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# REPORT from the CAPITAL



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

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## Access to Community

**T**he word, written, spoken or symbolically communicated is of unquestioned power, and thus any abridgment of the media, right of expression or of assembly must constantly be examined in the most severe light. How governments deal with these issues is the substance of much of this month's contents.

**Gerhard Claas**, executive director of the Baptist World Alliance and an international religious leader, contributes to our understanding of freedom with detail to the dangers of censorship while examining the nature of religious freedom in Socialist countries.

Claas posits the "exaggerated individualism" of Western church and individual lifestyles against the restricted understanding of freedom of church life under so-called "peoples' government." While the West is characterized by a seemingly light regard for unity (which leads to fragmentation), the East because of government controls at least finds religious bodies in creative tension, perhaps for the sake of collective well-being.

News from across the U.S. and Canada attests to the growing uneasiness over media access of those desiring to carry on communications with a minimum of government regulation, and of readers and viewers who want the freedom to choose materials to read and programs to watch without interference. In Canada, for example, two incidents raised the issue of government restraint and censorship, and revealed the division among religious leaders and others concerned over a policy decision of the Canadian Radio Television and Telecommunications Commission.

Caught between opposing forces—one calling for a more balanced presentation of religious broadcasting and the other for increased access to radio and TV audiences, the Commission is withholding further broadcast licensing but promised to conduct hearings to help it determine future policy. The other incident sparking controversy (January REPORT) occurred when Canada's customs department banned two volumes of religious comic books published by Chick of Southern California because of their "virulent anti-Catholic content." Tariff Act legislation allows prohibition of material judged to be of immoral or indecent character.

**The Supreme Court** set no precedents in the recent case involving the Amish community. Its decision involving an Amish employer seemed to be saying that if persons are self-employed their religious beliefs are protected; but if they are employed by someone else, these rights do not receive equal protection.

John Baker in **VIEWS** carefully analyzes the arguments of the Court which concluded that "belief may be limited or burdened if government can demonstrate a compelling interest."

DeLane Ryals recently participated in a Christian-Marxist dialogue, where his observations on the nature of freedom include helpful distinctions between political and spiritual freedoms. His article will prove helpful to those planning a 1982 Religious Liberty Day observance.

Victor Tupitza



## WASHINGTON OBSERVATIONS

news/views/trends

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE Judiciary Committee told REPORT that it is unlikely the Hatch Amendment as reported from committee can get the two-thirds majority on the Senate floor necessary for passage of a proposed constitutional amendment providing Congress and the states with joint authority to restrict abortions.

Sponsored by Sen. Orrin G. Hatch, R-Utah, the amendment declares that the right to abortion is not secured by the Constitution. If it becomes part of the Constitution, S.J. Res. 110 would allow both Congress and the state legislatures to restrict abortions but states could not pass laws less restrictive than federal law.

Several Senators who voted with Hatch in the Senate Judiciary Committee do not agree with all the amendments' provisions but supported it to move the debate to the Senate floor. Chairman J. Strom Thurmond, R-S.C., for instance, opposes the provision allowing Congress to set a federal restriction standard and indicated he would seek to amend the bill to leave the question entirely up to the states.

Another bill on the Senate calendar declares that life begins at conception and prevents lower federal courts from striking down any anti-abortion legislation enacted by states. Sponsored by Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., the bill requires only a simple majority in the House and Senate to reach President Reagan's desk for signature. Lack of support for the bill among many representatives and senators can be traced to their belief that the bill unconstitutionally limits federal court authority. ■

AN AMERICAN BAPTIST MISSIONARY says that "Nicaragua has been the victim of the USA government's increasing virulence in its desire to isolate Nicaragua." The missionary, a medical doctor who was born in Nicaragua and is a 17-year veteran of medical service there, presented a picture of events in his native country that differs from that of the Reagan administration and State Department portrayals.

Dr. Gustavo Parajón, in a Western Union Telex/TWX message to the Rev. Victor Mercado, area secretary for Latin America of the Board of International Ministries of the ABC, declared that "the peace proposal by the FSLN (the Sandinista National Liberation Front) as well as Mexican President López Portillo's offer to mediate are signs of hope for the Nicaraguan people that have been frustrated by the Reagan administration."

The telegram also addressed the plight of the Miskito Indians in eastern Nicaragua and examined the confusing reports that have issued from government and church sources relative to mass resettlement taking place. Parajón, founder of CEPAD, an organization through which 40 Protestant groups are active in Latin America, says "the immediate task is a pastoral one." He added that teams will be visiting the settlements on a regular basis to "provide hope to the people and...encourage them to work in the new settlements." ■

# Freedom and The Danger of Censorship

Visitors to Christian churches in Eastern Europe, upon their return, report enthusiastically of the exciting life of these churches, of overcrowded buildings, impressive growth and a great hunger for the Word of God. Official statements and news releases in eastern papers and the media are quick to refer to religious freedom as guaranteed by law and experienced by western visitors.

In contrast are the reports from immigrants and publications of the western press that talk of imprisonment of Christians, closing of churches, dissolution of congregations and heavy restrictions on religious freedom.

Who is right? Is the truth somewhere in the middle between these two sides? Are the conditions different from place to place? Do western visitors get to see only the bright side?

Is there freedom of religion in socialist countries? In order to answer that question one has to realize that East and West speak two different languages, i.e. terms such as freedom, freedom of religion, etc. have a different connotation.

## The Western Concept of Freedom

The classic concept of the four sides of freedom in the West has been best described by President Franklin D. Roosevelt: "Freedom from want of any kind; freedom from fear, freedom of expression and freedom of religious practice."

This individual freedom is almost without limitation as far as it is understood as protecting and promoting life. On the other hand this kind of freedom has the innate danger of exaggerated individualism.

In the realm of the church it will show the following negative results: private persons, often with special teachings of their own, establish independent churches; church members easily change churches or denomina-

tions for various possible or impossible reasons; all pastors have access to the commercial media, and often this is being misused for solicitation of funds.

Baptists, just as many other Christians, understand the term freedom of religion always in connection with the principle of separation of church and state. The church therefore gives up the privilege of exercising power, i.e. to direct or exert undue influence on the state. Accordingly the state has no right to control or determine the life of the church or its laws.

In doing so, the church forfeits financial support from the state, even though it is undeniable that the churches in the western world are enjoying remarkable privileges.

## Social Freedom

According to Leninist-Marxist understanding, freedom is the free space of life granted to a society, who together fills and shapes it to its own benefit. The society is the people (the folk society) represented through the "peoples' party" in accordance with the "peoples' government." These representatives of the people determine the borders of and the activities within the living space—and "the party is always right."

Each citizen is supposed to submit oneself to the will of the people and blend with the society. Practice of religion is being granted to the citizens, but this is strictly a private matter and therefore has to operate within the frame of existing laws.

Based on this concept the churches in socialist countries have to deal with the following consequences:

1. All are equal before the law. Churches do not have any special privileges, and no state church—be it ever so large—receives preferred treatment over the small minority churches.

2. Churches as well as members need to register. Worship services can

## Gerhard Claas

General Secretary of the Baptist World Alliance since 1980, Dr. Claas writes with the authority and competence of a close observer of church relationships in Europe. He was general secretary of the Baptist Union of West Germany, and held a similar position with the European Baptist Federation. Previously, he pastored churches in Duesseldorf and Hamburg.



be held only in those facilities and at those times as permitted by the state.

3. The practice of religion is limited to holding worship services. Any form of social involvement is reserved only to the state. Thus with a few exceptions the churches are not engaged in social ministries. The responsibility for education is granted to the parents, but the state carries the final authority. The churches therefore are not supposed to work with children and youth. In some countries even church membership can happen only after reaching the age of eighteen.

