must be removed

TEMPE, Arizona

A superior court judge has ruled a controversial cross atop a chapel on the Arizona State University campus must come down.

But in making the ruling, Judge Alfred Rogers gave two Christian groups that defended the cross 30 days to seek an order from a higher court that would let it remain in place pending a formal appeal.

Rogers said he based his ruling on a three-part test established by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1971 to determine whether the First Amendment is being violated in church-state cases. The criteria are that a government program or display must have a secular purpose, neither advance nor inhibit religion and not foster excessive entanglement with religion.

"In this case, there is a failure to satisfy any of the three conditions," Rogers said. **(RNS)**

Freedom without discipline is anarchy; discipline without freedom is totalitarianism. The only answer humankind has achieved through suffering is democracy. [Alexander Nezhny]

Thomas R. McKibbens

The Most Dangerous Freedom

He was just a kid; what did he know? When he approached dad and asked for the inheritance, I couldn't believe my ears. Ask for his inheritance before dad died? That's like saying, "Drop dead, dad!" But he did it; I'll never get over his horrible rudeness.

This story is about a freedom; a freedom that I do not favor, but a freedom nevertheless. It is about a dad who believed in that freedom, and about me—the older brother—who resented that freedom and secretly wished I had the courage to act on it. It started that day when the kid asked him for the inheritance and got it. Just like that. And I have never understood why. Why would dad take that slap in the face without a murmur, then turn around and give the kid a fortune? I knew all along that he would squander it. But at least he would still be around to help on the farm—I thought.

But I thought wrong. The very next week he started packing. "Why stick around this joint when I have the money to travel, see the world, do all the things I want to do?" So off he went, and once again my father said not a thing against it. He even wished him well. And he knew full well what the kid would do.

You know the rest of the story. You know all about the far country, his decision to return; and you know how my father waited every day until his return. You know about the robe, the ring, and the fatted calf; and you know how I felt about the whole thing. Our story has become famous.

What you may not know is that whole nations model themselves on this story, in one form or another. You heard me right. Whole nations model themselves on some form of this story. Consciously? No. But if you want proof, take a look at all the hoopla our nation is having over celebrating the writing of the United States Constitution. It was a little more than 200 years ago. That old Virginian, James Madison, got it written, and the convention passed it on September 17, 1787. What's so special about the Constitution? After all, every nation has one.

Well, I'll tell you what's so special about it. That Constitution places into law the same kind of freedom that my father gave to my kid brother. It's a dangerous kind of freedom. Perhaps the most dangerous of all. Because in religious matters, at least, it gives you absolute freedom to go off into a far country of thought and ideas, and no matter how far away you get, your home is still there waiting for you. Now that's dangerous!

If I had my way about it, I would have written the First Amendment far differently from James Madison. I would have said, "Congress shall establish evangelical Christianity as the sole religion of the United States, and shall prohibit the exercise of any other form of religion." And furthermore, I would have required every elected official to sign a statement of faith declaring belief in a system of doctrines, written out by me and passed by the Constitutional Convention. I would have required every school teacher to be a born-again Christian, and I would have mandated that every class begin and end with prayer. Textbooks, of course, would naturally be reviewed by qualified evangelical readers, and all undesirable material would be deleted. After all, God ordained this nation to be Christian, and I would have provided legislation to safeguard the United States as a Christian nation, world without end, amen!

As for the clergy, naturally, they would be paid by the state. The church, of course, should be supported by tax money because the church is the institution that trains the people of this nation how to be what they already are by law—evangelical Christians.

Of course, I tried to convince the delegates of the Constitutional Convention of the rightness of my position. And I had a lot going for me. Historically, England had had a state religion and only since 1689 had tolerated dissenters like Quakers and Baptists. When the colonists settled in this country, they tended to set up their own official religions. Out of the original 13 colonies, only two had complete religious freedom. One was Pennsylvania, settled by those quiet Quakers led by William Penn. The other was Rhode Island, settled by radical Baptists like John Clarke and Roger Williams, both of whom had the strange notion that religion was a matter of conscience and every person had to make a decision on his or her own, without pressure from the state.

> The Constitution, in religious matters, at least, gives you absolute freedom to go off into a far country of thought and ideas—now that's dangerous!

