



VOICE OF REASON

Summer 1983

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Religious Liberty Struggle Heats Up

The long hot summer drawing to a close has been a mixed bag for religious liberty and church-state separation. Clear-cut victories were scored for abortion rights at the Supreme Court and in the U.S. Senate. But in other developments, the Supreme Court handed down an ambiguous ruling on parochial aid and a bad ruling on legislative chaplaincies, a tuition tax credit parochial aid bill and proposed constitutional amendments on group prayer in public schools remain

alive in the Senate, and the country is racheting closer to a national constitutional convention. The details:

Abortion Rights

On June 15 the Supreme Court ruled unconstitutional state and local laws which placed impermissible obstacles in the way of free choice on abortion. Among the obstacles ruled out were requirements that second trimester abortions be done only in

hospitals, that women must wait 24 hours for the procedure after signing a consent form, that the attending physician personally counsel the patient, and that physicians must recite certain anti-abortion materials to patients. The Court held that requiring parental consent for abortions of minors was permissible only if the law provides "an alternative procedure whereby a pregnant minor may demonstrate that she is sufficiently mature to make the abortion decision herself or that, despite her immaturity, an abortion would be in her best interests."

On the other hand, the Court held to be permissible requirements that a second physician be present during a procedure involving a viable fetus and that pathology reports be made on aborted fetuses.

The 6-3 ruling is significant in that it summarily reaffirmed the Court's landmark 1973 ruling in *Roe v. Wade* that the right to abortion is constitutionally protected. The Court noted that "a state may not adopt one theory of when life begins to justify its regulation of abortions."

Two weeks later the U.S. Senate voted 50-49 to defeat Sen. Orrin Hatch's (R-UT) proposed constitutional amendment, S.J. Res. 3, to remove constitutional protection from abortion and thus allow both Congress and state legislatures to restrict or outlaw abortion. Pro-choice senators, who needed only 34 votes to defeat the amendment, were surprised when they garnered 50.

VOR had submitted a statement to the Senate Judiciary Committee in May pointing out that S.J. Res. 3 would have the effect of imposing on all women the theological view that personhood begins at conception, on which there never has been any consensus among theologians, philosophers, scientists, legal authorities, or lay persons. The VOR statement added that an anti-abortion amendment was incompatible with the constitutional principle of separation of church and state.

These two victories for women's rights
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Editorial

Reagan's Gender Gap

President Reagan, the press reminds us frequently these days, has a gender gap. That is, women are significantly less well disposed toward his policies and his administration than men.

Some of the reasons for the gap are obvious to all: Reagan's strong support for a constitutional amendment to outlaw abortion, his opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment, and his administration's request that the Supreme Court limit federal authority to cut off funds to educational institutions that discriminate against women. Then in August came the resignation of Justice Department official Barbara Honegger, with her well publicized charge that the administration's "program" to create alternatives to the ERA is a sham.

Women should be further turned off on Reagan when they look closely at his proposal (S. 528, recently approved by the Senate Finance Committee and awaiting Senate floor action) to provide massive federal aid to parochial and private schools by means of tuition reimbursement income tax credits.

Clearly the overwhelming majority of the beneficiaries of such a plan would be those private school operating religious bodies which refuse to ordain women to the clergy, which oppose the constitutional

right to free choice on abortion, which often oppose effective birth control and a woman's (or man's) right to terminate an unworkable marriage, which generally teach that women should take a back seat to men and should generally be confined to "traditional" roles in society, and whose schools often discriminate by sex in admissions.

If the Reagan tuition tax credit plan should become law, and be upheld by a future Rehnquist-led Supreme Court, then the tax dollars of all women and men would be used to indoctrinate new generations of girls and boys with views and attitudes inimical to women's rights and interests.

It is not enough for the Reagan administration merely to seek the election or appointment of more women to public office. Would electing a bunch of Phyllis Schlaflys or Connie Marshners help women? Not much. Why did Rep. Barney Frank defeat Rep. Margaret Heckler in a Massachusetts House race in 1982? Because Frank is a stronger supporter of women's rights than Heckler.

Yes, we need more women in public office. But above all we need women and men in office who are strong supporters of women's rights—and all civil liberties.