4. Religion is a private matter. For this reason Christians are not permitted to propagate their faith (missions, evangelism, etc.). Atheistic propaganda is in the interest of the people, while any other form of promotion is outlawed.

Just as the individual has to submit himself to society, even so the church has to be subject to the control of the state, attempting to contribute to the well-being of the community. There are many resulting consequences: A number of pastors and their wives have secular employment. They serve the churches voluntarily along with their regular job. Other pastors work in the churches in a full-time capacity, but need a license to preach. Members of the church leadership are elected by delegates from their own churches, but they need the approval of the state. The church budget is controlled by the state; so are the interchurch and international contacts of each church.

### The Danger of Misjudgments and Accusations

Whoever moves within the existing laws, enjoys freedom of religion even in socialist countries, which we in the West would call the "freedom to assemble." Christians and Christian churches who have determined to be a part of the socialist society, in spite of the imposed limitations, therefore on one hand work together with the state, and on the other hand enjoy the protection of the state as well as a certain amount of support (permission to build churches, printing or importing of Bibles and hymn books, granting of conferences and overseas contacts, etc.)

Those who cannot settle for the limitations imposed upon the church, who stand firm against the idea that being a Christian is strictly a private affair, and who claim greater freedom for themselves, will constantly come into conflict with the law and will risk prosecution.

How then does the responsible Christian arrive at a decision? There can be no one answer. One person will use the freedom granted to him by law to his best advantage. The other will fight for a wider measure of freedom and will bear the resulting consequences. Important is that each of them will make a personal decision before God without judging the brother who may have made a different decision.

An incident from the times of Franco-Spain may serve as an illustration. I knew of a Spanish pastor who served his Baptist church for many years within the following restrictions:

- worship services were to be held only at certain hours in a building that outwardly was not to be recognized as a church;
- worship services were allowed only behind closed doors and windows and without use of musical instruments; and
- no evangelistic efforts and civic ministry in any form including the invitation of friends to attend the church services.

In spite of these restrictions the church grew continuously. His successor did not live by these rules but broke one after the other. However, as a result he could not serve his church very long. A few weeks after his arrival the police shut down the meeting house and the congregation was forbidden to assemble.

Who had acted properly? May God prevent us from passing judgment.

Report from the Capital

## Canada Studies License Denials; Religious Broadcasters Testify

HULL, Quebec—For the first time in Canada, a major public hearing has been held to examine religious broadcasting and to determine its future.

The Canadian Radio Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), which regulates Canadian broadcasting, heard over 40 oral submissions—the majority from fundamentalist or evangelical groups or churches. Some 1,800 written submissions or suggestions also came in from across the country.

At stake is whether the present government prohibition of licenses to would-be religious stations or networks should be changed.

Many Canadians, especially in the main-line churches, are alarmed and dismayed at the way in which 90 percent of all religious broadcasting aired in Canada comes from the United States and speaks from a fundamentalist point of view.

The government has been under some pressure for a considerable length of time to restrict this and to encourage more Canadian content in religious programming.

At the same time there has been mounting pressure from Canadian fundamentalist-style pastors and organizations to permit them fuller access to radio and TV audiences.

When the commission turned down the request of a Vancouver pastor for an FM radio station to be called Canadian Family Radio nearly two years ago the flood of protest mail received in Ottawa was greater than that on any other issue except the economy.

Then last spring the Rev. David Mainse, host of 100 Huntley Street, Canada's equivalent of the PTL Club or 700 Club, and head of Crossroads Christian Communication, Inc., asked the commission for permission to broadcast, via communications satellite, 24-hours-a-day religious broadcasting coast-to-coast.

The commission denied the request in accordance with previous policy but at the same time promised the hearings because of the complex issues raised by Mr. Mainse's application.

Among those at the hearing who opposed granting such licenses, to Mr. Mainse or anybody else proposing to operate a religious outlet, was the Canadian Jewish Congress.

Rabbi Jordan Pearlson of Toronto testified for the organization that televised religion in the United States has used computers to "viciously dehumanize the people in the audience, pretending to talk to them personally, but really turning them into statistics in electronic files."

Mainline denominations such as the Anglican Church also argued against the Mainse position. They wanted regulations which would compel existing and future commercial stations of all kinds to devote some space—including prime time—to balanced religious programming.

In addition, they called for the creation of a religious advisory committee for each station on a model now followed by the Canadian Broadcasting Corp., the national publicly owned radio and TV network.

The Council of the Atlantic United Baptist Convention called for an open-to-all-religious broadcast service, to be run by Christian groups. But testimony suggested that minority religious groups, such as Jews and Jehovah's Witnesses, probably would not get balanced treatment on such an operation.

Similarly, a group representing French-speaking Roman Catholics in Quebec called for a license for all-French religious stations with air time divided according to the percentage of population each faith accounted for in coverage areas. But Commissioner Jean-Louis Gagnon pointed out that that would probably bar everyone except Catholics from the Quebec programs.

No one can predict for certain what the outcome of the hearings will be. The commission will not make any pronouncement for some months on the evidence put before it.

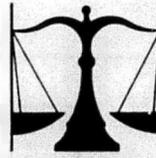
Evangelicals in Canada—of all kinds—muster only about 10 percent of the population. So, many observers feel, the essentials of the present policy will remain unchanged.

But there is a political aspect involved. A top government source said there is real fear that denying the license request will trigger an organized political campaign which could force the Trudeau Cabinet to intervene and give in.

Tom Harpur  
Religious News Service Correspondent

John W. Baker

## VIEWS OF THE WALL



*The First Amendment built "a wall of separation between Church and State." Thomas Jefferson in a letter to the Danbury Baptist Association  
... the line of separation, far from being a 'wall', is a blurred, indistinct, and variable barrier." Chief Justice Burger, Lemon v. Kurtzman.*

The Amish I have known have been a deeply religious people who separated themselves from the world as much as possible lest they be contaminated by it. They are a rural people who love and care for their farms and families and have a firm religious belief that they are obligated to take care of their families and fellow Amish in sickness, disaster, and old age. To fail to care for their own would be a serious sin.

Such beliefs compel the Amish to refuse to pay social security taxes and to refuse to take any payments due to them under social security. In the Amish communities in Ohio in the 1950's, it was commonplace for government agents to seize the Amish farmers' horses to satisfy unpaid social security taxes. The Amish would not resist and usually bought their horses back when they were put up for auction.

Because the First Amendment forbids government to make any law which prohibits the free exercise of religion, it would seem apparent that social security laws which require people to participate in a government program when their religion forbids them to do so would be unconstitutional. The fact that the Court has now held that the social security tax is not unconstitutional when applied to the Amish merits explanation.

There was such a public outcry against the government's seizure and sale of Amish horses and equipment that Congress passed what is § 1402(g) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954. § 1402(g)(1) provides for an exemption from paying social security taxes for an individual who is a member "of a recognized sect or division thereof and is an adherent of established tenets or teachings . . . by reason of which he is conscientiously opposed to acceptance of the benefits . . ." which come as a result of the social security program. The act specifically applied to self-employment income only.

On February 23, 1982 the Supreme Court in *United States v. Lee*, No. 80-767, held that Lee, a self-employed Amish farmer and carpenter who employed fellow Amish to work on his farm and in his carpentry shop, was required by the law to pay social security taxes on wages paid to his employees. The decision came as something of a shock to many people who are con-

cerned about religious liberty and the separation of church and state. The Court seemed to be saying that if persons are self-employed their religious beliefs are constitutionally protected but if they are employed by someone else their rights are not protected.

The Court was unanimous in its decision; its stalwart defenders of religious liberty did not speak out. A brief analysis of the constitutional and statutory law involved in the case may help to explain what happened and why it happened.

