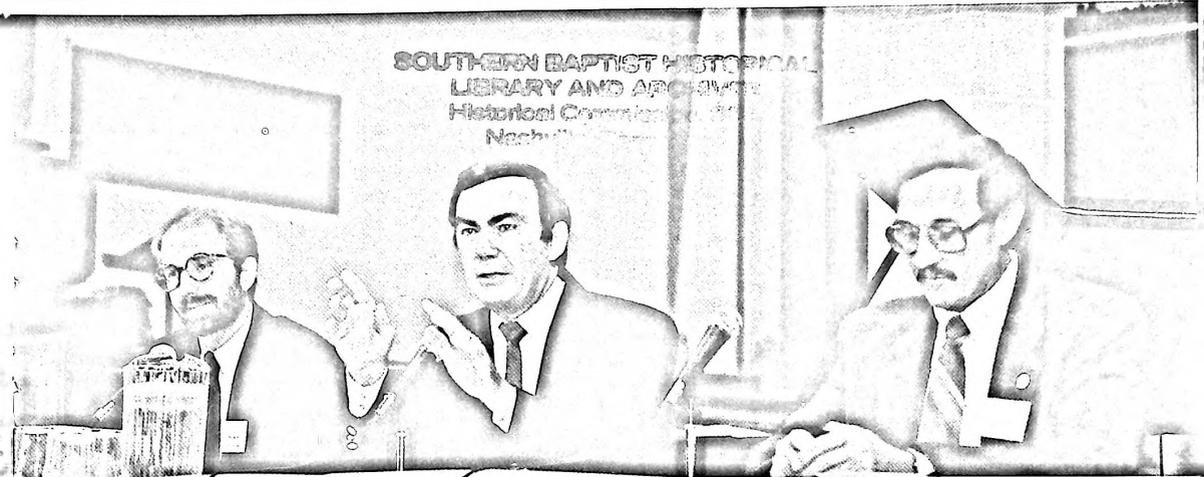


Religious Liberty Conference Report

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REPORT from the CAPITAL



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

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Cover: Collage of some of the participants in the 22nd National Religious Liberty Conference: (top, l to r), Gustav Niebuhr, Sam Donaldson and Dan Martin; (bottom, l to r) Cynthia Clawson, James Dunn, William Gray, and A. E. Dick Howard.

Correction: Don't look for the sculpture, "Christ, the Light of the World," (Sept. cover) at Mass. Ave. & 14th St. in Washington. Its new location (since we photographed it) is 3211 Fourth St., N.E. Thanks to Robert Tiller and Mark Chopko for that news.

Executive Director: James M. Dunn
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Books Reviews: J. Brent Walker
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Mightier than the Sword

I discovered the innate beauty of words and the ideas they express not in the classroom, as might be expected, but at home, on the living room carpet, where I learned to read stretched out over the daily newspaper. Then followed an opportunity as an 11-year old to write and to see that first endeavor published — there, on a printed page, in bold type — impressive! The last experience taught me a new respect for words, one that causes me to stand in awe of those gifted in their use.

A greater sensitivity to the power of words came as a young adult awakening to the significance of that supreme act of God's humility, when the Divine assumed human form as the means of intruding into human history. Good News! Our common faith sees one element of that Incarnation as destructive — capable of ending the power of sin and the grasp of death.

The biblical announcement, "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us," points to another, a creative dimension of the Word, the power to transform our being and make us a new creation. In following the Word and in our use of words rests the potential of making us creators but destroyers as well. It is pure nonsense, therefore, to teach little children to respond to hurled insults with "sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me." The reputations, egos, and lives we struggle to maintain are easily shattered. The divine example must surely be the measure of the words and actions we enmesh.

Philip Wogaman's article on the *Illusions of Theocracy* speaks of discerning the character and purposes of God amidst the relative values and truth claims of a finite world. And Richard Koenig makes this pertinent comment in his Oct. 3 *Christian Century* article: "Even good and pious opinions become destructive when codified and held before the faithful as that which must be believed." Both statements can move us to practiced humility.

To "swallow one's words," is one such act. When individuals or nation's do it, enemies are reconciled, enmity gives way to friendship, and the power of words in the service of peace accomplishes what appeared so elusive. It is terrifying, therefore, to hear amidst the verbage coming out of the Middle East: "Infidel! Cut off their hands! Kill them; God wills it!" The latter, a most blasphemous claim, must be rejected along with all such violence by anyone having the faintest notion of a loving and just God. Religious sentiment, too, can become a persuasive instrument for evil doing.

The past 25 years of my ministry have been served at a desk as a "word processor," directing word flow into published form. It has been an experience not remote from occupying a pulpit of another kind. The essential message of this office and this desk has always been freedom; freedom of conscience and freedom in Christ. This, my final column as editor of REPORT, simply means, God willing, that I now join each of you as a "doer of the word." □

Victor Tupitza



REGARDING BILL RM-2493 AND THE BIG RUMOR, FACT: No federal law or regulation gives the Federal Communications Commission the authority to prohibit radio and television stations from presenting religious programs. That said, how does one clip the wings of a rumor flying about over the last 16 years? **Rumor:** Madalyn Murray O'Hair is about to appear before the FCC to demand the end to all religious broadcasting. An estimated 23 million people in good faith have written the FCC to denounce Ms. O'Hair. Why does the rumor continue? Ms. O'Hair's son says it's to harass his mother. Others believe it has been a great fund-raising tool for right-wing groups, a boost to their oft-times dwindling contributions. **Added fact:** The First Amendment (free speech, free exercise) requires the FCC to remain neutral, "acting neither to promote nor inhibit religion." The FCC denied RM-2493, the petition filed in 1974 asking the FCC to investigate practices of noncommercial radio and television stations, including religious broadcasters. The death of that petition cannot be exaggerated. ●

U.S. SENATE AND HOUSE ACTION TO CUT IN HALF MILITARY AID to El Salvador dealt a severe blow to the Bush administration's Central America policy and to a U.S. counter-insurgency effort that has lasted more than a decade. Estimates are that more than 70,000 people have died in the war, during which the U.S. has directed more than \$2 billion to the military. Congress' action is said to be a clear victory for critics of the U.S. policy and has been attributed to the lack of action taken following the murders of six Jesuit priests in El Salvador, along with their housekeeper and her daughter. That incident and the failure of the Salvadoran government to prosecute those responsible for it dominated debate on the Senate floor prior to the vote. "If they (Salvadoran officials) can't stop lying about the Jesuits' case, how are they going to stop lying about all the thousands and thousands of other killings?" asked Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.). ●

EDITING PUBLIC SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS TO REFLECT THE ROLE OF RELIGION in the shaping of American history will be no simple task, if the experience of the California Board of Education is any measure. An effort to overcome criticism about the lack of references to religion has led to broad criticism. The Houghton Mifflin series for kindergarten through eighth grade and an eighth-grade book by Holt, Rinehart and Winston brought a negative reaction from some black, Asian, Muslim, Jewish, Christian and homosexual groups. State school superintendent Bill Honig said the choice was between textbooks that are bland and those that are controversial. "Any history worth its salt is going to include negative things," he said. Charlotte Crabtree, a professor of education at UCLA more wisely observed, "The text is the common core. This is what we believe all our children should have in common." ●

TECHNIQUES AND TACTICS USED BY LEADERS OF THE CHRISTIAN RIGHT have diluted its effectiveness in national politics, according to a friendly critique by the former controller of Pat Robertson's failed 1988 presidential campaign. Thomas C. Atwood, managing editor of a Heritage Foundation publication, listed "widespread bigotry against evangelicals" but also that they came across as "authoritarian, intolerant and boastful, even to natural constituents." He declared that "conservative evangelical activists are now notorious for displaying overconfidence in their ability to discern the Divine will at any time, in any situation." Offering suggestions for improving its effectiveness, Atwood suggested the movement "use Scriptural references more judiciously and stop using messianic rhetoric to describe and motivate the movement." ●

The Illusions of Theocracy as a Model of Relationship

Almost every conceivable relationship between religious groups and political authority can be illustrated historically — and many variations exist even within the contemporary world. The complexity defies easy classifications. But it may still help frame the broader issues to note four basic “models” of church-state relationship that have some importance in different parts of the world.