Everyone knows how dangerous that is, and therefore the other colonies were more reasonable. The southern colonies set up the Episcopal Church as the state religion. That way they could be sure that everyone believed the same thing and no undesirables would live there. The New England colonies, led by Massachusetts, set up the Congregational Church as their official religion and simply whipped and banished anyone who disagreed with that procedure. So I had tradition going for me.

But for some reason (and I can't put my finger on it) they listened to my father more than they listened to me. What I didn't know was that my father also lobbied that Convention. And what he was urging was, to put it simply, religious freedom. And what arguments he got! "That's dangerous," they said. "We can't allow the free movement of religious ideas in this nation. No telling what will happen if all religions are on equal footing. And how do you think churches can survive without tax money?" The argument went on and on.

My father kept working quietly. One delegate finally cornered him. "Look," he said, "you know the truth of God. You know the true way of salvation. Now, once you know the truth, how can you let people look for truth in any other way?" That was a strong argument. And do you know how my father

Dr. McKibbins is pastor of Metropolitan Baptist Church (SBC), Cambridge, Massachusetts. This sermon was delivered during the anniversary celebration of the U.S. Constitution.

answered it? He told them a story.

"Once," he said, "I had a son. A fine boy, he was. I even gave him his inheritance early, before I died. He came to me one day and said, 'Dad, I want to go away—find out the truth for myself.' I thought to myself, we already have the truth. Why would he want to find it out for himself? But I held my tongue, and let him go."

"Why in the world did you do that?" asked the delegate. "Because," said my father, "I knew that real truth could never be superimposed on my son just because I said it was truth. It had to be truth for him. So I let him go, and as I watched him walk off down that road, I knew that I was taking a chance. He might get hurt or killed, or he might find truth in a different way than I did. But I knew that he had to find it for himself. I had to give him that freedom."

That argument is what turned the tide of the Convention. In the end, they could not refute the argument that religious truth is something that everyone must find in his or her own far country. So that Constititutional Convention added some amendments. And the very first line of the First Amendment was the result of my father's arguments: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereo...." Which is the same thing as saying, "Every person in this nation is free to travel in his or her own far country of thought until he or she finds the truth."

You wonder why I'm here to tell this story? I'll be absolutely frank with you. I am here in this church today because, after all these years, I am still searching for the truth. I never went into my far country. I just accepted my parents' faith the way it was. As a result, I have no real faith of my own. I am hoping that maybe here, I can find my own way to truth. My brother did.

Some of you, I know, are in your own far country. Many of you, I am sure, have found truth in the man Jesus. I come here because I knew that here, at least, my struggles would be accepted, and I could find my own way to truth. □

NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

Eileen Barker. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1989. 224 pages, plus index.

The "main aims" of this book are two: "to provide some general background information about the new religious movements (NRMs)" and "to offer some preliminary suggestions to people who are concerned about what should be done when a relative, friend, student [or] parishioner ... has become involved in one of the movements." It does both, objectively but sensitively, with reference to the academic research literature, yet intelligibly, with wisdom and common sense.

Eileen Barker is a sociologist of religion at the London School of Economics who is widely respected on both sides of the Atlantic, author of many publications (including her award-winning *The Making of a Moonie*), and founder of INFORM (Information Network Focus on Religious Movements), funded by the Home Office and the Archbishop of Canterbury, which tries to provide objective data about new religious movements to troubled "enquirers."

Religious innovators have been a cause of much turbulence in every era and culture, and the United Kingdom, like the United States, has its share of them and of their vehement adversaries, the anti-"cult" movement. Dr. Barker threads her way adroitly between these two fires, being neither a critic of the new religious groups nor an apologist for them, though, of course, like anyone trying to tread a neutral course, she has been attacked from both sides.

She makes several important points repeatedly throughout the book: (l) the "cults" (a term she seldom uses because of its perjorative overtones) are *not* all alike; each has its unique beliefs, practices, strengths, and weaknesses; (2) they offer various attractions to young people that are not found (or not thought to be found) in older religions; (3) nevertheless, most young people who come in contact with them are not attracted; and (4) most of those few who are drawn into membership soon leave on their own initiative; many such groups have a huge natural turnover of membership every year. (A few remain and may find fulfilling careers as responsible leaders in religion.)

