

# REPORT from the CAPITAL

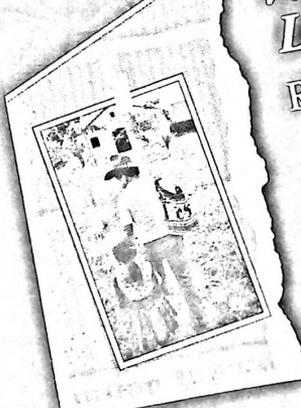
As you Christ  
received the Lord,  
so live in him!  
COL. 2:6



*Walking in Christ,  
Living by Faith.*

RELIGIOUS  
LIBERTY  
DAY

1990



Baptist Joint Committee  
on Public Affairs  
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# REPORT from the CAPITAL

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

Vol. 45, No. 5

May 1990

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## Religious Liberty, 1990

Over the past decade, Religious Liberty Day has highlighted biblical, Baptist heritage, and contemporary themes. Yet, it always became evident that the three foci could not be neatly isolated. They allude to distinctives that Baptists have espoused — "soul liberty," the priesthood of believers, and the separation of church and state. Inevitably, each one reminds us that faith and practice are of one substance.

"Walking in Christ, Living by Faith," our theme for the June 1990 observance, celebrates the unmediated redemptive experience in Jesus Christ. In Him, according to the text (Colossians 2), "all the fullness of Deity dwells." And then, truths that gladden the heart: "In Him you have been made complete," and "He is the head over all rule and authority." Our cover graphically illustrates examples of individuals in their faith journeys — all persevering in spite of economic and political hardships.

William Hull reminds us that Baptists were a freedom movement some 150 years before the French or American Revolutions. But it took the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights to provide the environment in which Baptists could flourish. That heritage of "soul freedom" and church-state separation provides continuity to the Baptist mission that Hull aptly summarizes: "to offer a wall-weary world unfettered access to God and to all God's children."

While Hull's immediate reference is to the wall that once divided Berlin, C. Fred Kleinknecht warns of threats to another wall, the one so guardedly treasured by Thomas Jefferson. That "wall of separation" is under siege by religious groups that lobby for public funds for their programs. More alarming, some current attitudes on the U.S. Supreme Court are viewed as having even greater potential for eroding time-honored interpretations. The Baptist "mortar" of unswerving commitment to freedom of religion in the context of the organic separation of church and state historically has given that "wall" a measure of endurance.

Legal counsel Oliver Thomas in VIEWS notes that the "separation" issue increasingly appears in the courts, as churches become part of this litigious society. But because Americans seem bent on being misled, as the ubiquitous O'Hara petitions demonstrate, Brent Walker writes of the need among Christians "to develop and nurture a certain measure of dubiety and spiritual discernment to evaluate the events that impact their daily lives." Government officials will be kept busy enough without having to deal with nonexistent proposed legislation.

The newly formed Religious Liberty Council is a reminder that preservation of religious liberty requires a collective effort. These friends of the BJC share in common their Baptist heritage and their dedication to "preserving and extending the effectiveness of the Baptist Joint Committee." In REFLECTIONS, James Dunn lists a number of these people. □

Victor Tupitza



● **THE U.S. CONSTITUTION** does not require a state to allow the religious use of the drug peyote, the Supreme Court has ruled.

The high court held the state of Oregon not only can prohibit the use of peyote but also can deny unemployment compensation to individuals dismissed from their jobs for using the drug.

The case involved two drug rehabilitation counselors who were fired for using peyote as part of Native American Church ceremonies. They were turned down for unemployment compensation because they had been discharged for work-related misconduct.

The Oregon Court of Appeals reversed that decision, holding the denial of benefits violated the men's free exercise of religion rights. The Oregon Supreme Court concurred.

After hearing the case, the U.S. Supreme Court sent it back to the Oregon Supreme Court for determination of whether the sacramental use of peyote was prohibited under Oregon's controlled substance law.

Although the Oregon court held such use of the drug did fall within the state law's prohibition, it also held the law to be invalid in light of the First Amendment's free exercise clause.

The case then went back to the high court.

Writing for the court, Justice Antonin Scalia said, "If prohibiting the exercise of religion is . . . merely the incidental effect of a generally applicable and otherwise valid provision, the First Amendment has not been offended."

Although concurring with the majority's judgment, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor wrote an opinion opposing most of Scalia's arguments.

She flatly rejected Scalia's contention that a "compelling state interest" test should not be applied to most free exercise of religion cases.

In its 1963 decision in *Sherbert v. Verner*, the Supreme Court set forth a test requiring that governmental actions that substantially burden a religious practice must be justified by a compelling governmental interest.

But Scalia said the test should be applied only in unemployment compensation cases.

"The government's ability to enforce generally applicable prohibitions of socially harmful conduct, like its ability to carry out other aspects of public policy, cannot depend on measuring the effects of a governmental action on a religious objector's spiritual development,"

Scalia wrote.

Such application of the test would produce a "constitutional anomaly," opening the prospect of constitutionally required religious exemptions from almost every conceivable kind of civic obligation, Scalia said.

O'Connor wrote, however, that the compelling interest test "reflects the First Amendment's mandate of preserving religious liberty to the fullest extent possible in a pluralistic society. For the court to deem this command a 'luxury' is to denigrate the very purpose of the Bill of Rights."

The court's decision is a dangerous one that has serious implications for all laws affecting churches, said Oliver S. Thomas, general counsel for the Baptist Joint Committee.

"Taxation of church assets, regulation of church schools and child-care centers, zoning and other land-use questions are all areas of the law where we've relied upon the compelling state interest test to provide churches with exemptions," Thomas said. "With a stroke of his pen, Justice Scalia has overturned 27 years of legal precedent and made the 'first liberty' a constitutional stepchild."

● **THE U.S. SUPREME COURT** has sent a dispute over a Minnesota law that requires Amish to display slow-moving vehicle emblems on horse-drawn vehicles back to that state.

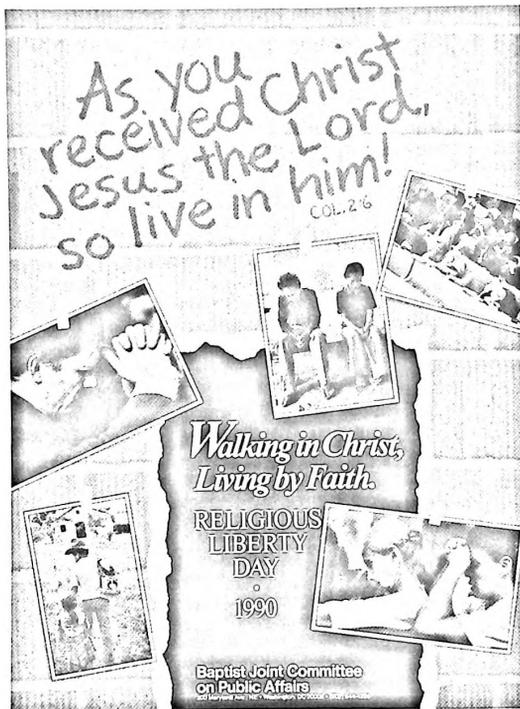
The court vacated the judgment in *Minnesota v. Hershberger* and instructed the Minnesota Supreme Court to reconsider the case in light of a recent decision that limits the application of a "compelling state interest" test in free exercise of religion cases. (See previous story.)

The dispute over the Minnesota law began when 14 members of the Old Order Amish refused to place red and orange triangular warning signs on their buggies, claiming it would violate their religious beliefs.

A district court judge upheld the sign law, saying Minnesota was justified by "a compelling state interest in requiring a uniform and universally recognized emblem."

But the Minnesota Supreme Court overturned the decision, holding the Amish have a "sincere religious belief" that is protected by the First Amendment.

# The Baptist Idea in Today's World



**W**hen all is said and done, the Baptist denomination will flourish or falter on the strength of its most basic idea. If our ultimate reason-for-being speaks compellingly to an enduring need of the human heart, then we can be used as agents of that cosmic redemption which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. But if our deepest identity is not shaped and sustained by some grand dimension of His gospel, then we will finally wither and wane no matter how frequently we struggle to survive. In search of the distinctive principle which has made us what we are, let us look first to "the rock from which we were hewn and the pit from which we were digged" (Isaiah 51:1).