Erastianism

It is difficult to identify theocracy with certainty because what may appear to be a religious leadership controlling the state for religious purposes may, in fact, be exactly the opposite — political leadership controlling religion for purposes of the state. Most of the Roman emperors who commanded religious worship of themselves were not as vain as their decrees implied. They simply wished to foster some object of common loyalty within the empire that could be utilized to draw the diverse peoples into a politically workable unity. The use of religion in the state has been named “Erastianism” (after the 16th century Swiss-German Thomas Erastus). This approach of the state attempting to control the church has been followed to some extent by politicians who have sought, thereby, to advance political ends through religious means.

Separation Models: Friendly and Unfriendly

In some countries, religious and political institutions have remained largely separate, but without hostility. Essentially, that is true of the principle of separation in the United States. Despite the rhetoric of those calling for a closer relationship, the principle of the non-establishment of religion in the U.S. Constitution is not to be understood as a negative one.

Decidedly unfriendly kinds of separation have developed, particularly in the last two centuries. French anticlericalism

in the 19th century was of this sort. Anticlerical policies in Mexico (where priests were forbidden to wear clerical garb) produced an unfriendly form of separationism. Most of the Marxist countries had institutionalized a hostile stance toward religious institutions — perhaps most brutally expressed by the Constitution of Albania which provides that:

The State recognizes no religion and supports and develops atheist propaganda for the purpose of implanting the scientific materialist world outlook in people. (Art. 30)

The creation of any type of organization of a fascist, anti-democratic, religious or anti-socialist character is prohibited. (Art. 54)

The unfriendly separationism of Marxist countries (Albania aside) was not as absolute as commonly believed in the West. Indeed, in most such countries, religious institutions, clergy, seminaries, and so on, were even provided with some public financing, along with a good deal of public control. But the clear attitude in these countries was that religion was, at best, only to be tolerated until the populace had matured into a more scientific outlook.

Theocracy

Here the state is under the control of religious leaders or institutions for essentially religious purposes. Theocracy can be illustrated by most primitive societies, by ancient Hebrew theocracy (particularly of the Judges period), by traditional Tibet, by the Puritan establishments in colonial America, by early Mormon Utah, and by Muslim territories at various times, including contemporary Iran. It can be illustrated by some extent to medieval Catholicism and by Catholicism in the modern world, in some countries, up to the time of Vatican II. It can be illustrated to a degree by Zionist Israel — although that country is very complex in its church-state patterns.

THE ILLUSIONS OF THEOCRACY

Theocracy has often been a peculiar temptation of people committed to a particular religious viewpoint. If one's religious perspective is true (and how many people believe their views to be false?), then why not enlist the powerful

To exist in the faith, Christians must be able to discern the character and purposes of God amidst the relative values and truth claims of a finite world.

engine of state in its support? Few theologians have ever really thought it possible to force people to accept the faith. But state power can at least disable the competition and establish more favorable material conditions. That is exactly what happened in post-Constantinian Europe, where Christianity quickly changed from an occasionally harassed minority status into the dominant cultural force of the Roman Empire. State power did not exactly guarantee the spread of Christianity, but who would argue that it did not greatly facilitate it?

Few in our time suggest a wholesale theocratic union of church and state; but certain aspects of the theocratic model are indeed supported. Vestiges of the old religious establishment continue in a number of European and Latin American countries, whereby the established church receives by right certain benefits, not least the funding of clergy and certain public ceremonial rights. In the United States, efforts are occasionally made by zealous evangelical Christians to have the nation constitutionally designated a “Christian nation” and to reintroduce religious observances in the public schools. While such largely symbolic actions fall far short of real theocracy, they do reveal a desire to give special political status to Christians. They may also reveal a latent desire to go as far in the direction of outright theocracy as the political climate will permit.

But that is a dangerous course for Christians to take. It is a way paved with illusions. Some of the illusions are practical and political. Those who seek to control the state for religious purposes sometimes discover, in the end, that it is the church, rather than that which is being controlled by the state for political ends. The dividing line between theocracy and Erastianism is easily crossed, and it is the state that generally winds up in control.

Dr. Wogaman is professor of Christian Social Ethics at Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, D. C. This article is taken from his book, *Christian Perspectives on Politics*, published by Fortress Press. Used by permission.

BJC adopts 1990-91 budget, resolutions; bylaw change will enlarge representation

There is also the practical problem of how to distinguish between sincere and insincere professions of faith in a society where a religious body has dominant power. Power has its rewards. How can the church tell the difference between those who profess faith out of pure religious devotion and those who are after the more mundane rewards? Ironically, that was the problem that confronted the Communist party in many of the Marxist countries, where it paid to be a Marxist and where religious profession led to social disability. Young people wishing to enter universities and get on with their careers typically found they would do better as party members. So how was the party to know which young people joined out of their commitment to Marxism and which out of opportunism? A theocratic state may proceed on the illusion that its many public supporters are religiously committed, when they may not be.

But the deeper illusion is theological. Theocracy exists on the supposition that the truth can be known well enough to make an a priori distinction between those who are "in the truth" and those who are not. The former are to be allowed to govern, the latter are legally disempowered. The illusion here is not simply that some of those appearing to be in the truth may only be opportunists taking advantage of the special privileges of believers. It is also that God, if God is truly the transcendent center and source of all being, cannot be fully known by anybody. To be sure, Christians hold their faith on the basis of beliefs about the transcendent God; and to exist in the faith they must be able to discern the character and purposes of God amidst the relative values and truth claims of a finite world. But a formal, legally established distinction between those who are and those who are not among the true followers of God denies the truth that may have been grasped by the outsiders.

A reformed theological conception of the transcendent God helps establish a basis for the criticism of premature absolutes while at the same time creating a certain "expectancy" that the transcendent God may break in upon human society through anybody. This more open conception of God is a powerful general support for democracy. By the same token, it may be the strongest basis for rejection of theocracy, for theocracy has already decided who God can and cannot speak through. □

Major action taken by the Baptist Joint Committee (BJC) at the October meeting of its board will effect a bylaw change that recognizes the broadened base of its financial support.

The bylaw change will most visibly affect the Southern Baptist Convention by decreasing its delegation to the BJC from 18 to 11 members.

That change will go into effect March 4, 1991, at the conclusion of the BJC's Executive Committee meeting. At the request of the full committee, the Executive Committee will then define "national member body."

Other board action saw adoption of a 1990-91 budget of \$666,794; resolutions on the Religious Freedom Restoration Act; on Charitable Deductions; Religious Liberty in Liberia; and on Equal Access. It also received the annual reports of the BJC's executive staff.

The board also added another denomination to its membership, the new National Missionary Baptist Convention; expanded its total possible representation from 54 to 60 members; approved a proposed staff restructuring plan; and named a new Director of Information Services.

Trustees at the October meeting seated representatives from the Religious Liberty Council (RLC), an umbrella organization composed of "friends of the Baptist Joint Committee."

Because the current BJC membership is limited to 54 members, only five representatives from the Council were seated for the October meeting. The RLC will be entitled to nine members when the bylaw change becomes effective.

The RLC's application for membership on the joint committee was submitted by Grady Cothen, retired president of the Southern Baptist Sunday Board.

Formed in May, 1989, by parties staunchly dedicated to religious liberty and church-state separation, the RLC arose out of concern over the then-proposed Southern Baptist Convention reduction in the BJC's budget.

Messengers to the SBC's New Orleans meeting in June, 1990, subsequently voted to slash that BJC allocation from \$391,796 in 1989-90 to \$50,000 in 1990-91.

