



REPORT from the CAPITAL

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NEWS MAKERS

Rep. Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., introduced the Workplace Religious Freedom Act (H.R. 5233) that would amend Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, strengthening its requirement that employers make a real effort to accommodate the religious practices of employees. Title VII requires employers to accommodate religious practices unless such action poses an undue hardship on the business. "This anti-discrimination statute was designed to ensure that religious Americans not be forced to choose between their jobs and their religious obligations — such as observing the sabbath or other religious days, or wearing religiously mandated articles — and their jobs," he said. "Title VII struck a reasonable balance between the religious rights of working people and the needs of private business. Unfortunately, in two separate decisions, the Supreme Court upset this delicate balance."

Libby Ivins, assistant to the general counsel and director of research services at the Baptist Joint Committee, resigned Oct. 14 to become the administrative assistant to the headmaster at the Barrie School in Silver Spring, Md. Ivins, whose husband Dan is the pastor of First Baptist Church, Silver Spring, has been with the BJC for 18 months.

Darreyl M. Young, a fired United Methodist Church minister, has lost her sex and race discrimination suit against the church's Northern Illinois Conference. The U.S. Supreme Court refused Oct. 11 to review lower court rulings that the First Amendment bars courts from reviewing employment decisions affecting clergy. Young, a female African American, served four years as a probationary minister. Δ

Faith impacts decisions, Clinton tells Baptist group

President Clinton prays and studies the Bible as he makes tough decisions and copes with the isolation of the presidency, he told a group of Baptist editors and leaders Oct. 3.

Stung by religious critics and what he called "the brutal polarization of debate" on moral issues, the president decried the meanness of those debates. And he wondered aloud why others have not defended him from harsh personal attacks by religious critics.

During the visit, organized by the Baptist Joint Committee, Clinton, a Southern Baptist, was asked how his faith informs his decisions. Contrary to his critics' claims, Clinton said, he bases decisions regarding the thorniest issues — such as abortion and homosexuality — on Scripture, as well as science and law.

"When I have some big decision and no one else can make it and my advisers are split, I try to spend a lot of quiet time, and I pray a lot about those things," said Clinton.

"Even more important is the kind of guidance I try to get on a daily basis. Since I've been here, I've spent a lot more time than I ever have in my life reading religious books. ... And it's made a huge difference, actually, in enduring what is the pretty significant isolation of this job."

Clinton grew animated discussing the "demonization" he had received at the hands of TV preachers such as Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson. He also expressed frustration that he hasn't had

more help in fending off the attacks of Robertson, Falwell and others. "I have been surprised that they haven't been held accountable by other people."

The challenge for Christians, Clinton said, is to infuse the public debate with moral concerns "and still resist the temptation to demonize the opposition." He lamented that debates over

serious moral issues often are reduced to screaming matches. "If these problems were easy and could be screamed away, they would be solved already," he said.

Two issues that prompt thrashings from conservative Christians are abortion and homosexuals in the military.

"The real issue is not whether you think abortion is wrong or not, but whether government ought to criminalize the conduct in all cases," the president said.

The U.S. Supreme Court's landmark abortion case essentially maintained government cannot penalize a mother or her doctor for an abortion performed before the fetus is viable outside the womb, he said. That decision reflects the absence of a national consensus on when human life begins, Clinton noted.

"Until I know something from science or I feel the Scriptures are totally unambiguous, as a Christian, I must uphold the law," he added. "I have read all the verses cited by people who say that it is self-evident that the Scripture is against abortion and we



President Clinton makes a point at BJC briefing.

See President, Back Page

BJC healthy financially, Dunn tells agency's board

The Baptist Joint Committee is back on its feet financially after losing the support of its largest member-denomination three years ago, James M. Dunn told the agency's board of directors in their annual meeting Oct. 3-4.

The Southern Baptist Convention, a founder of the BJC and member for more than 50 years, withdrew its support in the early 1990s.

The rapid defunding brought hard times to the BJC, said Dunn, executive director of the religious-liberty organization, but now things are turning around. Cash reserve funds dropped to about \$30,000 last year but have rebounded to \$118,800, he said.

The defunding changed forever the picture of BJC support, Dunn said. A few years ago, funding came almost exclusively from member denominations. Today, the BJC's largest supporters are not denominations, but Baptist state conventions, congregations, individuals and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, a national moderate organization which, its leaders insist, cannot properly be termed a denomination.

The BJC board approved a 1995 budget of \$815,700, 3 percent larger than this year's budget.

The BJC also amended its constitution to allow board representation for state and regional bodies that contribute to the agency.

In other business, a Kentucky Baptist Foundation account established in December to support the BJC has received \$90,000 in pledges and \$23,000 in gifts, reported Bill Crosby, pastor of First Baptist Church in Erlanger, Ky. The goal is to raise a corpus of \$200,000, which would yield about \$20,000 a year for BJC support by 1996, said Crosby, a BJC member.