## Our Heritage

The Protestant Reformation was part of that vast ferment through which Christianity passed in an effort to renew itself by challenging the traditional culture to which it had been wed for a thousand years. In England, the more radical reformers were not content merely to prune the excesses of medieval Catholicism but determined to restore the church to its apostolic purity. Hence the name Puritans, some of whom were driven by conscience to become Separatists, then Dissenters, and finally Baptists, born in the fires of persecution because they dared to challenge the established church and hence the entire social system which had existed since the time of the Emperor Constantine.

At the center of this revolt was an insistence on the right of personal decision in religious affairs. Martin Luther had given theological legitimacy to this new voluntarism in his doctrine of justification by faith, but the Baptists carried their demand for self-determination into every area affecting beliefs. In so doing, they became a revolutionary vanguard championing the primacy of individuals over institutions, of commitment over conformity, of autonomy over authority, of experience over establishment. Underlying all of these emphases was a stress on the sovereignty of the human soul in spiritual matters.

In essence, Baptists emerged as a freedom movement, 150 years before the American and French revolutions forever altered our understanding of individual rights. That explains why they languished in Europe throughout most of the 17th and 18th centuries, as well as in America for almost 200 years until the Constantinian legacy of established churches was abolished at the beginning of the 19th century. When the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights began to be implemented, Baptists at last found themselves in a climate where they could flourish. As a people of free churches in a free land, they quickly became, by the 20th century, the largest evangelical movement in America. Why this dramatic reversal of fortunes? Because Baptists were uniquely suited by history and conviction to offer common people an understanding of the Christian faith that coincided with their quest for freedom in a new land of opportunity.

What Martin Marty today calls "Baptistification" becomes the wave of the future in those countries seeking to throw off

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Dr. Hull is provost of Samford University, Birmingham, Alabama. His address was delivered before the annual convention of Baptists in North Carolina.

the yoke of a colonial or totalitarian past. In "Old World" countries where the hierarchical structures of a Constantinian heritage still dominate, Baptists are weak: England, Canada, Scandinavia, Continental Europe. But in "New World" countries where freedom is struggling for expression, Baptist growth is greatest: Russia, China, Korea, Africa, Latin America. Why? Because these are the places where the multitudes welcome our Baptist passion for individual self-determination, for freedom of choice, for personal experience. The lessons of history are clear: Baptists are at their best when they share "the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Romans 8:21) with those who are hungry for freedom as the key to their highest fulfillment.

What, then, is our manifest destiny shaped by the past, and our urgent opportunity offered by the future? To become again the "freedom movement" that we have always been. To seek out those with a stifled yearning for emancipation from the rigidities of modern life: those whose vision is constricted by lack of adequate education, those who chafe under ethnic prejudice or gender discrimination, those trapped in a stagnant economy without any chance for productive work, those who have migrated or immigrated to a place of permanent homelessness and are desperately in search of roots, those constrained by a collectivist business culture that offers prosperity at the price of captivity. Everywhere within our land, and far beyond its shores, are what Emma Lazarus called "huddled masses yearning to breathe free." If we will lift high the torch of Christian liberty in our day, as we have done so bravely in years gone by, then the freedom seekers of earth, who are still the vast majority of its citizens, will turn to us in hopes of finding for themselves "the freedom with which Christ has set us free" (Galatians 5:1).

### Our Hope

How may this be done? By fearlessly proclaiming, in word and in deed, those convictions which have always been at the bedrock of our Baptist understanding of the Gospel. Chief among these has been our insistence on the primacy of personal conversion. Basic to the Baptist idea is a transforming encounter with God as we know him in Jesus Christ through the witness of the Holy Spirit. So immediate is this divine/human relationship that there can be no proxy interposed between one's soul and the Saviour. Confession is completely uncoerced, baptism is voluntarily chosen, church membership is freely accepted and daily renewed.

To be sure, there are risks inherent in

a religion of personal experience: subjective deception, psychological manipulation, emotional excesses. But Baptists dare believe that God is intensely personal, seeks relationships with God's own, is great enough to authenticate His presence so that even the humblest believer can distinguish faith from fantasy. To insist upon conversion does not rule out the importance of nature, as if everything is settled by an instantaneous and catastrophic change. But it does embrace a high view of human nature that contends that, slowly but surely, every person can be transformed from one order of being to another, a change so decisive that we are justified in calling it a "new birth."

This foundational understanding of the Christian life affects our approach to Holy Scriptures as "the sole rule of faith and order." Historically, Baptists used this axiom to set the Bible above every creedal dogma, canon law, or papal edict that would prescribe the content of faith. But this does not mean that we were "for" the Bible while other denominations were "against" it. On the contrary, our most exalted words for the Bible — such as "inspired," "authoritative," and "infallible" — were borrowed from the confessions of others, especially in the Reformed tradition. The key issue, rather, was that the Constantinian churches tended to view ecclesiastical tradition as prescribing the correct way of interpreting the Bible, whereas Baptists insisted on going back to the Bible itself and interpreting it afresh under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Once again we may acknowledge the audacity of choosing the unsupervised interpretations of rank amateurs (i.e., laity) over the carefully controlled interpretations of experts (i.e., clergy). The former was spontaneous while the latter had been sifted by centuries of usage. But Baptists did not take lightly their freedom to interpret the Bible for themselves. Instead, they pioneered a Sunday School movement which offered each member an opportunity to study the Scriptures avidly, while many of their detractors were so complacent about the received tradition that they seldom bothered to go back and investigate its ultimate source. Implicit in the Baptist approach is a high expectation that even modestly educated lay persons, if genuinely led by the Spirit of God, can go directly to the Bible and decide what it means for their lives. As with access to God in conversion, so access to God in Scripture must be unmediated and uncoerced.

This conviction, that the Christian life grows best when guided by persuasion from within rather than by pressure from without, accounts for our emphasis on "soul competency" and the "priest-

hood of the believer." These doctrines are not efforts to sidestep accountability for the spiritual decisions which we make. Rather, they are ways of saying that spiritual decisions are best made as acts of self-determination and not in response to demands by "the powers that be." We have trumpeted "separation of church and state" as a watchword, not because religion is good and politics is bad, but because we want to create an independent domain, free from entangling alliances with civil authority, where God alone is sovereign over the human spirit. We have no desire to shirk any temporal duty as citizens of the state, but neither do we want any earthly Caesar telling us what we should "render unto God" (Mark 12:17).

It is precisely here that our passionate commitment to evangelism may be understood. If Baptists cannot depend upon the laws of government, or the traditions of culture, or the pressures of society to insure the survival of Christianity, then we must accept the responsibility for personal soul-winning ourselves. When the voluntary baptism of believers replaces the automatic baptism of infants, the church then is always one generation away from extinction. So Baptists insist on the right to propagate our faith, not because we have all of the answers or because we are trying to build some triumphalistic empire, but because every person on the face of the earth has the right to a free and independent choice!

### Our Heart

Our basic Baptist idea of freedom places us at the center of one of the great ferments in world history. Perhaps the most decisive issue of our epoch is whether earth's children are to be governed from below or from above. Will human destiny be determined by the common people, the disenfranchised masses, the neglected majority? Or by the traditional elites, the hereditary aristocracies, the privileged minority? A long-suppressed grassroots yearning for freedom is beginning to assert itself around the world as whole populations, particularly in the totalitarian Second World and the developing Third World, cry out for the inalienable right to choose their own future.

Nowhere is this ferment more apparent today than the Berlin Wall which, since August 13, 1961, has served as a potent symbol of human frustration in the quest for freedom. Overnight this hideous barricade amputated a brave city in its midsection, condemning more than a million of its citizens to collective claustrophobia. During the past 28 years, it steadily grew to become a death strip of land mines, self-firing machine guns,

Continued on page 14

## VIEWS OF THE WALL

Oliver S. Thomas  
General Counsel



Lawyer-bashing is fast becoming a national pastime. Jokes abound, from the quick and dirty — "What's black and tan and looks good on a lawyer?" "A doberman." — to the more elaborate quizzes — "A high-priced lawyer, a low-priced lawyer and Santa Claus were sitting around a table with a thousand dollars on it. The lights went out, and when they came back on the money was gone. Who took the money?" "The high-priced lawyer, because the other two people are a figment of your imagination."

Actually, lawyers are essential to any civil society. We Americans, in particular, pride ourselves on being a nation of laws, not men. Crafting laws requires lawyers, and nowhere is this more evident than in the field of church-state relations. As churches have become more involved in providing social services such as medical care, child care, and education, the likelihood of government regulation has increased. At the same time, taxing authorities have become more aggressive, prospective employees more hostile, and society more litigious. These developments have caused a dramatic increase in the need for experienced and competent legal counsel to assist churches with their problems.

