



REPORT

from the Capital

State funding of religious groups is lure of 'Babylon,' Campolo says

Human governments are the Babylons referred to in the book of Revelation. And America's Babylon is tempting religious charities to accept government money, Baptist sociologist Tony Campolo said in a June 27 speech.

Campolo, a former professor at the American Baptist-related Eastern University in suburban Philadelphia, was speaking at the annual luncheon of the Religious Liberty Council of the Baptist Joint Committee. The luncheon took place during the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's General Assembly in Charlotte, N.C.

"Whenever the church finds itself in a particular political-economic system, then of course that system must be referred to as Babylon," Campolo said in reference to the allegory of the "Whore of Babylon" in Revelation 17.

"The system is out to seduce the church, and that is exactly what is going on right now with 'faith-based initiatives,'" Campolo continued. "It has become the most dangerous seduction that I've ever seen come down the pike."

Campolo referred to President Bush's bid to place pervasively religious groups — such as churches and mosques — on an equal footing with secular groups in receiving government grants for performing social services. Many religious leaders have endorsed the idea as a more effective way of providing social services

that work, while many others have viewed it as a violation of the Constitution's ban on government support for religious groups.

Campolo said churches and religious charities that think it is a good idea to take government money are looking to the wrong place for their funding. "The people of God have the resources to do what needs to be done, and we don't need to be looking to the government," he said.

Campolo said the risk is greater to the church's freedom than to the state's integrity. "We will lose our prophetic edge" if churches take government money, he said. "Separation of church and state is crucial if the church is going to influence the government." ❖



"Whoever pays the fiddler, calls the tune."



Tony Campolo made that statement as featured speaker at the recent RLC Luncheon in Charlotte. He also was presented the J.M. Dawson Religious Liberty award by BJC Executive Director Brent Walker for his long advocacy of religious liberty and church-state separation.

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❖ But churches cannot offer a meaningful critique of government if they are in debt to it. "Whoever pays the fiddler calls the tune," Campolo said.

Campolo, a sociologist by training and a popular Christian speaker on social-justice issues, also used the opportunity to comment on several other areas of public policy.

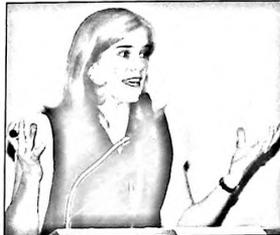
Discussing new restrictions on Americans' freedom, Campolo questioned why more Christians in the United States are not speaking up for Muslims. "Following September 11, the religious freedom of Muslims is being seriously threatened" in the United States, he said.

Campolo condemned new laws and Justice Department policies that make it possible for government police — such as FBI agents — to spy on religious services and groups without probable cause. "They're sending spies into mosques and we're not saying a word," he said. Campolo pointed out that during the Soviet era American evangelicals would often express outrage over reports of KGB agents spying on churches and keeping intelligence files on Christian leaders.

"If it was outrageous to send spies into churches, then it is also outrageous to send spies into mosques."

Campolo said excusing such surveillance of mosques because of national security concerns is missing the point. "You say, 'It's dangerous.' Freedom is always dangerous."

He also called on the U.S. government to pay particular concern to the peril that the prospect of a Shiite Muslimocracy in newly liberated Iraq would mean for that country's



BJC Executive Director Brent Walker and General Counsel Hollyn Hollman both led breakout sessions during the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship General Assembly in Charlotte.

religious minorities — including hundreds of thousands of Iraqi Christians.

Campolo particularly took to task American Christian leaders who have made incendiary public statements about Islam in recent years — including statements by former Southern Baptist Convention president Jerry Vines, who called Mohammed a "demon-possessed pedophile."

"I can tolerate difference of opinion, except when they're stupid," Campolo said of such comments. "Do these people understand how this plays out for our [Christian] missionaries ... in Muslim countries?"

He said he in no way meant to excuse the acts of Muslim extremists. But pointing to such acts does not absolve the American agitators of responsibility, he said. "You agitate people, and then you're all upset because those agitated people do violent and ungodly things."

Campolo said that a better approach to Muslim-Christian relations would be for American Christians to persuade leaders in Islamic countries of the value of religious freedom. "We've got to watch out for seduction of Babylon," he said, "[but] we've got to ... guarantee that the New Jerusalem has a right to exist in all the Babylons of the world."

