



VOICE OF REASON

Fall 1986

The Newsletter of Americans for Religious Liberty

No. 21

Robertson's Run for the Presidency

Rev. Marion G. ("Pat") Robertson is off and running for the 1988 Republican Party nomination for the presidency of the United States. Speaking on September 17 to 3,000 wildly cheering followers at Constitution Hall near the White House in Washington, D.C., and by closed circuit TV to an estimated 140,000 to 180,000 followers in 216 other halls around the country, Robertson declared that, "If by September 17, 1987, one year from today, three million registered voters have signed petitions telling me that they will pray—that they will work—that they will give toward my election, then I will run as a candidate for the nomination of the Republican Party for the office of President of the United States of America."

Immediately before this announcement, Robertson said that, "deep in my heart I know God's will for me in this crucial decision." Since Robertson and nearly everyone else knows that his getting three million signatures will be easy, it seems obvious that Robertson is saying that he knows it is "God's will" that he run for president. And if a candidate and/or his followers believe that he is divinely anointed, then they probably would believe that a vote against the candidate would be an affront to the deity.

Significantly, Robertson was introduced at the Constitution Hall rally by Harald Bredesen, whose name is not exactly a household word. Bredesen is a self-described "evangelical-charismatic." According to a 1984 campaign biography of Ronald

Reagan, *Reagan Inside Out*, by Bob Slosser, executive vice-president of Robertson's Christian Broadcasting Network, Bredesen was one of seven people, including Ronald and Nancy Reagan, present at a home in Sacramento in October 1970, when someone, either Bredesen or singer Pat Boone, suggested that they

join hands and pray. According to Slosser, the "Holy Spirit came upon" evangelist George Otis, who had been praying aloud, and Otis called Reagan "my son" and said, "If you walk uprightly before Me, you will reside at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue" (the White House).

Robertson's speech was nothing new. He declared that, "we have permitted during the past 25 years an assault on our faith and values that would have been unthinkable to past generations. We have taken the Holy Bible from our young and replaced it with the thoughts of Charles Darwin, Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, and John Dewey."

The Virginia evangelist attacked the Supreme Court's rulings upholding church-state separation as a "scandal," charged that our schools are teaching children "if it feels good do it," and insisted that, "for our

children's and grandchildren's sake we must insure that control of education is returned to their parents and caring teachers in local communities, and taken away from a powerful union with leftist tendencies . . . We must bring God back to the classrooms of America." He denounced "illegitimate pregnancies" (though he is opposed to abortion), opposed "mob supported drugs and



Five States Face Church-State Referenda

Voters in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Arkansas, South Dakota, and Oregon will decide church-state issues in six statewide referenda on November 4.

In Massachusetts, an unprecedented political campaign by Catholic Church leaders got the state legislature to put two proposed state constitutional amendments on the ballot. Question 1, if approved by voters, would give the legislature power to prohibit all abortions except those required to save a woman's life. Question 1 would also eliminate all public funding of abortions for poor women, prohibit private insurance coverage for abortions, and regulate facilities which provide safe medical care for abortion. The almost total prohibition could go into effect if the Rehnquist Supreme Court ever overturns the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* ruling which acknowledged that free choice on abortions is constitutionally protected.

Question 2 in Massachusetts would, if passed, remove from the state constitution the language which prohibits tax aid for sectarian private schools. It would also authorize almost any level or kind of tax support for religious schools, from a \$2 million per year textbook loan program to an \$88 million per year full-support voucher plan. Massachusetts already provides parochial schools with transportation subsidies, health services, and evaluations for special needs students, while the state ranks rather low in funding public education.

Catholic Church pressure manipulated by Cardinal Bernard Law got the legislature to pass the two proposed amendments. Parochial lobby leaders are trying to portray the state constitution's ban on tax aid for church schools as an anti-Catholic measure, yet the anti-aid section of the constitution was over-

(continued on page 2)

Robertson's Run for the Presidency

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pornography," denounced waste in government and urged support for "brave freedom fighters in Angola, in Afghanistan, in Mozambique, in Nicaragua."

