



VOICE OF REASON

The Newsletter of Americans for Religious Liberty

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School Prayer Amendment Fails

The school prayer constitutional amendment proposed by Oklahoma Republican Ernest Istook and 150 cosponsors failed to win House approval by 61 votes on June 4. The misnamed Religious Freedom Amendment (HJR 78) received 224 votes, with 203 opposed, but needed to secure a two-thirds vote, as required by the Constitution for all amendments. Significantly, the Istook amendment garnered the votes of only 52.4% of House members, in contrast to the nearly 60% a similar amendment got in 1971, the last time the House voted on such an amendment. And this in spite of Republican control of the House and intense pressure from the Religious Right.

This hotly-contested proposal bitterly divided the Congress, and partisan polarization was extraordinary. Fully 88% of Republicans supported the Istook amendment while 87% of Democrats opposed it. (Also opposed was Vermont's feisty Independent, Bernie Sanders.)

The Istook amendment had been simmering for three years, going through several manifestations and emerging finally as a deeply flawed constitutional change that would have replaced the First Amendment's ban on acts concerning religious establishment with an 86-word statement which would have added the word "God" to the Constitution for the first time in history and would have legalized various forms of religious activities in public schools, courthouses, and buildings. It would have authorized tax aid to sectarian schools and other religious enterprises. It would both symbolically and substantially have moved the United States toward multiple or single establishments by majoritarian religion -- a decisive departure from more than two

centuries of constitutional law once thought settled.

The debate was spirited and often emotional. Proponents, mainly Istook himself, an Oklahoma Mormon who attended a Southern Baptist university, paraded a list of largely unsubstantiated horror stories alleging religious discrimination against evangelical Christian children in public schools. While some of the incidents were undoubtedly genuine, all could have been -- or were in fact -- settled by simple phone calls to proper authorities and hardly required a massive constitutional change that would have altered the Bill of Rights for the first time in over two centuries.

Opponents, led by 60 major religious groups and including Americans for Religious Liberty, denounced the proposal as dangerous to democracy, harmful to full religious freedom for all U.S. citizens, and patently unnecessary. Texas Democrat Chet Edwards, aided by Virginia Democrat Robert Scott, proved to be an eloquent spokesperson for the anti-Istook forces, reminding fellow members that "the Bill of Rights

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Chet Edwards (D-TX)



Robert Scott (D-VA)

Wisconsin's Voucher Green Light

On June 10 the Wisconsin Supreme Court, reversing a lower court decision, ruled 4-2 that Milwaukee's school voucher plan violates neither the state constitution nor the U.S. First Amendment. The ruling sets the stage for a major confrontation at the U.S. Supreme Court, one that could have the most profound effects on the future of public education, religious liberty, social harmony, and the economy.

The Wisconsin case, *Jackson v. Benson*, pitted parents, teachers, administrators, and civil liberties and civil rights organizations against a coalition of Religious Right and pro-voucher groups.

A reading of the 45-page ruling shows that the Wisconsin court glossed over the plain intent of the state constitution's establishment clause and trumped the relevant U.S. Supreme Court rulings with subsequent minor dilutions of sound 1970s decisions. Given the present make-up of the U.S. Supreme Court, it is not possible to predict what will happen to the Wisconsin case on appeal. Whatever the Court decides, most state consti-

tutions still provide strong barriers against diversion of public funds to sectarian schools.

Then, too, whatever the Supreme Court decides, the strong public policy objections to voucher plans remain and will be unaffected by any court ruling.

The Wisconsin Supreme Court naively made much of the *continued on page 2*

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facts that Milwaukee parents do not have to choose a particular sectarian school for their eligible children and that parents may opt their children out of participation in religious activities in voucher schools. But this ignores the fact that denominational private schools tend to the pervasively sectarian, to pervade the whole curriculum with a particular denominational slant. Duane Miller, principal of a Lutheran school in Milwaukee, expressed concern about the opt-out feature of the voucher plan and said that opt-out would defeat the purpose of going to a religious school. "That means they would be opting out of every class that we have."

Another concern was voiced by Milwaukee school superintendent Alan S. Brown, who says his district stands to lose as much as \$100 million per year. "State aid to Milwaukee Public Schools will be reduced in order to pay tuition for children who have never been in Milwaukee Public Schools to continue their education in private and religious schools. . . . This is no solution to improving the quality of public education in our city and the nation."

Another concern was articulated by Brad Adams of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. "Private schools are virtually unregulated," he said. Unlike public schools, Adams added, the religious schools have no state requirement to run background checks on teachers and other employees. "You could have a convicted felon. They [teachers] could be high school dropouts."

Still another concern is that Milwaukee's voucher-aided private schools, unlike public schools, do not have to admit special education students and have no programs for them.

Nor does the Milwaukee voucher plan bar discrimination against teachers in ways unthinkable in public schools. In Cortlandt Manor, New York, this past spring Catholic parochial school teacher Jeanne Hearty was fired because she married a divorced Episcopalian. It could also happen in Milwaukee.

