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REPORT FROM THE CAPITAL

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NewsMakers

◆ Herb Silverman, an atheist activist, said his religious liberties were violated when South Carolina denied his application to become a notary public after he crossed out the word "God" from the state-required oath.

◆ Charles Stanley, pastor of First Baptist Church of Atlanta and Ed Young, pastor of Second Baptist Church of Houston, have joined Christian Coalition founder Pat Robertson and others in a letter to over 100,000 churches urging use of the group's 1996 voter guides. The letter says that churches would not risk their tax-exempt status by distributing the guides, but others dispute that claim.

◆ Joan Englund, legal director of the ACLU, has asked officials in Medina, Ohio, for the immediate removal of a painting of Jesus that has hung in a public school there for 50 years. Δ

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COMMENTARY

Supreme Court agrees to decide important religious liberty case

After a year in which the Supreme Court failed to decide a single church-state case, it has now granted review of what may be the most important religious liberty case in 50 years.

Flores v. City of Boerne involves an attempt by a Texas city to prevent a Catholic church from expanding its 70-year old building because the sanctuary's facade lies in a historic district. The church sued under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), claiming that the city's policy substantially burdened its exercise of religion and that the city did not have a compelling interest sufficient to justify its actions. The city challenged RFRA's constitutionality, and the case eventually wound up in the Supreme Court.

The constitutional argument boils down this way. The city argues that RFRA violates the separation of powers doctrine: Congress is trying to overrule a Supreme Court decision without amending the Constitution and is attempting to tell the courts how to decide its cases. But that's not what RFRA does. Congress was not trying to overrule judicial decisions; it was simply creating a statutory right when the Court refused to recognize a constitutional right in its infamous peyote decision, *Employment Division v. Smith*. The Constitution provides a floor on our rights; it doesn't erect a ceiling. And, within some limits, there is nothing

wrong with Congress "ratcheting up" our rights beyond that which the Court has interpreted the Constitution to provide. And, Congress is not telling the courts how to decide their cases. It is only telling

government officials that, before they will be able to adopt policies that restrict religious liberty, there must be a compelling interest to support it. The courts still will have to decide what amounts to a



"One can't overstate the importance of this case."

— J. Brent Walker

compelling interest.

The city also argues that RFRA is unconstitutional because of federalism: Congress is without power to apply RFRA to the states. However, since the Free Exercise clause applies to the states in the first place through the Fourteenth Amendment, and since that amendment gives Congress "power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this Article," Congress has plenary power to apply RFRA to the states.

I know this sounds like a bunch of legal mumbo jumbo. But that is where religious liberty battles often are won or lost. One can't overstate the importance of this case. If RFRA is declared unconstitutional, we will be back to living under the *Smith* case which gives absolutely no protection whatsoever for religious liberty. And that would be doubly unfortunate, because it also would fan the flames behind the religious equality amendment

BJC cited for role in church-state debate

Though small, the Baptist Joint Committee has been an anything-but-quiet voice that has contributed to America's ecumenical debate by insisting that church and state be separate, said two religious leaders at the organization's 60th anniversary celebration.

The Washington-based religious liberty agency has brought "an expertise and constancy" to the nation's church-state discussions, said Joan Brown Campbell, general secretary of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, a coalition of mainline churches representing 42 million U.S. Christians.

"This steady, steely Baptist witness to religious liberty and its corollary, the separation of church and state, has, I would be so bold to say, changed the course of American history," she said.

"You are small, but you are one of the brightest stars in the constellation of Baptists," she said.

Rabbi A. James Rudin, national interreligious affairs director of the American Jewish Committee, said the BJC has worked alongside America's Jewish community in the fight to defend religious liberty, even when relationships with other Baptist groups were bad.

Rudin mentioned an oft-quoted 1980 statement by the then-president of the Southern Baptist Convention that God does not hear Jewish prayers and a resolution by the SBC this year calling for evangelization of Jews.

Rudin called the resolution "a coercive and unnecessary and unhappy resolution to target Jews for conversion."