Robertson's coyness in delaying his formal candidacy for a year is dictated by very practical considerations. If he announced formally now, he could no longer use his daily "700 Club" talk show to promote himself and his ideas without giving equal time to other candidates. He has, however, resigned as host of the "700 Club" to have more time for campaigning, though he will continue to appear on the TV show as a commentator.

Many political observers dismiss Robertson's candidacy as doomed to failure, citing his largely negative ratings among voters. Yet he is certainly in better shape for running than George McGovern in 1970 or Jimmy Carter in 1974. Robertson heads a \$230 million per year communications empire. His "700 Club" reaches an audience estimated at 16.3 million by the A.C. Nielsen Company.

In addition, Robertson has picked up endorsements from influential ultra-conservative religious leaders, including evangelists Jimmy Swaggart, Oral Roberts, and Rex Humbard, Adrian Rogers, president of the 14 million member Southern Baptist Convention, Charles Stanley and Jimmy Draper, the two immediate past presidents of the Southern Baptist Convention, and Beverly LaHaye, head of Concerned Women of America and wife of Tim LaHaye, head of the powerful American Coalition for Traditional Values. Jerry Falwell, while staying with his endorsement of George Bush, has told Robertson that he will support him if he is nominated and that he did not plan to campaign actively for Bush.

Robertson should have little difficulty raising the kind of money needed for a presidential campaign. While the 217 September rallies cost somewhere between \$800,000 and \$3 million, Robertson urged the 140,000 to 180,000 attendees to contribute \$100 or more to his campaign. The rallies are expected to produce \$5 million to \$10 million. And this is nowhere near the amount he is capable of bringing in. Even before his September 17 speech, Robertson sent out petitions for voter signatures and urged recipients to "mail it along with your tax-credit contribution of \$100 today."

It is too early to predict what will happen on Pat Robertson's odyssey toward the White House, but it is to be hoped that his campaign will cause a lot of Americans to think hard about their liberties, politics, government, and their duties as citizens.

Church-State Referenda, continued from page 1

whelmingly supported by Catholic lawmakers when it was approved in 1917. In 1982 Massachusetts voters defeated by 62% to 38% a similar proposal to allow state aid to parochial schools.

Questions 1 and 2 are being opposed by two separate coalitions, respectively, the Campaign for Choice (76 Summer St., Boston, MA 02110) and Citizens for Public Schools (72 Franklin St., Suite 402, Boston, MA 02110). Americans for Religious Liberty is a member of both coalitions, and of the coalitions in the other four states with church-state referenda in November.

In neighboring Rhode Island, ballot question 14 would define personhood as beginning at conception and thus outlaw all abortions for all reasons, including saving a woman's life and in cases of pregnancy resulting from rape or incest. Opposing the proposed amendment is Stop 14 Campaign (212 Union St., Providence, RI 02903).

The Arkansas amendment would define personhood as beginning at conception and would halt all public funding for abortions for poor women except when a woman's life is in danger. There would be no exception for cases of rape or incest. The amendment is opposed by Planned Parenthood of Greater Arkansas (209 W. Capital Ave., Suite 318, Little Rock, AR 72201).

The Oregon amendment, Ballot Measure 6, would bar public funding of abortions except to prevent the death of a woman. There would be no exception for rape or incest. Measure 6 is opposed by Taxpayers for Choice (c/o Oregon NARAL, 408 SW 2nd, Suite 527, Portland, OR 97204).

In South Dakota the proposed amendment would allow the state to provide textbooks to sectarian private schools. The amendment is aimed at overturning a recent state supreme court ruling that a state textbook loan law violated the state constitution. Opposing the measure is the South Dakota Committee for Public Education and Religious Liberty (c/o Marvin Bailin, 509 South Dakota Ave., Sioux Falls, SD 57102).