Dr. Barker has brief, informative chapters on Conversion or Mind Control; What do NRMs offer?; The New Convert; Areas of Public Concern; Effects on the Individual; Personal Relations and the Family; Parents' Reactions; Forcible Deprogramming; A Middle Way (between throwing up one's hands in despair and taking the law in one's own hands by forcible "rescue"); and Leaving a Movement. Several helpful appendices are attached, including one that quotes first-person accounts of five victims of (unsuccessful) deprogrammings, showing the trauma and resentment created; one that gives a brief description of 28 NRMs active in the British Isles (most of them also active in the U.S. and Europe). This last appendix is 50 pages long and in itself worth the price of the volume.

This work is designed to provide practical information for parents and others concerned about a loved one who has become involved with a "cult." The author is more patient and reasonable with such concerns than I might be and even quotes from some of the less hysterical anti-cult literature. While debunking some of the atrocious myths about "cults," she readily acknowledges that there are "worrying" aspects about some of them (one of her favorite words).

Among her conclusions are the following:

- The vast majority of those who become involved in an NRM suffer no serious damage as a result of their involvement. Many will testify that they gain considerable benefit.
- Forcible deprogramming is unethical, illegal, and based on an assumption about mind control that has been seriously undermined by a considerable body of scholarly research. It is also likely to result in more problems than it solves.
- Parents and friends of those who join in a new religious movement should make every possible effort to keep in touch and to foster a good relationship with the convert.
- It should never be forgotten that, in Western democracies, adult human beings have the right to enjoy religious liberty.

The media in this country and in the United Kingdom have done a great disservice in sensationalizing the "cult problem." This volume should be a great help in defusing some of the hysteria-hype that surrounds the subject and helping people to view it with some patience and understanding. □

Dean M. Kelley

INTERNATIONAL DATELINE

Baptists discuss future of minority churches

DORFWEIL, GDR

The role of the majority churches in Eastern European countries following recent revolutionary changes was a concern expressed here during the February meeting of world Baptists.

Oppressive communist regimes had held in check notably the Roman Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox churches.

While Baptists and other evangelicals often experienced tragic losses, under communism the former state churches likewise suffered extensive losses of property, wealth, and power.

Cases were reported of authorities occasionally favoring Free Church and other Protestant activity in an attempt at achieving a greater degree of religious equilibrium within the country (Yugoslavia, for example).

Now that communist governments have failed, the period of free-for-all politics has begun. In some cases, former all-powerful majority churches are in a very good position to exert strong influence in high places. There are serious concerns. For example:

USSR: While doors are open as never before for Baptist witness, some worry about the growing power of the Orthodox Church. One Baptist leader observed, "Under the oppression of the atheist period, the Orthodox Church was more "Protestant-minded." Evidence of emerging hostility was evident in the statement of one Orthodox churchman: "The main problem of the Christian Church is Protestantism."

Bulgaria: The Orthodox Church is trying to put pressure on the government to prevent passage of new religious laws that would grant freedom and equality to all churches.

Czechoslovakia: Relationships between Roman Catholics and Baptists are good. However, the proposed law governing religions has brought differences to the surface: Baptists want an end to state-support for salaries of priests, pastors, etc., while the larger Catholic Church feels it cannot afford this extreme move.

Hungary: the Hungarian Baptist Union's Janos Viczian lamented that the termination of the Council of Free Churches means diminished influence in face of growing Roman Catholic power in villages and towns, where Baptists bear the terrible name "sect."

Poland: Baptists enjoy a good relationship with the Roman Catholic Church. Piotr Dajludzionek said, however, "Solidarity is now come to power and is the long arm of the church." History indicates that such a majority status can mean trouble for religious minority groups.

Romania: "The most dangerous thing is that the Orthodox Church might become a state church," stated Nicolai Gheorghita, director of international relations for the Baptist Union of Romania. "Now, there is no department of religious affairs [to control religious equilibrium]."

Eastern European Baptists affirm the good relationships and mutuality they enjoy with the majority church leadership at the highest levels of ecclesiastical authority within their countries. They do make a strong distinction between the threats experienced at local levels and the acceptance and unity gained at the national or leadership level of these churches. **EBPS**

Religion fully protected under Hungary's new law

Hungary's National Assembly passed a long-awaited law that radically altered the legal basis for church-state relations and religious practice.