Voucher promoters spread the message that private voucher schools provide better education than public schools, but the empirical data do not support that view. Professor Cecilia Rouse,

Ultimately, America's answer to intolerance is diversity, the very diversity which our heritage of religious freedom has inspired.

-- Robert Kennedy, *The Pursuit of Power*, 1964

an economist at Princeton, found that students in a school choice program performed better in math but showed no gains in reading. But when she compared the "choice" schools with public schools that had small classes and other enhancements, she found that the public students did as well in math and better in reading.

The Wisconsin voucher case is on its way to the U.S. Supreme Court, but other cases are before courts elsewhere. Ohio's Cleveland voucher plan, similar to Milwaukee's, is set for argument before the Ohio Supreme Court in the fall. In Maine and Vermont the state supreme courts will tackle the issue of whether exclusion of denominational schools from private school tuition plans in districts that do not operate their own schools is constitutional. Arizona's Supreme Court should rule shortly on a peculiar scheme that gives tax credits for donations to scholarship funds for public, private, and religious schools.

The bottom line is that the struggle over vouchers, public education, and church-state separation is reaching a crucial stage. Sectarian special interests are indifferent or hostile to public education and church-state separation. Televangelist and Christian Coalition founder Pat Robertson put it this way, "They say that vouchers would spell the end of public schools in America, to which we say, so what?"

In Philadelphia, meanwhile, Cardinal Anthony Bevilacqua, instead of seeking additional public funding for the public schools that serve the majority of Catholic and other students in his communities, is urging politicians to enact a voucher plan for parochial and private schools.

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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 \$25 for individuals, \$30 for families, \$10 for students and limited income.

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has served America well for 207 years” and has resulted in more genuine freedom of religion than in any other nation.

Defenders of religious liberty might well reflect on the fortuitous circumstance that courageous leaders seem to have emerged in each school prayer debate in the past quarter-century. In 1971 it was an obscure Iowa Republican, Fred Schwengel, and a Catholic priest, Democrat Robert Drinan. In 1984 it was Connecticut Republican Senator Lowell Weicker who marshalled the forces against President Ronald Reagan’s school prayer amendment. In 1998 it was Chet Edwards of the 11th District of Texas. Edwards is already the target of retribution from the Christian Coalition, which has blanketed his district with literature calling for his defeat. Edwards said of these attacks, “I feel comfortable agreeing with James Madison and Thomas Jefferson and all of human history that the best way to ruin religion is to politicize it.”

In the House debate, Sherwood Boehlert of New York, a Republican and a Catholic, had some strong words about the intent of the Istook amendment supporters. He said, “Today, June 4, 1998, will be a good day for religious freedom in the United States because by the end of the day, the so-called ‘Religious Freedom Amendment’ will have been defeated. But it is a shame that we have to go through the exercise of dealing with the proposal at all.

“The Religious Freedom Amendment has nothing to do with acknowledging the power of God, and everything to do with asserting the power of special interest groups that are all too human and flawed. The Religious Freedom Amendment has nothing to do with expanding religious freedom, and everything to do with expanding the opportunities for religious coercion. The Religious Freedom Amendment has nothing to do with praying for people’s betterment, and everything to do with preying on people’s darker instincts – their fear, their prejudice, their lack of knowledge of the state of American law.

“The Religious Freedom Amendment represents a break from an almost 300 year trend of expanding religious liberty in America that dates back at least to Roger Williams’ founding of Rhode Island, and it would violate, for the first time, the sanctity of the First Amendment.

“Perhaps even that would be defensible if we were facing some sort of religious crisis in the United States, but we most decidedly are not. Every study demonstrates that Americans are by far the most religious people in the industrial world, students can voluntarily pray and study scripture in school and other public facilities, religious education at church, parochial schools and home is thriving, the United States remains a beacon and a sanctuary for those seeking religious freedom. Americans are a God-fearing people, there’s no reason to make them fear their Constitution.”

See related article on this page.

Prayer Amendment Vote Reveals Sharp Partisan, Regional and Religious Divisions

by Albert J. Menendez

The June 4, 1998, vote in the U.S. House of Representatives on Rep. Istook’s so-called Religious Freedom Amendment revealed sharp partisan, regional and religious divisions. Political party differences were intense, as 88% of Republicans favored Istook while 87% of Democrats opposed it, a dramatic 76 percentage point difference. The overall tally was 224 to 203 in favor, which fell 61 votes short of the two-thirds requirement for Constitutional amendments.

Regionally, the South, which has much less religious diversity than any other region, was the bastion of support for the school prayer measure. Members from the 11 states of the Old Confederacy, where evangelical Protestantism has been seen as a kind of semi-established religion, voted 83 to 38 in favor of Istook, a support level of 69%. Every Southern state favored Istook, though support was below 60% in Florida, Texas, Virginia, and North Carolina. In Tennessee four Democrats joined five Republicans to give unanimous support to Istook. In the Deep South, where Baptists are close to an absolute majority of the population, 82% of members supported Istook, including half of the Democrats and all 38 Republicans. In the more religiously diverse states of the South, only 55% of members voted yes.