Religious Liberty, *continued from p. 1*

and religious freedom, however, do not obscure the facts that anti-choice forces in Congress have clamped severe restrictions on Medicaid funding of abortion for poor women and that they are trying to remove abortion coverage from health insurance programs for government employees, the unemployed, and military personnel and wives. The large, well-heeled anti-choice movement is also expected to be active in the 1984 presidential and congressional election campaigns.

Parochiaid

On June 29 the Supreme Court ruled 5-4 to uphold a Minnesota law which provides state aid to sectarian private schools through tuition tax deductions on state income tax returns. Justice Rehnquist (joined by Burger, White, Powell, and O'Connor) insisted in his ruling that the Minnesota law could be distinguished from the similar New York law ruled unconstitutional in 1973 because the financial benefits to sectarian schools in Minnesota were "attenuated" and because the state law allowed a few crumbs of aid to go to public school families. However, Rehnquist did not spell out where the constitutional line is to be drawn between "attenuated" and substantial aid, nor did he pay much attention to the fact that public school students' benefits under the law are insignificant compared to the benefits to parochial schools.

Justice Marshall (joined by Brennan, Blackman, and Stevens) showed in his dissenting opinion that the Minnesota parochiaid plan is not really distinguishable from other state plans ruled unconstitutional in the 1970s and has "a direct and immediate [unconstitutional] effect of advancing religion."

What effect will the *Mueller v. Allen* ruling have on the prospects for President

Reagan's tuition tax credit parochiaid bill, S. 528, approved by the Senate Finance Committee on May 24?

Parochiaid backers hailed the ruling as a green light for their pet scheme. Defenders of public education and religious freedom, however, are concerned that the ruling might signal a serious weakening of the Court on more substantial forms of tax aid for parochial schools, especially if President Reagan is reelected and appoints another one or two Supreme Court justices.

District Polls Score Tax Credits

Polls of their districts by members of Congress in recent years have shown solid opposition to the tuition tax credit plan for federal aid to nonpublic schools. The following table shows the results of all the polls we have found:

Representative	Against	For
Holt (R-MD)	54.7%	41.5%
Steers (R-MD)*	64	30
Frenzel (R-MN)	74.4	25.6
Regula (R-OH)	58	42
Pritchard (R-WA)	66.3	33.7
McClory (R-IL)	56	44
Williams (D-MT)	60	40
Sharp (D-MD)	71	29
Rosenthal (D-NY)	56	44
McCurdy (D-OK)	71	29
Beilenson (D-CA)	63	35
McKinney (R-CT)	46	53
Roberts (D-KS)	65	35
Hammerschmidt (R-AR)	60	40

*Rep. Steers voted for the Packwood-Moynihan tuition tax credit bill in 1978 after he took his poll, which apparently played a part in his defeat at the polls that year.

Parochiaid lobbies in state capitals may not succeed in getting tax credit or deduction bills passed in the near future for two reasons: most state constitutions have fairly strict provisions against parochiaid,

and most state budgets are stretched so thin that expenditures for parochial education would be opposed for fiscal reasons.

(At present the states of Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York are spending over \$150 million per year on parochial schools in "peripheral" ways which have survived judicial scrutiny. An additional two dozen states provide limited tax aid to parochial schools through transportation services. Federal aids to parochial and private education, amounting to about \$600 million annually, are presently being tested in federal courts.)

In April VOR executive director Edd Doerr presented a statement to the Senate Finance Committee listing the reasons why the Reagan bill, S. 528, would be bad public policy. Doerr pointed out that the plan would be unconstitutional, would tax all citizens for the support of religious institutions, would prefer more over less affluent families, would subsidize the various forms of discrimination common in nonpublic schools, would create political divisions along religious lines, would damage public education, would tax all for the support of institutions not under public control, and would make religious institutions dangerously dependent upon government.

School Prayer

On July 14 the Senate Judiciary Committee sent to the floor not one but two proposed constitutional amendments on school prayer.

President Reagan's amendment, S.J. Res. 73, would authorize government sponsored group prayer in public schools, though dissenting students would be allowed to stand up to peer and school pressure and decline to participate. At the last minute the administration had the resolution changed to bar federal or state officials from actually composing the school prayers.

The second amendment, introduced by Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and curiously lacking a resolution number, would authorize "individual or group silent prayer or meditation in public schools" and require that voluntary student religious groups be given equal access to use of public school facilities with nonreligious groups.