As a result, the major portion of Southern Baptist funds will now be provided by state conventions and other

SBC organizations. While the SBC will continue to elect its representatives, the additional voices will be named by RLC organizations.

The RLC membership is composed of laity, pastors, churches and state conventions from among the cooperating denominations, and the Southern Baptist Alliance.

Co-chairing the Council are Abner V. McCall, president-emeritus, Baylor University, Waco, Texas; Gardner C. Taylor, retired pastor of the Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc., Brooklyn, New York; and Dr. Cothen, of Coral Springs, Florida.

In his letter, Cothen said the nominating committee which selected representatives to be seated "was composed of the popularly elected presidents of the several state conventions that are already supporting the BJC as well as the president of the Southern Baptist Alliance."

These new members include James Ralph Scales, president-emeritus of Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, N.C.; John Wood, pastor of First Baptist Church, Waco, Texas; Robert Wayne, pastor of Lynn Haven Baptist Church, Vinton, Va.; Douglas Watterson, pastor of First Baptist Church, Knoxville, Tenn.; and Jeanette Holt, associate director of the Southern Baptist Alliance, Washington, D. C.

In the discussion on the bylaw change, BJC Chairman John Binder, executive director of the North American Baptist Conference, Oakbrook Terrace, Ill., said: "Most of us would rather not have to deal with this bylaw change."

"This is painful to us, but there is hope and encouragement because another of the realities (in addition to the SBC funding decrease) is that there are other groups working to support the Baptist Joint Committee. They want to be represented."

In comments made during the National Religious Liberty Conference which followed the board meeting, James M. Dunn, executive director, in his report said that the beleaguered BJC "will continue to be here and functioning."

He responded to uncertainty over the its budget, declaring, "At this point, on the basis of pledges, proposals, projec-

Continued on page 14

VIEWS OF THE WALL

J. Brent Walker
Associate General Counsel



Events swirling around Washington, D.C. lately have been dizzying — from the S&L crisis, to the Middle East conflict, to threatened furloughs and Gramm-Rudman sequestration, to the student takeover at the University of the District of Columbia. But cutting through all of this morass and capturing the imagination and curiosity of the public was that terribly laconic, somewhat reclusive, Pat Paulsen-look-alike Supreme Court nominee, David Souter. As Court watchers scrambled to follow the tracks laid down by this jurist over his twenty-five year legal career, the paucity of information only added to the shroud of mystery around him and piqued the public's interest even more.

Judge Souter's record on church-state relations is as meager as that in any other area of law. Although he had been a trial court judge and a state supreme court justice for a number of years, there are only two cases that illustrate a church-state philosophy. In both, he was

Supreme Court nominees can be expected to expound on their basic judicial philosophy, demonstrate the requisite expertise in constitutional law, and show appropriate judicial temperament.

Attorney General for the State of New Hampshire, not a judge trying to decide a dispute objectively. So, the church-state community waited with baited breath to hear what Judge Souter would say to the Senate Judiciary Committee on church-state issues.

Historically, Supreme Court nominees have been loathe to commit themselves ahead of time to positions on specific questions of law, especially ones that have a chance of being decided by the Court in upcoming terms. Not only would such an advance ruling be jurisprudentially premature, it would be politically unwise — as Judge Bork found out three years ago. Nevertheless, Supreme Court nominees can be expected to expound on their basic judicial philosophy, demonstrate requisite expertise in constitutional law, and show appropriate judicial temperament.

Despite Judge Souter's desire to keep

most of his answers general, he became as specific about the church-state questions as any. First, with respect to the "no establishment clause," he was asked by Senator Leahy about his defense of New Hampshire Governor Thomson's executive order requiring that the state flag be flown at half-mast on Good Friday "to memorialize the death of Christ on the Cross . . ." Souter answered that he was only representing his client — the Governor — and conceded that if he were judging the case today, rather than advocating one side, he probably would declare the action unconstitutional.

Moreover, Senator Specter asked Judge Souter whether, on a continuum, he would align himself more closely with Mr. Jefferson's wall of separation or with Justice Rehnquist's "non-preferentialism" (i.e., allowing some governmental aid to all religion as long as it does not show preference). Souter responded that, while he had some problems with the *Lemon* test (i.e., a three-pronged test that the Court uses to decide establishment clause cases), he nevertheless had no reason to re-examine the basic presuppositions embodied in the Jeffersonian metaphor or in *Everson v. Board of Education* (1947), which incorporated it.

On the "free exercise" side of the First Amendment, Judge Souter's only tracks again are found in the New Hampshire statehouse rather than in any courtroom. As Attorney General he had approved the prosecution of a Jehovah's Witness who, objecting to the motto "Live Free or Die," obliterated those words from his license plate. The Jehovah's Witness felt strongly that such words were inconsistent with his religious faith. New Hampshire's brief in the U.S. Supreme Court claimed that the Jehovah's Witness's conduct was "whimsy or bizarre behavior" that fell short of First Amendment protection. *Wooley v. Maynard* (1977). Again, Judge Souter claimed only to have been representing his client but conceded that the state did not have a "compelling interest" in requiring the exhibition of the motto on the license plate.

Judge Souter, further testified that he favored "strict scrutiny" for fundamental rights, including the free exercise of religion. He was aware of *Employment Division v. Smith* (1990), which overturned the compelling state interest doctrine in free exercise jurisprudence. Souter seemed to be more comfortable

with Justice O'Connor's concurring opinion, which found against the Native Americans' right to use peyote in religious worship but upheld the all-important compelling state interest doctrine.

On balance, Souter's answers appear to be "right" on church-state issues. Of course, none of his testimony can be taken as a firm commitment. But, assuming, as we must, that he is proceeding in good faith, he appears to be headed in the right direction for the lovers of religious liberty.

This is extremely important. Recent decisions of the Court indicate that there are at least four justices who are ready to either abandon or water down the Court's historic establishment clause jurisprudence. For example, Justice Rehnquist wants to abandon Jefferson's "wall" metaphor entirely and would interpret the establishment clause only to forbid a "national religion" or preference among religious sects or denominations. *Wallace v. Jaffree* (1985). Justices Kennedy, White and Scalia would limit establishment clause protection to governmental coercion directly benefitting religion to a degree that in fact establishes a state religion or tends to do so. *Allegheny County v. Greater Pittsburgh ACLU* (1988). Even Justice O'Connor would revise the *Lemon* criteria to incorporate an arguably less stringent "endorsement" test. *Lynch v. Donnelly* (1984).

Moreover, as we saw last term, five justices have already demonstrated their willingness and ability to violate the free exercise clause without remorse. Justice Scalia has written, and Justices Rehnquist, White, Kennedy and Stevens concur, that complete religious liberty is a "luxury" we can ill afford as a society and that any society adopting full-bodied religious liberty in the historic Baptist sense would be "courting anarchy." *Employment Division v. Smith* (1990).

Thus, Judge Souter's position on First Amendment issues becomes critically important as this new, conservative-leaning, philosophically-statist Court moves into the 1990's. We cannot expect Judge Souter to fill William Brennan's strong leadership role in church-state cases, at least not immediately. However, one hopes that Judge Souter's voting record will be as good as Brennan's and that in time he will be able to steer the Court in a direction that will restore our "First Liberty" to the constitutional pre-eminence that it deserves. □

Attorney Testifies in Support of Pension Simplification Bill

Baptist attorney Gary Nash testified during a recent congressional hearing in support of legislation that would simplify employee benefit law for churches.

Mr. Nash is general counsel for the Southern Baptist Annuity Board, and secretary of the Church Alliance, a coalition of church pension board executives acting on behalf of church pension and welfare benefit programs.

He told members of a Senate Finance Subcommittee that the Church Retirement Benefits Simplification Act of 1990 would be an important step for churches in dealing with the "constant onslaught of employee benefits legislation," which typically does not take into account the unique needs and characteristics of church retirement and welfare benefit programs.