The board also adopted two resolutions. One urges defeat of legislative efforts to exempt prison inmates from protection under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. "Prisoners should be entitled to exercise their religion freely, consistent with the state's compelling interest of maintaining order and safety within the prison system," the resolution states.

The other resolution endorses the statement, "A Shared Vision: Religious

Liberty in the 21st Century," published by the BJC staff and 80 other organizations and individuals this summer.

The document "reaffirms both the proper role of religion in public discourse and civic affairs and the need for the separation of church and state," the resolution says. **A**

Clinton orders monitoring of RFRA application

President Clinton has ordered every government agency to appoint someone on its legal staff to monitor application of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, according to Joel Klein, deputy counsel to the president.

Klein announced the president's latest directive Oct. 3 at a briefing for Baptist editors and religious-liberty specialists held in the Old Executive Office Building. Clinton, White House Deputy Chief of Staff Philip Lader and others also spoke to the group.

RFRA says that before government can "substantially burden" the free exercise of religion, government must show that its action serves a "compelling governmental interest" and is the least-restrictive means of furthering that interest.

Fostering understanding of RFRA among government officials is essential, Klein said, because legal challenges to the statute are just beginning. Klein's prediction is supported by the history of the Equal Access Act, passed by Congress in 1984.

Equal Access says if public schools allow any extra-curricular groups to meet on school grounds during non-class times, they also must allow student-initiated religious groups the same privilege. But many school administrators still don't understand the law, said Steven McFarland, director of the Christian Legal Society's Center for Law and Religious Freedom.

During another session of the briefing, two IRS officials advised that church financial secretaries should begin preparing to help donors comply with new tax laws related to charitable

giving.

Effective Jan. 1, 1994, any single contribution of \$250 or more to a charity must be substantiated in writing by that charity. The documentation also must indicate whether the donor received any goods or services in exchange for the contribution.

Church officials will want to get out donor statements as soon as possible each quarter or at year-end, said Karin Gross, a senior technician reviewer with the IRS chief counsel. Howard Schoenfeld, IRS special assistant for exempt organizations, and Gross



SCHOENFELD

said the IRS already has received numerous phone calls, many from people who have misunderstood the new law.

Forging a positive response to the religious right, Rabbi David Saperstein, director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, said, "We talk too much about the politics of what the the religious right is doing ... and too little about the context of what's caused that vacuum that has allowed the religious right to move in a manner that fills an enormous yearning in the heart and soul of the American people."

Today Americans suffer from a pervasive sense of powerlessness, Saperstein said, and the religious right's call to return to traditional values offers them a sense of control.

The religious right claims that what it is doing is no different than what the mainstream religious community is doing, he said. But major differences do exist between the two, he said, noting the religious right seeks to impose its views on people.

Another briefing speaker, Jimmy R. Allen, discussed results of a national survey on religion and the media, conducted by the Freedom Forum's First Amendment Center. The study revealed that the news media and religious leaders are leery of one another but both have more in common than is usually apparent. They are both truth seekers, truth tellers, he said. **A**



KLEIN

PEW, PULPIT & the LAW

Q: What is the status of the EEOC's proposed guidelines on religious harassment in the workplace?

A: The EEOC voted on Sept. 19 to withdraw all of its proposed guidelines on workplace harassment based on race, color, sex and national origin, as well as religion. Some had urged the removal of religion from the guidelines. The BJC sought to keep religion in the guidelines but make them more protective and less vague.

It's good that the EEOC withdrew all the guidelines together. The worst thing would have been to withdraw only religion and to move forward with the rest. Religion must not be left at the station when the train leaves. That would send the unfortunate signal that the EEOC is less concerned about religious harassment than its other forms.

We can live with or without these guidelines, but if we're going to have them, religion should be there too — protected to the hilt. (JBW)

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REFLECTIONS

Sabbatarian Baptists



JAMES M. DUNN
Executive Director

Roman Catholics and real Christians."

Sabbatarian Baptists were early among those variegated versions of the faith in Rhode Island. Along with Roger Williams and John Clarke, Samuel and Tacy Hubbard should be known as Baptist founders. They brought out Seventh Day Baptists.

The term "Sabbatarian" was used as a derogatory reference. The names "Christian" and "Baptist" were also "dirty words" early in history.

You may not have noticed that Seventh Day Baptists are one of the supporting bodies for the Baptist Joint Committee. In fact, you may not know about Seventh Day Baptists. Enough of that particular gap in Baptistology!

Newport History, the bulletin of the Newport (R.I.) Historical Society, devotes the Summer 1994 issue to Seventh Day Baptists. It is a signal honor for Don A. Sanford, a direct descendant of the Hubbards, to be chosen by the Newport Historical Society to write this important story. Sanford is the historian of the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference.