In all six referenda the aim of the amendments' proponents is either to secure public funding for sectarian private schools or to impose on all citizens of each state a sectarian theological position on the question of when personhood begins and whether women have freedom of conscience in dealing with problem pregnancies.

Since 1967 parochial aid has been defeated in every statewide referendum (New York, Massachusetts, Maryland, District of Columbia, Michigan, Nebraska, Missouri, Idaho, California, Oregon, Washington, Alaska), while the referenda on abortion have had mixed results.

Voice of Reason is the quarterly newsletter of **Americans for Religious Liberty** (formerly **The Voice of Reason**), P.O. Box 6656, Silver Spring, MD 20906. (Telephone 301-598-2447). The newsletter is sent to all contributors to ARL.

Editor: Edd Doerr Associate Editor: Maury C. Abraham

Americans for Religious Liberty 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 its purposes. Annual dues are \$20 for individuals; \$25 for families; \$10 for students and limited income.

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Books, Etc.

The Handmaid's Tale, by Margaret Atwood (Houghton Mifflin, 311 pp., \$16.95), is a chilling, engrossing companion novel to Orwell's 1984. Atwood's dystopia, the Republic of Gilead in what was once the United States, is the kind of grim, sexist, theocratic totalitarian society that many observers believe could come about if some of the wackier Radical Right gurus have their way. A good read, but not a pleasant one.

Religion and the U.S. Presidency: A Bibliography, by Albert J. Menendez (Garland Publishing Co., N.Y., 142 pp., \$25), is an

excellent, thorough guide for anyone interested in what all American presidents have said and done with regard to religion.

Family Planning Under Siege (produced by the Population Crisis Committee, 1120 Nineteenth St. NW, Suite 550, Washington, DC 20036, 59 minute audio cassette, \$3) is a superb radio documentary on the worldwide population problem. The tape includes interviews with leading population experts and shows how the Vatican-led anti-abortion lobby has succeeded in getting the Reagan administration to withhold U.S. government support for family planning programs, even though they have nothing to do with abortion.

Newsbriefs

Parochial Update

The American Civil Liberties Union of Rhode Island has won an out-of-court settlement in its challenge to the 21-year-old Chapter 2 federal aid program which provides educational equipment to both public and parochial schools. Under the consent agreement, which still has to be approved by federal judge Francis Boyle, the state and federal education departments would cease providing parochial schools with computers, film projectors, video cassette recorders, and other equipment which could be used for teaching religion. Church-state separation groups have been working for twenty years to get a proper court test of this program of federal aid to church schools.

Although the New York City Board of Education was ordered by the Supreme Court in July 1985 to stop sending public teachers into sectarian private schools, the Board has continued to try to find ways to circumvent the ruling. Some of the supposedly "neutral" sites for providing remedial services to eligible students have turned out to be church rectories, religious schools, and other religious buildings. In addition, \$7 million per year is being spent on mobile vans parked next to parochial schools, which keep children segregated by religion and sometimes by sex and which costs three times as much as educating the children in public schools. Sectarian school officials and parents are strongly resisting having their children go to public schools for remedial education.

The New York state legislature has also circumvented the ruling by voting \$10 million in state funds for parochial schools, in violation of both the state and federal constitutions.

In a related matter, the local school board in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn physically blocked off a section of Public School 16 so that girls from an Orthodox Jewish day school could be segregated from "boys and goys." The move displaced 70 handicapped public school students, most of them Hispanic. Public school parents protested until they were promised that the handicapped public students would not be bussed to other locations.

New York City and Catholic Church officials have met to try to get federal aid to Catholic schools through third-party contractors. Lawyers for the city turned down the plan, but the city has asked the U.S. Department of Education to mount a third-party contractor pilot project.