As VOR executive director Edd Doerr pointed out in the *New York Times* on July 21, the President's adding the stipulation, "Nor shall the United States or any state compose the words of any prayer to be said in public schools," does not make "a thoroughly objectionable tampering with the Constitution any more tolerable."

The Voice of Reason Newsletter

The Voice of Reason Newsletter is published quarterly by The Voice of Reason, P.O. Box 6656, Silver Spring, MD 20906. (Telephone: 301-598-2447) The newsletter is sent to all contributors of basic membership dues to The Voice of Reason.

Editor: Edd Doerr

The Voice of Reason is a nonprofit public interest educational organization dedicated to preserving the American tradition of religious, intellectual, and personal freedom in a secular democratic state. Membership is open to all who share that purpose. Annual dues are \$15 for individuals, \$20 for families, \$5 for students.

President: Lynne Silverberg-Master; Vice-President: Donald Field; Treasurer: Stephen Fenichell; Secretary: Bruce Southworth. Executive Committee includes above officers and Edward L. Ericson, Sol Gordon, Sherwin T. Wine.

Executive Director: Edd Doerr

Falwell's Follies

Lynchburg, Virginia, Circuit Judge William W. Sweeney ruled on August 12 that the Old Time Gospel Hour (OTGH), Rev. Jerry Falwell's financial and broadcasting operation, must pay taxes on 20 of 23 properties it claimed were tax-exempt. The properties include Falwell's residence and a quarter of a square mile at Falwell's Liberty Baptist College. Unpaid taxes, penalties, and interest are estimated at \$250,000. Sweeney held that OTGH does not meet Virginia's legal definition of a church or charity. The judge noted that even if OTGH qualified as a church, state law allows only four acres to be tax-exempt, and city law allows only ten. OTGH had originally claimed tax-exempt status for 55 properties, but agreed earlier this year that taxes should be paid on 33 of them. OTGH is appealing the ruling.

In May, OTGH withdrew from the Evangelical Council for Financial Account-

ability, claiming that the large number of complaints against the Falwell operations had become a burden to the ECFA staff. Many complaints stemmed from a 1982 Gospel Hour appeal for funds to replace a TV antenna tower wrecked by vandals. The appeal raised more than \$200,000 and did not mention that the tower was covered by insurance. An audit showed that the Falwell operations raised \$56.98 million in fiscal 1982-83.

Meanwhile, OTGH announced in August that it was laying off about 275 full and part-time employees in order to cut spending by 20%. Falwell said the austerity program is needed to save \$15 to \$18 million to help raise \$100 million to expand his college. OTGH employs about 2,300 people.

In other action, the Lynchburg Planning Commission recommended unanimously in July that OTGH be denied permission to use three houses in a residential zone for classrooms and offices.

"Why can't President Reagan, Senator Thurmond, the Reverend Falwell, and their friends understand that every public school student now enjoys full freedom to pray individually in school, each according to the dictates of his or her own conscience, and that government sponsorship of any kind of group prayer in school would not enlarge but rather diminish religious freedom? And why do people who profess to want to deregulate and privatize everything else seek to have government regulate and manage the daily practice of religion by 42 million American children?"

*Edd Doerr, Executive Director, The Voice of Reason
The New York Times, July 21, 1983*

Civil Rights Nominee

When the Senate reconvenes in September, it will consider three nominations which President Reagan has made to replace people he has fired from the U.S. Civil Rights Commission. The three nominees are Morris B. Abram, former Brandeis University president and 1980 Reagan supporter, John Bunzel of the ultraconservative Heritage Foundation, and Robert A. Destro. The Senate did not act in 1982 on three earlier Reagan nominees, one of whom was Destro.

While civil rights groups have been urging senators to reject all three nominations, on the ground that President Reagan is trying to politicize and weaken the Commission, the naming of Destro is regarded as especially bad by women's and civil rights activists.

According to Frances Kissling, executive director of Catholics for a Free Choice

and a member of VOR's National Advisory Board, Destro has no experience with traditional civil rights issues. His short legal career has been devoted to anti-abortion litigation. (The Commission is now barred by law from dealing with the civil right to abortion.) His principal employment from 1977 to 1982 was as general counsel for the Catholic League for Civil and Religious Liberties, an ultraconservative group whose main goals are outlawing abortion, getting tax support for parochial schools, and stifling all criticism, justified or not, of conservative Catholic views and institutions.