During the luncheon, which was attended by more than 500, BJC Executive Director Brent Walker presented Campolo with the J.M. Dawson Religious Liberty award for his long advocacy of religious liberty and church-state separation. The award is named after the 67-year-old religious liberty agency's first executive director.

The Religious Liberty Council is the individual membership organization of the Baptist Joint Committee. RLC members elected new co-chairs for the council. They are Reginald McDonough, the recently retired executive director of the Baptist General Association of Virginia; and Sharon Felton, campus minister at Baptist-related Georgetown College in Kentucky.

RLC members also elected Mississippi attorney Mark Wiggs to the BJC board for a three-year term, and re-elected board members David Currie of Texas, Ed Massey of Kentucky and Joel Avery of Tennessee to second three-year terms.

—Robert Marus
Associated Baptist Press

New RLC Co-Chairs



Reginald McDonough
Tennessee



Sharon Felton
Kentucky

RLC members on the BJC board (elected to 3-year terms)

Mark Wiggs, Mississippi
David Currie, Texas
Ed Massey, Kentucky
Joel Avery, Tennessee



J. Brent Walker
Executive Director

It's time to link resources, advocates in cause of religious liberty

It is a truism that democracy requires an educated citizenry. The same can be said about religious liberty. Religious liberty and its corollary, the separation of church and state, are at risk and can quickly be lost when we neglect our duty to champion the cause of freedom. Indeed, eternal vigilance is the price of liberty that is extracted from all of us. I offer you three opportunities to become informed about the very real threats to religious liberty and church-state separation in contemporary America and the ways in which you can sound the alarm for others.

First, this fall the Baptist Joint Committee and the Richmond, Va.-based Center for Baptist Heritage & Studies, are cosponsoring a convocation titled "Reclaiming an Historic Baptist Principle: Separation of Church and State." Scheduled Sept. 30-Oct. 1 at the First Baptist Church of Washington, D.C., it will start with a rally at the Jefferson Memorial featuring a keynote address by Dr. Charles G. Adams, pastor of Hartford Memorial Baptist Church in Detroit and member of the Baptist Joint Committee board. It will end at the U.S. Capitol with a meeting with the Honorable Chet Edwards, D-Texas, and a visit to your elected representative's office. In between, participants will be treated to an educational experience by some of our nation's leading church-state scholars and activists. Participants will learn ways to teach others about why the separation of church and state is so important to ensuring religious freedom for all.

Want to attend? Contact either the Baptist Joint Committee or Fred Anderson at the Center for Baptist Heritage & Studies (theheritagecenter@vbmb.org or 804-289-8434). Act quickly; space is limited.

Second, the Baptist Joint Committee has just released a new book — *The Trophy of Baptists: Words to Celebrate Religious Liberty*. Published by Smyth & Helwys, I had the privilege of editing 23 Religious Liberty Day sermons and essays. These range from George W. Truett's famous sermon, *Baptists and Religious Liberty*, first preached in 1920 from the East Steps of the U.S. Capitol, to the recently penned sermon by the incomparable Gardner Taylor, senior pastor emeritus at the Concord Baptist Church of Christ in Brooklyn, N.Y. In addition to informing and inspiring the reader, these materials can serve as templates for sermons, resources for Sunday school, study courses and other training sessions, particularly in the context of the local church.

Writing about *The Trophy of Baptists*, Daniel Vestal, coordinator of the CBF, comments:

This collection of essays is as important today as when they were written. They champion the biblical principles of freedom of conscience, priesthood of the believer, and religious liberty. They also interpret these principles for today's world, inform us with their clarity, and inspire us with their passion. This book makes me proud to be a Baptist.

We would love to send you one or more copies. They are \$14 each. I will be delighted to inscribe your copies personally.

Finally, the Baptist Joint Committee's new video, *Freedom is Never Free*, is now complete. This 13-minute film provides lessons in American and Baptist history, articulates the importance of religious liberty and separation of church and state, highlights the role of the Baptist Joint Committee in defending these principles and sketches contemporary threats to religious freedom. Our goal is to show the video in every Baptist church that wants to view it. Would you be willing to show it in your church? We will send you a copy of it, along with written material to help you prepare the presentation and discussion questions that will assist in developing the conversation. To volunteer or to obtain more information, contact David Rogers at the Baptist Joint Committee (drogers@bjcpa.org or 202-544-4226).