My predecessor at the Baptist Joint Committee, the late John Baker, although already a Ph.D. in political science, anticipated the rising demand for legal expertise in the church-state field in the mid '70s and enrolled in night law school. Today, we have two attorneys and a paralegal on the BJC staff, and we're busier than ever.

A typical week may find our legal department wading through a complex set of federal regulations or filing a brief in the United States Supreme Court. More likely, however, we will be providing information and assistance to local churches and denominational agencies that have encountered less lofty, but oftentimes more frustrating, legal problems.

A recent week in the life of the BJC legal department illustrates the type of service we routinely provide.

On Monday a Baptist child-care agency asked advice about whether to contract with a state to provide foster care services to juveniles placed under the state's custody. Would the arrangement violate the constitutionally mandated separation of church and state?

### Crafting laws requires lawyers, and nowhere is this more evident than in the field of church-state relations.

What, if any, regulation of the Baptist state convention might result from this arrangement? Can the foster parents share their faith with the children placed in their care?

On Tuesday a call came from a church concerned about a proposal to force churches to conduct background checks on all employees who work in church child-care centers to determine if they have ever been convicted of crimes involving children. Could the state impose such a requirement on churches? Even if the state legislature exempted churches, could churches still be held liable if workers were not screened and later molested children placed in their care?

The next day a local church called to inquire about whether it could contract with a state college to provide literacy classes at the church. Could the church accept payment for the space provided? Would federal civil rights laws be triggered by the contract? Could the church use the college's class roll for follow-up visits by the church's Sunday school?

Thursday's call came from the business administrator of a church with a child-care center. The mother of one of the children enrolled in the church center is a student at the local community college. The college assists its students with their child-care expenses, so the church had received a check from the college for half of the child's tuition. Should the church accept the check? What kinds of regulation, if any, would accepting this money incur?

On Friday a church called about its practice of advertising its youth program in a local high school newspaper. Was such a practice constitutional? Could the school refuse future advertisements as part of an across-the-board policy of not including potentially controversial advertisements? Does the church have any free speech rights?

From property tax to political endorsements, questions pour in — each one requiring the assistance of a qualified and experienced attorney. To paraphrase the apostle Paul, we at the BJC count it

all joy to be able to provide this service to Baptists.

As the director of the BJC's legal department, I am particularly proud of our committed and capable staff. Without them, the agency couldn't assist Baptists in such practical ways. Our most recent addition to the staff, Brent Walker, gave up a lucrative career in one of Florida's most prestigious law firms to live on a denominational employee's salary in one of America's most expensive cities. His co-worker, Rosemary Brevard, a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Texas, has given 23 years of her life to serving Baptists in the nation's capital. Brent's experience as a Baptist pastor and Rosemary's lengthy tenure as a Baptist lay leader and Sunday school teacher make them uniquely qualified to assist churches with complex legal problems. Each is skilled in the law, but each also understands the issues as only one who is serving in a local church can.

As both a minister and a lawyer, I, too, try to approach my work in the multi-disciplinary way that is most successful in the church-state arena. When local pastors call with questions concerning malpractice, clergy confidentiality, church discipline, etc., I understand their concerns because I've walked in their shoes.

Kill all the lawyers? Let's hope not. It's my opinion that some of us may actually be doing some good. Besides, who would we have to kick around? □

### 22nd National Religious Liberty Conference

#### *Freedom's Spiritual Roots*

#### *Baptists and the Bill of Rights*

October 1—3, 1990  
Washington, D.C.

*Sponsored by*  
The Baptist Joint Committee

Mssrs. Nehemiah Dodge, Ephraim Robbins, and Stephen S. Nelson a Committee of the Danbury Baptist Association in the state of Connecticut.

Gentlemen,

The affectionate sentiments of esteem and approbation which you are so good as to express towards me on behalf of the Danbury Baptist Association, give me the highest satisfaction. My duties dictate a faithful and zealous pursuit of the interests of my constituents, and in proportion as they are persuaded of my fidelity to those duties, the discharge of them becomes more and more pleasing.

Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between man and his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legitimate powers of government reach actions

Thomas Jefferson's letter to the Danbury Baptist Association. January 1, 1802. Reprinted from a document in the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

only and not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should "make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," thus building a wall of separation between Church and State. Adhering to this expression of the supreme will of the nation in behalf of the rights of conscience, I shall see with sincere satisfaction the progress of those sentiments which tend to restore to man all his natural rights, convinced he has no natural right in opposition to his social duties.

I reciprocate your kind prayers for the protection and blessing of the common father and creator of man, and tender you for yourselves and your religious association, assurances of my high respect and esteem.

(Signed) Thomas Jefferson

# Wall Under Siege

By C. Fred Kleinknecht

Last October, four U.S. Supreme Court justices joined several hundred other judges, lawyers, and public officials at the "Red Mass" in Washington, D.C. The mass, an annual worship service sponsored by the Roman Catholic Church, offers a blessing for members of the legal profession, men and women of all faiths, at the start of a new court term.

The occasion is meant to be apolitical, an event akin to prayer breakfasts and other civil religious observances. But during the October mass something disturbing occurred. The chief speaker, Archbishop Anthony J. Bevilacqua of Philadelphia, unleashed a stinging attack on the principle of church-state separation.

Dismissing the "wall of separation between church and state," Bevilacqua remarked, "The time has come to restore the vital relationship between religion and law, church and society. This opposition, this impregnable wall ... cannot endure much longer."

Bevilacqua, who is a lawyer as well as a priest, told the assemblage that the wall, if allowed to stand, will produce "a barrier between religion and society and lead to moral decay."

While it is always sad to see such misguided attacks on church-state separation, it is especially disheartening in this case because four high court justices were present to hear and be influenced by Bevilacqua's opinion.

What is even more unfortunate is that at least one of those justices, Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist, long ago took a stand similar to the archbishop's. In 1985 Rehnquist called the wall of separation, a phrase Thomas Jefferson coined nearly 200 years ago, a "useless metaphor" and recommended that it be "frankly and explicitly abandoned."

It would be a mistake to dismiss the thinking of the archbishop and Rehnquist as aberrations. Rather, their words represent a trend of thinking that is becoming all too common.

Many people would be surprised to learn church-state separation is under fire today as never before. Slowly and methodically a movement has developed to chip away at "the wall." It is a trend that, unfortunately, is gaining strength.

This movement takes many forms. In several states, advocates of private sectarian schools are relentlessly pressing their demands for state assistance. Such "parochial" schemes — whether they take the form of vouchers, tuition tax

credits or other methods — would mean that all taxpayers would be forced to support religious education whether they agree with its tenets or not.

Aside from the great damage these proposals would do to public education, there is a more basic reason why they should be opposed. It is simply wrong to require any citizen to support any religious body or its schools. Rather, religious instruction should be financed through the voluntary contributions of its supporters. Nevertheless, proponents of such aid plow ahead, promoting what amounts to a religious tax — all this in an attempt to restore public morality, or rather, *their* version of public morality.

The point is that far from damaging public morality, separation of church and state does exactly the opposite. By keeping the long arm of the government out of religion, citizens are free to develop and promote religious, moral, and philosophical ideas.

In the United States, the results of the separation principle speak for themselves. Americans enjoy a measure of religious freedom unparalleled throughout the world. Those less fortunate — the oppressed around the world — must look toward the United States with envy.

In addition, separation of church and state has helped keep the United States relatively free of sectarian violence and interfaith disharmony. Hundreds of religious denominations exist peacefully side by side here. It is a situation for which the residents of Northern Ireland, Lebanon, India, and other countries must long.

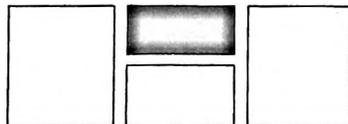
Because separation of church and state is so basic to American freedoms, support for the principle is one of the essential objectives of Scottish Rite Freemasonry. We proudly defend the American legacy of religious liberty and work diligently to ensure that future generations enjoy the freedoms we too often take for granted.

Jefferson's wall has stood as a bulwark of religious liberty for nearly two centuries, yet it is under determined assault today. Only a concentrated effort on the part of those who value the wisdom of the Founding Fathers will make certain that those who advocate tearing down the wall do not prevail. □

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The author is Sovereign Grand Commander, the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Southern Jurisdiction. "Wall under Siege" is reprinted from the *Scottish Rite Journal*.