Civil rights groups are urging people to request that their senators reject all three Reagan nominees to the Civil Rights Commission, while pro-choice groups are concentrating opposition on Destro.

VOR's Edd Doerr testified against Destro's nomination before the Senate Judiciary Committee in August 1982.

Vatican Ambassador?

The Reagan administration is considering opening formal diplomatic relations with the Vatican. To facilitate such a move, Rep. Clement J. Zablocki (D-WI), chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, introduced on June 30 H.J. Res. 316, with 25 cosponsors, to repeal an 1867 statute barring appropriations for "an American legation at Rome," then capital of the Papal States.

U.S. diplomatic relations with the Papal States, begun in 1848, were ended in 1867 largely in response to a papal encyclical, the "Syllabus of Errors," which condemned church-state separation, religious liberty, and public education, and to harassment of non-Catholics. The Papal States were incorporated into the kingdom of Italy in 1870. In 1929 Mussolini granted statehood to the 108-acre Vatican City, which now enjoys diplomatic relations with 106 countries.

Franklin D. Roosevelt sent a "personal presidential envoy" to the Vatican early in World War II, a practice continued by Harry Truman. In 1951 a storm of protest ended Truman's attempt to upgrade the envoy to ambassadorial rank, which would have required Senate approval. In 1970 Richard Nixon appointed a "personal envoy," a part of a strategy, along with promoting federal aid for parochial schools, for gaining religious bloc votes in 1972. Presidents Ford, Carter, and Reagan continued the practice.

VOR executive director Edd Doerr urged President Reagan in July not to establish diplomatic relations with the Vatican. Doerr pointed out that, since the Vatican is primarily the headquarters of a church, formal diplomatic relations would violate the religious neutrality required of our government by the First Amendment. Doerr added that formal relations would prefer one religious body and discriminate against all others, increase interfaith tensions, and offend many Catholics who prefer that their church be regarded as a spiritual rather than a political entity.

VOR Speakers

The Voice of Reason can arrange for expert speakers on our areas of concern for conferences, meetings, universities, churches, synagogues, and other groups. For details contact the VOR Speakers Bureau, P.O. Box 6656, Silver Spring, MD 20906 (Telephone: 301-598-2447).

Editorial

How You Can Help

Supporters of church-state separation and religious, intellectual, and personal freedom can help preserve our basic freedoms by:

Renewing dues and/or making a special contribution to Voice of Reason to help us expand our operation. (Radical Right TV preacher Pat Robertson boasts that a recent telethon got over 24,000 new members pledged to give \$15 per month and over 8,000 to donate \$1,000 or more per year.) VOR can't compete on that level with Jerry Falwell or the "700 Club," but we do need more members with that kind of commitment.

Ordering and distributing VOR literature to friends, colleagues, etc. See our "Resources" ad for details.

Sending us the names and addresses (with zip codes) of people you think would be interested in supporting our work.

Writing your senators and representatives on pending legislation. Be courteous, brief, and stick to one topic per communication.

Writing letters to editors on topics of concern. Again, be brief, courteous, and stick to one subject. Or send VOR the column or editorial you would like us to respond to.

Getting a VOR speaker for your church, synagogue, university, club, or other group.

Sending us clippings of news items, editorials, columns, cartoons, etc. on our areas of interest. Indicate source and date on each clipping.

"Religion is not the legitimate business of any level of government. Government intrusion into religion, even when sanctioned by constitutional amendment, can only create the sort of problems which cost many ancient Christians, Jews, and others their lives, which led many of our ancestors to leave their European homelands for the New World, and which led after 1776 to the ever fuller implementation of the principle of separation of church and state."

*Voice of Reason statement
to Senate Judiciary Committee
May 3, 1983*

"Year of the Bible"

Two lawsuits are pending in federal courts challenging the constitutionality of the "Year of the Bible" resolution passed by Congress late last year and President Reagan's subsequent proclamation of 1983 as the "Year of the Bible" in February.

In one suit, sponsored by the ACLU of Southern California, fifteen plaintiffs—including VOR board member Dr. Gerald LaRue and several Unitarian Universalist, Protestant, Jewish, and Sikh clergy—contends that the proclamation violates the First amendment prohibition against laws "respecting an establishment of religion." One plaintiff, a United Presbyterian minister, said that the proclamation subverts the Bible for political purposes. The second suit was filed by the Wisconsin-based Freedom from Religion Foundation.