The Baptist Joint Committee can neither fight nor win the battle for freedom alone. We need informed, dedicated advocates to help us. With the involvement of religious liberty advocates from across the country, these resources — the Washington convocation, the book of sermons and essays and the BJC video — will be effective tools to protect religious liberty for generations to come.

"Reclaiming an Historic Baptist Principle: Separation of Church and State"

Sept. 30 — Oct. 1

First Baptist, Washington, D.C.

Call for information:

202-544-4226 or

804-289-8434



BEYOND SEPARATION:

Tax-funded churches

By Melissa Rogers

In upholding a Cleveland, Ohio, voucher program last summer, the U.S. Supreme Court noted that its "jurisprudence with respect to the constitutionality of direct aid programs [that allow such aid to flow to religious institutions] has 'changed significantly' over the past two decades. ..." Indeed, currently there is powerful support within all three branches of the federal government for the abandonment of many of the traditional principles of church-state separation.

One example of this trend is the charitable choice provision first codified in the 1996 welfare reform law. President Bush and his administration have called for broad extension of charitable choice principles through legislation and regulatory reform.

A particularly troubling aspect of "postseparationist" trends like charitable choice is that they allow the state to direct tax funds to our most quintessential religious institutions, houses of worship.

One of the reasons this is troubling is because there are special dangers associated with the government's direction of tax funds to institutions performing religious functions. To differing degrees, all of the justices currently serving on the U.S. Supreme Court have demonstrated concern about this matter.

In their opinion concurring in the judgment in *Mitchell vs. Helms*, Justices O'Connor and Breyer not only emphasized the

importance of prohibiting the diversion of direct aid to religious use, but also other fundamental concerns raised by this aid. They explained:

[O]ur concern with direct monetary aid is based on more than just [concern about] diversion [of tax-funded aid to religious use]. In fact, the most important reason for accord[ing] special treatment to direct money grants is that this form of aid falls precariously close to the original object of the Establishment Clause's prohibition.

If direct monetary aid for religious bodies falls "precariously close to the original object of the Establishment Clause's prohibition," then governmental direction of tax funds to churches strikes at the Establishment Clause's core. The historic opposition of disestablishment advocates to the state's attempts to tax citizens for the support of churches provides credence for the general notion that the government should not direct tax funds to churches. While the types of funding programs have changed since the founding era controversies, the fundamental nature of the church has not. Houses of worship generally are focal points of worship, religious activities and spiritual communion. Allowing the government to direct tax

funds to these quintessential symbols of religion “connote[s] sponsorship, financial support, and active involvement of the sovereign in religious activity.”

And, although it is suggested that the government will be able to pick and choose among houses of worship solely based on non-religious criteria, this high-minded principle is likely to be sullied by politics. While our country is well beyond the days in which minority faiths were subjected to systematic oppression by the government, society is not religion blind. Polls show that approximately 60 percent of Americans favor Catholic and Protestant churches applying for government funds to provide social services, while only 38 percent favor Muslim mosques and Buddhist temples doing the same. It is risky enough for elected officials and their staffs to choose among religiously affiliated organizations that offer secular social services; choosing among congregations significantly increases the odds of religious favoritism by the government.

If the government takes the needed steps to ensure that tax funds won't be used to support religion within churches, it will raise a powerful concern about excessive church-state entanglement. The very requirements that are necessary to guard against government support for religion require intrusive regulation in religiously intensive settings. Houses of worship will be forced “to predict which of [their] activities a secular court will consider religious,” and that “fear of potential liability” will profoundly “affect the way an organization carry[es] out what it understand[s] to be its religious mission.” To adequately guard against the use of tax funds for religious purposes, a clear separation of religious activities from tax-funded programs would be required. These kinds of actions must be taken when the government directs funds to such religious organizations, but they will slice our most quintessential religious institutions into state-approved segments.

Further, the Court in the past has recognized that religious organizations need control over all aspects of their governance, even for aspects that are not obviously religious. This would seem to be particularly true of churches. Even if regulation of tax-funded churches is contained to regulation of supposedly “secular” activities, it will degrade their religious autonomy. Close government regulation of tax-funded churches also risks weakening or removing a general stigma on close regulation of churches even when tax funds aren't involved.