Baptists and Jews have much in common, Rudin said, including a similar congregational polity, a "deep respect and reverence" for the Bible and a shared commitment to the separation of church and state.

Rudin suggested that the American Jewish Committee and the Baptist Joint Committee work together to develop a "theology of pluralism" to ensure that all people are afforded the constitutional guarantee of religious freedom.

"I fear for pluralism. It is a tender plant that needs tender-loving care," Rudin said. "A theology of pluralism means to plumb the depths of our relations and to build a sturdy theological basis for what we have practiced in America for 200 years."

Such a theology should not simply acknowledge the fact of religious diversity but also propose that "perhaps pluralism might be the will of God," he said.

In addition, Rudin said the two groups could work together to reach out to immigrants to educate them about American concepts such as the separation of church and state.

Rudin said many newcomers to the United States come from countries without concepts of separation of religion and state, religious liberty or government protection of minorities.

Rudin said the two groups could work together not to "coerce or indoctrinate" immigrants "but to sensitize our new citizens" to America's heritage of religious freedom and the view that "all faiths should be welcomed into the public square."

In a discussion following prepared remarks, Campbell said that interfaith relations pose a tough challenge for many evangelical Christians.

"For so many, to be a witness means go into all nations and preach the gospel,"

she said. "The 'therefore' in that is anyone who is not a Christian must be brought to faith."

A key question, she said, is "how can I be a witness to my faith and be fully recognizing of Jim (Rudin) and his faith."

James Dunn, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee, said his organization has succeeded in relating to other faith groups not by theological dialogue but by a "practiced pluralism."

"Rather than sitting across the table seeking common ground, we stood side by side against common challenges," he said.

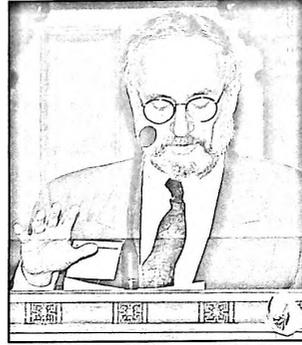
— Bob Allen

Associated Baptist Press



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— Joan Brown Campbell



"I fear for pluralism. It is a tender plant that needs tender-loving care."

— Rabbi A. James Rudin

Quoting ...

"There is a new brand of tribalism that is loose in the land today, a kind of Balkanization as many scholars refer to it, in which our concern is about our own little group."

— Oliver S. Thomas

Shurden says—

Baptists losing emphasis on religious liberty

Concern for religious liberty pre-dates foreign missions as "the ecumenical glue" that binds together diverse Baptist groups, but that heritage is fading into history, a Baptist historian lamented at a recent conference.

Walter Shurden, chair of the Christianity de-

partment at Mercer University in Macon, Ga., was among speakers at an Oct. 6-8 conference in Washington celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Baptist Joint Committee, a church-state watchdog group.

Speaking on the topic, "How Baptists Got This Way," Shurden acknowledged that Baptists today are not widely perceived as standing for freedom, calling the acknowledgment "sad, sad, sad."

"It means Baptists have come a long way from their humble beginnings and their struggling origins," Shurden said.

Shurden said early Baptists overcame prevailing views that restricted religious liberty because of their origins as an oppressed minority, because of theological views that encouraged theological diversity and because those two factors propelled them into political involvement.

"Baptists bled in their earliest years in England and in New England in the 17th century and they remained handcuffed in the 18th century," Shurden said.

"Baptists got 'that way' on religious liberty and on the separation of church and state because they were born in adversity," Shurden said. "If you contrast that to our living in prosperity, you begin to get a hunch about why the



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— Walter Shurden

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Even without a history of oppression, however, Baptist convictions about the Bible, theology, ecclesiology, philosophy and history all pointed to a respect for diversity, Shurden said.

Early Baptists took their views on church and state

primarily from the New Testament, viewing church and state as "two spheres," in contrast to the predominant Anglican view, which followed the Old Testament model of the kingship.