The proclamation identifies the Bible as "the Word of God" and calls on the President to designate 1983 "as a national 'Year of the Bible' in recognition of both the formative influence the Bible has been for our Nation, and our national need to study and apply the teachings of the Holy Scriptures."

The "Year of the Bible" proclamation idea seems to have been originated by Bill Bright, head of Campus Crusade for Christ—which tries to infiltrate fundamentalism into public schools—and leader

of the "I Found It" proselytizing campaign in the 1970s. Bright persuaded Sen. Bill Armstrong (R-CO) and Rep. Carlos Moorhead (R-CA) to introduce the resolution in Congress. Armstrong and Moorhead then got President Reagan to serve as honorary chairman of the privately funded National Committee for the Year of the Bible, the functioning head of which is Bill Bright.

The Committee has distributed materials which convey the message that Catholics, Jews, Muslims, Mormons, Hindus, Buddhists, Christian Scientists, and non-fundamentalist Protestants are "false believers." The Committee is using the congressional resolution and presidential proclamation for proselytizing campaigns.

One fundamentalist outfit in Arizona is distributing widely a copy of the resolution with this statement: "The United States Congress has settled it. The Bible is now officially proclaimed by a law of the United States to be 'the Word of God.'" The brochure adds that under the resolution "a study of the Holy Scripture should now be made a part of every public and private school curriculum." And: "individuals and organizations who advocate banning the Bible from the public schools . . . would be . . . probably guilty of sedition against the United States of America."

Voice of Reason Sponsors Conferences in Washington, Michigan

"Values in Public Education" will be the subject of the national VOR conference to be held on Monday, October 17, from 9:30 to 4:00, in Washington, D.C., at the National Education Association headquarters. Dr. Sol Gordon, professor of Child and Family Studies at Syracuse University and a member of the VOR executive committee, will be the featured speaker. His topic will be "The Case for a Moral Education in the Schools." The program will also include presentations by Dr. Jeanne Pietig, professor of Philosophy of Education at the University of Virginia, Dorothy Massie of the Human and Civil Rights office of the National Education Association, Rabbi Kenneth Block, Sister Regina Coll, Prof. James Skillen, and other educational and religious experts.

For information or reservations (\$10 per person), contact VOR, P.O. Box 6656, Silver Spring, MD 20906 (phone: 301-598-2447).

The annual VOR board of directors meeting will be held at the end of the October 17 conference.

The Michigan VOR affiliates will sponsor their annual conference on Saturday, October 29, from 9:30 to 4:30, at the University of Michigan Law Quad in Ann Arbor. Featured speakers will be constitutional lawyer Harold Norris on "The Morality of the Constitution" and VOR cofounder Rabbi Sherwin Wine on "Morality and Education." Other speakers will include the Rev. Scott Stephen, Michigan ACLU director Harold Simon, and VOR executive director Edd Doerr.

For information and reservations (\$5, students \$2), contact Voice of Reason, 4008 Michigan Union, Ann Arbor, MI 48109 (phone: 313-663-3757).

Doerr noted that, "though Federal or state agents would not compose official school prayers, school officials could do so, or would at least have to preside over the process whereby transient or permanent community majorities or pluralities would decide what group prayer is to be imposed in the classrooms."

"The 'new, improved' Reagan school prayer amendment," Doerr added, "would still homogenize and trivialize prayer, would thrust the heavy hand of government into the sacred area of religion, and would still generate religious conflict in thousands of communities across the nation."

Observers in Washington believe that having two different school prayer amendments on the Senate floor will reduce the chances of either being passed.

At the Reagan prayer amendment Senate hearings in May, religious and civil liberties experts opposed the proposal. VOR submitted testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee pointing out that government sponsored school prayer could not avoid violating the religious liberty of a great many students. "Even an amendment to require a minute of silence for prayer or meditation is not unobjectionable," the VOR statement added, "for it would give preference by law to one mode of religious expression over others, would strongly suggest to students that the state knows best when children should pray or meditate, and would suggest to students that personal voluntary prayer at other times than those chosen by the state is improper."

The VOR statement also noted that the Reagan amendment would force teachers and administrators "to undertake religious functions beyond their normal duties, tasks which will surely be repugnant to many of them."

Senate action on the two prayer amendments is expected this fall.