The legislation, introduced by Sen. David Pryor, D-Ark., is designed to achieve three primary goals:

- Recodify rules applicable to church retirement plans separately under the IRS Code of 1986, thus ensuring that future changes in the code would not inadvertently impact retirement plan issues unique to churches.
- Bring workable consistency to the coverage and related rules that apply to

church retirement programs.

• Resolve other significant problems churches face in administering their retirement and benefit programs under current law.

In his testimony, Nash — who also serves as secretary of the Church Alliance, a coalition of church pension board executives acting on behalf of church pension and welfare benefit programs — explained: "S. 2902 creates a new section 401A, applicable only to 'qualified church plans' and modifies section 403 (b) for churches.

In addition, and most importantly, S. 2902 provides that new section 401A and the portion of section 403 (b) that applies to churches will be 'walled off' so that future changes made for non-church employers in sections 401 (a) and 403 (b) will not apply to church retirement plans unless specifically made applicable thereto. This provision is the cornerstone of S. 2902.

"S. 2902 simplifies and brings workable consistency to the rules applicable to church plans ... S. 2902 would provide the same treatment under new section 401A for qualified church plans, other than for plans maintained by church hospitals, colleges and universities. S. 2902 would also level the play-

ing field for plans of church hospitals, colleges and universities so that section 403 (b) annuity programs and section 401A plans maintained by these organizations will be subject to the same set of coverage rules."

The legislation, Nash said, also would make it clear that ministers who are employed as chaplains in hospitals, halfway houses and government prisons can continue to participate in church retirement and welfare benefit plans.

It also would permit IRA-type qualified voluntary employee contributions to be made to church plans, Nash said, as well as deal with a number of other issues that prove troublesome to church pension boards under current law.

During the hearing, a Treasury Department representative voiced the Bush administration's opposition to the proposed legislation.

Terry D. Thomas, benefits tax counsel for the treasury, testified that the administration opposes exempting most qualified church retirement plans from current trust and non-discrimination requirements; extending special rules currently applicable only to qualified church-controlled organizations to all church-controlled or affiliated organizations, and consolidating special rules applicable to qualified church retirement plans in one section of the Internal Revenue Code. **Kathy Palen** □

THERE IS A PHRASE ...

"to lift the seal of silence from one's lips.

This metaphor materialized early in August as official Soviet newspapers were for the last time stamped for printing by the censor's seal. Against the background of loud and often hysterical debates about privatization, emigration, depoliticization of the army and state security, to the accompaniment of fire and explosions in many corners of our disintegrating empire, such an event may pass unnoticed.

News censorship has been an unquestionable important "achievement" of the form of Socialism built in one unfortunate country and eventually adopted by others. GLAVIT is the acronym that in the seventy years of experimenting on human beings has fallen into the same category as SOVDEP, CheKa, NKVD, KGTB, GULAG, etc.

So why aren't we celebrating? Why don't readers rush to the newsstands to buy the first issues of newly liberated newspapers? Why don't we journalists congratulate one another? The answer is simple; the manager has been sacked but the master has remained in place. The main problem, however, lies elsewhere. As usual, it has to do with our mentality, our habitual mode of thought. The road towards free speech that a local newspaper will have to cover while its editor has always been and still remains a member of the local party leadership is long and tortuous.

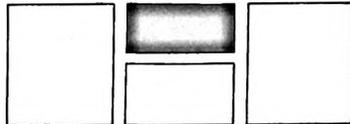
At a higher, more enlightened level, the situation appears even more complicated. What can be done as long as even the most progressive, intelligent and independent editors of truly democratic newspapers still have a special "hot line" telephone in their offices? When this telephone rings it is usually an old pal — from the Komsomol, the Higher Party

School or diplomatic corps — asking or advising (no more orders or instructions) them not to publish this or that story. How many more news stories will be suppressed after such calls in the new censorship-free era? □



Good-bye scissors. Hail ye backyard fighters on the ideological front who for decades didn't let newspaper readers read what you thought they shouldn't. (*Moscow News*)

News in Brief



Court to school district: ‘Religion has equal rights’

WASHINGTON

The U.S. Supreme Court let stand a lower court ruling that a Pennsylvania school district cannot exclude religious groups from after-hours access to school buildings available to other groups.

It declined to review a decision by the Third U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals that a Centennial, Pa. school district policy allowing school facilities to be rented to a wide variety of civic organizations but excluding their use for religious groups such as Campus Crusade, violates the free speech clause of the First Amendment.

The ruling has important church-state ramifications, said J. Brent Walker, associate general counsel of the Washington-based Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

According to Walker, the case “makes clear that religious speech and worship may not be discriminated against, even in public school buildings.”

Walker hailed the decision as “a logical extension of the equal access.” He said that since 1984, the Baptist Joint Committee has advocated the concept as one which includes use of school facilities at night and on weekends by outside groups.

At the time of the request, the school district had allowed more than 65 other groups access to school buildings.

By allowing these groups to use its buildings, it had created a “limited open forum,” in which both religious discussion and worship are protected as free speech, ruled the appellate court in the case, *Gregoire v. Centennial School District*.

The case is important for small churches and missions which meet in rented school facilities until they are able to secure buildings of their own. This ruling from a federal circuit appeals court serves as a strong precedent in any legal challenge to that practice. □

Study shows increase in Church-state disputes

SILVER SPRING, MD

Church-state disputes are on the rise in the United States, according to a recent nationwide survey conducted by Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

The second annual report on such con-

licts listed 192 incidents in 46 states. That number was up sharply over last year’s report, which showed 118 incidents in 38 states.

“The Supreme Court is providing mixed guidance and seems less and less willing to uphold Thomas Jefferson’s vision of a wall of separation between church and state,” said AU’s executive director, Robert L. Maddox.

“As a result, the types of problems we have seen in the states this year will only intensify,” Maddox held.

The survey categorizes disputes between religion and government into four types: religion in the public schools, state endorsement of religion, public funding of religious organizations, and that involving free exercise.

Religion in the public schools problems top the list, and include attempts to introduce sectarian religious exercises into public schools, disputes over creationism and Bible classes, school Bible distribution, and religious clubs meeting on school campuses.

Maddox said that his organization undertook the informal survey in order to gauge problems involving religion and government. He explained that the survey tallied incidents from information supplied by AU members across the country, as well as news media accounts. □

Oregon court’s ruling may end peyote controversy

The Oregon Supreme Court has ruled that two men who lost their jobs as drug rehabilitation counselors for using the drug peyote in ceremonies of the Native American Church are not entitled to unemployment compensation.

After Alfred Smith and Galen Black were fired from their jobs with a drug program operated by Douglas County and were refused unemployment compensation, they appealed on church-state grounds.

Both the Oregon Court of Appeals and the state Supreme Court said that the denial of benefits violated the men’s free exercise of religion rights. When the case initially went to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1987, the high court sent it back to the Oregon Supreme Court to determine whether the sacramental use of peyote was barred under state law.

The Oregon court held that such use of the drug did fall under the state law’s prohibition, but it also ruled that the

state law was invalid under the First Amendment. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled last April that the First Amendment does not require a state to allow the religious use of a drug.

Now, the Oregon high court has ruled on the case for the third and presumably the final time, saying that Smith and Black are not entitled to unemployment compensation because of the state’s anti-drug law. □

Court in Minn. reexamining ‘orange triangle’ ruling

Minnesota’s Supreme Court is taking another look at its ruling that a state law requiring Amish buggies to display slow-moving vehicle emblems violates religious freedom.

Last April, the U.S. Supreme Court vacated the state court’s unanimous 1989 decision exempting the Amish from having to use the bright orange triangle which the Amish consider an odious “worldly” intrusion into their simple way of life. It sent the case back to Minnesota for review following a decision in the Native Americans case in Oregon.