Theologically, Baptists viewed God as "a liberating deity," saw humanity as being in God's image and insisted on soul liberty, Shurden said. "Baptists insisted on soul liberty because of their understanding of faith — to be authentic, faith must be free."

Baptists also viewed the church not as a social organization, but as a spiritual reality in which involvement is not coerced, he said.

The Baptist founders also used "exceedingly practical arguments" from philosophy and their reading of history that religious oppression was "unnecessary and ineffective" and led to civil unrest, Shurden observed.

Such Baptist convictions "issued into activity" in the political sphere, Shurden said, noting that early Baptists "lobbied together" for religious freedom through writings and civil disobedience, Shurden said.

"I submit there was a Baptist joint committee long before there was a Baptist Joint Committee," Shurden said.

"Baptists lobbied jointly with their pens and their lives," he said. "They intentionally, premeditatedly broke laws and they did it because they were acting out their convictions."

Rather than a struggle by a few figures, the fight for religious liberty was "a melee in which the entire denomination was involved," Shurden said.

"It was the struggle for ministerial education and the struggle for religious liberty that brought Baptists in this country together first," Shurden said. "It was not our commitment to foreign missions."

"It is interesting to me that it is still on issues of religious liberty that Baptists in America cooperate together more than any other issue," he said. "Religious liberty is the ecumenical glue that holds us together."

— Bob Allen
Associated Baptist Press

CITIZENS OF TWO KINGDOMS

A four-part lesson series for youth
in Baptist history and religious liberty



"This curriculum helped our boys and girls and our leaders gain a new awareness of and appreciation for the religious freedoms we enjoy as Americans and reminded us of the responsibility we have to preserve this freedom."

— DAVID GARRARD
Minister to Children
St. Matthews Baptist Church
Louisville, Kentucky.

\$5 Available from:

The Baptist Joint Committee and Smyth & Helwys

BJC thriving a decade after funding crisis

Ten years ago, when the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs marked its 50th year, many Baptists close to the religious-liberty agency feared it had entered its last decade.

The agency had come under increasing attack from political conservatives who had gained control of the Southern Baptist Convention, historically the largest single financial contributor to the BJC's work.

After several years of acrimonious investigations and tense board meetings, the SBC defunded the BJC of its nearly \$400,000 annual allocation.

But as the Baptist Joint Committee celebrated the beginning of its seventh decade Oct. 6-8, neither the strife of the past nor the budget problems that could have resulted were in evidence.

"We have more money from Southern Baptists today than we ever had from the Southern Baptist Convention," Executive Director James Dunn said in an interview.

In addition to support from nine other Baptist bodies who participate in the cooperative effort, the BJC now receives about \$300,000 annually from the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, a group of disaffected Southern Baptist moderates, plus about \$160,000 annually from three state Baptist conventions — Texas, North Carolina and Virginia.

Soon, the BJC will begin receiving an annual allocation from Kentucky Baptists who have contributed to a special endowment fund. Also, a national endowment fund drive for the BJC has netted \$221,000 in gifts and pledges toward a \$600,000 goal, Dunn said.

During an Oct. 8 meeting of the Baptist Joint Committee's board of directors, a 1997 budget of \$870,000 was adopted for the agency. Despite some uncertain months in 1990 and 1991, the agency never missed a payroll and ultimately has prospered, Dunn said.

Dunn, an outspoken Texan who has been described as "telling the truth with the bark still on it," said he believes his tenacity and the tenacity of his staff and the other Baptist bodies in the coalition are the reasons the agency not only survived the changing winds of the SBC but has thrived.

He particularly commended his staff for staying with the agency. "There were months when they didn't know if they'd get their paychecks," he said.

After the funding cut, donors began sending money without prompting, Dunn said. "We didn't go out to find these people. They knew enough to step up to the plate."

Today, the BJC has a core group of about 2,000 donors, he said, plus about 50 churches that have included the agency directly in their budgets.