The legislation adopted in January provides religion more extensive legal protections from state interference than Hungary has ever known.

Under the new law, churches and religious communities will have an important cultural, educational, social, and patriotic function in Hungarian society.

The section on "The Right of Freedom of Religion and Conscience" stipulates that:

- The mass media may be used to promote religious views in accordance with legal regulations.
- No one may be disadvantaged for professing religious faith.
- No one may be prevented from practicing faith unless it interferes with the fulfillment of civil obligations.
- Religion may be practiced individually or collectively in public institutions, such as retirement homes, hospitals, and prisons.
- Parents have the right of providing religious education for their children.
- Soldiers may practice their faith as individuals on military premises and may do so collectively off military bases.

The section on "The Registration of the Churches" ends the practice of granting legal recognition by means of governmental decree. A fellowship with at least 100 members may obtain legal status; such registration can be denied only if the activities of the group are deemed by a court to be contrary to state law. **KNS**

Conditions opportune for Baptist Unity in So. Africa

Developments in South Africa are providing fresh opportunities for Baptists in America to assume the significant role of a reconciling presence in the move to eradicate the divisions created by apartheid between white and black Baptists.

Ivan George, Africa secretary for the American Baptist Churches' International Ministries, upon his return from a South Africa fact-finding tour, said his denomination can promote reconciliation by "helping our brothers and sisters in South Africa recognize that though their theological stances are different, they are complementary...."

George added that another path American Baptists can take toward bridging the divisions among Baptists is through sharing their resources and serving as a channel of service and support.

The opportunity to help unite Baptists from all races and economic levels of South Africa also is being taken up by the Southern Baptist Convention.

Introduction of a new dynamic—acceptance into membership of the Baptist Convention of South Africa by the Baptist World Alliance—is a contributing factor.

Previously, the SBC related only to recognized national groups; in South Africa, the Baptist Union of South Africa. Now SBC missionaries will work with the two groups, the predominantly black Convention and the predominantly white Union. Each body, however, has both black and white congregations as members.

South African leaders, while conceding that tensions exist between the Convention and the Union, share an optimism over the future. "It used to be a situation of whites evangelizing

blacks," said Trevor Swart, general secretary of the Union; "but now it's the total membership reaching out to everyone."

Gideon Makhanya, former executive secretary of the Convention, believes, "The Convention will work with Southern Baptists without recognizing racial boundaries."

George explained, "One of the questions we asked both the Union and the Convention was how apartheid appropriated within their own Christian experience."

"What we found," he added, "was that both groups have taken strong stands against apartheid and in their own ways have worked to eliminate it. They are far ahead of the government in progressive reforms."

George believes that another challenge before American Baptists will be to convince the various Baptist groups that "people don't surrender their integrity when they relate in different ways" in the struggle against apartheid. □

All-Union Council in USSR is renamed, restructured

MOSCOW

The office of general secretary of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the Soviet Union was abolished and the office of president strengthened in a restructuring move by the 44th Congress of the Union.

More than 700 delegates, from every republic in the U.S.S.R., were represented when the Congress was convened in February in Moscow's Izmailovu Conference Center.

Operating in the new atmosphere introduced by *perestroika* and *glasnost*, the Congress voted to change the name of the Union to the Evangelical Christian Baptist Union of the U.S.S.R., a move that suggests more autonomy for the Baptist Unions in the various republics.

Gregory Komendant, former deputy superintendent of Baptists in the Ukraine, was elected president of the Union.

Alexei Bichkov, who had held the now-abolished office of general secretary, was named to one of the three vice presidencies created under the restructuring. As vice president for education and communication, he is expected to maintain duties he has long held related to international representation.

Alexander Firisyuk and N. A. Kolesniko were elected as the other two vice presidents. Former president Vasile Logvinenko will remain superintendent for the Russian Federation; Michael Zhidkov, a former vice president, will retire but continue to work in social ministries. □

Nepal cracks down on non-Hindu religions

The Hindu kingdom of Nepal has intensified a crackdown against Christian activities, with a reported 168 cases against Christians now in the court system.