The Court has consistently held that the right to believe is an absolute right but that action on that belief may be limited or burdened if government can demonstrate a "compelling," "paramount," or "overriding" interest which cannot be served by less restrictive means. First Amendment requirements are balanced against the needs of the society expressed through its government, but the burden falls on government to demonstrate that its needs are compelling and cannot be served less restrictively.

In *Lee*, the Court looked first at § 1402(g) and found that Congress had only exempted self-employed workers from the payment of social security taxes. The "black letter law" is clear. If Congress had intended to exempt all people who had religious beliefs against the payment of social security taxes, it would have said so. Because the social security tax meets the constitutional standards for a tax, the only defense Mr. Lee had for not paying the taxes was that they unconstitutionally limited or burdened the free exercise of his religion. The U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania agreed with Lee. The Supreme Court disagreed and reversed the lower court.

Its first task, the Court stated, was to determine "whether the payment of social security taxes and the receipt of benefits interferes with the Free Exercise rights of the Amish." After a brief analysis, the Court said, "Because the payment of the taxes or receipt of benefits violates Amish religious beliefs, compulsory participation in the social security system interferes with their Free Exercise rights."

At this point the Court used its balancing test. It saw the government's

interest lying in maintaining the integrity of the social security system. "The design of the system requires support by mandatory contributions from covered employees. This mandatory participation is indispensable to the fiscal vitality of the social security system." Congress has determined that "widespread individual voluntary coverage would undermine the soundness of the social security program." "Thus, the government's interest in assuring mandatory and continuous participation in and contribution to the social security system is very high."

The Court then went to the question of whether accommodating the Amish religious beliefs would interfere with fulfillment of the governmental interest. It stated, "To maintain an organized society that guarantees religious freedom to a great variety of faiths requires that some religious practices yield to the common good." Further, "The obligation to pay the social security tax initially is not fundamentally different from the obligation to pay income taxes" and, if people were allowed to choose to support only specific programs by withholding taxes for the others, the entire system would fail.

Justice Stevens, in a concurring opinion, made a clear statement on the matter: "The Court's analysis supports a holding that there is virtually no room for a 'constitutionally-required exemption' on religious grounds from a valid tax law that is entirely neutral in its general application."

This statement of Justice Stevens and his opinion that the Court should require the person who objects to government's burdening of his religious actions to "shoulder the burden of demonstrating that there is a unique reason for allowing him a special exemption from a valid law of general applicability" are the most disturbing elements of the decision. Justice Stevens' statements are not precedent, but they may foretell a trend in the Court's thinking.

The opinion of the Court is rational and does not break any new ground concerning the free exercise of religion. Churches should expect to be bound by all religiously neutral laws when the state can demonstrate a compelling need to act even in the face of religious views.

# BJCPA Cautions Against Proposed School Prayer Bills, Convention

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Representatives of eight Baptist groups issued warnings against proposals in Congress on prayer in public schools and a nationwide movement calling for a constitutional convention.

In their annual session members of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs also heard warnings from Father Robert F. Drinan, a Jesuit priest who formerly served in Congress, about numerous Reagan administration domestic and international policies.

In other business conducted during a two-day meeting, the Baptist Joint Committee adopted criteria for its involvement in legal disputes, approved a record 1982-83 budget and reelected all current officers.

A strongly-worded document on prayer in public schools designed to provide its staff with a fresh statement for use in this year's congressional battle on the subject reaffirmed the agency's support of what it called the "historic" 1962 and 1963 Supreme Court decisions banning state-mandated prayer and Bible reading in public schools.

Speaking to proposals in Congress for a constitutional amendment to nullify those decisions and for stripping federal courts of jurisdiction to hear challenges to state and local laws which return state-mandated prayer to public schools, the group pledged to work for their defeat. The statement also promised that the Washington-based Baptist agency will "exercise a leadership role" in seeking defeat of both kinds of legislation.

In its statement on the call for a constitutional convention, the Baptist Joint Committee warned that 31 state legislatures have called for such a convention for various reasons, including the desire to pass constitutional amendments requiring a balanced federal budget and banning abortion. Two-thirds, or 34, states must issue calls for a constitutional convention before Congress is required to convene it.

The Baptist statement noted that such a gathering "easily could become a 'runaway' body which could propose alterations to the entire Constitution" and urged Congress to establish rules of procedure to limit the subject matter

which a constitutional convention would consider.

Another statement, expressing renewed commitment to racial justice and affirmative action in employment practices in both churches and society, was tabled after lengthy debate. The proposal was introduced in an effort to demonstrate opposition to racism and sexism in the aftermath of the agency's support for Bob Jones University in a widely publicized Supreme Court test.

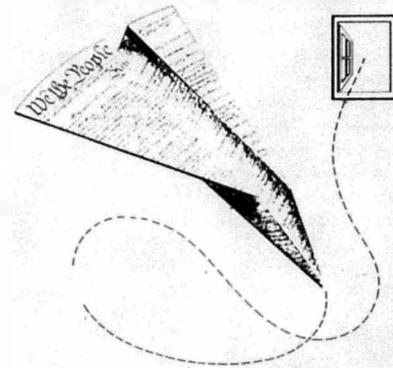
That support, based on the agency's belief that the Internal Revenue Service acted illegally and unconstitutionally in stripping the University of its tax exemption, is spelled out in a friend-of-the-court brief filed last fall by the American Baptist Churches and the United Presbyterian Church.

The action to table came on a 12-9 vote following deliberation on whether the Baptist Joint Committee had authority to call on denominational bodies and their churches to examine and alter employment practices.

Former Massachusetts congressman Drinan blasted the Reagan policy of cutting federal programs which aid the poor while simultaneously promoting large military spending increases. Drinan, who now heads Americans for Democratic Action, expressed fear "for what is transpiring in El Salvador" and indicated the administration's focus on the "alleged East-West confrontation" diverts attention from what he considers the "real problems" in the world such as hunger, inadequate health care and the population explosion.

He further warned against pending legislation threatening religious liberty and other freedoms guaranteed in the Bill of Rights. Expressing concern about pending bills which would "prohibit federal courts from even hearing cases on prayer, abortion and busing," Drinan charged that congressional sponsors "recognize that they can't kill the message and therefore they want to cripple the messenger."

Drinan indicated that a tuition tax credit bill might clear the Senate if the White House orchestrates it but added that the projected large budget deficits are working against such passage. He scored Reagan for being the "first president in American history to endorse full support for private schools"



and for heading the "first administration in 50 years to oppose enforcement of civil rights laws."

In other action, the Baptist Joint Committee adopted a set of criteria to guide the agency in future legal actions in "friend-of-the-court" briefs. (Such a brief is not filed as a party to the case; rather a "friend" provides the Court with a unique point of view to be considered in its decision process.)

The agency's Washington staff will continue to determine which cases to enter. If "serious doubt" exists about whether a case falls within the program assignment of the agency, the organization's officers will decide.

Committee members also adopted a record 1982-83 budget of \$431,916 and reelected all four current officers to new one-year terms. Reelected chairperson was Elizabeth J. Miller, an official of the Board of National Ministries, American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. First and second vice chairpersons are C. J. Malloy Jr., general secretary, Progressive National Baptist Convention, and John Binder, executive secretary, North American Baptist Conference. Serving a second term as secretary is R. G. Puckett, executive director, Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

—Stan Hasteley and Larry Chesser

# News in Brief

## Hatfield-Kennedy Bill for Nuclear Freeze Endorsed by Denominational Executives

WASHINGTON—Eight prominent Baptist clergymen joined a large slate of U.S. religious leaders in endorsing a joint congressional resolution which calls for a freeze and reduction in nuclear weapons by the United States and the Soviet Union.