Allowing the government to direct tax funds to churches also undermines the independence of the religious sector in other significant ways. At least to some degree, this inevitably shifts the focus of the church from spiritual authorities and goals to those of the state, as Isaac Backus noted long ago. It also creates a dependence of key religious institutions on government aid. While we have been able to withstand a certain dependency of religiously affiliated social service providers and colleges and universities

on such aid, creating a dependency of churches upon the state undermines fundamental constitutional precepts. Some have eloquently testified that churches are best able to issue a tough and independent call to the government to heed the better angels of its nature when congregations do not have to lobby the government for the continuance of church programs and submit to intrusive government regulation. As the Rev. Carlton Veazy, a minister who was active in the civil rights struggle, recently stated: “Can you remember the Montgomery boycott? The reason it was successful was because we had one institution that we could turn to without any interference in the Deep South and that was the black church. If we had been tied up with money from government, I cannot imagine what the effect of that boycott would have been, because the church provided food, it provided transportation, it provided the strength of the movement. ...It's important to us in the black community to safeguard and keep the black church independent, free of any interference from government.” And though the process may be subtle, allowing the state to direct tax money to churches will tend to transform religion from a distinctive, independent force into what Baptist dissenter John Leland called a mere “creature of the state.” Indeed, government officials' recent touting of religion's success in achieving policy goals foreshadows a day in which religion is viewed mostly as a cog in the bureaucratic wheel.

Finally, because churches generally have as part of their responsibilities leading or coordinating other religious bodies and determining, or at least shaping, religious doctrine, the negative effects of the aid will reach far beyond the particular church that receives it. Preserving the existence of many leading religious bodies as largely self-supporting and self-regulating has helped to create a strong backbone for the religious sector. Weakening this backbone will seriously undermine the entire system.

Charitable choice is simply one indication that church-state relations are at a critical stage of development and that a significant “postseparationist” reordering looms. Instead of welcoming or acceding to this trend, this article argues that it should be resisted for the sake of religion and religious freedom.

The basic principle that the government must not direct tax funds to or closely regulate certain religious institutions must be preserved. There should be serious exploration of the ways in which constitutional law and policy can advance such a principle at this time. This approach is more fitting for a system that must safeguard the delicate rights of religious freedom, and it will best protect governmental neutrality and religious autonomy.

— This article is adapted from a longer article *Traditions of Church-State Separation: Some Ways They Have Protected Religion and Advanced Religious Freedom and How They are Threatened Today*, Symposium Issue of the University of Virginia Journal of Law and Politics.



Melissa Rogers serves as Executive Director of the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. This article, however, was written in her personal capacity as a church-state lawyer and in her former capacity as general counsel of the Baptist Joint Committee.





K. Hollyn Hollman
General Counsel

Faith-based plan pits church autonomy against equal employment principle

From their inception, the president's faith-based initiatives have contained a basic contradiction. They purport to allow pervasively religious organizations to receive federal funding without altering their religious character *and* without violating the ban on government funding of religion.

There is no easy way to reconcile these twin objectives. Recent attempts to ensure that faith-based organizations receiving federal funds can discriminate based on religion in hiring provide a telling case in point.

Faith-based initiatives raise many concerns, but the prospect of government-funded employment discrimination may be most troubling to the general public. Polls indicate overwhelming opposition to government funding

right to hire based upon teachings and tenets).

Title VII's exemption is a legislative accommodation of religion that enjoys wide support in the context of privately funded entities. Since direct federal funding of pervasively religious organizations is a relatively new (and constitutionally questionable) idea, there is little case law on how it applies in that situation. The only case directly on point *rejected* the organization's claim to the exemption in the context of a government-funded position. To complicate matters, many state and local laws provide even more stringent rules against employment discrimination. For example, some add sexual orientation to the list of protected categories. While some laws exempt religious organizations, others do not.

The White House supports statute-by-statute efforts to lift civil rights protections that apply to faith-based organizations. The House recently removed an anti-discrimination provision for religious organizations from the Workforce Investment Act, a provision signed into law by President Reagan that has enjoyed longstanding bipartisan support. The next target is

Faith-based initiatives raise many concerns, but the prospect of government-funded employment discrimination may be most troubling to the general public.

of groups that hire on the basis of religious beliefs. Any moves to enlist "the full involvement of the faith community" to provide government services for the needy will inevitably challenge our nation's commitment to equal employment opportunity in publicly funded positions.