In Orange County, New York, the Hasidic Orthodox Jewish sect is demanding that local public schools use only male drivers to bus their male children to parochial schools. In 1984 a labor arbitrator held that the public schools could not discriminate against female bus drivers in assigning routes.

In other action, Sen. Daniel P. Moynihan (D-NY), a key sponsor and advocate of the tuition tax credit plan for federal aid to sectarian schools, has come out in favor of the voucher plan to do the same thing.

In October the U.S. Department of Education reluctantly declined to set up an "emergency voucher plan" for parochial students whose parents

don't want them to receive remedial education in local public schools. The Supreme Court ruled in 1985 in *Aguilar v. Felton* that the First Amendment prohibits sending public school teachers into sectarian private schools.

Reproductive Rights Update

Federal district judge Joyce Hens Green in Washington, D.C., ruled on September 19 that Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington could not be excluded from the Combined Federal Campaign, a united giving program for federal employees. The exclusion was part of the Reagan administration's campaign against family planning.

The U.S. Agency for International Development has withheld \$25 million designated for the United Nations Fund for Population Activities. According to the Population Crisis Committee, the administration move was intended to "dismantle our family planning program to keep happy a small but noisy anti-family-planning constituency at home."

In another Reagan administration move, Health and Human Services Deputy Assistant Secretary Jo Ann Gasper, a Radical Right activist, announced on September 17 that the department will drop a requirement that federally funded (\$142.5 million per year) family planning clinics tell women that abortion is an option for handling problem pregnancies. The administration action had been urged by Radical Right leaders in Congress and elsewhere after Congress refused to take such action.

The U.S. Senate has been forced to drop a provision to restore Medicaid funding for abortions for rape and incest victims in order to prevent anti-choice amendments and other mischief by anti-choice senators.

Radical Right senators tried again this year to amend the District of Columbia appropriations bill to forbid the city from using its own funds to pay for Medicaid abortions.

Sen. Gordon Humphrey (R-NH) continues to try to get Congress to pass legislation to deny tax-deductible status to hospitals, social service agencies, medical schools, philanthropic groups, and religious bodies which finance, provide, and provide facilities for abortions.

DuPont Announces

Former Delaware governor Pierre S. duPont announced his bid for the 1988 Republican presidential nomination on September 16. Making a pitch for Radical Right votes, duPont said he supported a voucher plan for federal tax aid to sectarian private schools, government sponsored group prayer in public schools, and the overturning of the Supreme Court's 1973 ruling acknowledging a constitutional right to choose abortion.

In the Press

Letters to the editor by ARL staff and members appear regularly in the press around the country. The following are recent examples from the *Denver Post*, the *Dayton Daily News*, and the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*.

The Denver Post, September 14, 1986

In his August 24 column, former Moral Majority official Cal Thomas put forth a great deal of misinformation about the evolution-creationism controversy.

The scientific community is not "afraid of a fight," as Thomas claims. Scientists wish that the "creationists" could produce some data to shed doubt on evolution, but the "creationists" refuse to do so. What the creationists want to do is get equal time for their discredited notions (a universe less than 10,000 years old, sudden creation out of nothing of existing "kinds" of plants and animals, no organic relation between humans and lower animals, the fossil record laid down by a single world-wide flood, etc.) in public school classrooms. Lower federal courts consistently have held that "creationism" is a religious doctrine held by some fundamentalist Christians, but rejected by mainstream Christians and Jews and by nearly all scientists.

If, as is most unlikely, the creationists win their case in the Supreme Court, then all public school science and history textbooks will have to be rewritten to give "equal treatment" to religious doctrines unacceptable to nearly all scientists. American science education, already weaker than that in Europe, Japan, and the Soviet bloc, will deteriorate further and place our economic and national security at considerable risk.

As a "moral majoritarian" fundamentalist himself, Cal Thomas is using his column to promote fundamentalist ideology and goals.