# News in Brief



## House debates, approves child-care legislation

WASHINGTON

The House of Representatives has approved child-care legislation that would establish a voucher system for parents, provide tax credits for low-income families, and set up school-based programs for "latchkey" children.

The bill, which would cost an estimated \$28 billion over five years, represents a compromise between proposals by House Democrats on the Education and Labor Committee and the Ways and Means Committee.

Despite the threat of a presidential veto, the House approved the measure 265 to 145 after rejecting a White House-supported substitute.

As approved by the House, the legislation would:

- Expand the Earned Income Tax Credit to help low-income families obtain child care. The bill would increase the amount of the EITC — which is available only to working families with children — and adjust the credit for family size.

- Increase funding for the Title XX Social Services Block Grant program, earmarking those increases for child care. States accepting those funds would be required to establish child-care standards and training requirements.

- Establish a program that would use schools to provide care for pre-school children and before-school and after-school care for school-aged children. Most of these services would be targeted for children from low-income families.

- Authorize additional funds to expand Head Start to a full-day, year-round program.

- Provide money to states to improve the quality of child care.

- Offer incentives to encourage private businesses to provide care for their employees' children.

The House measure also incorporates provisions for sectarian providers from the child-care legislation passed by the Senate last June.

Under the House bill, states that receive Title XX child-care funds would be required to establish a system of child-care vouchers, which could be used to purchase care from church-based centers.

Although the measure would prohibit

the use of Title XX funds for "any sectarian purpose, including sectarian worship and instruction," it would exclude assistance in the form of vouchers from that prohibition.

The bill would allow sectarian programs to require their employees to adhere to the religious tenets and teachings of the organization operating the program. It also would permit such programs to require their employees not to use drugs or alcohol.

Religious child-care providers receiving less than 80 percent of their funds from federal and state governments would be allowed to give preference in hiring based on religion, as well as to admit children on the basis of religious preference for slots not directly funded by Title XX.

The House rejected an amendment that would have prohibited the use of any federal funds — including vouchers — under the Title XX program for any sectarian purpose, including worship or instruction. The amendment would have allowed religious organizations to receive federal funds if they operated non-sectarian programs.

Members also rejected an amendment that would have made voucher programs optional, not mandatory, for states.

In a 195 to 225 vote, the House defeated a substitute bill sponsored by Reps. Charles W. Stenholm, D-Texas, and E. Clay Shaw, R-Fla. The measure was supported by the Bush administration.

Although in some aspects similar to the House-approved bill, the Stenholm-Shaw substitute would not have authorized funds for school-based programs; would not have provided as much additional funding to Head Start and Title XX programs; and would not have required states to develop child-care standards.

The House bill now goes to a conference committee with the Senate. Once a compromise is worked out, it will have to be approved by both the House and the Senate before being sent to the White House for President Bush's signature. Should the president veto the bill, Congress would have to muster a two-thirds vote in order to override the veto and enact the legislation. □

## BJC hosts briefing for Baptist editors

WASHINGTON

Sessions on the U.S. Supreme Court, the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, churches and taxation, ethics in Congress, clergy malpractice, and urban ministries, as well as visits to the White House and the embassy of the U.S.S.R., highlighted a Washington briefing for Baptist editors.

The March 14-15 briefing, sponsored by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, attracted editors of Baptist state newspapers and writers from Baptist Press bureaus.

During a two-hour briefing in the White House's Roosevelt Room, President George Bush dropped by to greet the editors and answer questions. Bush commented on a variety of topics, ranging from drugs to Central America to the Soviet Union to China.

"For the first time, I think we're making progress in this war" against drugs, the president said. He told the editors his administration needs their input, help, and advice as it continues to fight the nation's drug problem.

Shifting to developments in Nicaragua, Bush pledged American support. "We have an emergency," he said. "We need to help them guarantee their democracy."

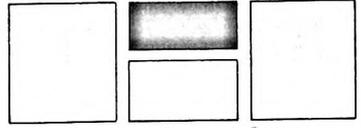
In discussing changes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, Bush called Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev a "different kind of leader." Gorbachev may or may not prevail, Bush said, explaining that the Soviet leader has so many problems at home. "I salute him for staying with the concept of peaceful change," he added.

Bush said he is not as encouraged by the situation in China. He specifically cited the human rights issue in that country.

Participants in the editors' briefing also met with Supreme Court Justice Harry A. Blackmun. During the off-the-record session, Blackmun spoke about such issues as the high court's future, church-state separation, abortion, and the death penalty.

Several speakers provided perspectives on changes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

John Finerty, a staff member for the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, reported on religious liberty advances being made in the Soviet



Union, including the release of all Baptist religious prisoners and increased evangelical activity outside the church.

Baptists in that country are involved in prison ministry, charitable volunteer work, open-air libraries, newspaper publishing, and Bible and literature distribution, said Finerty, a Southern Baptist who travels frequently in the Soviet Union.

Although progress is being made, Finerty said, he received reports of police breaking up prayer meetings as late as last year. "Some government officials still have the attitude that if you don't have a piece of paper you can't do it," he said.

Another CSCE staff member, Judy Ingram, reported on human rights developments in Eastern Europe. Up to a year ago, she said, a general pattern existed in that region, but now seven models can be found.

Commenting on religious rights, she said: "Initially, I think the situation in Eastern Europe looks good. But in some places, you still do have to register your church, and the government may say, 'No.'"

Eastern Europe has had a long drought of religious literature, and people there are starved for relationships with coreligionists abroad, said Ingram, who encouraged the editors to travel in Eastern Europe.

Speaking of her own experiences with Baptists in Romania, Ingram said: "I am not a Baptist. But if I were a Romanian, I would have converted. They are the most courageous group of people I've met. They open up their homes to you and their hearts to you."

During the White House briefing, Robert Gates, National Security Council deputy director, discussed U.S. policy toward Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

Eastern Europeans have a strong foundation on which to build and should be able to do so with "wise leadership and real sacrifice and help from the rest of us," Gates said. The speed of change there will depend upon how quickly the countries decide they cannot straddle economic systems, he added.

The United States is committed to providing direct financial assistance, recruiting aid from other countries and supplying "know-how" to countries in Eastern Europe, he said.

In regard to the Soviet Union, Gates said a revolution is under way.

U.S. policy toward the U.S.S.R. includes support for the reform process; recognition that it is a "top-down change," with Gorbachev as the engine of revolution; dealing with the present reality, as well as the future promise, of U.S.-Soviet relations; recognition that while U.S. influence over changes there is quite marginal, the government should be prepared to assist; and an emphasis on the importance of maintaining the unity of the Western alliance.

The editors' briefing also featured a question-and-answer session with Joe Schlesinger, a native of Eastern Europe who has covered recent developments there as a news correspondent for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Wayne Angell, a Federal Reserve Board governor, also spoke about his work with the U.S.S.R. on that government's monetary system.

In addition, the editors visited the embassy of the U.S.S.R., where they were briefed by Vladimir Belyakov, first secretary of the embassy, and Boris Malakhov, press secretary for the embassy.

The Washington briefing also featured: — A presentation on ethics in Congress by Wilson Abney, chief counsel for the Senate Select Committee on Ethics.

— A discussion of churches and taxation by two top-ranking Internal Revenue Service officials.

— A presentation on clergy malpractice by J. Brent Walker, BJC associate general counsel.

— A panel discussion of ministry opportunities and challenges faced by Washington churches led by three local Baptist ministers. □

## Agency warns of problems in child-care proposals

BISMARCK, North Dakota — North Dakota will have a religion curriculum in its public schools next year through a federal grant for a program jointly sponsored by the state university in Fargo and the state Department of Public Instruction in Bismarck.

The university and the state agency are using a \$168,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to train 30 teachers to include religion in their teaching of such classes as history and literature.

There have been no negative reactions from either religious fundamentalists or advocates of church-state separation since the program was announced, said

John Helgeland, professor of religion at North Dakota State University, and Clarence Bina, director of special projects for the state Department of Public Instruction.

Helgeland said the program will follow guidelines established by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1963, when it ruled against devotional readings from the Bible in public schools but said there is a proper place for objective teaching about religion in such a setting.

He said the program would not attempt to be all-inclusive, since there are more than 1,000 Christian denominations alone in the United States.

The program, Helgeland said, also will view religion from a global perspective, which he said is important "as part of this country's keeping up with situations internationally." (RNS)

## N.D. schools to have religion curriculum

WASHINGTON

As the child-care vote in the House of Representatives approached, the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs worked to warn members of Congress and the Bush administration of potential church-state problems contained in proposed legislation.

