

# SALT



*"You are the salt of the earth"* Matthew 5:13

Washington Newsletter, Christian Life Commission, Southern Baptist Convention

Vol. 4, No. 4, 1994

## *Congress protects religious liberty in workplace*

Religious expression in the workplace has escaped, for now, the reach of federal bureaucrats—thanks to the U.S. Congress.

Responding to the concerns of organizations such as the Christian Life Commission and complaints by thousands of evangelical Christians and other citizens, the Senate and House of Representatives have directed the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to remove the category of religion from proposed guidelines on workplace harassment.

"Congress has seen the light, because they felt the heat from the outrage of the American people," said Michael K. Whitehead, the Christian Life Commission's general counsel.

In an 88-12 vote Aug. 19, the Senate passed a spending bill which included an amendment deleting religion from the guidelines. Earlier in the week, the House of Representatives

passed the same measure after work by a joint Senate/House conference committee. The Senate and House had passed different versions of the bill, including differing amendments on the EEOC guidelines, before they went to the committee.

Since the guidelines' content became well known early this year, the CLC and other organizations had charged the inclusion of religion in the proposed rules would result in a ban on religious expression on the job, largely because of employers' fear of lawsuits. The guidelines, which also cover race, color, gender, national origin, age and disability, could result in harassment charges against employees or employers for witnessing to fellow workers or subordinates, or for displaying religious art or literature, the CLC and others warned.

The response of evangelical Christians and others to these

*(See Congress on Page 2)*

## Health care: Unborn still in danger

By James A. Smith

Director of Government Relations

Without taking any action in the House of Representatives and after little action of consequence in the Senate, Congress adjourned for a truncated August recess with the prospects for health care reform legislation in doubt. However, compromise legislation gaining support in the Senate contains abortion provisions as pernicious and dangerous as President Clinton's bill.

Although the President's Health Security Act has long been considered dead, even the more recent congressional versions of health reform, written by Rep. Richard Gephardt, D.-Mo., and Sen. George Mitchell, D.-Maine, also now are regarded as lacking enough votes for passage in this Congress.

After returning to Washington the week of Sept. 12, Congress had less than

*The "mainstream" bill contains abortion mandates which are in many respects as sweeping as those in the President's plan and would thus represent the biggest expansion of abortion since Roe v. Wade.*

one month in which to decide what to do about health care reform. The failures of the Clinton, Mitchell and Gephardt bills are positive developments in that they

contained many provisions which the Christian Life Commission has steadfastly opposed—most prominently, abortion on demand and rationing.

In the waning days of this session of Congress, vigorous efforts are being undertaken to strike a grand compromise which will allow legislation dealing with health care reform to move forward. The most likely vehicle for such a compromise is being crafted by a bipartisan group of senators known as the "mainstream coalition."

Led by Sen. John Chafee, R.-R.I., and Sen. John Breaux, D.-La., the self-styled "mainstream coalition" has proposed legislation less sweeping in its design than the President's bill, but which contains a number of provisions which are of deep concern to the Christian Life Commission. *(For information on how*

*(See Abortion on Page 4)*



## Conscience held captive

By C. Ben Mitchell\*

The question is sometimes asked, "Has the conservative resurgence in the Southern Baptist Convention made any practical difference?" Clearly, some of the differences are striking. For instance the response to the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development at Cairo, Egypt, would, no doubt, have been radically different in the pre-controversy SBC.

The pre-controversy response to the Cairo conference would most likely have been relevantly similar to the Baptist Joint Committee's response. In his Aug. 9 editorial in *Report from the Capital*, BJC Executive Director James Dunn calls for believers to maintain a "free and informed conscience" with respect to the Cairo proposals. Dunn views favorably the provisions for "removing legal, regulatory, and social barriers to sexual and reproductive health information and care for adolescents." What he fails adequately to represent is the Draft Programme's mandates for the international expansion of abortion and abortifacient contraceptives. The draft document is replete with euphemisms for abortion such as "fertility regulation" and "reproductive rights."