At a rehearing in St. Paul, attorney Philip Villaume, representing the 14 Amish plaintiffs, argued that the Amish case differs from the peyote case because it involves not only religious freedom but other constitutionally protected freedoms.

Co-counsel Joseph Daly declared that the Minnesota Constitution offers broader religious freedoms than the U.S. Constitution and that the court should rule in favor of the Amish simply by applying the state constitution.

The county attorney insisted that the Oregon decision applies in this case: a law is enforceable if it applies to all citizens. The Minnesota law, he said, is “totally secular, and under the U.S. Constitution, no other test is required.” □

U.S. interfaith group says leaders can ease conflict

NEW YORK

Members of an interfaith delegation from the United States, having recently visited three countries in Eastern Europe, in a press conference here said that religious leaders have the potential to help defuse the religious and ethnic

conflicts that have reemerged in Eastern Europe in the past year.

"In all three countries we found strained relations, inter-ethnic friction and interreligious strife," said Orthodox Rabbi Arthur Schneier of New York's Park East Synagogue and president of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation.

Schneier said he was pleased to learn that more and more people of all ages are flocking to their religious institutions, but expressed alarm over the reported absence of any feeling for religious or ethnic pluralism.

Father Leonid Kishkovsky, of the Orthodox Church in America and president of the National Council of Churches of Christ, noted that in Yugoslavia, "to be a Serb is virtually inseparable from being Orthodox; to be a Croat is to be a Roman Catholic. In the largely Muslim province of Kosovo, local tensions parallel the Christian-Muslim confrontation on a regional and world scale."

He said that in Romania, the interfaith delegation urged religious leaders to call for religious tolerance and respect.

"They understood and agreed," he said, "but they must educate their parishioners to the value of a pluralistic society, and this requires a long educational process for which there is little if any precedent in Romanian society." □

Nativity scene approved; mixes religious, secular

A nativity scene centrally displayed during the Christmas season on the lawn of a city hall was found not to convey an endorsement of Christianity and thus did not violate the establishment clause of the First Amendment.

In the case, *Doe v. Clawson, Michigan*, the city's display at the entrance to city hall included evergreen trees with lights and stars, two Christmas gift packages, a Santa Claus standing nearby, a large "Noel" sign, and holiday roping on the building. Decorated lamp posts, a "Seasons Greetings" sign, colored lights and candles adorned the public library across the street.

A citizen sued the city arguing that the nativity scene dominated the display and therefore unconstitutionally communicated an endorsement of Christianity. The city defended that its display is constitutional because of the inclusion of secular symbols so as not to convey a message of government endorsement of religion.

Chesser to head BJC Information Office; will edit REPORT

The Baptist Joint Committee, at its October meeting, named former staff member Larry G. Chesser as its new Director of Information Services, a position in which he also will assume editorship of **REPORT from the CAPITAL**.

Chesser, currently the city editor of the **Log Cabin Democrat** in Conway, Arkansas, will head a department that has been redefined under the recent restructuring of the news and denominational services offices.

An experienced journalist with a background in both religious and secular newsdesks that dates back to 1971, Chesser served as the BJC's information associate from 1980-1985 under then-Baptist Press bureau chief Stan Hasteley.

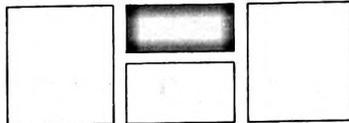
His primary assignment was that of covering both houses of the U. S. Congress, but also the Supreme Court and White House. In addition, Chesser compiled the *News Briefs* and *Washington Observations* pages for this publication.

In assuming editorship of **REPORT**, Chesser succeeds Victor Tupitza, who retires at the end of this year. (story on page 16). He also replaces information director Kathy Palen, who resigned in August to begin theological studies at Yale University Divinity School.

Under a change that consolidates all information services, Chesser will continue to provide comprehensive coverage of church-state and policy

The court held that this display fell somewhere between two cases recently reviewed by the U.S. Supreme Court, *Allegheny County v. American Civil Liberties Union* (1989), and *Lynch v. Donnelly* (1984). In *Allegheny*, Justice Blackmun's majority opinion cited three factors as central: "context," "composition," and "location."

The court in this instance concluded that the city creche satisfied the contextual requirement of the celebration of Christmas as a national holiday by depicting the historical origins of the celebration. The composition consisting of both religious and secular figures on each side of the nativity scene distracted from the creche's religious message. While the location of the creche tends to imply that the religious message has the support of the local government, the



LARRY G. CHESSER

developments of all three branches of government.

He will serve as a media spokesman for the BJC, and maintain contacts with religious and secular news writers. Preparation of editorials and articles on church-state relations for denominational publications become part of that new portfolio.

Chesser earned his undergraduate degree at Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, Arkansas, and the M. Div. degree at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky.

Spouse Nancy Mathews Chesser, a nurse, will work in the office of a cardiologist in the D.C. area. The Chessers have two daughters, Caren, 22, and Rachel, 6. □

court held that the overall message of cultural pluralism outweighed the proximate location. □

Youth group 'Carried away'

A woman has sued the First Baptist Church of Winter Park, Florida, for damages because of the emotional distress incurred after her son was taken to a church program without her approval.

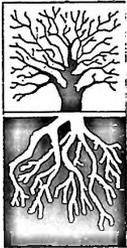
Patricia Carroll also asks the court to restrain the church from removing her 15-year-old son, Michael, from her premises or her neighborhood.

The church administrator said the events are called "Bring 'Em Back Alive," and that the term "kidnapping" is not used. He said young people are told to get their parents' permission before attending. □

The 22nd NATIONAL RELIGIOUS LIBERTY CONFERENCE

FREEDOM'S SPIRITUAL ROOTS

The Bill of Rights with its guarantees of religious liberty and freedom of the press was celebrated at the Baptist Joint Committee's 22nd National Religious Liberty Conference on the theme, "Freedom's Spiritual Roots: Baptists and the Bill of Rights."



On the eve of the bicentennial anniversary of that historic document, approximately 150 representatives of various Baptist bodies came together in Washington, D.C. for major addresses on the historical, legislative and religious implications of the Bill.

The conference included presentations by prominent journalists, educators, congressmen and constitutional experts who focused on free exercise and governmental non-involvement in religion.



QUINN PUGH as JOHN LELAND

There is no danger of the destruction of liberty when the community is well informed. Ignorance always brings on mutiny or lethargy, which equally paves the way for tyranny.

The salient role of Baptists in the Bill's creation was a motif echoed throughout the conference.

Dr. Landrum Leavell, president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in the keynote sermon stressed the importance of the priesthood of believers. "It doesn't mean anyone can believe anything he or she wants," Leavell said, "but anyone gifted of God can interpret scripture without checking with Nashville, Valley Forge or wherever."

Congressman Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) hailed the First Amendment freedoms of religion as "a beacon for all the world." He observed that "central to the philosophy of the United States is the separation of church and state," cautioning, "our moral and spiritual values should not be separated from our public work."

Baptist minister and legislator, House majority whip William Gray III (D-Pa.) described his dual vocations as "a career in constant creative tension."

Gray, too, affirmed the separation principle but opposed "the divorce of religious ethics from public policy." He said, "to stay out of politics was an alignment with the forces of evil."

ABC-TV news reporter and commentator Sam Donaldson, highlighting a panel on religious and press freedoms, told the gathering that "the state should do nothing — in any way — to intervene in religion."

Calling himself "an extremist when it comes to the First Amendment," Donaldson said the problem with making exceptions to it would be in determining who decides what those exceptions would be.



WILLIAM LEE MILLER

Panel moderator Stan Hastey called the First Amendment's guarantee of freedom of conscience "logically, the cornerstone of all other freedoms."

The former BJC information director and now head of the Southern Baptist Alliance criticized the SBC Executive Committee's "unwarranted firings of the two top journalists" of the denomination's *Baptist Press* (BP).