Con-Con Gains

In May Missouri became the thirty second state to pass a resolution calling on Congress to convoke a national constitutional convention (Con-Con), the first since 1787, when the present U.S. Constitution was drafted. If just two more states pass the resolution, Congress is required by the Constitution to call a new Con-Con.

While the resolutions call specifically for a Con-Con to propose an amendment to the Constitution to require a balanced federal budget, many constitutional experts have warned that, once called, a Con-Con could not be limited to the

specific purpose for which it was ostensibly convened, but could revise the entire Constitution and Bill of Rights. Were a Con-Con to be called, it is probable that a powerful coalition of Radical Right groups would try to dominate the delegate selection process (which would have to be prescribed by Congress) and the Con-Con itself. Their aim would be to amend the Constitution to allow or require government sponsored group prayer in public schools, to permit or mandate tax aid for sectarian private schools, to outlaw abortion, to permit "creationism" to be taught in public schools, to roll back school integration, to halt or slow progress on women's rights, etc.

Con-con supporters are trying to get two more states to pass the resolution from among California, Washington state, Michigan, Massachusetts, New Jersey and New York. The battles are expected to be particularly serious in California and Washington State, where Con-Con backers are seeking to petition onto the ballot resolutions which would force the two state legislatures to pass the Con-Con resolution under the threat of having their pay stopped.

Equal Access

The Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism (sic!) of the Senate Judiciary Committee, chaired by Sen. Jeremiah Denton (R-AL), has held several hearings on bills (mainly S. 1059) to require public schools to give "equal access" to voluntary student religious groups whenever other student groups are allowed to meet in school facilities during the school day.

The bills are a response to the Supreme Court's declining to review federal appellate court rulings against such policies in Texas and New York. The bills would cut off federal funds to school districts which deny equal access to student religious groups.

While a free speech and assembly argument can be made for allowing "equal access," civil liberties and some religious groups maintain that a public school is not a public forum and that exclusion of religious clubs is justified by the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. Opponents of the bills have also said that personal religious activities of students are permitted, as is the objective, neutral study of religion in appropriate classes. Opponents also say that elementary student groups could not function without the presence of a teacher, which would be an impermissible involvement of the public school with religion.

In a statement to the Judiciary Com-

mittee in May, VOR executive director Edd Doerr pointed out that the bills were too loosely drawn to prevent proselytizing in the schools by adults, that the bills could open the door to aggressive missionary activity in the schools, turning schools into arenas for sectarian competition, and that they could lead to sectarian divisions in schools among students and teachers. Doerr urged the Committee to allow local school districts to deal with perceived equal access problems in their own ways, subject to judicial review.

Legislative Chaplains

On July 5 the Supreme Court overturned by a 6-3 vote a lower federal court ruling that a state legislature's appointing a chaplain to open legislative sessions with prayer and appropriating public funds to pay him violates the First Amendment. Writing the opinion, Chief Justice Burger said that the practice "is simply a tolerable acknowledgement of beliefs widely held among the people of this country" and that it antedates the passing of the First Amendment.

In dissent, Justice Brennan said that "Legislative prayer clearly violates the principles of neutrality and separation that are embedded" in the First Amendment. Brennan noted that a correct ruling would have unleashed a "furious reaction," apparently because it would also have set the stage for Madelyn Murray O'Hair to win her suit against the congressional chaplaincy.

Also in dissent, Justice Stevens noted that in the Nebraska case before the Court a single chaplain had been in office for 18 years, plainly "the preference of one faith over another" in violation of the Constitution."

VOR in Action

VOR executive director Edd Doerr spoke on "Will Religious Liberty Survive the 1980s?" at the New York Society for Ethical Culture on May 15. Copies of the address are available for \$1 each (includes postage) from VOR, P.O. Box 6656, Silver Spring, MD 20906. He also appeared on a panel on church-state problems at the ACLU's Biennial conference in Washington in June.

Doerr's radio and TV appearances in recent months included: appearing opposite Jerry Falwell on WDVM-TV in Washington on May 19; on the Fred Fiske Show on WAMU-FM in Washington on

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VOR in Action, *continued*

June 24 and August 22, the second time in a two-hour debate with former Reagan administration lawyer and Radical Right author Peter Ferrara; on the Dave Baum Show on August 1 on WIND in Chicago in a debate with Moral Majority national secretary Greg Dixon; on the Susan Bray Show on WWDB-FM in Philadelphia on August 19.