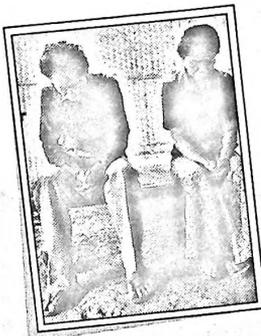
"The BJC consciously abstained from endorsing any particular child-care proposal on the merits," said J. Brent Walker, BJC associate general counsel. "Instead, we tried to critique the church-state aspects of all of the proposals.

"Premature endorsement of any bill — on the merits or otherwise — can be counterproductive because of the rapidity with which bills are amended and because such an endorsement can detract from our credibility when we speak to church-state issues, which are the core of our program assignment."

Walker met with President George Bush, the House Democratic leadership, and congressional staff members to discuss the various child-care proposals that were pending in the House.

"We continue to oppose any proposal that would use federal tax dollars to fund sectarian child care, whether in the form of vouchers or direct grants," Walker said. "We do not oppose the use of nondiscriminatory earned income tax credits as an aspect of child-care policy, because such credits do not have obvious church-state implications. This kind of tax credit is not a voucher." □

# Observing Religious Liberty Day



## *Walking in Christ, Living by Faith.*

### RELIGIOUS LIBERTY DAY

1990

**F**or the church, planning must be more than a prelude to service — it must become an integral part of the entire worship experience. That will happen when an individual or committee invests deeply in the project at hand and seriously considers the suggestions offered. Even then, these may need to be adapted to the nature and situation of the congregation. Churches that do this will enrich their celebration of Religious Liberty Day, 1990, on the biblical theme: "Walking in Christ, Living by Faith." This page primarily is for those who have not ordered the planning packet offered by this office. Our poster (see cover), in color and measuring 17 × 22 inches, can still be ordered without charge.

#### Interpreting The Theme

We are now witnessing in South Africa and within the states of Eastern Europe evidence of transformation that began with individual gestures of dissent and resistance. The impetus was their cry for liberty, for religious freedom and political self-determination. Heard among those cries were voices from among the religious communities, believers who were not silenced by years of repression and persecution. Americans rejoice with their every success, but must not forget the ways our own nation structured its life and avoided similar dangers.

Our biblical theme has been developed with a more international in scope than usually is the case. Other nations are graphically providing fresh evidence of God's vindicating activity. Authorities and ideologies are being struck down and human justice and true community lifted up. The ground is prepared for a new planting, where the seeds of the Gospel may freely be cast as Christians persuasively proclaim the redemptive love of God in Jesus Christ.

Paul warned the church at Colossae against strange philosophies and empty deception. The world is also seeing how many of these proved to be powerless and short-lived. It is in Christ, his life, death and resurrection that authoritative truth and the enduring victories of God are demonstrated. Interesting, Paul also shows his understanding of human nature in detecting traces of doubt. Human authority and ideologies are often persuasive. But our freedom in Christ relieves us of the need to mull over these competing interests. They are no match for Christ who has given us new life and who is the ultimate measure of truth. Indeed, Walking in Christ, Living by Faith has been the sustaining experience from generation to generation.

#### Planning your observance

Religious liberty is real! Take this occasion to reflect on God's goodness and to express gratitude for the liberty to which Christ has set us free. All doubt over the wisdom of the early Baptist advocacy — of religious liberty, best expressed by the free church in a free state — is erased by the Colossians passage. It points to "soul liberty," a Baptist distinctive but more importantly a gift which, when exercised under the leading of the Holy Spirit, ushers us into God's truth.

This is a good time to reach out and touch members of the congregation with a challenge that equals their abilities, incorporating their talents in making this celebration noteworthy. Here are three activities that might be considered to help enrich the day.

#### A STAINED GLASS WINDOW

Historically, glass windows have been used to portray the Christian tradition. How about one which tells about your church. Involve the children. Start by gluing four or more layers of tissue paper of the same color or colors that blend well. Use these to simulate the panes for a stained glass effect. Then cut out simple shapes from a sheet of heavy paper. Behind these cut-out "windows," children can tape the tissue to form their designs. Several other procedures may be known to teachers.

#### WRITING A HYMN

Such a suggestion may be greeted with stonewall silence. Or the plea, "We can't do anything that difficult." Here, the organist or minister of music can help. Why is it so hard to recall in well-chosen words our trust in God, our belief in Jesus Christ, our dependence upon the Holy Spirit? Look for an occasion in the life of the church which may give special meaning or direction to the hymn. Everyone is familiar with the Psalms — and these hymns will provide a ready model for this activity.

#### A COVENANTING EXPERIENCE

One writer refers to the covenant as "a living agreement," calling for "spiritual integrity" under the lordship of Christ. The scripture supporting our theme states, "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to Christ. ... He is the head over all rule and authority." Let your covenant open with a brief declaration or pledge of commitment to God and to each other. Such a personalized covenant will include: a statement of moral and spiritual commitment applied to all of life; a life of personal devotion and Christian conduct; a promise to gather for worship; and to be involved in supporting the church's mission and service. Our biblical text encourages "good discipline." Involvement in writing a covenant increases its meaning for the congregation, as members extend their personal commitment to cover others and their well-being in Christ. □

# Gullibility Travels

Despite the wise admonition of one of the Niebuhr brothers that "we cannot claim any knowledge of the furniture in heaven or the temperature of hell," eschatology — the study of last things — has been an all-consuming passion for some Christians. The year before last, Edgar Whisenant published a book titled *Eighty-Eight Reasons Why the Rapture Will Occur in '88*. He predicted that it would happen during the Jewish holiday of Rosh Hashanah. (I was particularly glad he was wrong, because he had pinpointed my birthday — September 13.) During the early weeks of September preachers all over the country announced Whisenant's prophesy from the pulpit, and thousands of Christians started preparing for Christ's imminent return. Of course, to their great chagrin, the prediction misfired along with the slew of previous millennial prognostications.

But this apocalyptic fervor continues to rage. Last summer, it was reported by someone in the press that a deep space probe had penetrated the outer reaches of our solar system and had sent back astonishing pictures of a shining city, which some accepted as convincing evidence of the existence of heaven. The pictures allegedly revealed "a beautiful city of crystal buildings and lush gardens — teeming with human beings!"

And recently, I guess in order to render some eschatological balance, one Finnish newspaper reported that a group of Soviet scientists had managed to drill nine miles into the earth's crust and, through sensitive microphones, heard the sounds of human screaming in an environment that exceeded 2000 fahrenheit. Hell had been discovered too! I wonder how many readers of these two articles believed their findings without any further thought? Probably quite a few.

This almost amusing naivete — this bent to accept as gospel the word of someone perceived to have greater knowledge, expertise, or authority — finds expression in the secular realm as well. For example, did you know that Madalyn Murray O'Hair has been granted a hearing before the FCC on her petition number RM-2493 which seeks to ban all religious broadcasting from the airwaves? In response to a ubiquitous circulating petition urging Christian folk to do something, the FCC by latest count has received in excess of 21 million letters and postcards protesting O'Hair's effort to strip the broadcasting media of its religious programming.

Trouble is, there never was such a request by Madalyn Murray O'Hair. Petition 2493 was filed not by Ms. O'Hair, but by two California broadcasters, asking not that the FCC ban religious broadcasting, but that the commission investigate the operating practices of noncommercial educational radio and television stations, including religious broadcasters. The petition only sought a freeze on licensure of new stations pending completion of the investigation. The FCC unanimously denied the petition on August 1, 1975!

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Fortunately some people have the good judgment to check the petition out before signing. In fact, we at the Baptist Joint Committee get at least one or two calls every week. But, by and large the letters of protest keep coming unabated. A spokesperson from the FCC recently declared that, "no matter how many times we stamp it out, it keeps popping up again. It shifts from one part of the country to another, from one time to another and from one denomination to another." (If any one ever doubted the resurrection, he or she doesn't know about the irrepressible 2493!)

No one knows for sure who keeps churning this issue and sending out the protest petition for otherwise well-meaning, if somewhat gullible, Christians to sign. The point is, this is a good example of how we tend to let others do our thinking for us and accept their word without investigating the matter further to see if it is legitimate and worthy of our support.

We Christians need to wise up. I am not talking about an exaggerated emphasis on head religion over heart religion, nor am I extolling the virtues of reason at the expense of revelation, nor am I urging the elevation of rationalism to the detriment of genuine piety. What I am saying is that each individual Christian

needs to develop and nurture a certain measure of intellectual dubiety and spiritual discernment to evaluate the events and issues that impact his or her daily life in this modern world.