Nevertheless, the Bush administration continues to push this controversial agenda. The White House contends that its approach — exempting religious organizations that receive government funds from certain anti-discrimination rules — will clarify a confusing area of the law. To be fair, the issues are complex, but this reflects the intrinsic difficulty of reconciling conflicting policy priorities.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects against employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex and national origin. It applies to any employer with 15 or more employees, but it exempts religious organizations (a broader category than churches) from the ban on religious discrimination.

The exemption, which the Supreme Court upheld in 1987, is quite broad. It applies to all employees of qualifying entities. It not only provides that a Baptist organization (for example) can hire only Baptists (the right to hire co-religionists), but that it could also choose to hire only Baptists whose specific beliefs are acceptable (the

Head Start. If these efforts succeed, employees hired with tax dollars to provide needed social services — job-training and early education — can lawfully be fired because of their religious beliefs.

Defending this policy, the White House released a glossy brochure in late June. Its position is clear, but the document obscures crucial policy trade-offs. It fails to acknowledge any tension between the nation's commitment to equal employment opportunity and the autonomy of religious organizations. Why prize the latter exclusively if the real goal is to provide social services? Should the federal government override employment protections that reflect the values of state and local governments?

The president says he recognizes "that government has no business endorsing a religious creed, or directly funding religious worship or religious teaching." Yet by weighing in so heavily on one side of this debate, the White House invites suspicion and continued political conflict. As Rep. Bobby Scott insists, if the government is not funding faith, why is it necessary to allow religious litmus tests for employment?

Andrew Daugherty joins staff of Baptist Joint Committee

Andrew Daugherty, a recent master of divinity graduate of Wake Forest Divinity School in Winston-Salem, N.C., has been named assistant to the general counsel at the Baptist Joint Committee.

Daugherty joined the staff of the Washington, D.C.-based religious liberty agency on June 24.

A native of Crossville, Tenn., Daugherty graduated from Belmont University in 2000 with a degree in religion.

Daugherty succeeds Whitney Washington, who left the



"Andrew brings to the position excellent credentials and enthusiasm for religious liberty and church-state separation. He will be an enormous help in our attempt to fulfill the BJC's mission."

— K. Hollyn Hollman
General Counsel
Baptist Joint Committee

BJC in July. He will assist Hollyn Hollman, BJC general counsel, in work with religious liberty coalitions and legal research.

At Wake Forest, Daugherty completed a senior project titled *Evangelical Is Not A Bad Word: Investigating the Culture of the Emerging Church in the United States* and was the recipient of the Robert Forest Smith III and the John D. and Bertha Wagster scholarships.

Religious freedom advocate criticizes Iraq effort

A leading religious freedom advocate has warned that the Bush administration may throw away the possibility of creating a genuinely free Iraq because it is ceding authority to fundamentalist Shiite clergy in its effort to restore order to the chaotic country.

"It's a form of Shariah law, Islamic law, that's being imposed on a de facto basis," said Nina Shea of Freedom House's Center for Religious Freedom and a member of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.

"Even more worrisome are Islamic courts that are being set up to settle disputes. They have been set up on an ad hoc basis, but with the acquiescence of the U.S. military, who's in charge. ... It's a dangerous trend."

The chaos in the country was underscored July 3 when

"The U.S. reconstruction team at times has turned over neighborhoods, hospitals, schools, even towns to the Shiite clergy to rule, to run. This is unacceptable."

— Nina Shea
Member
United States Commission on
International Religious Freedom

The Associated Press reported that attacks on troops wounded nine Americans.

Militant Shiite clerics, many of them fundamentalists and some of them trained in Iran, have begun entering the power vacuum, much to the concern of religious freedom advocates such as Shea. They believe the trend could result in establishment, with U.S. military backing, of local and other governments that mimic the theocratic Iranian regime — Shea called it "Taliban lite" — and the potential repression of the Christian minority and dissident Muslims.

Supreme Court declines to hear Mormon plaza free speech case

The Supreme Court has let stand a lower court's ruling that the Mormon Church may not maintain speech restrictions on a Salt Lake City park it owns because of the park's past as a public street.

On June 23 the justices declined, without comment, to hear an appeal from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints to the ruling by the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. In October, a three-judge panel of that court ruled that terms of the city's sale of a downtown street to the LDS Church for use as a religious park violated the First Amendment.