The country's best known evangelical leader, Charles Mendies, has been in prison since November, having been found guilty of "disturbance to the Hindu religion" by having placed Bibles in hotel rooms. Earlier, he had been acquitted by two lower courts for the activities that took place more than six years ago.

The court's ruling in the Mendies' conviction was based on intent rather than result and means that any Christian activity in Nepal is potentially liable to prosecution, relatives of the evangelical leader told News Network International.

Operation Mobilization, a British-based mission group working in Nepal, recently reported on an incident that took place last November, when police arrested 40 members of a Christian group in Bhaktapur and took them to prison.

According to the mission body, 25 Nepalese Christians are now in jail with cases pending, and another 143 are free on bail while awaiting disposition of the charges against them.

An NNI correspondent, who visited Nepal in January, said there has been a "Hinduization" drive in the country since 1988, resulting in greater pressure being put on all non-Hindu religions in the country. Buddhists also have suffered, with the confiscation of property and the beating of priests. □

NEWS-SCAN

Baptists continue their efforts toward full religious liberty in the Soviet Union. At their 44th Congress, Alexei Bichkov again called on the government to enact the long-awaited law on freedom of conscience and religious associations. Such legislation would grant religious groups legal entity status and greater autonomy and assure individuals the protection of their rights and liberties. ... The Methodist Church in Estonia added its support of three **Soviet army officers** who have become Christians. Two of the officers were summarily discharged from service, but the third, who wishes to leave the army, has been detained. All three attend the church in Tapa, where they were baptized. ... Bulgarian **Christians are demanding Bibles**, which have been in short supply since the communist takeover after World War II. The last printing in 1982 totaled 30,000 Bibles, published on paper supplied by the United Bible Societies. The new administration in Bulgaria is expected to find difficulty resisting the request for the Scriptures along with recognition of other religious rights. ... According to the press office of the Roman Catholic bishops in Berlin, **Christians in the GDR** number 6,221,450. Of these, 5,100,000 are members of the eight Protestant provincial churches, 1,050,000 are Roman Catholic, and 71,450 members of other churches or communities. ... Evidence available makes clear that authorities in China are taking coordinated **action against unauthorized Christian believers.** Reports from Hong Kong tell of clergy arrests, of two evangelists from Shanghai who were given prison sentences, while a well-known unregistered fellowship at Canton has been under continuous pressure. The pastor, Lin Xiangao, refuses to register his congregation, explaining that he would otherwise be compelled to tailor his preaching to government regulations. .... Students of the mechanics and mathematics faculty of Moscow University refused in January to take the **examinations in social and economic disciplines**, formerly known as scientific communism. The exams finally were cancelled. .... Cuban television in February carried a news broadcast of a church service, "the first time that a religious service has appeared on national **television news in Cuba**," commented Methodist minister Armando Rodriguez. □

Church-state separation captive to financial needs

PRAGUE

Jan Carnogursky, Czechoslovakia's deputy prime minister and leading lay Catholic, told a Keston College interviewer that the "Separation of church and state was a slogan which was used under communism, mainly by believers, to sum up their notion of religious freedom."

Keston also interviewed the nation's deputy prime minister for religious affairs, Josef Hromadka, who is synodical senior in the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren.

Hromadka pointed out that the dependence of churches upon government financial support weighs heavily in modifying the once-strong call for church-state separation.

He said that the Catholic Church, which at one point presented a petition in behalf of separation, has undergone change of mind. It is not accustomed to raising enough money to cover its needs.

Carnogursky said that role of religion in recent societal change was that of providing a framework within which those who disagreed with the totalitarian system could operate.

The Czechoslovakian government has not dealt with the whole range of issues affecting church-state relations but has abolished a 1949 law that requires a state license for pratically every church activity.

Hromadka, a Protestant, said he accepted the government appointment only with the support of the Catholic Cardinal Tomasek. "It would not have been possible without his support, and that support was very strong," he told Keston.

"I do not think the church should play a role in politics," Hromadka explained. "The church plays a role by just being the church and affecting policy."

He said, however, that about five percent of the members of his own church believe he should resign his church office because of the political position. The church's General Assembly affirms him in his decision to serve in government while holding church office.