Hastey attributed that action to fundamentalist criticism of the reporting by BP'ers Dan Martin and Al Shackleford, particularly their coverage of the theological and social controversies within the denomination.

Martin, also a member of the panel, explained that under his and Shackleford's leadership BP "was not an unbiased service." That bias, however, was "toward democracy" and in the belief "that what we were doing was worthwhile."

Gustav Niebuhr, the *Wall Street Journal* religion columnist, noted the proliferation of "readers seething with personal anger." He said, "There is no shortage of passion for any given issue," and that "There are many not aware that anyone else is passionate ... who feel they have the Truth with a capital T."

The growth of Islam in the cities and



WILLIAM BENTLEY BALL

of New Age cults and practices in the West are among emerging stories certain to be center stage soon, Niebuhr predicted.

"The fabric of this country is such that conventional wisdom [rapidly] becomes outdated." With new directions and expressions in religion, he said, "the greatest stories in America at the end of the century" probably will be contained in religion coverage.

Historian William Lee Miller, of the University of Virginia, traced James Madison's evolution of thought as it led to his crafting of the Bill of Rights. Significant influence in persuading Madison

that "written minority rights against majority tyrannies" were necessary came from Baptists of northern Virginia who were among Madison's constituents.

In a complementary survey, Baptist historian and author Robert Handy saw in colonial New England forces that paved the way for the Bill of Rights. Handy believes the iconoclast Roger Williams ("a square peg in a round hole even in the 17th century") "still speaks to us today in an arresting way if only we listen to him."

One of the nation's clearest interpreters of the Constitution, University of Virginia law professor A. E. Dick Howard told the audience that the no-establishment clause of the First Amendment was necessary. "The 'Free Exercise,'" he explained, "simply doesn't exhaust what was meant by religious liberty in the largest sense."

Another outstanding constitutional interpreter and a seasoned advocate in religious liberty litigation, William Bentley Ball, hailed free exercise as "a superior, preferred, fundamental right ... the Constitution allows for no exemptions for the free exercise of religion. None," he stressed.

Ball represented the winning side in the landmark 1972 Supreme Court ruling that affirmed the right of the Amish to exercise their religious belief in the education of their own children.



GARDNER C. TAYLOR

In a closing sermon, Dr. Gardner Taylor called Christians "the trustees of the defining experience of what religious freedom — of all history — is about." He spoke of the "Calvary Event" as "the clue to history."

Taylor, who retired after a 42-year ministry at Concord Avenue Baptist Church in Brooklyn, criticized religion's "most orthodox [who] are likely to be the least tolerant."

With the crucifixion of Jesus as example, he pointed out those who crucified him "were the custodians of the oracles, the surrogates of the Covenant ... We must be mindful of it, afraid about it," he warned.

Also appearing at the conference, a biennial event of the BJC, were Cynthia Clawson, Grammy Award winning Gospel singer, and Quinn Pugh, SBC executive from New York state, who appeared, costumed, in a dramatic monologue as John Leland, the influential Baptist. □

[Based on the report by Rich Schramm (ABC/USA) and Dan Martin (ABP).]



ROBERT HANDY chats with BRENT WALKER

INTERNATIONAL DATELINE



Seminary classes set, but campus site still lacking

The long-awaited and much-discussed Baptist Theological Seminary in Moscow has become a reality and will begin full-time studies in January, 1991 with an expected class of 15 to 20 students.

Baptist leadership in the Soviet Union, who were appointed to oversee the seminary development, and the newly-formed Baptist World Alliance Theological Assistance Group formally established the seminary in Moscow, October 1-4.

Grigory Kommandant, president of the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, observed that "We have had conversations for five years, but what has happened this week is very new. I am convinced this is the proper begin-



ning for our seminary."

Kommandant regards the forming of the seminary committee as important as two other historic events that took place that week — the new law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations adopted by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the reunification of Germany.

Announcement of the establishing of the seminary followed "prolonged, detailed and harmonious discussions" with the Baptist leadership in Moscow, said the BWA's general secretary Denton Lotz.

Andrew McRae, principal of the Divinity College of the University of Acadia, Canada, chaired the BWA

group, which consisted of Europeans and North Americans.

In agreement with Baptist seminary leadership, which included representation from Estonia, Russia, the Ukraine and other areas of the Soviet Union, the BWA theological group "will guide the new seminary in the selection of guest professors, curriculum development and the initial development of library and audio-visual resources."

Representatives of the founding groups are currently seeking guest professors from among the Baptist world fellowship to serve in cooperation with teachers from the Baptist Union during the seminary's first semester.

In the meantime, negotiations continue in the search of a permanent site for the seminary. Alexander Firisiuk, secretary and vice-president of the Baptist Union, told *European Baptist Press Service* that the government's refusal to assign property is a sign of the change regarding ownership of property in the Soviet Union.

"Nobody is refusing us," said Mr. Firisiuk, "but nobody is giving us property either. Why give it away when in a few months the government will receive money for it," he rhetorically asked, alluding to the likelihood that new Communist policy will make property available for private purchase and ownership.

Mr. Firisiuk observed that six new churches in the Moscow area are also awaiting promised property from the government, but that nothing has been finalized. □ **BWA**

First Secretary at the Embassy of the USSR in Washington, VLADIMIR V. BELYAKOV, faxed to **REPORT** a news release indicating that a prominent Baptist in Moscow believes the first phase of a complex of buildings to house their long-awaited seminary will take approximately two years before it is ready for occupancy.

In a press interview, Alexei Bychkov, vice-president of the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, voiced confidence that the 125-year-old Baptist work in Russia has surmounted bureaucratic and political barriers in its progress toward finding a suitable building site. □

'New Europe' accessible, Scot Baptist tells Council

DEBRON, Netherlands
Characterizing the present condition of Europe as disillusioned, dissatisfied, secular, cynical, precarious and accessible, the president of the Scottish Baptist Union called Baptists leaders meeting here to greater involvement in mission in a new Europe.

Peter Barber addressed the European Baptist Federation (EBF) Council where he outlined his vision of mission in Europe today.

"Will we identify with Jesus in his agony over a lost world, or miss the opportunity of a lifetime?" he inquired. "Apart from the urgency of mission, that mission," he said, "must be prayerful, credible, holistic, relevant and cooperative."

"Eastern Europe is disillusioned because communism as an atheistic philosophy has been publicly tried and almost universally discredited," Barber told the Council.

He cautioned, however, that in Western Europe the low credibility of the church has created a cynical spirit. Barber alluded to the failure of wealth to cure violence and the industrial rape of the environment and he cited the low regard in which capitalism is held because of the growing gulf between rich and poor.

Barber believes that much of the change in Eastern Europe has come about because of the demand for a better lifestyle, while in the West, the hollowness of secularism and materialism has led to the turn to new religions.

The Scottish leader affirmed the imperative of seeking the salvation of souls, ministering to the needs of bodies and challenging injustices and inequalities that crush the human spirit. □

Appeal asks reduction in military aid to El Salvador

WASHINGTON
National leaders of 40 religious denominations and labor unions have signed an appeal aimed at influencing the Senate vote on a bill that would significantly reduce U.S. military aid to El Salvador and bring an end to the 10-year-old civil war.

"Members of our counterpart labor and religious organizations in El Salvador have endured the ravages of war,



NEWS-SCAN

the systematic violation of human rights, and even greater deprivation," the signers state. "A peaceful settlement of the conflict is long overdue."

Pressure to cut off military aid has increased since the murders last November of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her daughter.

The US House of Representatives voted in June to cut the aid in half. The Senate was due to take up a similar bill in October. □

Rumor of church tax leads to disclaimers of faith

BERLIN

Thousands of former East Germans, panicked by false newspaper reports, turned up recently at civil court offices to avoid paying a church tax by declaring they are not members of any church.

The bizarre situation resulted when two East Berlin newspapers in late September printed stories saying that a church tax hike was likely for residents of what was East Germany.