The other Baptist groups that form the Baptist Joint Committee also stood firm in their support and even increased their financial contributions, Dunn said. Those groups include American Baptist Churches in the USA, Baptist General Conference, National Baptist Convention of America, National Baptist Convention USA, National Missionary Baptist Convention, North American Baptist Conference, Progressive National Baptist Convention, Seventh Day Baptist General Conference and Alliance of Baptists.

Throughout the SBC battles of the 1980s and early 1990s, the names of Dunn and the Baptist Joint

Committee became inextricably intertwined. Critics lambasted the agency's most visible figure perhaps more frequently than the agency itself.

The intertwining public image of Dunn's personality and the BJC continued during the anniversary celebration, which also marked his 15th year as executive director.

Still, Dunn declared that the BJC remains a cause far larger than his Texas-sized personality.

"Circumstantially, that has happened," he said. "We personify our causes. I didn't choose to do that. As far as I was concerned, I was just doing my job. But I became both the target and the cause."

During the anniversary celebration, numerous figures from government and the Washington lobbying community stepped to the microphone to laud both Dunn and the agency he heads.

"We are all grateful here in the Washington community for the Baptist Joint Committee taking the lead" on legislative issues such as the Religious Freedom Restoration Act and the Equal Access Act, said Elenora Giddings Ivory, director of the Washington office of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

"I know of no organization in America that does more to preserve religious liberty in America," added Derek Davis, director of the J.M. Dawson Institute of Church-State Studies at Baylor University.

Rabbi A. James Rudin, director of interreligious affairs for the American Jewish Committee, lauded both Dunn and the BJC for speaking out for religious liberty "in good times and bad, sunshine and storm."

Rudin praised Dunn and his staff for their devotion both to religious liberty and religious conviction. "These folks are indeed people of faith," he said.

— Mark Wingfield

Editor, Western Recorder

Newsjournal of the Kentucky Baptist Convention



Telisa Harwell Photo

Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist Doug Marlette presents BJC Executive Director James M. Dunn a cartoon he drew to commemorate Dunn's 15 years at the helm of the religious liberty agency. In the cartoon, Marlette's "Kudzu" character, the Rev. Will B. Dunn tells the BJC's Dunn, "Fifteen Years! Big deal — I got sermons that seem longer than that."

Speakers challenge claims of religious right

Too many Americans wrongly think the Christian Coalition represents the only Christian perspective in American society, a panel of speakers said during the 60th anniversary celebration of the Baptist Joint Committee.

During the Oct. 6-8 event, a procession of government and religious figures praised the Baptist Joint Committee for its efforts and simultaneously sounded the alarm that "mainstream" Christians must speak up to counter the message of the religious right.

"I would rather be in the lion's den with Daniel or the fiery furnace with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego than in the tender mercies of the Christian Coalition," declared John Buchanan, a former U.S. representative from Alabama. Buchanan, a Republican who served 16 years in the House, was defeated in his primary race in 1980 through organized opposition by the Moral Majority, precursor to the Christian Coalition.

An ordained Baptist minister, Buchanan now works with Washington-based Podesta Associates as a legislative analyst and political consultant.

In a breakout session, Buchanan told how a group of conservative Christians from his district approached him and declared themselves to represent "the Christian position" on issues. They were unswayed by his declaration that Christians of good faith held a variety of positions, and they successfully opposed him in the primary race.

"They beat my brains out in Christian love," he said.

Buchanan, who describes himself as an "Abraham Lincoln Republican," said he is convinced that although the Christian Coalition may be the loudest voice heard from the Christian community, it is not the only voice nor the majority voice. "There is a great need for other people who are Christians to be heard," he declared.

Buchanan and other speakers said they agree with the religious right that Christians have a responsibility to speak out on political and moral issues. "What I want to see is more people active," Buchanan said. "I don't think we should let a minority ... dominate the scene."

"I agree with (Jerry) Falwell that churches must get involved in the political process," said Robert Tiller, a veteran American Baptist lobbyist.