Smaller churches because they are financially very strong, completely advocate separation. Within the next two months, it is expected that financial support will be even greater than at present. □

Spiritual Roots, from page 5

ney once said, Baptists are no longer "pilgrims"; we are now "tribesmen."[6]

By studying the Amish, we Baptists have a rare opportunity to view a rough picture of the way we used to be. Anabaptism has been called the "Dr. Pepper of evangelical traditions."[7] I fear that Baptists are becoming decarbonated Coke. There is, of course, no special virtue in tradition, nor is there any particular vice in change. But, as we Baptists grow and evolve, it is helpful constantly to be reminded of our spiritual and ecclesiastical heritage as touchstones for self-evaluation and self-criticism. Frankly, after living among the Amish for a short while and studying their ways, I think our quaint kinfolk may somehow be closer to the Kingdom than we modern Baptists. □

END NOTES

[1]J.C. Wenger, *How Mennonites Came to Be* (Scottdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1977), pp. 36–37.

[2]H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1987), p. 53.

[3]William R. Estep, *The Anabaptist Story* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1963), p. 189.

[4]*Ibid.* at *193.*

[5]Bill J. Leonard, Classroom lecture, SBTS, April 23, 1987.

[6]Dickson Lectures, 1974; quoted from John J. Carey, *Carlyle Marney: A Pilgrim's Progress* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1980), p. 138.

[7]Rodney Clapp, "The Anabaptist Option," *Christianity Today,* January 15, 1990, p. 61.

Life with Liberty

Government Intrusion into Religion

During the past generation many church-state conflicts have dealt with efforts by government to sponsor religion — such as officially sanctioned prayer in public schools and the support of church-related schools.

But the last several years have witnessed an increasingly troubling trend of government seeking to regulate religion. No area of First Amendment law troubles church-state specialists more than what they perceive as unwarranted and unconstitutional intrusion by the state into institutional religious life.

At the same time, Baptists must not become concerned exclusively about government intrusion to the neglect of standing firm against continuing efforts by churches to benefit from government largess, whether in the form of tax subsidies such as tuition tax credits or in the shape of improper government sponsorship of religious acts such as mandated school prayer. □

[Study guide includes questions, activities, and research suggestions.]

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A military metaphor has marched into the meeting house. When one hears of a "chain of command" related to a Baptist church, it is, indeed, a misplaced metaphor.

REFLECTIONS

James M. Dunn
Executive Director

Jesus would have liked Mexican food, jalapenos, Bluebell ice cream, and boiling hot chickory coffee. "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." (Rev. 3:15–16)

Baptists have been, at least on one side of the family, a part of the Radical Reformation not the Reasonable Reformation. Our forebears fought for freedom not toleration. They insisted upon separation of church and state not cozy cohabitation.

Our culture values "cool." Emotion is out. Moderate may mean merely medium. Temperateness can be tepidity. The worst thing about being called moderate might be that it's true. Look upon the sad soulless shells of former men who must consider the controversiality quotient of every utterance before it escapes their lips. The sense of one's own soul is so diminished that the requisite confidence for indignation has vanished.

Ordinary Baptists can be turned into timid doubters by blusterers who have no grasp of the roots of religious liberty. Yet, a man who saw himself an ordinary Baptist lined out in lay language the essence of what it means to be Baptist. Edgar Young Mullins gave all Baptists a snapshot of soul freedom in his book *The Axioms of Religion*.

E. Y. Mullins, accepted as a spokesman by Baptists of North and South, also possessed the perpetual indignation that marks all prophets. Perhaps we have forgotten what an ordinary Baptist is. The common attributes are outlined in *Axioms of Religion*. And because that is who we are and why we are Baptists we'd better not forget them.

One reason some people who are called Baptist can behave totally unbaptistically is that they reflect puritan rather than Baptist roots. Their malignant civil religion would allow government prescribed worship in public schools, tax support for parochial schools, federal funding for church nurseries, and the hollow and unfounded claims that this is a "Christian Nation."