In April and May Doerr presented statements to the Senate Finance Committee on the Reagan tuition tax credit parochial aid bill, S. 528, and to the Senate Judiciary Committee on the Reagan school group prayer amendment, S.J. Res. 73, on the anti-abortion amendment, S.J. Res. 3, and on several bills to provide student religious groups "equal access" to public school facilities.

VOR member Harlan Rainey testified before the Maryland House Constitutional and Administrative Law Committee in favor of a bill to withdraw Maryland's resolution calling for a national Con-Con. Action on the measure has been deferred until 1984.

Resources

Available from VOR, P.O. Box 6656, Silver Spring, MD 20906

American Freedom and the Radical Right, by VOR cofounder Edward L. Ericson. An excellent guide to the aims and methods of the movement bent on "piecemeal repeal of the Bill of Rights." \$4.95 plus \$1 for postage and handling.

Pamphlets:

"Tuition Tax Credits: Threat to Religious Liberty and Public Education."

"Prayer and the Public Schools."

"A New Constitutional Convention: Threat to the Bill of Rights."

"Creationism, Evolution, and the Public Schools."

10 for \$1, 75 for \$5. Titles may be mixed.

"Will Religious Liberty Survive the 1980s?"

Address by VOR executive director Edd Doerr. \$1 each includes postage and handling.

"Who Speaks for the Real America?"

VOR's basic introductory brochure. Single copies free, 20 for \$1.

Available from VOR, P.O. Box 16, Franklin, MI 48025

"Sex Education vs. the New Right," audio cassette of Dr. Sol Gordon's address to the Oakland County, MI VOR chapter last October. \$10 each, includes postage and handling.

News Briefs

- Three Rhode Island school districts have appealed to the Supreme Court to reverse an appellate ruling requiring them to bus parochial school students across public school district lines. Interdistrict parochial busing, the districts contend, costs more than intradistrict public school busing.

- The Reagan administration has asked the Supreme Court to allow local government to sponsor nativity scenes at Christmas time. The administration filed an *amicus* brief with the Court in June in a case challenging sponsorship of a creche by the city of Pawtucket, Rhode Island. The ACLU suit will be argued before the Court on October 4. Supporting the ACLU challenge in *Lynch v. Donnelly* are the National Council of Churches, the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress, and the Anti-Defamation League.

- The Rhode Island affiliates of the American Civil Liberties Union and the National Education Association, plus 12 local taxpayers, filed suit in federal court on July 11 to test the constitutionality of certain federal aids to parochial schools. About a fifth of the state's \$1.8 million Chapter 2 block grant aid goes to parochial schools. ACLU state director Steven Brown says that some of the aid is used in ways the Supreme Court has held unconstitutional, such as for the purchase of audio-visual equipment.

- A California parochial group calling itself Parents Choose Quality Education is preparing to try to get a voucher plan initiative on the November 1984 ballot in that state. The plan would provide \$1,850 per student to parochial and private schools.

A similar voucher plan failed to gather enough voters' signatures to get on the California ballot in the late 1970s.

- Sen. Jesse Helms and the Rev. Jerry Falwell announced in July that they would try to register 200,000 conservative Christian voters in North Carolina. Helms is regarded as trailing behind a possible opponent next year, Gov. Jim Hunt. Falwell said he hopes to register two million voters in a nationwide drive.

- Bible classes in Bristol, Virginia, public school fourth and fifth grades were ruled unconstitutional by a federal district court on July 29. The suit had been brought by the ACLU of Virginia and a Methodist couple. VOR contributed to the suit's expenses. Judge Jackson L. Kiser found that the classes were religious in nature, run by private religious groups, and that children were subject to pressure to attend. While ruling the classes unconstitutional, Kiser held that the schools themselves could offer classes about the Bible if they are objective and neutral, totally controlled by the school board, and optional.

- Radical Right censorship in Texas public school textbooks suffered a setback in August when the state board of education voted to allow proponents as well as critics of particular texts to comment on proposed textbook adoptions. Because Texas is one of the largest consumers of textbooks, its censors have influenced publishers to modify books used all over the country, usually in ways favorable to fundamentalist and Radical Right interests.

THE VOICE OF REASON

P.O. Box 6656, Silver Spring, MD 20906

YES, I want to do my part to help The Voice of Reason halt the threats to religious, intellectual, and personal freedom. I enclose a check for my tax-deductible contribution of:

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