Introduced in the Senate by Mark O. Hatfield, R-Ore., and Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., the resolution calls on the two superpowers to achieve "a mutual and verifiable freeze on testing, production, and further deployment of nuclear warheads, missiles, and other delivery systems." Following the freeze, it calls for "major, mutual and verifiable reductions" in nuclear warheads and delivery systems.

Four members of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs as well as the chief executive of the Washington-based agency were among the Baptist endorsers. They included Jimmy R. Allen, president, Southern Baptist Convention Radio and Television Commission; Robert C. Campbell, general secretary, American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.; C. J. Malloy Jr., general secretary, Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.; Foy D. Valentine, executive director, SBC Christian Life Commission; and James M. Dunn, executive director of the BJCPA.

Other Baptist supporters included evangelist Billy Graham; Carl Flemister, executive director, American Baptist Churches of Metropolitan New York; and William A. Jones, pastor, Bethany Baptist Church, Brooklyn, N.Y. and president of the National Black Pastors Conference.

Hatfield said the timing of the resolution was crucial since the two superpowers now have "rough equivalency" in nuclear capability. He further emphasized the significance of "houses of worship throughout the country" calling for peace at this time.

Kennedy charged that "the next world war could be a war against the world itself" where "all life could be the loser," adding that the "only sane choice is for both sides to halt and then reverse this disastrous arms race."

The Massachusetts Democrat linked current economic problems to the nuclear build-up, declaring that a nuclear

weapons freeze "could save at least \$20 billion each year."

Kennedy further emphasized that the resolution depends upon strict verification instead of trust, and calls for mutual agreement rather than unilateral action.

The resolution has 19 sponsors in the Senate where it was introduced as S.J. Res. 163 and has 130 sponsors in the House where it is labeled H.J. Res. 433.

One of the primary House sponsors, Rep. Edward J. Markey, D-Mass., declared, "It's clear that members of Congress are hearing from their constituents on this issue. They are telling Congress that the United States and the Soviet Union are on a dangerous nuclear collision course."

Hatfield indicated that he had not yet discussed the proposal with the president but said he had found Reagan "to be one who will listen." The powerful chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee then assured the audience that he would have ample opportunity to discuss the resolution with Reagan since the president "is anxious" to talk with him on budget matters.

—Larry Chesser

### President's Tax Bill Rumored 'Dangerous'

WASHINGTON—Fueled by repeated publication in church newsletters, a new rumor sweeping the nation purports that Congress is about to pass a "Church Regulation Bill" which would impose racial and sexual quotas on churches.

The rumor apparently was started by a right-wing organization, the National Christian Action Coalition, which in the February issue of its newsletter, *Alert*, stated: "the most dangerous piece of legislation ever relating to church-state separation is on its way to passage" in Congress.

Editor William Billings accused President Reagan of bowing to pressure from U.S. Senator Edward M. Kennedy and Speaker of the House of Representatives Thomas P. O'Neill Jr. in asking Congress to pass legislation "which would give the Internal Reve-



Dunn, Hatfield, Malloy

nue Service broad new powers to tax, review and regulate churches which maintain Christian schools."

The bill in question, S.2024 in the Senate and H.R. 5313 in the House, is expected to go nowhere. It was drafted by Reagan administration officials and sent to Congress in January, only days after an announcement that the IRS would no longer enforce regulations denying tax exemption to private schools that practice race discrimination in their admissions policies.

While the law before Congress would regulate admissions policies in private schools alone, it contains no provisions relating to local church membership or to qualifications for the ministry. Despite the bill's limited scope, the widely-circulated newsletter of First Baptist Church, Houston, carried a column by its pastor, John R. Bisagno, which declared, "the purpose of the bill is to cut off the tax exemption status of churches unless they have a certain percentage of women and minorities in places of leadership and may make a certain percentage of homosexuals, possibly in ordained positions, mandatory."

Bisagno later admitted the article was based on "verbal information" given to him by a church member "who is very involved in conservative politics" who apparently got the data from the NCAC newsletter.

### Another Vietnam

WASHINGTON—A recent Newsweek-Gallup poll showed that 74 percent of Americans "familiar with Reagan policy believe that U.S. involvement could turn El Salvador into the Vietnam of the 80's."

The poll further showed that 49 percent disapprove of President Reagan's handling of the crisis; 89 percent oppose sending of U.S. troops to El Salvador; 60 percent oppose supplying military equipment; and 54 percent want the U.S. to "keep its hands off El Salvador altogether."



## Voters Call for Arms Halt At Vermont Town Meetings

MONTPELIER—Vermont voters called for a bilateral U.S.-Soviet Union freeze on nuclear arms production in 155 of 185 town meetings where the question was raised.

The motion was rejected in 22 towns and tabled without a vote in eight others. The question was on the town meeting agendas of more than two-thirds of the state's 252 cities and towns.

The statewide effort was coordinated by the Vermont chapter of the American Friends Service Committee, a leader in the nationwide freeze movement. The freeze idea has appeared in various formats, including on town meeting ballots.

Now being compared with the taxpayers' revolt of the late 1970s, the nuclear freeze petition drive is spreading nationwide, with church critics of the arms race among its strongest supporters. Freeze sponsors say more than 1,700 volunteers are now campaigning in most of the 50 states.

The Vermont ballot question asked the state legislature to call on Congress to request that President Reagan seek a mutual freeze on the production, testing and use of nuclear weapons. The question is expected to be introduced soon in the Vermont House of Representatives.

## Teacher Data Withheld

BANGOR—Officials of the Maine Association of Christian Schools say they are complying with some state-required health and safety standards, but won't give the state information on teachers and curricula.

They told U.S. District Judge Conrad K. Cyr they have corrected health and safety standards which they were charged with violating at Christian academies in Athens, Gardiner, Farmington and Monmouth.

However, the Christian educators said they won't give the state education department information about teacher qualifications and curricula because those are "church ministries." They said the schools are "arms of the church" and part of their "religious missions."

## Wants Tuition Tax Credits

WASHINGTON—Daniel F. Hoyer, the new general secretary of the U.S.

Catholic Conference, has criticized the Reagan administration for not providing for tuition tax credits in its proposed fiscal year 1983 budget.

"The message of the new budget is that, as far as the administration is concerned, tuition tax credits are an idea whose time must still be deferred," Hoyer said.

"There is limited encouragement in the budget message's statement that the administration will send Congress a tax credit bill later in the year," the secretary said. "But the failure to make provision now for tax credits is troubling."

## ABC Protests Escalation

VALLEY FORGE, Pa.—Continued American Baptist concern for the crisis in El Salvador was expressed in a telegram to President Reagan from Robert C. Campbell, general secretary of American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.

Campbell's message to Reagan expressed concern over the administration's stance in El Salvador, protesting U.S. funding of "military escalation" there. It further urged the administration to "provide humanitarian aid only and work for negotiated settlement by all parties concerned in El Salvador." (ABNS)

## Defiant Minister Jailed

OMAHA—A Nebraska Baptist minister began serving a four-month sentence at the Cass County jail in Plattsmouth for operating a non-accredited fundamentalist school in defiance of court orders.

Further steps will be taken to close the school "if it continues to operate contrary to the order of the court," warned Cass County attorney Ron Moravec.

Everett Sileven, pastor of the Faith Baptist Church and director of the Faith Christian School in Louisville, was convicted of contempt for violating a court order to close the school until it hired certified teachers and gained state accreditation.

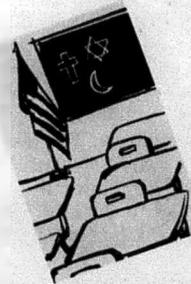
## Too Much Time on Creation

PIERRE—The South Dakota Supreme Court has upheld the dismissal of a high school biology teacher by the Lemmon school board on grounds that he spent too much time teaching the biblical theory of creation.

Lloyd Dale, a teacher for 17 years, was fired in 1980 after the school board decided his students weren't learning enough biology in his classes.