The papers erroneously reported that the tax, withheld from paychecks, would be equal to nine percent of a wage earner's salary and would go into force on October 3, 1990, immediately following German reunification.

Actually, there is a government plan to have the church tax reinstated in what was East Germany and to once again collect the levies through the government finance system. The projected effective date for the new system is January, 1991. The tax will amount to the equivalent of nine percent of an individual's income tax, not wage.

The small free churches — Baptist, Methodist, Free Lutheran — do not participate in the church tax system, but such churches make up only about two percent of all Protestants in Germany. □

Peace thwarted plans to 'quarantine' GDR pastors

MINNEAPOLIS

Protestant pastors who played a leading role in the peaceful revolution that ended the Communist regime in East Germany almost were not on hand to provide that leadership.

Documents have been discovered revealing that secret police in the German Democratic Republic in late summer of 1989 had made plans to arrest 1,200 to 1,500 "activist" GDR clergy. They were

to be "quarantined" in several remote castles in Thuringia, according to Dr. Albrecht Schoenberr, retired bishop of the Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg.

Addressing audiences at Augsburg College, Minneapolis, and at Luther Northwestern Seminary, St. Paul, Dr. Schoenberr painted a picture of a government increasingly concerned about the loosening of the Communist grip on Eastern Europe.

It was a portrait of a proposed crackdown on dissent that failed to outrun the pace of liberation. Nothing happened because of three reasons: indication of no support by Soviet military leaders; failure of the GDR secret police to seriously regard the threat; and the divisions into opposing factions among the Communist party. □

Mystery shrouds murder of Orthodox priest in USSR

MOSCOW

Mystery surrounds the murder of a well-known and popular Moscow Orthodox priest, Fr. Aleksandr Men, who viewed himself as an independent churchman and whose ministry was directed at promoting and strengthening Christian faith rather than in campaigning for religious freedoms.

Men's body was found by his wife beside the gate of his own house, where he had returned after the attack. Men was on his way for morning prayers at his Sretenskaya church in a suburb of Moscow.

Born in 1935 into an intellectual Jewish family, Men was brought up as an Orthodox Christian by his mother. After commencing studies of biology, he was expelled from the Institute for his Christian faith. He then married and began correspondence courses of the Zagorsky and Leningrad Orthodox seminaries to prepare for parish ministry.

In the repressive atmosphere of the Brezhnev era, Men was perceived as a threat by the Soviet authorities, and in the early 1980s came under increasing pressure in the form of interrogations and confiscation of books from his library.

More recently, Men had been actively involved in seizing new opportunities opening up for the church. He was a founding member of the Russian Bible Society and was planning to publish a magazine, "The World and the Bible." □

Results of a sociological survey conducted by *Moscow News* confirmed not only the survival of the church but its enviable stature in society as well. Writing of the ecological movement in the USSR, the news article states: "... the ecology movement enjoyed popular support and trust excelled by the Church alone. Interestingly, the army appeared as the third most trustworthy party." The article concludes, "Don't these results suggest that we are witnessing the decay of our 'defense conscience' which, for decades, has been our substitute for religion? ... In Nanking, China, a Bible correspondence course organized by the Protestant theological seminary has attracted 16,000 applications for the available 1000 places, according to word from the United Bible Societies. Most of the applicants are said to be from rural churches that have no pastor. Government statistics on religion indicate a population of 100 million Buddhists, 20 million Muslims, five million Protestants and four million Roman Catholics. ... Karl-Heinz Walter, General Secretary of the European Baptist Federation, says that the Baptists in Bulgaria are experiencing unprecedented growth because of a new openness. That has also led to an influx of para-church groups that greatly concern Baptist leaders, along with the tense situation created by economic severity. Mr. Walter contrasts the encouraging mood among Baptists with the country's general depression. ... "A revival of Islam is taking place," and with it a change in attitude toward Muslims, says the chief official of the only mosque in Moscow. Muslims today have no need to conceal that they are believers. An increase in demand for the Koran has led to commissioning the publishing of 100,000 copies. ... Uspensky Cathedral, confiscated in 1917 by Soviet authorities and used as a museum since that time, was transformed on Sunday, September 23 with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Keston College comments that the significance of the occasion was underscored by the fact that this was the first time since 1917 that any of the churches in the Moscow Kremlin have been used for a worship service. ... The Armenian Apostolic Church will begin to print religious literature on its own printing press with assistance from the relief agency of the Swiss Protestant Churches, the Swiss Bible Society and the research centre Glaube in der Zweiten Welt. □

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- A V Attorney William Bentley Ball
- A V Rep. Bill Gray, Cynthia Clawson, Dr. Quinn Pugh
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BJC, From page 5

tions, prayers, hopes, dreams and some good wishes, we anticipate \$420,000." That figure approximates the amount contributed by the SBC when it took the first step to decrease its funding.

Several Public Affairs Committee members, including SBC president Morris Chapman, pastor of First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls, Texas; Larry Lewis, president of the SBC's Home Mission Board; and Tom Pratt pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Brighton, Colo., questioned the bylaw phrase which refers to "national member bodies" of the BJC. Unclarified was whether the RLC is a such a body since all of the other member bodies are denominations.

Chapman later introduced the motion calling for the BJC to study and define the meaning of "national member body."

If the decision of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee stands, when the bylaw revision becomes effective the seven posts held by the executives of the seven SBC agencies will be eliminated.

In response to current developments, the board approved a restructuring proposal that included no additions to the current executive staff of the Washington-based office.

Editorship of **REPORT from the CAPITAL** and the news service will be combined and lodged in the Department of Information Services. The news bureau

will be expanded under the new BNS (Baptist News Service) logo.

A new development officer will assume responsibilities for a fund-raising program and the present denominational services portfolio. The post has still to be staffed. □

[This report is based on the article by Dan Martin of Associated Baptist Press]

Jewish, Christian schools seek state funds in Canada

The Canadian Jewish Congress has joined with the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools in a lobbying effort for government funding for their religious schools.

Although government funding for religious schools is often opposed by Jewish groups in the United States on church-state grounds, such funding is generally accepted in Canada.

In Ontario, Roman Catholic schools have received full government financial support since 1985, although the same has not been true for schools operated by other religious groups. Rather than opposing state funding for Catholics, the Jewish Congress and the Christian School Alliance are calling for equal funding of their schools. □

Quoting

Richard D. Bailey
Charlotte Observer

Budget negotiators from Congress and the Bush administration are reportedly considering trimming back individualized tax deductions, including deductions for charitable contributions, as one means of raising revenue to deal with the federal deficit problem.

Cutting back on the deductibility of charitable contributions would add substantially to the difficult problems charities face in meeting a wide range of human needs. In addition, it would reverse the policy of federal support of tax exemption for charitable contributions by taxpayers who itemize their income tax which has been in the law since 1917.

In 1986, Congress ended charitable tax deductions for the 72 million Americans who do not itemize their tax deductions. At the same time, Congress made gifts of

appreciated property subject to the Alternative Minimum Tax. These reductions in the tax incentives for charitable contributions are in addition to cuts in federal spending for human services that have totaled \$120 billion from 1982 to 1990, exclusive of Medicare and Medicaid. Of that \$120 billion, a total of \$32 billion was cut from services provided by non-profits.

The charitable deduction is a uniquely efficient way for government to encourage voluntary contributions for public purposes. It permits the exercise of a full range of individual choices by the taxpayer about what public purposes to support.

The taxpayer who gives money to charity for a public interest activity no longer has it for his or her own use. The charitable deduction is thus unique among the deductions; it's a kind of voluntary tax. □

(Richard Bailey is executive director of the United Methodist Foundation of Western North Carolina, Inc.)

Believers cannot lightly diminish or denigrate one "made in the image of God." That's everyone. Followers of Jesus cannot despise or demean a fellow human being, "for whom Christ died." He died for all.