Mullins, the prophet, hurled a bolt of quintessential Baptist doctrine into both the larger Baptist conventions at the beginning of this century. His propositions were warmly and widely accepted. The consensus that emerged kept Baptists from tearing each other apart in the fundamentalist-modernist controversy and allowed us to focus on experiential religion, proclamation of the gospel, practical Christianity, mission, and ministry. But the point is that *Axioms of Religion* is descriptive of what is most Baptist about us. The axioms:

1. "The *theological* axiom: The holy and loving God has a right to be sovereign." As Bill Leonard says, "God is free; freedom begins with God." All freedom is ultimately religious freedom.
2. "The *religious* axiom: Every human being is free to come directly to God."
3. "The *ecclesiastical* axiom: All believers have a right to equal privileges in the church."
4. "The *moral* axiom: To be responsible man must be free."
5. "The *religio-civic* axiom: A free Church in a free State."
6. "The *social* axiom: Love your neighbor as yourself." Personal freedom has communal implications.

The implications of these axioms are inextricably related to the practical, case-specific demands for religious liberty in 1990. One brings to the political dimension of church-state relations theological presuppositions. These theological underpinnings for church-state policy also reflect on our Baptistness or in some instances our un-Baptistness.

The importance of the individual interpretation of Scripture is a Baptist hallmark. Swedish Baptists were disparagingly called *lazare*, readers. They dared to read the Bible for themselves and so were hounded, jailed, and deported. Church and state have jailed Baptists for resisting creeds. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." (II Co. 3:17) There are Baptists who would usurp the teaching role of the Holy Spirit.

The priesthood of all believers is a biblical and Reformation doctrine that Baptists give an additional spin with soul freedom and the competency of the individual before God. Yet, there are those who are apparently troubled by what they see as the "undermining of pastoral authority," and they appeal for obedience and submission to one's pastor to keep unbridled personal priesthood in check.

We need to remember that the authority of veracity, ringing true, is the first significant component in all pastoral leadership, and that "there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." (I Tim. 2:5) Some would violate, in Truett's phrase, "the Crown Rights of the Son of God" by denying the unique Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Mullins' *ecclesiastical* axiom requires democracy in the local congregation. Baptists traditionally have been faithful to that high ideal; so much so that Martin Marty writes of the "baptistification" of America. That insistence of Baptists on equal privileges for all church members has clearly had societal and political impact. Yet, now there are those who would rather trust an autocracy of "godly men," the term often used. A military metaphor has marched into the meeting house. When one hears of a "chain of command" related to a Baptist church, it is, indeed, a misplaced metaphor.

The autonomy of the local church has been the principle recognized in Baptist relationships. Every congressional testimony given by the Baptist Joint Committee, every *amicus* brief filed before a court, and every positional document developed by those who respect that autonomy begins with a caveat that "no one speaks for Baptists." Yet, some today would engage in the support of candidates or nominees on behalf of Baptists.

We have understood and understand today that separation of church and state does not mean separation of God and government or separation of religion from politics or separation of Christians from their citizenship. It is, however, a hedge, a guardrail, a guarantee that government will not meddle in the business of religion. It pledges that it is none of the business of government to define the nature and mission of the church. It is a two-way street granting the churches no special favors, taking no tax dollars from everyone to advance the religion of anyone.

God leads us down a path that makes us unsettled and perpetually indignant. But we cannot be Baptist without following in that way. This course calls for courage not tepidity. □

REVIEWS

THOMAS MUNTZER, A Tragedy of Errors

Eric W. Gritsch. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 1989.

Eric W. Gritsch, professor of church history at Lutheran Theological Seminary in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, has displayed an enduring interest in the German Anabaptist Thomas Müntzer.

More than 20 years ago, he published a book titled *Reformer Without a Church, The Life and Times of Thomas Müntzer* (1488?–1525). And in 1989 he published the work which is here reviewed.

This second book on Müntzer is a valuable, well-documented, erudite, but somewhat hazy work. This haziness results from the nature of the language of both Müntzer and Gritsch. What emerges, however, from this dual haze with some measure of clarity follows.

His Life

Müntzer was born sometime around 1489 and spent his childhood in Stolberg, a small town near the Harz mountains in what is now East Germany. There, he received his early education in the Latin School, learning Latin and music. He later received the degrees of bachelor of arts, master of arts, and the biblical baccalaureate; where is not known.