The court declined to rule on whether Dale's teaching of creationism was protected by constitutional guarantees of freedom of religion and free speech, but the justices said the school board was within its authority in firing him.

## RELIGION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL CLASSROOM



Advocates of reinstating state-mandated prayer in the public school classroom are attempting to accomplish their goal by constitutional amendment and/or by limiting the jurisdiction of the federal courts. If successful, they would succeed in circumventing the two major decisions of the Supreme Court.

The nation's high court, while declaring mandatory prayer in primary and secondary schools unconstitutional, permits voluntary, individual prayer by students.

Following substantial revision and updating, the pamphlet "Religion in the Public School Classroom" is now available.

Order: single copy-free; 12 copies-\$1.25; 100 copies-\$7.50; and 1000 copies-\$70.00. Plus postage on all orders other than single copy.

Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, 200 Maryland Ave., NE, Washington, DC 20002

# Human Rights: An American Perspective

The United States of America was born in the Age of Enlightenment; the formation of our government and the enunciating of our freedom emerged from the climate of its time.

Then as now the question was: Where is the human in our scheme of things?

Christianity says humanity is of infinite (but not ultimate) significance. God is the ultimate.

Atheism says humanity is of ultimate significance. In that system, God is regarded as non-existent.

Eighteenth Century Deism said humanity is of primary significance. God was regarded as benevolent, but removed from everyday life.

The Enlightenment sought a consensus somewhere between Deism and orthodox Christianity. The mediating position was called "common sense": under God, humanity is of basic significance. Such a position could be described as a kind of theistic rationalism.

Thus America is not a "Christian nation." It is a religiously pluralistic nation founded on principles, many of which emerged from and are shared by Christianity. But the nation, strictly speaking, is not "Christian" either in its constituency or in its Constitution. Nor is the United States militantly "anti-Christian," "anti-God" or "anti-religious."

Nevertheless, the Christian faith, in many varieties of expression, has flourished on these shores. Other religious faiths have also taken root and grown here; and atheism (more often practical atheism rather than theoretical atheism) has its adherents. These varieties of religious expression are enhanced by our climate of religious freedom.

I am indebted to the Yale historian, Sydney E. Ahlstrom,<sup>1</sup> for this interpretation of the development of American freedom. He indicates that a combination of 1) Puritan heritage, including a fear of episcopacy, 2) middle-class democracy and 3) the Enlightenment emerged to provide a foundation for the American Revolution of 1776.

Thomas Paine's "Common Sense," a 79-page pamphlet, has been called "the greatest single force in convincing Americans of the wisdom of separation from England." He wrote: "Society is produced by our wants and government by our wickedness." And "Society in every state is a blessing, but government, even in its best state, is but a necessary evil, in its worst state an intolerable one." His views permeate American attitudes toward government to this day.

The ideas of Enlightenment men such as Ethan Allen of Vermont, John Adams of Massachusetts, Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania and George Washington and Thomas Jefferson of Virginia became a part of the Constitution of the United States of America.

To be sure, Baptists and other Christians had some significant influence on the writing of the Constitution. Possibly most of the signers of the Declaration of Independence were professing Christians. But the prevailing human influence on our national documents was that of the Deists. Theirs was an optimistic view of human nature.

These revolutionary thinkers mobilized freedom-loving Americans to create a society whose goals were "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness." They agreed that self-government must be the form of the society. Its Constitution would be its highest law, guaranteeing the right to justice, to live quietly, to provide for the common defense, to seek the general welfare of the populace.

The Bill of Rights of the U.S. Constitution guarantees religious freedom, that is, a free church in a free state. There is no established state religion in the United States. Citizens retain the right to worship, or not to worship, and to assemble, and to propagate their faith.

Many nations, including the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, claim to offer religious freedom. Too often that "freedom" is severely restricted. Public worship is permitted in designated places, but organized religious instruction, especial-

DeLane M. Ryals

Dr. Ryals is director of church extension for the Metropolitan New York Baptist Association, serving under the Home Mission Board of the SBC. This article is excerpted from a presentation to a Christian-Marxist Dialogue convened by the SBC's missionary to the United Nations.



ly of children and youth, is prohibited or limited. Private faith may be acknowledged, while the free propagation of that faith may be constrained.

The Constitution of the U.S.S.R. claims separation of church and state: "The church in the USSR shall be separated from the state . . ." (Article 52). Clearly, that government is not influenced by the church. The rest of the sentence, however, separates "the school from the church." The practical effect is that the USSR Constitution limits the church's freedom to engage in religious education, both in the indoctrination of children and youth, and in the theological education of pastors.

Article 52 of the Soviet Union's Constitution is explicit about the rights of atheism: "Freedom . . . not to profess any religion and to conduct atheistic propaganda, shall be recognized for all citizens of the USSR." No equivalent right to conduct Christian or religious witness is guaranteed.

The U.S. Bill of Rights, on the other hand, provides for personal freedom and political freedom in addition to religious liberty.

Maurice Fain observes that freedom, from a Christian point of view, is liberty to realize one's own potential as a human being. Pointing to the moral structure of the universe, he cautions that "political freedom does not always guarantee spiritual freedom; violence and war do not make people free; neither does irresponsible assertiveness make a person free."

There are some differences between political freedom and spiritual freedom. Jesus speaks of the true spiritual freedom which results from following

him. Jesus says, "If you obey my teaching, you are really my disciples; you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:31-32, TEV).

Here is a comparison of the two kinds of liberty:

#### Political Freedom

- for everyone within its realm
- outward/with inward effects
- able to do as one pleases with minimal government restraint
- free to speak and act
- free to worship publicly and propagate faith
- desired by God

#### Spiritual Freedom

- for everyone under the Lordship of Christ
- inward/with outward consequences
- enabled to know and do the will of God
- free to think
- free to worship God, and a boldness to share a witness
- gift of God

Karl Marx correctly cited man's basic problem to be man's alienation. We are alienated from the rest of humanity. We are alienated from God. The Christian term for the alienation is sin.

Jesus shows us that the alienation is even deeper—it is rooted in our rebellion against God. Jesus acted in the cross to rescue us, to provide forgiveness for our sin, friendship with God to replace our previous enmity, and his love working in our hearts to overcome alienation from the rest of humanity. Jesus Christ is the only person free of alienation, and Christ is the only true liberator of humankind.

As Jacques Ellul notes, "Employment of the means of force and domination is a sign of the lack of freedom."<sup>2</sup>

Realizing freedom for ourselves requires that we extend freedom to others who differ from us. Baptists have historically been dissenters from established forms of religion. We have

insisted on freedom for other dissenters in order that we could remain free ourselves. Genuine faith cannot be coerced. There must be freedom of choice, including the right to dissent, or there is no freedom.

Religious "toleration" is not an adequate expression of religious freedom. Who will do the "tolerating"? Freedom must include the freedom to believe, the freedom not to believe, the freedom to believe differently than the majority, and even the freedom to be indifferent about belief.

If freedom is to be more than a sham it must include the freedom to enlist others to one's own persuasion, while respecting the right of the other to believe otherwise. Genuine religious freedom must also include the privilege of providing religious education for both young and old.

Politically, the right of conversion from one faith to another is unpopular, even in this country. Many countries that claim to practice "religious freedom" omit the freedom of propagating one's faith, and the right to leave one's ancestral religion for another faith. Conversion is seen as a threat to the status quo.

Spiritually, conversion is a necessity from the Christian perspective. All persons need to be converted to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Even persons born into Christian homes need to be converted from "unfaith" to faith in Christ. Such conversion must be a work of God. It cannot be coerced. Christian conversion takes place when one recognizes the alienation from God and humanity and turns to Jesus Christ in a voluntary faith-commitment.