The difference between his view and Falwell's, Tiller said, is the scope and nature of what issues should be addressed. He attended a recent Falwell public-policy briefing at which the only issues discussed were abortion, homosexuality and schools. "Not a word was uttered about hunger, homelessness, health care" and a host of other issues the Christian community should speak out about, Tiller said.

The sessions were laced with calls for Baptists not to forsake their history of supporting religious liberty for all



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people in America.

"The challenge for the next century is remembering what it means to be an American," said Oliver Thomas, former general counsel for the Baptist Joint Committee and current special counsel for the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA. "It's not the language, not the color of our skin; it's not even the person we call Lord that makes us Americans. ... Freedom of

religion, freedom of conscience, that is the glue."

In a sermon that closed the two-day meeting, African-American preacher Gardner Taylor brought a scathing appraisal of Christians who claim theirs is the "Christian" agenda.

Taylor, pastor emeritus of Concord Baptist Church of Christ in Brooklyn, N.Y., and a founder of the Progressive National Baptist Convention, suggested racism is one reason why two presidents from the old South, Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton, both Southern Baptists, are "most despised in the areas of their own religious faith and the family out of which they've come."

Taylor noted that another president from the south, Lyndon Johnson, commented on the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act that Democrats had "lost the South for a generation."

"If you look carefully enough underneath all the claims and reasons advanced" for animosity against Clinton and Carter among white Southerners and conservative Christians, "I think you will find a gentleman of color in the woodpile," he quipped.

Taylor also decried those who tout family values and yet "never mention one of the greatest problems in American life today," divorce.

"These people who claim the title of Christian and who besmirch and almost make the name of the Lord Jesus Christ an expletive in some people's mind ... they never mention this issue," he said.

He also chided religious progressives who focus solely on issues of social justice while ignoring individual responsibility and needs.

"Those of us who are committed to great social causes ought never to forget that there are people in our congregations who are so much on the precipice of disaster, who have been so scarred by tragedy and who have been so enslaved by their individual circumstances, that these cries of public conscience are scarcely heard by them," Taylor said. "They need to hear a gospel message that addresses them."

— Mark Wingfield and Bob Allen

Historian says Baptists lured by civil religion

Civil religion, the "quasi-deification" of America itself, "played a key role in the defection of so many Baptists from the doctrine of the separation of church and state," according to Indiana State University history professor Richard Pierard.

Speaking at the Baptist Joint Committee's 60th anniversary celebration, Pierard said Baptists "made common cause with the large segment of the evangelical community which had sold its spiritual birthright to the Christian Right.

"In the hope of recovering the influence they sincerely believed they once had in society, they abandoned the most important contribution they had made to American Christianity, that is, their commitment to religious freedom," he added.

Pierard defined civil religion, a phrase coined by Robert N. Bellah in the mid-1960s, as a common religion that was part of the unity and character of the society.

"It could be seen as collection of beliefs, values, ceremonies and symbols that gave sacred meaning to the political life of the community, provided the nation with an overarching sense of unity that transcended all internal conflicts and differences and related the society to the realm of ultimate meaning," he said.

Bellah's argument, he said, was that American civil religion arose from national events such as the Declaration of Independence and the subsequent words and deeds of the Founders. It was bolstered by events like the National Day of Prayer and the insertion in 1954 of "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance, he said.

Pierard traced three periods of disestablishment of religion in American history, the final one occurring in the



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— Richard Pierard

1960s as there was a growing acceptance of plurality of norms and lifestyles. The "critical moment," Pierard said, was when the Supreme Court "forbade public schools from prescribing the saying of prayers or devotional Bible readings."

Groups like the BJC, however, pointed out that "public schools were never intended to carry the burden of instilling devotional attitudes in

the younger generation," he said.

Pierard said one of the most striking examples of the Baptist repudiation of church-state separation could be seen in two contradictory statements made by W. A. Criswell, while pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas. During the heat of the 1960 presidential election campaign, Criswell said, "It is written in our country's Constitution that church and state must be, in this nation forever separate and free." He warned that if nominee John Kennedy won, the door may later be open for another Roman Catholic "who gives the pope his ambassador, the church schools state support, and finally, recognition of one church above all others in America."