In 1517, Müntzer moved from Stolberg to Wittenberg in order to participate in Luther's Reformation. But in 1519, he moved to Juterbog, where he preached against the Franciscans. In the same year, he moved to Beuditz, where, most remarkably for a Lutheran, he became father confessor in a Cistercian monastery. In 1521, he was temporary pastor of St. Mary's Church in Zwickau, where again he attacked the Franciscans. In the same year, however, he was in Zaza and Prague and became temporary pastor in Allstedt. But on August 10, 1524, he moved to Muhlhausen. In early 1525, he visited the Anabaptist Conrad Grebel in Zurick. In the same year, he moved back to Muhlhausen, then to Langensalza. He joined the Peasants' Revolt, promising complete victory for the peasants. But the peasants were defeated, and on May 27, 1525, Müntzer was captured and beheaded. A violent end to a restless and violent life.

His Character and Theology

Müntzer was as arrogant as he was violent. He described himself as a reformer who would do more to reform the church than all the others and as a new Daniel who alone among the religious leaders of his time had the true message.

His theology was mystical, spiritual, theocratic, egalitarian, communistic, and violent. It was thoroughly mystical, stressing the importance of the mystical union of God and man. According to Gritsch, "His language bristles with terminology echoing German mystics."

It was spiritual in the sense that it emphasized the importance of experiencing the Holy Spirit. It was theocratic in the sense that Müntzer in his Manifesto of November 1521, maintained that he (Müntzer) was "initiating the final age of the world, at which time God would restore the original, sinless order of creation."

As a leader of the Peasants' Revolt, he evidenced in his theology its egalitarian, communistic, and violent natures, trying to "make everyone equal in Christendom," "to share goods according to needs," and "to kill princes opposed to this purpose."

Müntzer and Luther

When Luther initiated his reformation in Wittenberg in 1517, the relationship between Müntzer and Luther was so friendly that Müntzer moved to Wittenberg and was regarded by Luther as one of the Lutheran Reformers.

This friendly relationship, however, soon turned to hostility. The two reformers discovered that they differed regarding the Holy Spirit and Holy Scripture. Luther believed that Christian faith and worship are created by the Holy Spirit *and* the Holy Scripture, while Müntzer maintained that they are created by the Holy Spirit *alone* and not by the "dead letter" of Holy Scripture.

When the Peasants' Revolt occurred in 1524–25, the two reformers opposed each other. Luther rejected the revolt because it used violence, and Müntzer supported it because of that same violence. The result of these differences was a vitriolic relationship between the two. In the summer of 1524, Luther called Müntzer "satanic" and said that when preachers such as Müntzer "begin to destroy and use force" they should be banished. And Müntzer replied with a bitter attack in which he called Luther "the Soft-living Flesh of Wittenberg" and "Doctor Liar." Gritsch rightly remarks that "the two reformers finished in a swamp of mutual slander."

Müntzer and Communism

Müntzer was one of the earliest communists of the modern world. He completely agreed with the purpose of the Peasants' Revolt, which was "to make everyone equal in Christendom" and "to share goods according to need." He joined the revolt believing that he was the "new Daniel" who would lead the revolt to victory.

It is therefore not surprising that "the earliest Marxist-Socialist-Communist movement adopted him as a forerunner of the Marxist cause." Engels regarded the revolt of 1525 as an event pointing to the final emancipation of the oppressed classes of society. And Karl Kautsky and Ernst Bloch maintained that communism had been anticipated in Müntzer's religious visions.

One sign of this recognition of Müntzer as a pioneer of modern communism is that his picture is printed on the five Mark of East Germany.

Today, however, the communism for which Müntzer lived and died is crumbling throughout the Russian-dominated world. It is becoming an amalgam of communism and capitalism, as dictatorship yields to democracy, violence to discussion, and tyranny to liberty. No title for a book on Müntzer could be more appropriate than the one chosen by Gritsch: *Thomas Müntzer: A Tragedy of Errors.*

Arthur B. Crabtree

Reviewers

Arthur Crabtree has taught at the Baptist Seminary, Ruschlikon, Switzerland, and at Eastern Seminary and Villanova University in the suburban Philadelphia area. He is now retired. **Dean Kelley** directs the Religious and Civil Liberties work for the National Council.

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