Every human being must be free to make and act upon decisions relating to God. This human right is basic.

<sup>1</sup>*A Religious History of the American People*, v. 1. Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1975, p. 436.

<sup>2</sup>*The Ethics of Freedom*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1976, p. 57.

## Quoting

The seemingly illogical quality of adding a First Amendment to a Constitution of delegated powers is a testimony to the practicality of the men of 1791. They knew that constitutional phrases granting power could never be so precise and so self-interpreting that men would be able to avoid the error of restricting freedom simply by following the letter of the delegated powers. In short, they knew or sensed that, in spite of slogans to the contrary, this is finally a government of men. It is not a government of laws only.

Furthermore, failure of the First Amendment to spell out how its restrictions could be harmonized with the proper exercise of congressional power was also a recognition that legal forms are not adequate to solve all future problems. Men alone are adequate to tomorrow's tasks.

Therefore, let us not make the error of using such phrases as the First Amendment "guarantees" or "protects" or "preserves" freedom of expression. Let us not pretend that the precise legal boundaries of our freedoms can be described. We must recognize that the First Amendment is basically society's reminder to itself that free expression is very important. It is a signpost that warns. It is not and cannot be a track that controls.

—Walfred H. Peterson  
Religious Liberty Conference

The situation in the world is disquieting today. "Hot spots" are emerging in different parts of the globe. The race of death-carrying weapons is continuing. New types of weapons are created which are particularly dangerous because they, as experts say, lower the threshold of a nuclear war, i.e., make its outbreak more probable. Under such circumstances the speculations of some strategists and politicians in the West on the admissibility of a "limited" nuclear war and the possibility to win a victory in it look particularly insidious.

As a matter of fact, there can be no "limited" nuclear war at all. If a nuclear war breaks out, . . . it would inevitably and unavoidably assume a worldwide character. Such is the logic of war itself and the character of present-day armaments. . .

L. I. Brezhnev  
*Der Spiegel*" (Interview)



## What is Freedom but Choice? Observe Religious Liberty Day-June 1982

Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.

# INTERNATIONAL DATELINE



## Analysis

### Apartheid Church in Turmoil

South Africa's conservative Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK), the country's most powerful ally of the ruling white minority Government's apartheid policy, is facing a crucial year in 1982 following deep ideological differences within its ranks.

The first signs of a split emerged late last year when a number of verligte (liberal) theologians and younger members of the church resigned from the white NGK to join the Africa, Coloured and Indian sister churches. The black churches have already broken off links with the white NGK because of the white church's dogged support for apartheid.

One of the prominent theologians to resign from the Afrikaner church is professor Nico Smith who quit his post as head of the theological seminary at Stellenbosch.

Sources report that verligtes and younger members of the NGK are squaring off to challenge the conservative and ultra-right-wing policies of the church by introducing a radical resolution in the church's caucus to break the back of the conservative clique.

The resolution will include a push for the abolition of racial barriers, the

neutralization of the secret Afrikaner body, Broederbond, which holds a strong influence in the white NGK, and the desegregation of the church so that it would be open to all groups. The reforms are expected to receive stiff opposition from the pro-apartheid leadership.

The proposed reforms have been supported by black theologians. Alan Boesak, a former black consciousness leader who is now a minister in a Coloured Dutch Reformed Church, said the verligte clergy and members were in a better position to influence changes in South African society than white politicians.

"No other organization in the country, not even parliament, can play a greater role for peaceful change within South Africa than the white NGK headed by verligtes," he said, "but if they fail, the situation here will get worse."

Another theologian said that central to the debate on the crisis in the NGK is the role of the secret Broederbond organization. If the anti-racists win the struggle, the Broederbond would have its power and prestige eroded to such an extent that it could also face a split.

—African Church Information Service

### Soviets Indicate Approval Of Visa for Pentecostal

MOSCOW—In a surprise move, authorities allowed a Soviet Pentecostal woman to return from a hospital to the U.S. Embassy here for a reunion with her family before flying home to Siberia.

Lidya Vashenko, 31, is one of seven Siberian Pentecostals who took refuge in the embassy in 1978 after being denied permission to leave the Soviet Union for religious freedom. The group has lived in a basement room inside the compound ever since.

Miss Vashenko was allowed to return briefly to the American embassy 12 days after embassy officials rushed her to Moscow's Botkin Hospital for treatment following her 36-day fast to dramatize the Pentecostals' demand to emigrate to the United States. She subsequently gave up her fast.

Miss Vashenko flew back to her hometown, Chernogorsk, where she was expected to file papers for emigration.

In Washington, Sen. Carl Levin (D-Mich.), who has taken an active interest in the case of the "Siberian Seven," said Soviet officials have indicated that they will approve Miss Vashenko's visa application.

### 'Religion', 'Superstition' Seek Definition in China

PEKING—China's constitution gives freedom to religion but outlaws superstition. Unfortunately the document does not define the two terms and, as a consequence, confusion has occurred.

Recently, in Hebei province near Peking, some old people bought pictures and statues of Buddha and burned paper money as a sacrifice to the gods. They were criticized in the Chinese national press, not for practicing their religion, but for "having superstitious activities," which are illegal.

Legally defining the difference between superstition and religion is proving a difficult task in China.

*The Beijing Review*, an English-

language journal produced by the government which attempts to explain Chinese policy on certain issues, described superstition in its Dec. 21, 1979 issue:

"We mean sorcery, witchcraft, fortune-telling, palmistry, phrenology, magic and so on."

The danger to most Chinese minds is a repeat of the Cultural Revolution years (1966-1976) when no one could safely practice any religion. Newspapers run by the so-called "Gang of Four clique" attacked religion and religious personages during that period.

But none of the published stories seem to merit that kind of fear yet.

### Right-wing Irish Catholics Hit Christian Unity Effort

BELFAST—Conservative Roman Catholics who oppose Christian unity efforts here denounced their bishop for recently "allowing Protestant wolves in among the Roman Catholic sheep."

A group of lay Catholics who call themselves "The Campaign for Catholic Recovery" criticized Bishop William Philbin for allowing a Protestant minister to preach at a Christian unity prayer service at a West Belfast Catholic monastery.

The minister was the Rev. John Dunlop of Belfast's Rosemary Street Presbyterian Church. The lay critics said that inviting Protestant clergy to participate in such functions only weakened the Roman Catholic Church and scandalized the faithful.

The group said it was all in favor of bringing Protestants into "the Roman Catholic Church," but not for ecumenical prayer. . . . We believe we can render our Protestant fellow countrymen no greater service than to convince them of the absurdity of their religious system and of the truth of Roman Catholic teaching."

### British Baptist Dismayed At Prevalence of Drinkers

DERBY—The Rev. Fred Wilson, president of Britain's Baptist Union, says he was shocked to learn recently that large numbers of Baptist deacons were not teetotalers.

Mr. Wilson told delegates to a Baptist conference here he had made this discovery during official visits to churches around the country.

"It has greatly disturbed me," he said.



## Reaction to Polish Crisis Threatens Security Talks

JAMAICA, N.Y.—The Madrid conference reviewing the Helsinki accords on European security "is in danger of being subverted" by the U.S. government's political reaction to the Polish crisis, a human rights consultation of Canadian and U.S. church groups said here.

A joint statement adopted by the consultation urged Canadian and U.S. delegates to the Helsinki Review Committee, "to move toward new forms of security and cooperation in Europe with their implications for North America."

"We recognize that the solution of the internal crisis in Poland is complicated by the role Poland plays in the military security system of Europe," said representatives from 30 Canadian and 37 American churches and church-related human rights groups at their first joint consultation on human rights in national policies.

"We pray for the day when the security of Europe no longer will rest upon the balance of force between the Warsaw Pact and NATO. The Helsinki process has been, and should continue to be, aimed at creating new relationships and structures which will provide European people a genuine security that thousands of nuclear weapons now deployed in Europe cannot provide.