In his autobiography, *The Struggle to Be Free*, one of my mentors, Wayne Oates, writes of his struggle to be free from "pack thinking," sometimes called "bandwagon thinking". To break the bond of this insidious shackle we must take responsibility for thinking for ourselves. It means not being a "wet finger" Christian — going along with the prevailing winds of the majority. It means, according to Oates, "not being a yeasayer, a pawn of propaganda, a worshiper of ... the idols of the marketplace."

We Baptists must reaffirm our "free thinking" tradition. We need to understand and embrace again the bedrock of our denominational existence — "soul freedom." This requires that we make up our own minds about our religious beliefs and our spiritual destiny. It suggests that we are competent to read the Bible for ourselves and, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, make good decisions about religious commitment, theological beliefs, and ethical behavior. It argues for the repudiation of any ecclesiastical potentate who, through self-arrogation, seeks to make decisions about the future of our churches, expecting individual Baptists to fall in behind in cultic fashion.

It means, in the final analysis, that we listen to one voice and one voice alone — to the voice of Jesus Christ, as revealed in Holy Scripture and illuminated by the Holy Spirit. He is our sole source of authority — not autocratic pastors, not denominational politicians, not self-righteous civil religionists in public office.

Appropriately, this is the theme of the Religious Liberty Day emphasis that comes up in Baptist life this year in June. It is titled, "Walking in Christ, Living by Faith." The focal verse of Scripture is Colossians 2:6: "As therefore you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so live in him ..." (RSV).

This should always be our watchword. We think, we act, and we do for ourselves — exercising our God-given freedom. We reject all claims of worldly demigods on our conscience, relying only on our faith in Christ and being guided solely by our understanding of His leadership in our lives. This is the biblical way and the Baptist way.

J. Brent Walker

# INTERNATIONAL DATELINE



## Britain to reconsider broadcasting legislation

LONDON

Following a deluge of letters protesting a proposed blanket ban on church ownership of television stations, the British Home Office will reconsider that legislation.

David Meller, Home Office minister, has agreed to re-examine clauses in the Government's Broadcasting Bill that allow only secular ownership of TV stations.

This about-face was prompted by opposition from MPs and church-goers. Meller told MPs during the bill's committee stage that religious issues had generated more letters from the public than any other aspect of the bill.

David Beer, Baptist minister at Frinton-on-Sea and the Free Church adviser to Anglia Television, welcomed the change of heart.

"The proposed bill would have been an absurdity for some of the responsible Christian groups involved in television," he said. "There must be some facility for them to be involved — but there must be safeguards."

New commercial television franchise holders may be forced by the bill to include religious programs in their schedules, according to a Labour Party broadcasting spokesman. □

## Moravians urge Chamorro to honor Miskito rights

MANAGUA

Moravian Church leaders have warned this country's newly elected government not to make the same mistakes with Nicaragua's indigenous population that the Sandinistas made 10 years ago.

In a March meeting with president-elect Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, Moravian leaders urged the new government to proceed carefully in its relations with residents of the remote Atlantic coast.

Norman Bent, a Moravian leader here, said newly elected government leaders have "no interest in the Atlantic coast except for economic reasons, the desire to exploit the area's natural resources."

Among the church leaders present with Bent were Moravian Bishop John Wilson, superintendent Ofreciano Julius, and Gustavo Parajon, president of the

Nicaraguan Council of Evangelical Churches.

The political environment on the coast has grown more tense since the elections. A massive pullout of Cuban physicians has left area hospitals critically short of personnel, and a March shipment of food supplies was cancelled. □

## Spain grants recognition to Evangelicals and Jews

MADRID

Evangelical Christians and Jews gained important new legal recognitions and rights as the Spanish government signed a first-ever agreement with non-Catholic religious entities here in February, according to an article in the daily newspaper *El Pais*.

The new agreement provides recognition of Jewish and Evangelical marriages, offers religious instruction in the appropriate faith in public schools when the parents so desire, and opens the way for non-Catholic clergy to enroll in the social security system.

The concord also provides an income tax deduction plan for church contributions. Both the Evangelical and Jewish groups turned down an offer to share in the current "religious tax" proceeds.

This system allows taxpayers to designate a portion of their annual income taxes to a special religious or social service entity. It was refused on the grounds that "it creates an unacceptable dependence of the religious group on the state."

Jose Cardona, one of three persons to sign the document, explained that Protestants, who are financially self-supporting, cannot approve a state which designates the funds of all its citizens to finance confessions that are against the beliefs of these citizens." He added, "Every church which receives money from the state is compromised with the state." □

## Council has concern over Chinese rule in Hong Kong

HONG KONG

Protestant and Roman Catholic Church leaders raised concern over the persecution of Christians on mainland China during the visit of Chinese government officials here in March, but local church leaders said the Chinese replies were

"far from satisfactory."

Heyward W. H. Wong, general secretary of Hong Kong Christian Council (HKCC), reported that officials denied any arrests of Christians in China, although the incidents were widely reported in local media.

"We wanted to express our concern over the fate of the Christians in China," Wong said. "In all, the answers were far from satisfactory, but it was hard for us to pursue the matter further at the 'friendly' visit."

Under the auspices of the Christian Council, Lutheran, Methodist and Baptist leaders met with the government's director of religious affairs, Ren Wuzhi.

Ren was quoted as saying that no people were arrested for "religious reasons" and that China is such a large country that his office had no knowledge about the reported incidents.

The British colony will be governed by the People's Republic in 1997. Fear among local churches has grown dramatically since June 4 that they, like their counterparts in mainland China, may face state oppression after 1997. □

## NAE asks Bush to act on plight of refugees in USSR

WHEATON, Illinois

Evangelical leaders have asked President George Bush to act immediately on behalf of 6,000 Soviet men, women, and children caught in the maze created by changes in the U.S. refugee processing system.

A press conference called in the nation's capital, announced that Billy A. Melvin, executive director of the National Association of Evangelicals, and Jerry Ballard, head of NAE's World Relief, urged the president to assist more than 900 families stranded in the Soviet Union because of the new process.

Abiding by the old refugee processing system, these families renounced their citizenship, quit jobs, sold homes, and left apartments. Most crucial of all, they relinquished domestic passports which served as identification papers for the purchase of food and household goods.

Caught between conflicting systems, the earliest these families can move is December 1990. Having openly renounced their Soviet citizenship, they are targets for harassment and many believe their lives are in danger.

Since January 1988, approximately



## NEWS-SCAN

19,000 evangelicals have fled the USSR, despite the promise of greater religious freedom under *glasnost*. World Relief, in partnership with other U.S. church groups, expects to resettle up to 2,000 Christians from the USSR in 1990. □

### 'Most irrelevant,' Tutu says of segregated church

JOHANNESBURG

The white, established Dutch Reformed Church has become one of the "most irrelevant" institutions in South Africa, as the country moves slowly toward dismantling the apartheid system of racial segregation, according to one of the country's most prominent anti-apartheid church leaders.

Allan Boesak, moderator of the mixed-race Dutch Reform Mission Church and president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, said in a February interview, "The dilemma of the white Dutch Reformed church is that it has no answer to South Africa's problems."

The white church, which counts as its members the vast majority of South Africa's leading politicians, cannot participate in the recording of society along nonracial lines, Boesak contended, because the church itself propagated apartheid and has refused to condemn all forms of apartheid as sin.

"How can such a church now help break down apartheid?" asked Boesak. "After all, it is a church which had categorically refused to merge with the black Dutch Reformed churches to form one united nonracial Dutch Reformed Church." □

### Kohl, Modrow differ over resurgent anti-semitism

WEST BERLIN

East German Prime Minister Hans Modrow has told an American rabbi that fears of a resurgent anti-Semitism in a reunited Germany "are definitely justified in light of the formation of a multi-party landscape."

The letter to Rabbi Marvin Hier, dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles, followed an earlier communication from West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

Both German leaders were responding to concerns raised over whether a reunited Germany would take steps to educate its citizens about the Holocaust

and provide legal sanctions against anti-Semitism and other forms of bigotry.

Modrow's response, which was drafted by one of his aides, contrasted with that of Kohl, who questioned "whether such anxiety is essentially justified" and stressed current laws in West Germany against dissemination of neo-Nazi propaganda.

"What is interesting in the replies of the two German leaders is how differently they view the issue," Hier told Religious News Service. While he said he viewed Modrow's letter more favorably than the one from Kohl, Hier said he still felt more specific guarantees about Holocaust education in a reunited Germany would be appropriate.