The content of public school classes should not be determined by opinion polls. The public, through elected school boards, decides which subjects shall be taught, but the content of those subjects is to be decided by the professionals competent in the particular disciplines.

Edd Doerr, Executive Director
Americans for Religious Liberty

The Dayton Daily News, July 29, 1986

A recent letter writer who wrote a long letter about family planning and accused [cartoonist] Mike Peters of slandering traditional religious institutions generated far more heat than light.

While some family-planning pioneers long ago may have held racist views, as did most Americans during Margaret Sanger's early days, this is no longer the case. Supporters of family planning and reproductive rights today are interested in seeing that all births are intended or wanted. They also support the constitutional/legal right of all women to choose whether to become mothers, whether the choice is implemented through contraception, abortion, sterilization, or abstinence.

Supporters of reproductive freedom and freedom of conscience agree

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with the letter writer that it is intolerable for citizens of a liberal democracy to challenge the fundamental right of parents to decide for themselves how many children they can and should have.

Yet it is the letter writer's church, the self-styled "moral majoritarians," and the Reagan administration who are campaigning to have government limit the reproductive rights of women.

Of course, not all religious bodies are, in effect, promoting "unplanned parenthood," but some are. Fortunately, a good many religious bodies, representing Catholics, Protestants, Jews and others, support reproductive choice. There is even a national Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights, with more than 30 religious groups representing all the major faith groups.

The letter writer also has a warped view of freedom of the press, as guaranteed by the First Amendment. Freedom of the press means Mike Peters, the *Dayton Daily News* and others have the right to express themselves as they please, subject only to their own consciences and libel laws. The press has the right to publish what it will, whether the letter writer and his organization are pleased with it or not.

Edd Doerr, Executive Director
Americans for Religious Liberty

The Cleveland Plain Dealer, February 26, 1986

James Kilpatrick misses the point once more ("Religious non-religion in the schools," February 19). Separation of church and state requires the public schools to be religiously neutral, which means that they may not take sides for or against religion, either generally or particularly. Respect for religious differences demands this neutrality in the schools that are open to all children.

The absence of teaching the existence of God does not equate with teaching the non-existence of God. It simply leaves this private and special part of a child's life in the family, where it belongs.

Anne W. Lindsay
Cleveland Heights

(Ms. Lindsay is immediate past president of Americans for Religious Liberty.)

(To our readers: We would appreciate receiving clippings of letters you may have had published, and also of news articles, editorials, columns, and letters dealing with our concerns.)

Editorials

Robertson is Wrong

In an interview with *U.S. News and World Report* in July, presidential aspirant Pat Robertson stated, "I believe in freedom for all people, and I would never see the power of the sword—the secular state—being used to enforce spiritual values on people."

Robertson may be so busy campaigning that he has either forgotten his own words or he has forgotten one of the Ten Commandments, the one about not bearing false witness.

The Virginia preacher advocates that government sponsor and regiment group prayer in public schools. He favors taxing all citizens for the support of sectarian private schools. He insists that women be denied freedom of conscience on abortion and that the Bible relegates women to subordinate status to men (he and most preachers are men, of course). In Alabama a Robertson organization is supporting a federal lawsuit seeking to censor and rewrite public school textbooks.

If school prayer, parochialism, mandatory motherhood, and sectarian censorship are not instances of using the power of the state "to enforce spiritual values on people," and rather narrow sectarian values at that, then we are closer to Orwell's dystopia than we thought. If Robertson wants to convert our democratic republic into a theocracy, he should have the decency to state his intention openly and to propose constitutional amendments to repeal the First Amendment and the Fourteenth Amendment and to establish his religion.

What Robertson wants to do is hijack the ship of state and take it back to the Middle Ages.

Pot and Kettle

Education Secretary William Bennett has criticized Pat Robertson for engaging in "invidious sectarianism" by suggesting that Christians (presumably under Robertson's narrow definition) "feel more strongly" about "patriotism, love of God, love of country, support of traditional family" than other Americans.