You will learn more than you ever knew about Seventh Day Baptists reading this beautiful 48 page account of their beginnings. This issue is available from the Newport Historical Society, 82 Touro Street, Newport, R.I., 02840; telephone 401-846-0813.

This brand of Baptists is also examined carefully in the September 1994 *American Baptist Quarterly*. Raymond D. Irwin has carefully crafted "A Study in Schism: Sabbatarian Baptists in England and America, 1665-1672." Irwin writes, "The old notion that

Cotton Mather, Puritan divine, called Rhode Island "a cesspool" of religious practice. He wrote that "there never was held such a variety of religions together on so small a spot of ground ... everything in the world but

Rhode Island was the original home of 'soul liberty' has never been challenged seriously. Scholars perennially view the founder of the colony, Roger Williams, as a renegade radical who believed that government could not constrain consciences without encouraging hypocrisy." The unconstrained conscience and a hatred for hypocrisy has haunted and energized Seventh Day Baptists from their rocky Rhode Island origins until today. This look at their roots is available from: *American Baptist Quarterly*, P.O. Box 851, Valley Forge, Pa., 19462-0851; single issues: \$6.00 plus postage.

These who observe Saturday as the Sabbath have argued that Judaic codes continued in force, particularly the divine dictate demanding observance of the Sabbath. They accuse "first day Baptists" of rejecting basic biblical precepts. Yet in most particulars members of this smallest of our national Baptist bodies believe and behave like other Baptists.

Seventh Dayers have clung tightly to and ferociously defended their beliefs. They have more experience with persecution than most believers in the Baptist family. They turn to one another for support, form strong family ties and take their identity from their formative faith perhaps more than any other Baptist by the name.

They have understood the absolute necessity of the separation of church and state. For their entire history an indifferent or disinterested or even hostile state has been willing to run roughshod over their day of rest and worship.

The Baptist Joint Committee has a special place in their affections. I was reminded of this once again as I spent a week at their annual conference this summer in Linsborg, Kan.

Court cases and friend-of-the-court briefs have been the battleground on which the Baptist Joint Committee has repeatedly fought for the freedom of Sabbatarians to worship as they see fit and not to be punished by law, custom or culture. We stand with Seventh Day Baptists for full-fledged, whole hearted, religious liberty. It is none of government's business to appoint the time for worship ... never has been. Δ

COVER STORY

President, Continued from Front Page

should criminalize the conduct of mothers and doctors. I simply don't believe they're so free of ambiguity that you can say, 'Well, the only answer to this is to overturn the (*Roe v. Wade*) decision by constitutional amendment.'"

Conservative columnist Cal Thomas said Clinton is misreading the Bible. Thomas said criminalization of abortion "is not the issue at all. Only a tiny fraction of the people in this country wants abortion outlawed in every case." He also disagreed with Clinton's claim that the Bible is ambiguous on abortion. "I'd like to know what verses are ambiguous," he said.

But Thomas conceded Clinton's critics have gone too far. "Some of the stuff I've seen comes very close, if not over the line, to bearing false witness," he said.

Thomas declined to criticize Falwell, his former boss at the Moral Majority. But he said: "There are too many visible preachers who have allowed them-

selves to be seduced by the kingdom of this world, rather than [preaching about] the kingdom of God."

Clinton told the Baptist group that abortion is an ongoing concern. "I work on this issue. I've read a lot of pro-life literature. I'm not for the number of abortions we have today. So, there are only two things to do — reduce the rate of unwanted pregnancies ... and do something about adoption."

The administration is addressing the first concern through education, and it's also "trying to get a law through Congress loosening the restrictions on cross-race adoptions," he said.

Clinton said his position on abortion essentially matches that of the Southern Baptist Convention in a 1971 resolution, which supported abortion in cases of rape, incest, fetal deformity and to protect the health of the mother. Stricter views have been expressed by SBC resolutions since conservatives took control of the convention. "Did we learn something about the Bible in the last 23 years?" Clinton asked.

Gays in the military is the other issue

that alienated Clinton from many conservative Christians. "The question is this: If you're in government and acknowledge the existence of homosexual people, does that mean you affirm the lifestyle? My answer is no," he said.

"My position, embraced by the most decorated veterans of the Vietnam War in Congress, is that people ought to be judged not by what they are or say, but what they do," he said. "If they're guilty of misconduct, throw them out."

His position is more conservative, intellectually honest and fair than his opponents' position, he said.

"We ought to apply the same standard to all," Clinton said. "If you play by the rules, work hard and pay taxes, you ought to be able to serve." (ABP)

— **Marv Knox**
Editor, *Western Recorder*
Newsjournal
of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

Associated Baptist Press Editor Greg Warner contributed to this story.

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James M. Dunn
Executive Director

Larry Chesser
Editor

Pam Parry
Associate Editor

J. Brent Walker
Book Reviews

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