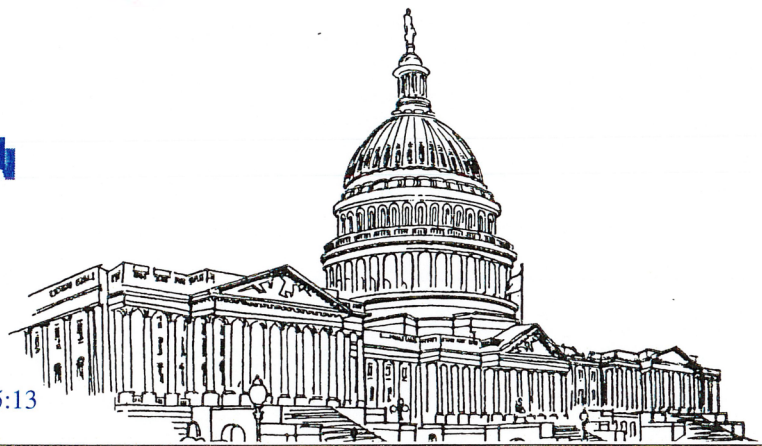


SALT



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

Washington Newsletter, Christian Life Commission, Southern Baptist Convention

Vol. 5, No. 5, 1995

Public schools get religion rules

The U.S. Department of Education sent guidelines on religious expression to the country's 15,000 public school superintendents in mid-August.

Secretary of Education Richard Riley said he hopes the action at the direction of President Bill Clinton "will end some of the confusion" about the sometimes volatile issue at the local level.

The problems will not be solved, however, without the passage of a constitutional amendment protecting religious expression, said Michael Whitehead, general counsel of the Christian Life Commission.

The guidelines discuss only student rights, but religious discrimination also occurs in the work place, ... in rental of school property by church groups, and in zoning cases. The guidelines do nothing to stop these violations. A religious equality amendment would.

— Michael Whitehead

In a July speech on religious liberty, President Clinton announced he had instructed Riley, in consultation with Attorney General Janet Reno, to inform schools by the start of the new year of the

administration's interpretation of what is permissible religious expression by students, including interpretations of the Equal Access Act, which provides

(See CLC on Page 4)

Platform problems

The Platform for Action adopted at the World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, includes worthwhile sections, such as one on religious liberty, but it also includes sections opposed to biblical morality. Among the latter:

- Sexual and "reproductive" rights for women;
- Children's rights at the expense of parental authority and responsibility;
- Refusal to define "gender" and "family," providing leverage especially for the promoters of homosexual rights.

Pro-family representatives said the document also is guilty of promoting promiscuity, ignoring marriage and minimizing motherhood.

Beijing battle moves to U.S.

Delegates to the recent World Conference on Women approved a Platform for Action which is unfavorable on several counts to the concepts of biblical morality and the family. Now, the battle over the influence of this document moves to the national level.

While the document adopted in September at Beijing, China, is non-binding, members of the United States delegation declared they would work for its implementation at home.

"The United States delegation looks forward to bringing the Platform for Action from Beijing to fruition," said delegation director Marjorie Margolies-Mezvinsky, according to *The Washington Times*. "We will move quickly and implement this document."

The Clinton administration may seek to do so without Congress, but congressional oversight hearings on the

conference and document have been promised.

Sections of the Platform for Action were offensive enough that 42 countries, primarily Muslim and heavily Catholic ones, and the Vatican registered reservations. Western delegations—the U.S., Canada and the European Union—led the push for liberal social policies, including homosexuality and bisexuality as classifications deserving civil rights protection. That section was pulled from the document on the last day, however.

Nancy Schaefer, a Christian Life Commission trustee from Atlanta, represented the CLC at Beijing. She worked with other pro-life/pro-family representatives in an effort to influence delegates to the United Nations-sponsored conference. (Her report is included in the November-December issue of *Light*, the CLC's magazine.)

Cyberporn II: What to do?

By Richard D. Land

The heated debate on how, or whether, to regulate obscenity and pornography in cyberspace has reached a critical juncture. At this point the Exon-Coats bill in the Senate and the Cox-Wyden bill in the House are being touted as different ways to approach the problem. Of the two approaches, Exon-Coats is the only one providing any meaningful legal restrictions. The competing bills have gone to a conference committee composed of House and Senate members.

If you are truly concerned about obscenity and pornography being made available to children on various Internet computer networks, you should urge your congressman and senators to support strong legislation which makes it *illegal* for pornographers to distribute their materials to children. The ACLU, People for the American Way and the heavily financed online lobbying groups will be vigorously opposing such actions. They believe there should be *no legal liability* for making pornography available to children. In the name of protecting the culture and freedom of cyberspace, such groups are adamantly opposed to any legal restrictions on the only unregulated communications medium in America.