Pierard noted that 24 years later Criswell told CBS Evening News, "I believe this notion of the separation of church and state was the figment of some infidel's imagination." Pierard added, "How times had changed."

He concluded that "instead of being the persecuted remnant people, the outsiders wherever official religion prevailed, these Baptists chose to seek the life of ease in Zion. However, the Zion they thought they had found proved to be elusive. The vision of a Christian America was a mirage, and they wandered aimlessly in a spiritual desert seeking something that did not exist." Δ

Wogaman: Cost high for avoiding controversy

"Courageous, prophetic preaching is the kind of preaching that draws people into an inescapable intersection with the truth that they would rather avoid," a Methodist minister told participants at the Baptist Joint Committee's 60th anniversary religious liberty conference.

Philip Wogaman, senior minister of Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington, D.C., said that "preaching has to be able to take the heat."

Wogaman said that "many preachers avoid controversy at all costs and yet the cost of avoiding controversy finally is greater than the cost of being willing to accept it. And that is the cost of an irrelevant Gospel that will not feed the people and enliven the nation."

He saluted the Washington D.C.-based church-

state organization for guarding religious liberty and praised Executive Director James Dunn for his work during the years the agency came under attack from conservatives who had gained control of the Southern Baptist Convention. "I'm really moved as I think of the crisis that Jim Dunn saw you through and did it with such grace and skill, and the BJC has never been stronger and more vibrant than it is today."

Wogaman also discussed the importance of preaching about religious liberty and the issues of the day.

"Being a preacher in any congregation anywhere is the front-line challenge for Christian leadership, and there is no second-class congregation anywhere on Earth in that respect," Wogaman said.

"As a preacher, I feel no pressure on speaking on issues

that I'm confident the congregation agrees with me wholeheartedly," he said, adding that on some issues, "the very fact that I feel the pressure means that it needs to be said."

Wogaman disagreed with the suggestion that preaching is only "supposed to be about spiritual questions having to do with personal religious commitment and not about politics." He defined politics as anything that someone disagrees with you about.

He said the point of preaching is to draw the meaning of the Gospel into the context of human existence.

Wogaman also suggested ways to raise religious liberty concerns. He said people must first consider religion to be important. "If religion is not important how could religious liberty be important?"

"The best way to defend religious liberty is to exercise it," Wogaman added.

He suggested four preaching themes that emphasize religious liberty:



◆ The mystery and the greatness of God. "Who can claim to know the whole mind of God."

◆ The unconditional love of God — the idea that we all belong to God and that God cares about all of us, "gives that internal freedom that makes it possible to assert the external freedom."

"The cost of avoiding controversy finally is greater than the cost of being willing to accept it."

— J. Philip Wogaman

◆ Learning the lessons of love can also promote religious liberty. "Authentic love wishes to protect the self-worth of others."

◆ Religious liberty is needed for authentic religion. "When religion and the state get too intertwined, the result usually is not control of

the state by religion; it is usually control of religion by the state," he said.

Speaking of the how history will one day look at the Christian Coalition, he said, "I'm not sure that its effect on the state will be nearly as much as its use by politicians for their own ends." Δ

Howard: New constitutions have 'cultural spin'

While better off than before the breakup of the Soviet Union, linking a "national identity" to a particular religion threatens religious liberty in several formerly communist countries, according to a University of Virginia law professor.

"One gets the impression that when a new constitution is framed in terms of national identity, there are the insiders and the outsiders," said A. E. Dick Howard at the Baptist Joint Committee's religious liberty conference.

Howard who has helped in the process of drafting constitutions in Eastern European countries, told conference participants not to expect the new constitutions to look similar to the U.S. Constitution.

"The closer you get to these individual countries, the more you realize how distinctive each one is," Howard said.