Furthermore, Dunn insists that we should adopt an "enlightened" view of population, quoting Nobel laureate Henry Kendall, who said, "If we don't control the population with justice, humanity and mercy, it will be done for us by nature—brutally." Instead of an enlightened mentality, most of Dunn's editorial reflects an Enlightenment mentality—naturalistic and void of Providence. Where is the Sovereign God who sustains His creation in Dunn's response? Where are the eternal verities of God's Word in a so-called "enlightened" conscience? The Christian conscience is not free, but captive to the Word of God.

Contrast the BJC's response to that of the post-controversy Christian Life Commission. In an invited pre-Cairo statement to a multi-religious consultation at Geneva, Switzerland, the CLC called for initiatives on population and development which take into account: (1) The sanctity of all human life, born and unborn; (2) the equal value and dignity of every human life regardless of gender, age, state of development, etc.; (3) that the two-parent, heterosexual family is ordained by God as the basic unit of human society; (4) that heterosexual marriage is the only morally acceptable condition for sexual intercourse; (5) that, while growing world population makes it essential to use wisdom in planning and development, human history will end with the return of Jesus Christ and not as a result of overcrowding; and (6) that for married couples non-abortifacient contraceptives may be appropriate when voluntarily used, but for unmarried couples sexual abstinence is called for.

Dunn chides United States leaders who, in a 1984 population summit, called population growth a "neutral phenomenon." He scolds, "How out of it can elected leaders get?"

On the other hand, the CLC reaffirmed the 1984 summit's language: "Governments are urged to help women avoid abortion, which in no case should be promoted as a method of family planning."

Let a conscience informed by the Word of God decide who is "out of it."

*\*This guest editorial is by C. Ben Mitchell, Christian Life Commission consultant on biomedical ethics and life issues.*

## Congress protects religious freedom in workplace

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concerns produced the largest volume of comments in the EEOC's history. Between mid-February and mid-June, the EEOC received more than 100,000 comments, a commission spokesperson said.

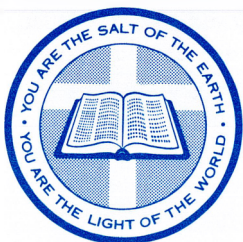
The Senate version of the amendment, introduced by Sen. Howell Heflin, D.-Ala., and Sen. Hank Brown, R.-Colo., was the one reported out of the conference committee for final passage. The House's version prohibited the use of funds for implementation of the guidelines if they were not changed.

The CLC sent a letter to the conference committee members asking them to include the Senate language in the final bill.

In testimony before a Senate subcommittee and in a White House meeting, the CLC's Whitehead called for religion to be handled separately from the consolidated guidelines.

At its June meeting in Orlando, the Southern Baptist Convention approved a resolution requesting removal of religion from the guidelines and separate handling of rules on religious discrimination.

The Heflin-Brown amendment not only directs the EEOC to delete religion but calls for any new guidelines on religious harassment to be written in such a way as to clarify "that symbols or expressions of religious belief consistent with the first amendment and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 are not to be restricted and do not constitute proof of harassment." The amendment also directs the commission to hold public hearings and receive additional comment on such guidelines.



*Salt* is the public policy newsletter of the Christian Life Commission. The CLC is the moral concerns, public policy and religious liberty agency of the Southern Baptist Convention. For information, contact the Christian Life Commission, 400 N. Capitol St. NW, Suite 594, Washington, DC 20001, (202) 638-3223.

*Salt* is published six times a year. It is mailed without charge to individuals who request it. Voluntary subscriptions are \$10 annually. Subscribers to *Salt* also will receive *Light*, the CLC's ethics magazine. Checks should be made payable to the Christian Life Commission. Your canceled check will serve as your tax-deductible receipt. Please send requests for subscriptions or extra copies of issues to the Christian Life Commission, 901 Commerce, #550, Nashville, TN 37203-3696. *Salt* is printed on recycled paper.

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# Abortion Is Not Health Care: Time is Short ... Tell Congress Today!

## Speak Out Now!

Call now to receive your four personalized letters, as seen on this page, addressed to the President, your Senators and Congressional Representative.

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- Begin by calling 1-900-933-1776. This service is available in all 50 states, 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. The total cost of this call is \$5.95 and will appear on your telephone bill.
- After a brief message from the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission you will be asked to say and spell your name. Next you will be asked to say and spell your street address, including any apartment or unit number. You will then be asked to just say your city, state and zip code.