The consultation here was sponsored by the Human Rights Program for the Implementation of the Helsinki Final Act, which brings together the Canadian Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches in the USA, and the Conference of European Churches for cooperation on a broad range of human rights issues.

"We condemn martial law in Poland, as elsewhere, as a grievous violation of human rights," the joint statement said. "At the same time, we are grateful that the social influence of the Polish churches has played an important part in limiting the violence in so volatile a situation.

"We seek to use our influence in North America, similarly, to reduce the violence of martial law regimes wherever we are related to them, such as El Salvador; but knowing our complicity in such regimes we oppose any self-righteous political misuse of this tragic period of martial law in Poland." (RNS)

Report from the Capital

## Pope Asks Correction of News Flow Imbalance

LAGOS, Nigeria—Pope John Paul II gave support here to a common complaint from the Third World—that the technologically advanced West controls mass communications to the detriment of the poorer underdeveloped nations.

Speaking to journalists on the last day of his five-day visit to Nigeria, the pope touched on the issue of alleged "imbalance" in the flow of news between the West and the Third World.

Without providing specifics, the pope said that "dangerous imbalances" existed. "There is a tendency toward the exercise of outside pressure in the world of the press, radio and television, with the imposition, by the stronger countries, not only of technology but also of ideas," the pope said.

While Western media have generally been favorable to providing technical assistance in the development of mass communications in the Third World, suggestions that governments be involved in determining news content or that journalists be "licensed" have met with stiff and vehement resistance.

## Loyalty Oaths Mask Growing Insurgence

MANILA—In remote villages where the Philippine military battles a growing insurgency led by the New People's Army, the government is requiring the mass signing of loyalty oaths.

Whole villages are sometimes forced to sign a "pledge of allegiance" that often provides the basis for military press releases in national newspapers announcing the mass surrender of the communist-backed guerrillas. Such surrenders in turn have been cited as cause for promotion in rank of responsible military officers.

The Philippines' loyalty oath has the person swear that "I will bear true faith and allegiance to, and recognize and accept the supreme authority of the Republic of the Philippines." The signer is further committed to "defend the constitution" and "obey the laws, legal orders and decrees promulgated by the duly constituted authorities."

"With this pledge of allegiance, I assume and take upon myself the duties and obligation of a peaceful and law-abiding citizen of the Republic of the Philippines."

The statement is signed and sworn to before an administering officer. At the bottom of the form is place for a full set of finger prints.

## 'Spare' Test-tube Embryos Raise Moral Questions

LONDON—The developers of the successful "test-tube" baby technique say they hope to freeze "spare" embryos for possible donation to infertile women, with the permission of the natural mothers.

The proposal by Dr. Robert Edwards and Dr. Patrick Steptoe was immediately criticized by the British Medical Association's ethics committee, and by Life, an anti-abortion group.

Dr. Michael Thomas, ethics committee chairman, charged that "medical technology is running ahead of morality," and asked that experiments be stopped while his committee reviews the work.

"Spare" embryos result from the in-vitro technique because more than one egg may become fertilized in the lab procedure but only one embryo is implanted in the mother's womb.

Anti-abortionists and other critics have long charged that the in-vitro process results in a form of abortion because the unused embryos are destroyed.

## Jackson Brings Plea For Haitian Refugees

VATICAN CITY—The Rev. Jesse Jackson, the black American civil rights leader, met here with Pope John Paul II to talk about the plight of Haitian refugees living in Florida.

Mr. Jackson, who was on a European tour, said afterwards that he had tried to draw the pope's attention to the plight of some 2,500 refugees from the Caribbean island of Haiti living in what he called "concentration camps" in Florida.

Speaking to reporters, Mr. Jackson said that the pope had shown concern over "growing U.S. insensitivity in human rights concerns."

Asked whether the pope had made any promises to him, Mr. Jackson replied, "We can only wait with a measure of faith and high hope."

"Our feeling is that the forces of religion can be the moral agents of the world," he added. "They must speak loudly and clearly."

The Haitian refugees on Florida say they are escaping political oppression.

## CORRESPONDENCE

Reader response to the actions taken by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and to the feature material found on these pages contributes to dialogue and helps sharpen our understanding of the issues. Letters, signed and with full address, should be kept to 200 words. Editors reserve the right to edit for length.

**To the Editor:** I am pleased to see Baptists facing the problem of the dangers of nuclear war, and I would like to add my comments, especially with regard to two excellent articles in the February issue. Besides sharing a fear of nuclear warfare with all Americans, I have a special interest in the subject which goes back to 1961, when I was an instructor at the Navy's Nuclear Warfare School. The effects of nuclear weapons are real to me because I have computed the size and optimum height of burst needed to knock down a structure by the blast wave, to ignite materials of various types by the heat wave, to cause blindness from the flash, and to cause death, illness, or injury from the radiation. And I know how much the size of the weapon must be increased to compensate for the inaccuracy of each delivery system, to insure to a given degree of probability that the target will be destroyed. I can still see in my mind the films of nuclear weapons tests showing wooden buildings being incinerated like a match from the heat wave and then disintegrating into the air at the arrival of the shock wave. We selected and destroyed Russian targets in our planning exercises, and I still remember the shock I felt one day when I realized that this was all very real: we actually had plans to use these weapons—"contingency plans" to be used only if necessary, but still they existed, waiting for the emergency which might make them necessary.

I also remember the widespread attitude expressed then and that I am hearing again today—that nuclear war is inevitable eventually; the question being only when it would occur. That was an extremely dangerous attitude because it led to the conclusion that the only chance for survival was to strike first, so as to destroy the Russian delivery capability. There were some people in authority, with little faith, who actually advocated initiating a nuclear attack for that very reason. Twenty years have passed since then—not very peaceful, but at least without nuclear war. It was not inevitable after all, nor is it today. Helen Caldicott in

her article has rendered an important service in reminding us of the horrors of nuclear war, but I believe that we must be careful not to create hysteria which could add to the danger of rash action by either Americans or Russians or any other nation possessing these weapons. Fear of war is the strongest incentive for increasing our stockpile of weapons and for making plans to use them; it is not an incentive for getting rid of them. Faith, not fear, is the answer to the problem.

John A. Tinkham  
Virginia Beach, VA

**To the Editor:** Let me commend you and your staff heartily for both the January and February issues of *REPORT from the CAPITAL*. My particular appreciation goes for the articles by Dr. G. McLeod Bryan, Dr. Helen M. Caldicott.

Dr. Bryan's article puts together some facts about Baptists involved in peace-making that I have not seen put together before. It serves as an encouragement to those of us who have a commitment to this cause.

C. R. Daley, Editor  
Western Recorder  
Louisville, KY

### "Register Citizen Opinion"

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Isn't it odd that 2,000 years after the Resurrection the emphasis in Christianity is still more on the cross than on the empty tomb? We are not a Resurrection people . . .

In an Easter sermon some 15 centuries ago, St. Augustine condensed the point nicely, "Pagans believe in the death of Jesus, Christians in His Resurrection."

—Frank Moan  
America Magazine

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... ironic that folks who quake at the danger of secular humanism are the very ones pushing for prayer in public schools, an ultimate secularization . . .

## REFLECTIONS

James M. Dunn  
Executive Director



Words carry a peculiar freight, trigger a reaction in specific settings. The "school prayer" debate involves some odd words, 4 to 7 syllables long.

Consider *secularization*: simply to transfer from ecclesiastical to civil use. More precisely, to make secular: "that which is of or relating to the worldly or temporal as distinguished from the spiritual or eternal."