Robertson certainly is guilty of "invidious sectarianism." In a campaign letter after his success in lining up precinct delegates in Michigan earlier this year, he wrote, "The Christians have won! What a breakthrough for the Kingdom!" And he has used his "700 Club" talk show to assail religions he doesn't like.

But Secretary Bennett is also guilty of "invidious sectarianism." He has strongly advocated federal tax aid for the private schools operated by his own and other churches. At a conference in Washington last spring, in response to a question by ARL's Edd Doerr, he said that the forms of discrimination in hiring and admissions common in sectarian private schools should be no bar to their receiving tax support. Bennett has also advocated government sponsored and government regimented group prayer in public schools. And he has staffed the Department of Education with Radical Right types who share these views.

Bennett's criticism of Robertson is a case of the pot calling the kettle black.

Resources

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

Religion, the State and the Burger Court, by Leo Pfeffer. A comprehensive up-to-date examination of the whole range of church-state issues by the dean of constitutional authorities on religious liberty. An indispensable resource for layperson and lawyer alike. (\$22.95 plus \$2 for postage and handling.)

James Madison on Religious Liberty, edited by Robert S. Alley. Madison's own writings plus authoritative essays analyzing their importance. (\$20.95 plus \$2 for postage and handling.)

Our Right to Choose: Toward a New Ethic of Abortion, by Beverly Wildung Harrison. A brilliant treatment of our culture's attitudes toward women, religion, law, and medicine by a noted theologian. (\$9.95 plus \$1 for postage and handling.)

American Freedom and the Radical Right, by ARL co-founder 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.)

A Delicate Balance: Church, State, and the Schools, by Martha M. McCarthy. A concise summary of Supreme Court and lower court rulings on religion in public education, government aid to religious schools, religious exemptions from public school curriculum, and governmental regulation of parochial schools. (\$6 plus \$1 for postage and handling.)

Science and Creationism. The National Academy of Sciences' statement on the important school controversy. (\$4 plus \$1 for postage and handling.)

Crusade of the Credulous, by William J. Bennetta. A collection of articles about "creationism" and the effects of that fundamentalist movement on public education. (\$2 plus \$1 for postage and handling.)

Strange Priorities

Two of the country's largest chains of convenience stores have stopped selling *Playboy*, *Penthouse*, and other "men's" magazines, even though the magazines had been kept behind the counter with their covers covered up.

Yet the same stores continue to sell on open shelves both smoking and smokeless tobacco products, even though these products are known to cause a variety of forms of cancer and other diseases.

According to the calculus of the chain owners and the "moral majoritarian" pressure groups which influenced them to drop the magazines, allowing adults to view pictures of unclad young women and to read material offensive to puritanical busybodies, who are under no obligation to see or read sexually explicit material, is much more dangerous to the nation than the ready availability to adults and minors of addictive substances known to kill people.

And the people who have these strange priorities are determined to have a president, a judicial system, and a Congress who share them.

Falwell's Taxes, and Swaggart's

The Lynchburg, VA, city council voted 5-2 on September 25 to forgive \$1.4 million in back taxes and to exempt at least \$288,194 annually in real estate taxes on \$25.7 million worth of Rev. Jerry Falwell's local properties. The city council action is only advisory, however, as the state legislature would have to approve the deal. Vice Mayor M. W. Thornhill criticized the council decision as "putting the Rev. Jerry Falwell on welfare."

Falwell, whose Old Time Gospel Hour-Liberty University-Moral Majority-Thomas Road Baptist Church empire has an estimated annual income of about \$100 million, left the widespread impression that he might relocate much of his operation to Atlanta if the city and the state did not accede to his demands. Some local leaders feared that a Falwell pullout would hurt Lynchburg economically, while others believe that Falwell is only bluffing, that moving to Atlanta would ultimately cost more than paying the taxes in Virginia.