Terms of the sale said the area would remain accessible to the public but allowed church officials to regulate speech, such as barring distribution of "anti-Mormon" literature and disallowing sunbathing and forms of clothing church officials deemed immodest.

The site formerly was a block of Salt Lake City's Main Street that divided the church's main administration complex from the historic Mormon Temple and other religious sites. The city sold the block to the church in 1999. Since then, the church turned the space into a pedestrian plaza featuring religious statues, plants, benches and a reflecting pool.

However, the city retained an easement that allowed the general public pedestrian access to the site after the sale. When city officials and church representatives later drew up the official deed, they added language clarifying that public access did not include making the site a forum for free speech.

Several religious groups filed friend-of-the-court briefs supporting the Mormons' claim. They included the Colorado Baptist General Convention, the Baptist Joint Committee, the United Methodist Church and the Islamic Society of Colorado Springs.

"We fear that the ruling Appellants request might force open our own church grounds, gardens, camps, cemeteries, and other private property for demonstrations and marches condemning our religious messages."

— Amicus brief supporting
the Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-Day Saints

- ☐ Alliance of Baptists
- ☐ American Baptist Churches USA
- ☐ Baptist General Association of Virginia
- ☐ Baptist General Conference
- ☐ Baptist General Convention of Texas
- ☐ Baptist State Convention of North Carolina
- ☐ Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
- ☐ National Baptist Convention of America
- ☐ National Baptist Convention U.S.A. Inc.
- ☐ National Missionary Baptist Convention
- ☐ North American Baptist Conference
- ☐ Progressive National Baptist Convention Inc.
- ☐ Religious Liberty Council
- ☐ Seventh Day Baptist General Conference

Appeals court says Ten Commandments must go

The "Ten Commandments Judge" had better follow the commandment of the Constitution and remove his monument from the Alabama State Judicial Building, a federal appeals court said July 1.

A three-judge panel of the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled unanimously that Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore's installation of a 5,280-pound Ten Commandments monument in the rotunda of the state judicial building violates the First Amendment's prohibition of state support for religion. The panel upheld a lower federal court's ruling that the monument must be removed, although the appeals court did not set a timetable for its removal.

But the court vehemently rejected Moore's argument that the federal courts have no authority in the matter because he is sworn to uphold both the Alabama and federal constitutions. Moore argued that both documents acknowledge God.

The court likened Moore's argument to similar arguments by segregationist Southern governors in the 1950s and 1960s in their attempts to defy federal court orders integrating schools and other public facilities. After noting that former Alabama Governor George Wallace and former Mississippi Governor Ross Barnett were ultimately forced to obey federal decrees, Judge Ed Carnes wrote in the court's opinion, "Any notion of high government officials being above the law did not save those governors from having to obey federal court orders, and it will not save this chief justice from having to comply with the court order in this case."

Carnes went on to say bluntly that Moore would not be allowed to defy federal courts. "The rule of law does require that every person obey judicial orders when all available means of appealing them have

been exhausted. The chief justice of a state supreme court, of all people, should be expected to abide by that principle."

Moore had the monument placed in the building without the knowledge or consent of his fellow justices in the middle of the night on July 31, 2001. It stands by itself at the center of the building's main public space, and Carnes noted in his opinion that visitors and employees sometimes kneel in prayer before the monument, as if the room were a chapel.

Inscribed across the top of the monument is the Protestant King James translation of the commandments. The court's opinion took special note that different religious traditions — including different traditions within Christianity itself — have different ways of translating and arranging the Exodus passages from which the commandments are drawn. Therefore, the court said, it was difficult to view the sculpture as anything but an endorsement of Protestant Christianity.

To make this point, the opinion cites a friend-of-the-court brief prepared by the Baptist Joint Committee and joined by more than 40 Alabama clergy and religious leaders and organizations, including the American Jewish Committee, the Anti-Defamation League and the Interfaith Alliance.

Baptist Joint Committee General Counsel K. Hollyn Hollman applauded the panel's decision.

"The Ten Commandments are too important to be reduced to a decorating motif for a government building, much less the most powerful judicial building in Alabama," Hollman said. "The panel correctly recognized that Justice Moore's display would cross a church-state boundary that, for religion's own sake, should stand."

REPORT from the Capital

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