Secularization is exactly what would happen to prayer if some folks had their way. The most intimate and inner expression in religion would be drafted, conscripted, and dragged from its rightful setting where it is tenderly taught and spiritually shared. Prayer would be put into uniform and forced to do civil duty, to tote the values of the common culture, to bear the burdens of pop religion.

Prayer, as in "school prayer," is a component of civil religion. It is of necessity watered down. Whether prescribed by some level of authority like the teacher on the beat or the spontaneous outbursts of self-anointed spiritually superior students, it's watered down worship. There is something cheap about making prayer come under civil service, used to "quiet the kids down."

Isn't it ironic that folks who quake at the danger of secular humanism are the very ones pushing for prayer in the public schools, an ultimate secularization?

Consider *trivialization*. We live on several planes, but they intersect and intertwine. One can not and should not attempt an arbitrary division between the sacred and the secular. Christians accept Jesus Christ as the Lord of all life.

Yet, it is possible to put down, make light of, reduce to ridicule The Holy. Abraham Heschel, a great man of faith, spent his life attending awe as the ultimate emotion. Louis Cobb said, "The bump of reverence on the American head is a dent."

Great hunks of humanity in this country see nothing wrong with "using" prayer. If we who have given our lives to Him Who Was and Is and Ever Shall Be mean what we say and sing on Sunday, we will resist trivialization.

At seminary we had a yell for the intra-mural football team: "Yea black! yea gray! Seminary, Seminary! Let us pray!" Irreverent? Certainly!

However, it wasn't as dangerously irreverent and threatening to the spiritually sensitive as the move to allow government to get into religious observance. It seems that the religious right would like to name God the National Mascot. Trivialization!

Next, think about *reductionism*. For some, school prayer may not be tainted by this term. If, for you, prayer is nothing but ritual, mechanical observance, surface activity that has little if anything to do with heartfelt religion, it doesn't matter. If prayer is repeating rote phrases without engaging the mind, who cares what goes on in school.

If so-called school prayers are effective, compelling, and meaningful, then they constitute indoctrination, evangelization, and they have no part in the patterns of public school life.

On the other hand, if prayer is weak-kneed and wishy-washy, a poor imitation of the real thing, then it consti-

tutes a threat to authentic religion, contradicting what is being taught at home and church or synagogue. School "praying" can work like a flu shot. An inoculation of diluted deism can make some children immune, or at least resistant, to real religion.

Mr. Justice Stevens was correct in calling school prayers "compelled ritual." That's reductionism.

Now look at *revisionism*. Rewriting history is a growth industry of the fundamentalists who have recently come alive to their civic duties. It takes the place of study and research. It portrays Colonial America as a Christian nation. In fact, less than 20% of those people had any church connection. It portrays the founding fathers as great men of the Faith. In fact, some were bounders, others, deists, all sons of the Enlightenment. It minimizes the dedication of the framers of the Constitution to Jefferson's "wall of separation" between church and state.

In evaluating recent history advocates of religious exercise in the public classroom moan that all our present ills stem from "putting God out of the schools" (as if the Heavenly One could be carted about). In fact, school prayers have been faithfully and widely practiced in other countries and they haven't brought idealistic Islam to Iran, churchgoing to England, religious toleration to Belgium, sexual morality to Sweden, freedom of thought to Spain, or peace to Northern Ireland. They pray in schools there.

*Collectivization* is another real danger in our world. We don't need homogenized culture and religion in this country any more than it is needed in communist lands. Part of our strength lies in our pluralism and diversity. If we had prayers in public settings, they could be Buddhist in Hawaii, Mormon in Utah, Baptist in Mississippi, Roman Catholic in New Mexico and Black Muslim in Harlem.

On the other hand, someone has suggested that public school prayer to be fair would have to be addressed "to whom it may concern."

Lowest-common-denominator religion is not worth much to anyone. Emil Brunner criticized collectivism saying that it makes up society "like briquets of so many pulverized individuals." Moves to approve school prayers are steps toward collectivization.

One more word: *authoritarianism*. The dictionary says it is "of, relating to, or favoring a principle of often blind submission to authority as opposed to individual freedom."

Most of the folks for "returning prayer to the schools" have never thought about how such a practice fosters authoritarianism. It does so even and especially with the dedicated and caring teachers of small children. Most often these teachers do not want that role. They'd reject it if they could. Many, if not most of them, understand that for prayer to be real it has to be free. They're not interested in "favoring a principle of blind submission" particularly when it comes to religion. Most Americans are not opposed to individual freedom. We hate authoritarianism.

Explain these words to your Congressman, will you? The Supreme Court was right to reject government meddling in religion and efforts to legalize school prayers.

## REVIEWS



### **REAL SECURITY: Restoring American Power in a Dangerous Decade.**

By Richard J. Barnet, 127 pp. New York: Simon and Schuster

In an era when massive militarization increasingly is becoming the foundation of American foreign policy, *Real Security* declares that the present arms race threatens national security and should be replaced by a new agenda which will provide long-term stability. Richard Barnet served as an official at the State Department and the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency during the Kennedy Administration and is co-founder of The Institute for Policy Studies.

Barnet contends there is a decline in American power that can be traced to various sources. The emergence of "revolutionary nationalism" in the Third World, triumph of capitalism in Germany and Japan, and an arms race whose size has sapped resources, stolen industrial talent and undermined its own usefulness have brought an untimely end to the post-World War II image of an "American century."

Although Barnet agrees with those who perceive a loss of American power, he attacks the idea that national security can be increased through military might. Instead he effectively contends that the arms race and misuse of force have served to make the nation less secure. Barnet observes that the development of a first-strike nuclear capability as a "defensive counter-move in Washington looks offensive in Moscow." As a result, nervousness in both countries increases. He also cites instances in countries such as Iran and North Yemen when America lost prestige because African and Middle Eastern states failed to fit the "cold war" image our military power was supposed to address. One need only look at the Soviet embarrassment in Afghanistan, according to

Barnet, to see the effects of misused military power.

In place of the destabilizing effects of increased militarization and especially nuclear weapons production, Barnet offers thoughtful changes in perception and policy. Real security involves an "end to preoccupation with military strategies that cannot work and insufficient attention to political and economic strategies that can work." The author advocates closer collaboration with the rest of the industrialized world on new rules for developing a just international economic order. He also supports the recognition of the diversity of social experiments in the Third World, especially those which struggle to meet the basic needs of people.

Alert to Soviet opportunism and dreams of world domination, he convincingly argues that the United States view the Soviets as "cautious pragmatists with enormous problems who want to make concrete deals with the West in areas where mutual interest dictates." Barnet affirms that such areas include arms limitation agreements which create a positive political environment and the avoidance of Soviet and American military confrontation from internal political struggles.

His support for positive alternatives to militarism is welcome during these days as is his refusal to support security built on the sandy foundation of an over-armed globe. "The power that

### **CRY JUSTICE**

**The Bible on Hunger and Poverty**  
Ronald J. Sider, Editor, 220 pp.  
New York: Paulist Press, \$2.45 (paper).

In *Cry Justice* Ron Sider, well-known for his writings on world hunger, gathers together major Biblical passages on poverty and justice under such headings as "God's Special Concern for the Poor," "Economic Relationships Among the People of God," "Is Material Abundance the Result of Obedience?" "What About Systemic Injustice and Legalized Oppression?" The scriptures are allowed to speak for themselves and the reader is encouraged to reflect for himself with the aid of questions for each of 14 lessons.

There is also an index showing the Biblical references book by book.

*Cry Justice* will prove itself a very useful tool for classes and for individual Christians, who will be left with no doubt as to the Biblical imperative to "Do justice and love mercy." (GF)

can make us secure," Barnet writes, "is not the power to bend other nations to our will, but the power to remake an America that is once again committed to the values for which the nation was founded—justice, opportunity, and the liberation of the human spirit."

Steve Baylis



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