Human rights and liberties frequently fall victim to nationality and ethnicity in the new countries, he said. National and ethnic hatred is "the first cousin of racism," Howard added.

He reminded listeners that the new countries are still impacted by the communist regime that held power for half a century. In the socialist world "rights were given on



condition, and if you didn't behave and do your part in the social compact those rights would be withdrawn," he said.

Howard added that several constitutions have a "cultural spin" on free speech and free exercise of religion. The rights discussed in proposed constitutions are often "dependent on what the law permits and not rights that pre-exist the state," he said.

In Poland, for example, the constitution allows free speech with the exception that individuals are not protected to criticize the nation or its leaders, Howard said, noting

that Americans clearly exercise their right to criticize national leaders.

Howard also discussed the different models that are developing in the area of church-state separation and religious liberty.

There is a state church model where the church has a monopoly and relies on the state for special privileges. An atheist state model is possible, he noted, where the state is intolerant of all religions.

Baptist Joint Committee

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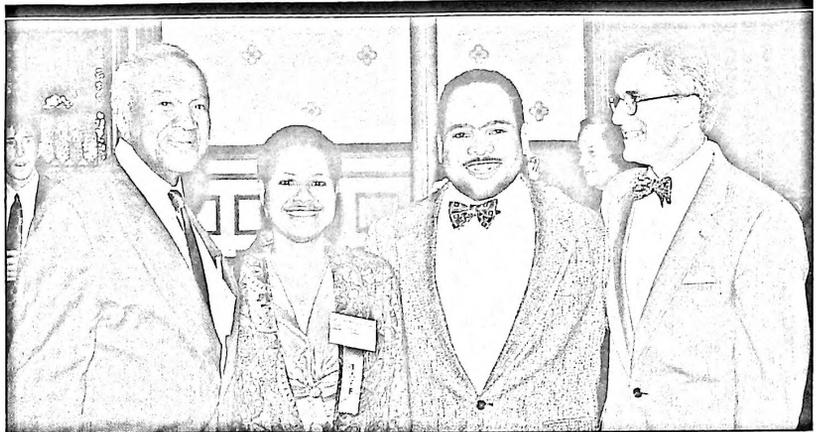
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- ◆ North American Baptist Conference
- ◆ Progressive National Baptist Convention Inc.
- ◆ Religious Liberty Council
- ◆ Seventh Day Baptist General Conference
- ◆ Southern Baptist state conventions/churches

REPORT FROM THE CAPITAL

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Book Reviews

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Gardner Taylor, pastor emeritus of Concord Baptist Church in Brooklyn, N.Y., gathers with BJC legal volunteer Cheryl Gaines, former intern Willie J. Seals and General Counsel J. Brent Walker after his sermon that concluded the BJC's 60th anniversary conference.

HOWARD, Continued from Page 7

Finally, there is a model where the state provides "practical preferences to one religion." Religious instruction in public schools, the paying of clerical salaries by the state, state funding of religious groups and Christian standards for media are among permitted activities in the model, Howard said.

Church-state provisions in new constitutions often read well, but they don't spell out prohibitions on establishment of religion, he said.

He cited circumstances that create a brighter climate for religious liberty. A country being at peace and having a certain level of prosperity helps, he said, noting that the poverty stricken public will be more likely to support leaders who fault groups of different nationality, ethnicity or religion.

Institutions such as a free press and fair elections, as well as a respect for a fair jus-

tice system, also provide support for religious freedom, Howard said. And finally, civic education can foster religious liberty. It is not enough to have good laws and good courts, Howard said. Religious liberty "has to find its roots in the culture in

WALKER, Continued from Page 1

— a misguided proposal that would virtually destroy the First Amendment's Establishment Clause.

The Baptist Joint Committee is already involved with others in plotting coalition strategy, including the filing of a friend-of-the-court brief, and planning to participate in a moot court argument to prepare Professor Doug Laycock to argue the case for the church. Oral argument probably will be held early next year, and a ruling is expected by the end of June. Stay tuned.

—**J. Brent Walker**
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