The stakes in this debate are enormous. If the opponents of legal liability for pornography distribution prevail, it will signal a catastrophic shift in legal philosophy in our society. Until now, society has said a pornography distributor (adult video or bookstore) has a legal responsibility to ensure that minors do not have access to pornographic material. The opponents of legal liability for cyberspace distribution are saying that instead it should be the parents', not the distributors', legal responsibility to protect their children from contact with obscene material. This is a devastating shift in legal philosophy which jettisons centuries of societal responsibility for ensuring children's protection from such exposure.

This is not to say that parents should not assume their responsibility to protect their children. They should make every attempt to shield their children from the electronic filth polluting the Internet. But what about children whose parents do not assume their responsibility? Does not society have an obligation to provide legal protection for those suffering such parental neglect?

The computer industry itself should also be involved in devising new "technical solutions" to block such material, and these technological advances should be made available to parents free of charge. However, the bottom line is that if those distributing obscene and pornographic material face no *legal liability* for allowing their materials to be where children have open access to them, they will never provide any safeguards. There must be *legal liability* for distributors on the Internet who do not take responsibility for keeping their "product" from children. If you agree, please write and/or call your congressional representative and senators today.

The CLC has received permission from the *National Coalition for the Protection of Children and Families* to reprint their excellent pamphlet, "Children, Pornography and Cyberspace." It is available from the CLC for 22¢ each or 5 for \$1.00.

They said it

"You cannot embrace racism to deal with racism. It's not Christian. If I type one word at my word processor in one opinion against [whites], I break God's law. Whether it is my opinion or a concurring opinion, I break God's law. If I write racism into law, then I am in God's eyes no better than they are."

– **Supreme Court Associate Justice Clarence Thomas** explaining his votes against the traditional civil rights approach to voting rights and school desegregation in a syndicated column Aug. 20 in *The Washington Times*.

"Politics is the art of the possible. I don't think the votes are here for an amendment. If they were, I would bring it up in a minute." – **Rep. Henry Hyde, R.-Ill.**, chairman of the House of Representatives Judiciary Committee, responding to a Democrat member asking if he would bring up a constitutional amendment protecting unborn children.

The Washington press corps knows "all sorts of liberal sources. They're their friends. They know no one . . . in the Christian Coalition. I'm serious. . . . If Bill Clinton misquotes Scripture and nobody on staff knows it because no one is a Christian, then you're not covering America." – **columnist Michael Barone** in calling for media recruitment of Christians during a panel discussion broadcast by C-SPAN, according to *The Washington Times*.

"When liberal middle-class special-interest groups try to force sex education or gay issues into public schools, they are guilty of arrogant cultural imperialism. . . . sex education has been a disastrous failure." – **Unorthodox feminist Camille Paglia** writing in the *Advocate*, a homosexual magazine, according to *The Washington Times*.



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, 505 Second St. NE, Washington, DC 20002, (202) 547-8105.

Salt is published six times a year. Voluntary subscriptions are \$10 annually. 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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President: Richard D. Land. Editor: Tom Strode. Contributors: James A. Smith, Michael Whitehead.

Congress at a glance

HIV infant testing: Legislation has been introduced which would require the testing of infants for HIV. If adopted, this legislation would represent a significant change in public policy regarding the HIV/AIDS issue.

Rep. Tom Coburn, R.-Okla., and Rep. Gary Ackerman, D.-N.Y., are the sponsors of the legislation. Coburn, an obstetrician/family physician, is a Southern Baptist. Ackerman has championed the cause in Congress of HIV infant testing for a number of years.

Since the beginning of the AIDS epidemic in the early 1980s, government leaders, under pressure from the homosexual lobby, have shied away from addressing the disease in the manner in which other communicable diseases have been approached. This civil rights issue approach has greatly harmed efforts to stop the spread of HIV.

Some 2,000 infants are born each year infected with the HIV virus. Coburn believes Congress should support guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention which encourage all expectant mothers to be tested for HIV. Studies have indicated transmission of HIV from mothers to children is reduced by two-thirds if the drug AZT is administered during pregnancy, labor and up to six weeks after birth.

The legislation would amend the Ryan White Act to require states to pass laws mandating the testing of infants born to mothers whose HIV status is not known at birth. States which failed to adopt such laws would not be eligible for funding under the Ryan White Act.

Early detection of HIV would permit treatment and counseling shortly after birth and would educate the mother against breast feeding, which transmits the HIV virus.

Adoption of the Coburn-Ackerman amendment is a common sense, public health approach to addressing the plague of HIV/AIDS as it pertains to infants.

The Christian Life Commission joined other pro-family organizations in September in urging Congress to support the Coburn-Ackerman amendment to the Ryan White Act, which is H.R. 1872 in

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The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

White House Comment Line
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U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable _____
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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the House of Representatives and S. 641 in the Senate.

Gambling commission: At deadline for this issue of *Salt*, legislation introduced early this year by Rep. Frank Wolf, R.-Va., to establish the National Gambling Impact and Policy Commission was set for a hearing Sept. 29 before the House Judiciary Committee.

The CLC supports H.R. 497, the National Gambling Impact and Policy Commission Act.