Your Name Printed Here  
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Your Senators/Representative Name  
United States Senate or House of Representatives  
XXX Senate or XXX House Office Building, Room XXX  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear (Your Senator/Representative Name):

I urge you to oppose any health care reform plan which will pay for abortion on demand. The problem of abortion coverage remains in the compromise versions of health care reform.

As you consider health care legislation crafted by the so called "Mainstream Coalition," please remember: millions of Americans, including myself, are unalterably opposed to supporting abortion in any health reform plan. In fact, a poll published in the May 18, 1994 *Journal of the American Medical Association* revealed that 68% of Americans are opposed to including abortion in a health care benefits package.

I agree with the Southern Baptist Convention Christian Life Commission, the snuffing-out of unborn children cannot be regarded as true health care. I would consider it a serious violation of my conscience to be made complicit in the act of destroying human life if my taxes were used to pay for abortion or if my private insurance was mandated to cover abortion services.

Please support amendments which seek to exclude abortion on demand from legislation Congress considers. If abortion is not explicitly excluded from coverage in the final legislation, please oppose that legislation. I look forward to your reply and learning your views on this important issue.

Sincerely,

(Your signature and a handwritten P.S. lets Washington know of your active involvement.)

- Your 4 personalized letters will be mailed to you within 5 days. Just stamp the envelopes that come with the letters, sign your letters and mail them.
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**PLEASE PHOTOCOPY THIS PAGE AND PASS IT ALONG TO YOUR FRIENDS**



## Abortion remains in health care bills

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*you can help impact health care reform legislation, see Page 3.)*

The coalition bill, brandished about Washington as an "incrementalist" approach to health care reform, would rely on market reform and expand subsidies to the poor, according to its backers. The plan would not require universal coverage, a central provision of Clinton's plan which he said would cause him to veto any bill lacking this goal.

Sen. Mitchell has latched onto the efforts of the "mainstream coalition" as the last hope of passing legislation this year. On the House side, compromise legislation written by Reps. Jim Cooper, D.-Tenn.; J. Roy Rowland, D.-Ga.; and Michael Bilirakis, R.-Fla., also is drawing bipartisan support. However, the Democratic leadership in the House has not embraced this plan the way the Senate Democratic leadership has that of the "mainstream coalition."

The "mainstream" bill contains abortion mandates which are in many respects as sweeping as those in the President's plan and would thus represent the biggest expansion of abortion since *Roe v. Wade*.

Under this proposal, the egregious abortion provisions include:

- Every health insurance plan would

### Express your opinion

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The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_  
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The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Capitol Switchboard  
(202) 224-3121

be required to have a basic benefits package that would include coverage of abortion on demand;

- Federal subsidies would result in taxpayer-funded abortion on demand;
- Every health plan would be required to ensure all benefits—including abortion—are "available and accessible to each potential enrollee in the area," which would result in the establishment of hundreds of new abortion clinics in "underserved" areas.

The mainstream bill also contains provisions which the CLC believes will lead to rationing.

Please write and call your senators and representatives today. Feel free to use the model letter on Page 3 or call 1-900-933-1776 to have letters to your legislators prepared for you.

## Hearing held on homosexual rights

In apparently Washington's first congressional hearing on a homosexual rights bill, only two of nine witnesses testified against the Employment Non-discrimination Act.

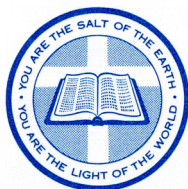
Testimony was offered July 29 before the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee on S. 2238, which would prohibit employment discrimination against homosexuals and bisexuals.

Sen. Edward Kennedy, D.-Mass., chairman of the committee and chief sponsor of the bill, has 29 co-sponsors in the Senate. Rep. Gerry Studds, D.-Mass., is prime sponsor of a companion bill, H.R. 4636. The House of Representatives bill has 124 co-sponsors.

The bill is not merely an expansion of civil rights but will produce "special privileges for an elite group that has unjustly played the victim card to advance," said Joseph Broadus, an African-American law professor at George Mason University, in prepared testimony.

The bill provides an exemption for religious organizations, except in the case of for-profit activities. Christian ministries such as some book stores and day-care centers would not be exempt.

Although a date for a committee vote has not been set, such action is expected before Congress adjourns this fall, a committee spokesperson said.



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