REFLECTIONS

James M. Dunn
Executive Director



The insatiable maw of the government's budget beast makes people anxious.

Taxation and new taxes upset everyday routines. Trouble in the Middle East lurks in everyone's mind. Homelessness, now a family affair, stalks the streets. A military presence disrupts many lives. Poverty is increasingly expected and accepted as a fact of life.

In Israel, soldiers make midnight raids on West Bank homes.

All wonder if war is coming. That's the way it is. That's also the way it was. Jesus came to a people who would not be shocked by many of today's headlines.

An ordinary mortal has trouble understanding the miracle Christians call the Incarnation, when God became a human being. Scripture says, "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." The mystery and wonder of Christmas are in the belief that God invaded history uniquely in the wetting, wiggling, squalling baby Jesus. What in the world was going on in that manger?

Why in the world would the God of the universe take up the trappings of mortal flesh? It's beyond reason. Martin E. Marty, master teacher, points out that all humans are victims of finitude, contingency and transience.

As finite beings, we live within enclosures. Dorothy Sayers put it, "God showed us by taking on flesh in Jesus Christ that He could take his own medicine," the bitter pill: humanity. She went on to suggest that God in Christ demonstrated that He could "play the game by His own rules." Does it make any sense that The Unbounded One would submit to limits?

As victims of contingency we stand exposed on an open road to whatever may come. We are vulnerable creatures of chance. We live with uncertainties. How can it be that the One in whom there is no shadow of changing could willingly accept the conditions of human existence?

As transients, this world is not our home, we're just a'passing through. Every news broadcast reminds us of our short lease on life. Every obituary page tells us that we are all temporaries. Can it be that the Eternal could in a fragile body be time bound?

In coming into the same space and circumstances of life, in accepting the same timeline and calendar of mortals, in living within the limits common to all flesh, Jesus ennobled all humankind. The dignity of the exalted individual in Western civilization is in large measure tribute to Jesus' taking on flesh. Believers can not lightly diminish or denigrate one "made in the image of God." That's everyone. Followers of Jesus can not despise or demean a fellow human being "for whom Christ died." He died for all.

The wonder of individual worth still sways the world. Let one small child be trapped in a well. Let one average young man in dark trousers and a white shirt stand before a tank in Tiananamin Square. Let one Leonard Bernstein, whose music has touched countless hearts, pass from the scene. We marvel at the value attached to one person.

Yet, it's not simply the victim, the hero or the exceptional talent that moves us all. We know that no one belongs at

the bottom. We demand that no one be casually sacrificed. We realize that in anyone may be unimagined gifts and undiscovered genius.

At least to some degree that's why we thrill, that's why we inexplicably get still and listen to the same old Christmas story we have heard so many times before. God was in Christ. The Word became flesh. Call his name Emmanuel, God with us, tiny baby in a barn.

In the great university library with two million books, not all of them taken together can explain the one student reading one of them. That's true, even if its a C- student. We understand in our innards more than we can explain about the value vested in each lonely soul.

But for the follower of Jesus Christ, he not only ennobled all flesh when he was born into this world of woe, lived within its confines, died with purpose and conquered time and death. He enabled all who share his bodily form to have hope. He was in all points tempted as we are, fully human. Henri Nouwen spells out the consequences of accepting our common humanity with Jesus.

Compassion roots itself in solidarity. Solidarity is the full consciousness of our being part of humanity, the deeply felt awareness of the oneness of the human race and the knowledge that all people, however separated, are bound together by the same fragmented human condition. This solidarity lies at the heart of the gospel.

The great message of the gospel is not that God came to take our pains away, but that in Christ he came to share them in solidarity with us."

And that gets us back to the battles over budgets and territory and oil and control that consume our waking moments and trigger tremors in our sleep.

It is into the sort of world we know that Jesus came. Mary and Joseph had gone to Bethlehem to meet a tax law requirement, found themselves homeless and before long were fleeing from Herod's soldiers. And that's why he came. And that's why we ought to pay attention ... to him and to all those around us. □

[Notice the tribute from Stan Hasteley, P. 16, to our co-worker and friend, Victor Tupitza. More about Victor and his contribution to Baptist life will appear in the next issue of REPORT from the CAPITAL. JMD]

Thoughts on a Colleague's Leave-taking

To Victor Tupitza, religious liberty is no afterthought.

It is rather the first principle of a belief system embraced by immigrant parents who came to adopt Baptist ways out of the deep conviction that no human intermediary is required between a Christian believer and the God in whose image every person is made and through whom the redeemed are truly free.

Victor remembers his mother as "an avid student of the Scriptures" who abandoned Russian Orthodox views for those of Baptists. "She really believed the Holy Spirit was the One to enlighten," he says.

Antonina Kulich came to Pennsylvania in 1913 to marry Anton Tupitza, who had left his native Russia some five years earlier to find work in America. They settled and reared their children in Erie, Pa., where Anton tended a blast furnace producing pig iron for the steel mills that had so much to do with the nation's industrialization early in this century. Antonina nurtured the family — and studied the Bible.

Her conversion from Russian Orthodoxy to Baptist ways did not come until 1931; his followed the next year. Together they helped form the local Russian-Ukrainian Baptist Church, a congregation that had its start in an Erie storefront. Anton, an able carpenter and plumber, helped build the congregation's structure.

From such stock came Victor Tupitza, who after nearly 12 years of service to the Baptists of North America as editor of **REPORT from the CAPITAL** and director of denominational services for the Baptist Joint Committee, has announced his retirement. In those roles, this second-generation American and Baptist has been both crusading journalist and ambassador of good will for a denominational agency that has known its share of turmoil.

Throughout, this lifelong American Baptist has been a steady influence on a staff otherwise dominated by

Southern Baptists. Often he has provided the needed prescription of wry, subtle humor for those of us too often consumed with the peculiar Southern Baptist malady of the period. Admittedly, sometimes we were left to scratch our heads at some seemingly off-the-wall observation about the vagaries of human foibles or at an esoteric comment on human nature. But eventually, more often than not aided by a dutifully rendered explanation, we'd catch the point.

For you, the reader of this publication, his contributions to the cause of religious freedom have been apparent. He has lifted **REPORT** from the status of a modest newsheet to that of a provocative journal. This considerable achievement has been made despite a barebones budget that forced him to be a journalist jack-of-all-trades, including that of enticer of a steady procession of outstanding writers who have been paid nothing more than thanks and a subscription for their contributions.

Among those enticed to offer their abilities has been his mate of more than 44 years, known to readers as Sarah Helen Shira, whose outstanding art has appeared on many pages and covers of **REPORT**. Sallie, as her friends know her, has been a major asset to editor and publication alike, has remained ever supportive of the mission of the Baptist Joint Committee, and has graced the lives of staff members and their families.

Beyond the publication and duties in denominational relations, Victor leaves another large gap — his first-hand knowledge of and keen insights into the state of religion in the Communist world. Repeatedly in recent years, as the first signs of *perestroika* appeared, followed by the full-fledged surge for freedom in the Soviet Union and throughout Eastern Europe, his expertise enabled this agency and its executive director to play significant roles in the process. These roles, always performed behind the scenes and of



VICTOR TUPITZA

necessity scarcely noted, have been far more important than is generally known. It is a story that someday should be told.

In a letter notifying James Dunn of his intention to retire effective Dec. 31, Victor wrote words that reveal who he is: "It is my hope ... to remain in discipleship as one 'retired but ready' to make contribution to the Kingdom's work, with the certainty that God is Good, and there will be no diminishing to God's lovingkindness.

"I ask for your earnest prayers that this moment become a form of 'commencement,' moving out into new avenues of witness to all that is 'soul liberty' and to the validity of the principles of separation."

Our prayers indeed go with you, good colleague and friend, as do the best wishes and thanks of many who have known you only through these pages. Godspeed. □

Stan Hasty

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