The proposed commission would compile information on gambling's effect on economics, crime, families and individuals. The commission would have nine members, three appointed by the President, three by the speaker of the House and three by the Senate majority leader. Wolf believes one of the members of the commission should be a governor from a state which has legalized gambling.

"I introduced H.R. 497 because I don't believe many Americans fully understand the consequences of legalized gambling," Wolf said recently.

He recounted a litany of concerns about gambling which motivated the introduction of H.R. 497: "I am concerned about the mother of two who killed herself because of her addiction. I am concerned about the teenager who prostituted his girlfriend to pay his gambling debts. I am concerned about the restaurant business cannibalized by overpowering casinos. I am concerned

about the political corruption associated with gambling."

The commission would also review the cost and effectiveness of federal and state regulations, gambling's impact on other businesses, the influence of gambling promoters on the development of policies regulating gaming, the relationship between gambling and crime, teenage gambling and the effect of pathological gambling on individuals, families and social institutions.

H.R. 497 must clear the House Judiciary Committee before it can be considered by the full House. The Judiciary Committee has not scheduled a date to vote on H.R. 497.

Sen. Paul Simon, D.-Ill., has introduced S. 704, which is similar to H.R. 497 and also would establish a commission to study the effects of gambling.

Partial-birth abortion ban: No floor vote in the House of Representatives was scheduled for the Partial-birth Abortion Ban Act (H.R. 1833) at deadline for this issue. It was expected a vote would occur no earlier than mid-October.

The bill, which was approved by the House Judiciary Committee in July, would ban a gruesome abortion procedure used by some doctors in the second half of pregnancy. The method also is known as dilation and extraction (D and X). The Senate version, S.939, has not been acted upon.

The CLC supports this legislation.

In the partial-birth procedure, the abortionist uses ultrasound and forceps to deliver the living, unanesthetized baby feet first—except for the head, which remains just within the birth canal. While holding the baby down with one hand, the abortionist kills the infant by forcing surgical scissors through the base of the skull. He inserts a catheter into the wound and suctions the brain. This causes the skull to collapse and permits easier removal of the dead baby. (See Vol. 5, No. 4 and Vol. 5, No. 3 of *Salt* for more information.)

Reps. Charles Canady, R.-Fla.; Barbara Vucanovich, R.-Nev.; and Tony Hall, D.-Ohio, are sponsors of H.R. 1833.

CLC: Guidance not sufficient

(Continued from Page 1)

religious clubs with the same access to school facilities as secular clubs.

According to the guidelines, the following religious expressions are among those allowed in schools: Prayer by individuals and groups as long as it is not disruptive; prayers over lunch; student-initiated religious discussions; witnessing that does not constitute "harassment"; individual reading of the Bible or other religious books; teaching about religion; student expression of religious beliefs in homework and class presentations; distribution of religious literature; wearing clothing with religious messages if clothing with other messages is allowed; and equal treatment of student religious clubs.

The guidelines are "not intended to change anything," Riley said. "They also won't solve all the problems. We are very quick to say that."

The result of the guidelines likely will be a decrease in the number of lawsuits, said Gus Steinhilber, general counsel of the National School Boards Association.

While the CLC commended President Clinton for his July defense of religious liberty, his solution falls short of what is

Join CLC online

Subscribers to SBCNet, the Southern Baptist Convention's data communications network, may receive information on ethics and religious liberty issues from the Christian Life Commission and also "talk" with CLC staff members.

The CLC posts on a regular basis a number of items in the General Ministry B Forum of SBCNet, which is found on CompuServe, the computer online service. These include alerts about pending federal legislation, statements from news conferences and commentaries. In addition to accessing such items in the CLC library of the B Forum, subscribers may communicate with staff in the B Forum message section.

Free SBCNet membership kits are distributed by the Baptist Sunday School Board. They are available in DOS, Macintosh and Windows and may be ordered at 1-800-325-7749.

needed, Whitehead said. The CLC general counsel made that point in discussions earlier this year with Department of Education officials.

"We urged that, even if the President does not endorse a religious equality amendment, which we support, the White House could make a substantive policy

impact by issuing a new executive order or by proposing new legislation on equal access, with real sanctions to stop the violations," he said. "Otherwise, a White House information campaign may be dismissed as symbolism over substance.

"There is no enforcement, no penalty, no plan to stop the tampering with fundamental religious rights, which the President has acknowledged."

The President's opposition to an amendment demonstrates his directive to Riley was intended primarily as an attack on the amendment effort and not as an attempt to influence public policy long-term, Whitehead said.

"The guidelines discuss only student rights, but religious discrimination also occurs in the work place, where the IRS bans employee religious articles and the EEOC proposes harassment guidelines that could penalize sharing one's faith, in rental of school property by church groups, and in zoning cases. The guidelines do nothing to stop these violations. A religious equality amendment would," Whitehead said.

The guidelines also "will not change the strict separationist opinions" of some Supreme Court justices, he said.

The Southern Baptist Convention passed a resolution at its 1995 meeting calling for a constitutional amendment to protect religious freedom, including that of students.

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