Nathanael Habel, a retired Lynchburg Baptist minister and public school principal, is urging concerned Virginians to write their state senators and delegates to oppose the special tax break for Falwell.

In other action, San Diego, CA, superior court judge Jack Levitt ruled in September that the state of California could collect sales taxes on items sold through TV evangelist Jimmy Swaggart's ministry. Swaggart had sued the state seeking reimbursement of \$185,167 in sales taxes, collected on books and tapes sold in California by the Jimmy Swaggart Ministries. Levitt also ordered Swaggart to pay court costs. According to a 1981 tax return, the Jimmy Swaggart Ministries took in \$38 million in donations from TV viewers and sales of sermon transcripts, tapes, and Bibles.

Letters

Mr. Edd Doerr
Americans for Religious Liberty

Dear Edd:

The students of the Washington Justice Semester and I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank you again for your excellent presentation on Wednesday, September 17. The information the students gained concerning numerous civil liberties issues ranging from church-state separation to support in Nicaragua will be very beneficial to their understanding of a peaceful co-existence if we can have one. During the next class meeting, the students, en masse, expressed their delight in having you as a speaker and strongly recommended that you be asked again for future Washington Semesters. They especially liked your presentation style and the mixture of serious content and humor. They feel they gained many insights into the topics, and I believe they will use the information to better understand the complexities of justice in their future readings and courses.

Again, we wish to thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to address us. The impression you made on the students was tremendous, and they will not soon forget the experience.

Sincerely,

Dr. James M. Moneymaker
Academic Director
Washington Justice Seminar
The American University
Washington, D.C.

MOVING?

Send both old and new addresses, with both old and new zip codes, to ARL, P.O. Box 6656, Silver Spring, MD 20906.

Miscellaneous

President Reagan will appoint Frank Shakespeare, current U.S. ambassador to Portugal, to succeed William Wilson as U.S. ambassador to the Holy See. ARL executive director Edd Doerr and several ARL board members are plaintiffs in the lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of this unprecedented government link with a church. The suit is currently on appeal to the Supreme Court.

A federal district court in Atlanta ruled on September 24 that Douglas County High School may not hold pregame prayers at football games or other athletic events.

The Colorado supreme court, ending a seven-year controversy, ruled in September that a life-size Nativity scene on the steps of the Denver City-County Building violates neither the state nor federal constitutions, on the ground, following an earlier U.S. Supreme Court precedent in a Rhode Island case, that the creche was accompanied by a display which included Santa Claus, reindeer, elves, penguins, and thousands of lights. The court disregarded testimony from Jewish, Muslim, and other religious leaders that the display on public property prefers one religion over others.

The ACLU and fifteen Episcopalian, Unitarian Universalist, Jewish, Catholic, Quaker, Buddhist, United Church of Christ, and Lutheran plaintiffs filed suit in July in federal court in Hawaii seeking removal of a 65-foot-high illuminated cross at Camp Smith, a Marine base. Although camp commander Col. Gene Castagnetti, on advice from the Navy judge advocate general, ordered the cross removed in May, Marine Corps commandant Gen. Paul X. Kelley ordered it to remain as a "nonsectarian symbol."

Christian Voice, a Radical Right political group, will have distributed by November 4 up to eight million copies of its "Biblical Scoreboards," which rate some 3,000 candidates for Congress and some state offices. According to Christian Voice's rating system, a "pro-Biblical" position requires support for a balanced budget amendment, an amendment to ban abortion, and the death penalty. The "pro-Biblical" position also requires opposition to public financing of family planning and "comparable worth" compensation for female employees.

William Lewis and six of his subordinates in the House of Judah sect in western Michigan were convicted in September in Grand Rapids of enslaving children and beating to death a 12-year-old boy. Lewis and the other sect members, who could receive life sentences, were allowed to remain free on bond until sentencing.

Americans for Religious Liberty

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