"After Auschwitz, remembrance of the Holocaust should be embedded in German consciousness from cradle to grave," Hier said. □

### Runcie to retire early; would end ties with state

LONDON

Saying that "it's time to withdraw and hand over [the office] to somebody else," Robert Runcie announced his plans to retire as archbishop of Canterbury on March 25, 1990, the 10th anniversary of his enthronement.

During Archbishop Runcie's tenure, the Church of England has been embroiled in controversies and increasing tensions with the government of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

Since the reign of Henry VIII, government has had the final word in choosing the head of the Anglican Communion. For three centuries, kings or queens made the appointment. Under the constitutional monarchy, the prime minister is empowered to make the final decision.

Calls for disestablishment have been heard in both church and secular circles. Runcie himself called for separation in 1977. □

### Freedom or funding —

OTTAWA, Canada

A Christian drug treatment center in Ottawa, Canada, has had its funding withdrawn by the Ontario provincial government because it requires clients to attend church services.

Bill Main, program director of the Harvest House center, said its approach is essentially that of other religious groups that receive government funds. □

Cuba apparently has been affected by developments taking place in other socialist countries. In a report from Havana, Mary Speidel writes that for the first time in more than 30 years, the government has allowed Baptists to conduct a national evangelistic campaign. A team of 11 Hispanic Southern Baptists held simultaneous revivals in 38 churches. ... A poll taken by the progressive Soviet newspaper, *Moscow News* cites statistics that suggest that even with *perestroika*, religion will continue to face an uphill struggle. Fifty-two percent of the population consider themselves to be nonbelievers, with 20 percent flatly denying the existence of God and 28 percent indifferent to the problems of religion. A mere five percent are actively involved in religious affairs. The hard core of believers, for whom religious values rank first among all others, totals seven to eight percent, according to the poll's estimates. Nor is there faith in Marxism-Leninism; only six percent believe that this doctrine can provide answers to the problems occupying the people. ... Bulgaria and Israel appear to be on the verge of reestablishing diplomatic relations, severed in the wake of the 1967 Six-Day War. The *Jewish Chronicle* reports that formalities may be completed in April when Israel's foreign minister is due to visit Sofia. ... Vladimir Raiz, one of the Soviet Union's longest-waiting refuseniks, arrived in Israel in March after having been denied permission to emigrate since November, 1972. It was alleged that the refusal was because Raiz, a mathematician, possessed state secrets. ... In Taiwan, however, Huang Hwa remains in prison — now totalling 21 of his 52 years. His opposition to the ruling KMT regime led to various charges of sedition against him. ... Baptists enjoy statistics, especially when the numbers are rising. Meeting in Moscow, delegates to the 44th Congress of the Union Council of Christians-Baptist learned from vice president Alexei Bichkov that their fellowship consists of 250,000 members and about 3,000 churches. Previously, the figure of 500,000 members had been cited. The revised statistics mean that European Baptists have "dropped" far below the prestigious 1.1 million mark. □

## Baptist Idea, from page 5

vicious patrol dogs, antitank ditches, and steel spikes. After 77 people lost their lives trying to scale the final 13 foot barrier, even the bravest were forced to conclude that here was one place where freedom would forever be denied.

And yet, at the very height of its ruthless impregnability, the Berlin Wall has suddenly been breached, and with it has come the collapse of the Iron Curtain that for so long denied freedom to the Communist world. Almost overnight the Berlin Wall capitulated, not to a superior military force, but to the inexorable power of a passion for freedom that could not be denied. Against that intangible yearning of the human heart, all the weaponry of modern warfare was finally helpless. The mighty barrier crumbled without a single stone being dislodged, its credibility conquered without a single shot being fired. In a very real sense, the wall became obsolete, and therefore condemned to eventual extinction, simply

because it stood in the way of human freedom.

This stunning political miracle was anticipated almost 2000 years ago by a spiritual miracle of even greater magnitude. In the first century Jerusalem Temple, a "dividing wall" had been erected, not by a totalitarian regime in an effort to restrict the movement of its citizens, but by an embattled religion in an effort to restrict where various groups might worship. According to the Apostle Paul, Jesus Christ broke down that wall where hostility had festered for centuries, thereby opening up for insiders and outsiders alike a completely new way of unhindered access to God (Ephesians 2:11-22). In a literal sense, this temple barrier was never breached during the ministry of Jesus, and it seemed just as formidable 30 years later when Paul made his defiant claim. But its validity had already been undermined by the universality of Jesus' message, thus it was only a matter of time until a new temple without any restraining walls would take its place (John 2:19-21).

Baptists today live in a world where many "dividing walls of hostility" inhibit true freedom between races and classes and cultures. Some of them have stood for centuries and seem stronger than ever before. Indeed, some of them run right through the life of our churches and denominations. But if they frustrate opportunity, if they compromise equality, if they foster discrimination, if they stifle dissent, if they obstruct openness, then they are walls that Christ has

already died to tear down. It may seem that there is little we can do about walls founded on time-honored tradition and reinforced by prevailing social custom. But we can, like the brave citizens of East Berlin, bring to those daunting walls our implacable determination to be free. Even more, we can, like the Apostle Paul, live as if those walls have already been fatally breached by the new and greater Joshua before whose gospel no wall can stand.

Just months ago, who would have dared to believe that the Berlin Wall could overnight become a relic of the past. And only weeks earlier, its architect, Erich Honecker, declared that it would stand for 100 years. But if that wall could not withstand the passion of the German people for political freedom, should Baptists allow any wall to defeat our determination to live out the religious freedom with which Christ has set us free? There are walls within our temple that would divide between young and old, rich and poor, black and white, male and female, rural and urban. But like the children of Israel marching against Jericho (Joshua 6), let us cry out with a great shout against such walls, believing that in the power of the great Wall Breaker they may all come tumbling down.

This is why we exist: to offer a wall-weary world unfettered access to God and to all God's children. Let it be our watchword both now and forevermore: "If the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed!" (John 8:36). □

## RESOURCES

### Life with Liberty Series

- \_\_\_\_\_ Baptists and Religious Freedom
- \_\_\_\_\_ Separation of Church and State
- \_\_\_\_\_ Christianity in American Life
- \_\_\_\_\_ Government Intrusion into Religion
- \_\_\_\_\_ Religion in Public Schools
  
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These pamphlets feature information about Baptist involvement in religious freedom and church-state affairs.

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churches. They also forbid individuals or churches from using public funds to achieve religious ends or from using the power of government to force religious beliefs or practices on the rest of the population. □

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

# REFLECTIONS

James M. Dunn  
Executive Director



Every high school football team worth its salt has a "booster club." It's in our American genes. Every cause about which people care prompts getting together. Something about us abhors the absence of organization.

Other entities in Baptist life beyond the local church have long come together in common cause. Colleges and seminaries have development boards and alumni/ae associations. Mission boards have societies and councils. Local church units for Sunday school, music, men, and women all have national networks.

Like a pelican in the wilderness, however, the BJC has had no more than a subscription list between the small staff and vast hordes of people who continually identify themselves as friends. The gap has been obvious for many years.

The staff of nine people with a board of less than 50 persons endeavoring to serve, relate to, and, in some sense, represent 28 million Baptists, the second largest religious label in the nation... how absurd! No more of that! Enter the Religious Liberty Council.

The Baptist Joint Committee is fortunate, blessed with friends who have put together this council. It is a tangible evidence of just such an urge to organize, an affinity grouping of believers.

Timing is important. The RLC comes on the scene just as some folks who cling to the name Baptist are acting more like Puritans. Their sympathies stir for Christian Reconstructionism. Thinly disguised theocrats, they would like very much to be "theo." With amazing gall, they applaud those who would interpret the Constitution to allow nonpreferential aid to all religions. And with deft revisionism, they declare the "intent" of the founders regarding the separation of church and state. They point approvingly to statements by Washington, Adams, and Henry. The modified establishment of religion fashioned by these "founders" was soundly defeated by Jefferson, Madison, Presbyterians, and Baptists who supported "no establishment of religion" as it appears in the First Amendment.

The "Statement of Purpose," accepted by the first 240 members of the RLC, sets the council's direction. It is dedicated "to preserving and extending the effectiveness of the Baptist Joint Committee."

The Religious Liberty Council subscribes to the American Baptist Bill of Rights adopted unanimously in 1939 by the founding denominations: the Southern Baptist Convention, the Northern Baptist Convention (now American Baptist Churches), and the National Baptist Convention.

That shaping document for the BJC concluded with these words:

Believing religious liberty to be not only an inalienable human right, but indispensable to human welfare, a Baptist must exercise himself to the utmost in the maintenance of absolute religious liberty for his Jewish neighbor, his Catholic neighbor, his Protestant neighbor, and for everybody else. . . . We stand for a civil state, "with full liberty in religious discernments."

The RLC will function with the BJC "as a mediating structure between the many and diverse Baptist publics" and will "expand the contacts, influence, and stature of the Baptist Joint Committee." The RLC sees itself as "a sounding board" to afford "a breath and depth of expertise

that would never be possible with a smaller, less representative body."

Abner V. McCall and others have been calling for such an organization for several years. Finally, a dozen pastors and laypersons met in Washington on May 21, 1989, hammered out a Statement of Purpose, and started the ball rolling.

The list of initial RLC members reads like a *Who's Who* of Baptist life. Pastors of many of America's historic churches are included. The First Baptist Churches of Providence, Boston, Knoxville, Pittsburgh, Los Angeles, Portland (OR), Jackson, Austin, Washington (DC), San Antonio, Abilene (TX), Ann Arbor, Kansas City, Greenville, Peoria, and Salt Lake City are represented.

Many of the strongest and best-known evangelistic pastors identify with the council as champions of religious freedom. Among these are Richard Jackson of North Phoenix; Buckner Fanning of Trinity, San Antonio; Ken Chafin of Louisville; Charles Hendricks of Tremont Temple, Boston; and Calvin O. Butts of Abyssinian, New York City.

Bill Moyers, distinguished television producer, and Doug Marlette, a Pulitzer prize-winning cartoonist, have joined the RLC. Harvey Cox, popular theologian and writer, is also a friend of the Baptist Joint Committee.

Historians Hugh Wamble, Bill Leonard, William Lumpkin, Walter Shurden, Richard Pierard, Bob Linder, and Edwin Gaustad are the first of a growing list of scholars who wish to be counted as members of the RLC.

Academics of the first order include Duke McCall, Pearl McNeil, Samuel D. Proctor, Olin Robison, Herbert Reynolds, Elving Anderson, James Ralph Scales, Robert L. Lynn, and others. Baptist denominational leaders — state convention presidents, executive ministers, and national convention or conference presidents for the various Baptist bodies — have identified with the RLC. Former American Baptist President Margaret Prine and the current president, Beverly Davison, have signed on.

Sons of J. M. Dawson, the first executive of the Baptist Joint Committee, Joseph T. Dawson and Matt Dawson, support the BJC through the RLC. The only living former BJC executive director, James E. Wood, Jr., also stands with the RLC.

Laypersons in the fields of politics and law include Lloyd Ohmdahl, the colorful lieutenant governor of North Dakota, state Sen. Stanley C. Johnson (R.-Wash.), and Vester T. Hughes of Dallas.

Activists for freedom and justice like Wyatt Tee Walker of New York from the East and J. Alfred Smith, Sr., of Oakland in the West are valued on the Religious Liberty Council.

Grady Cothen, Southern Baptist statesman, and Gardner Taylor, one of the most distinguished preachers in America, serve with Dr. McCall as co-chairmen of the Religious Liberty Council.

This list is but a sampling of the outstanding advocates of soul freedom who already have chosen to become a part of the Religious Liberty Council. If you would like to know more about the Baptist Joint Committee and its board of reference, the Religious Liberty Council, let us know. The cause of religious liberty and its essential corollary, the separation of church and state, need all the "boosters" they can find. □

# REVIEWS



## FALL FROM GRACE: The Failed Crusade of the Christian Right

Michael D'Antonio, New York: Farrar-Straus-Giroux, 1989. 242 pp.

Michael D'Antonio's book, by its own claim, seeks to chronicle the "remarkable edifice built by the Christian Right and its equally astonishing collapse" (p. 13).

The only focused explication of this thesis, however, comes in the book's introduction. D'Antonio asserts that the rise of the Christian Right in the early 1980s was a reaction to sweeping and troubling changes in the political, economic, and social fabric of our country from the end of World War II until the mid-1970s. It was a movement spawned initially by television evangelists who, with cocksure certainty, urged the nation to return to its Christian roots so that God would once again favor and bless this country. It was a nostalgic religious movement that reacted against modernity but, ironically, used modern technology to the hilt in promoting the message.

This conservative religious resurgence then was picked up and politicized by Ronald Reagan and used to promote his 1980 and 1984 campaigns. But, according to D'Antonio, this support was little more than lipservice since the Reagan White House never made a serious effort to translate the political agenda of the Christian Right into public policy.

D'Antonio then summarizes the demise of the movement. He contends that it began in early 1987 with the PTL scandal, followed by the Oral Roberts fund-raising embarrassment and the expose of Jimmy Swaggart's sexual exploits. The death knell of the Christian Right movement was sounded, according to D'Antonio, by the dismantling of the Moral Majority and the demise of the Pat Robertson campaign. The election of George Bush "insured the death of the movement, as he returned the nation to the professional politics of Nixon and Ford and abandoned the anomalous populism of Reagan and Falwell" (p. 12).

Having thus sketched the scenario in his introduction, D'Antonio devotes the rest of his book, nine chapters, to chronicling the rise and fall of the Christian Right over the decade. He does it in an interesting way. D'Antonio is a Pulitzer

Prize-winning journalist; he makes no pretense of being an academic historian. So he writes as a journalist — in almost travelogue fashion — spinning and weaving descriptions of interviews that he conducted with both the leaders and the followers of the movement, adding only a modicum of commentary. He interviews and writes about a born-again Pentecostal couple from New York, doctors and students at Oral Roberts University Medical School, devotees of PTL in the wake of the Jessica Hahn scandal, plaintiffs in the Mobile textbook litigation, Mennonite missionaries to Honduras, voters in New Hampshire during the 1988 primary, and political operatives for Pat Robertson in South Carolina.

Southern Baptist readers will find this book of particular interest. One chapter deals with Houston's Second Baptist Church and one with the "Southern Baptist civil war," as D'Antonio puts it. He sees Second Baptist as a prototype of a sun-belt fundamentalist mega-church and the church's presentation of "We the People," a musical extravaganza (complete with Paul Harvey), as an example of the Christian Right's willingness to meld conservative politics and fundamentalist theology. Then, in his chapter on the Southern Baptist controversy, D'Antonio interviews Glen Hinson and Raymond Bailey professors at Southern Seminary in Louisville, along with several fundamentalists in an effort to get to the bottom of the theological/political dispute in the nation's largest protestant denomination.

D'Antonio's work has some weaknesses. First, his greatest strength — his casual, highly personalized interview reporting technique — is also a detriment. For all of the life that this kind of writing breathes into the topic, readers should not come expecting a comprehensive, academic treatise on the nature and impact of the Religious Right during the 1980s. This book simply does not supply it.

Secondly, D'Antonio, an Italian from New York, is by his own admission a

nonbeliever. Although he made every effort to ingratiate himself with the interviewees and to immerse himself in the subculture of the Christian Right, one gets the impression that he is still very much standing outside of the phenomenon and looking in as something of a bemused observer. Accordingly, his evaluation is a bit too superficial in some ways. A number of times he talks about "the movement" as if the Christian Right were somehow a monolithic entity without variegation, texture, or contradiction. Moreover, D'Antonio makes several mistakes in his reporting that belie any assertion that he has lived and breathed the stuff of which this movement is made as thoroughly as he would like for us to think. For example, he states, "The Southern Baptist Church was founded by British colonists who left England in the seventeenth century and believed that America was a Protestant promised land" (p. 210). Even a casual student of Baptist history knows that D'Antonio is off by about 200 years and that the divisive issue behind the birth of the Southern Baptist Convention was not religious persecution in Europe but slavery in America!

Finally, D'Antonio is too quick to pronounce the final benediction at the Religious Right's funeral. Though less visible than during the early 1980s, it is simply wrong to say that the Religious Right is dead. It is perhaps more correct to say that the legacy of the Christian Right and the religio-political agenda that it advanced have become institutionalized in conservative think tanks, the Republican Party, right-wing Christian lobby groups, and a number of seminaries and Bible schools.

Nevertheless, D'Antonio's book is both entertaining in its style and informative in its content. He really does give a balanced description of the Christian Right without overt judgment or criticism. If read with a critical eye and an expectation that does not exceed the author's own purposes, much can be gained by spending some time with this prize-winning journalist. □ JBW

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