The North and West, in contrast, voted 165 to 141 against, with opposition reaching 91% in New England, the most Catholic and least evangelical Protestant region of the nation. The rest of the Northeast (New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania),

voted two to one no, with all 34 Democrats in opposition. Thus, the greater Northeast voted 63-23 no. The Northeast is historically the nation’s most religiously pluralistic area, and the 73% to 27% rejection reflects that fact.

The Border South embodies elements of both regions, straddling both the Upper South and the Lower North. All six Republicans from the firmly evangelical state of Oklahoma voted yes, as did most Kentuckians and Missourians. Even half of the Democrats in Kentucky and Missouri voted yes. But Maryland and Delaware were almost unanimous in their opposition, including four of the five GOP members. Given its historic divisions, the Border region voted 56% yes, nearer the national average than any other area.

In the Pacific Coast states, where religious diversity and secularity are notable cultural trademarks, Istook was rejected 39 to 29, or by 57% to 43%. Party differences were nearly absolute in this region, with just one Democrat out of 37 in favor and only three of 31 Republicans opposed.

The Midwest and West voted 59% to 41% in favor of Istook, with divisions closely following party lines. Most of the big states (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin) were closely divided, while the more rural Plains states voted yes by 11 to 3 and the Mormon-oriented Rocky Mountain West was solidly in favor, by 12 to 2.

The religious affiliations of the members clearly played a role in determining their vote. The two largest groups, Protestants and Catholics, diverged, with 62% of the 263 Protestants

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voting yes compared to 42% of the 120 Catholics in support. All 10 Mormons and 2 of the 3 Eastern Orthodox members were supportive, though all 25 Jews, both Unitarian-Universalists, and all 6 religiously unaffiliated voted no.

Among Protestants support was highest among the 36 who define themselves as just "Protestant" or "Christian." These denominationally unattached members voted 75% in favor of Istook, which may also reflect the fact that 29 of them are Republicans. Members from some of the smaller evangelical groups (Assembly of God, Christian Reformed, Nazarene, Christian and Missionary Alliance, Brethren in Christ) voted unanimously for Istook.

Among the major denominations, United Methodist support was highest at 63%. Methodists were also the most independent-minded since nearly 40% of Methodist Democrats voted yes (three times higher than all Democrats) and 20% of Methodist Republicans voted no. Support of Istook was 59% among Lutherans and Presbyterians, 58% among Baptists, and 55% among Episcopalians.

The Baptist vote was differentiated by race and party. African American Baptists gave a scant 15% approval to the amendment, while white Southern Baptists were 85% favorable. Among Episcopalians the slender margin in favor was due mostly to the two to one Republican majority in their ranks. No Episcopalian Democrats voted yes, though 20% of Episcopalian

Republicans voted no.

This moderate level of support among the five largest Protestant groups came despite relatively strong opposition from the leadership of their religious communities. This was also true for the United Church of Christ, half of whose four members voted yes, as did both members of the Disciples of Christ. Christian Scientists voted four to one in favor. Among the smaller Protestant groups that rejected Istook are the Seventh-day Adventists, a generally conservative denomination which has historically supported strict separation of church and state.

Opposition by 58% of Catholics, the largest single religious community in Congress, was pivotal. Jewish opposition was unanimous, and even included the two remaining Jewish Republicans in the House. The Protestant character of support for this school prayer amendment is clearly evident, since 72% of yes votes were cast by Protestants but just over half of no votes were cast by members representing all the other religious communities.

It should also be noted that support for a constitutional amendment for school prayer has declined seven percentage points since the last House vote in 1971, when 59.7% of members favored it, compared to 52.4% in 1998. Support has declined among all religious groups except Mormons and non-denominational Protestants. This occurred despite a Republican majority in the present Congress and in face of solid Republican leadership support.

Istook Amendment Vote

	<i>Democrat</i>		<i>Republican</i>		<i>All</i>		<i>Percent</i>	
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
Broad Categories								
Protestant	20	80	142	21	162	101	61.6	38.4
Roman Catholic	7	65	43	5	50	70	41.7	58.3
Jewish	0	22	0	2	0	25	0	100.0
Latter Day Saints	-	-	10	0	10	0	100.0	0
Eastern Orthodox	0	1	2	0	2	1	66.7	33.3
None	0	6	-	-	0	6	0	100.0
All	27	174	197	28	224	203	52.4	47.6
Baptist	6	23	27	1	33	24	57.9	42.1
"Christian"	0	3	8	0	8	3	72.7	27.3
Episcopal	0	10	17	4	17	14	54.8	45.2
Lutheran	2	7	8	0	10	7	58.8	41.2
Methodist	7	11	22	6	29	17	63.0	37.0
Presbyterian	1	14	26	5	27	19	58.7	41.3
"Protestant" (nondenominational)	0	4	19	2	19	6	76.0	24.0
S.D.A.	0	1	1	1	1	2	33.3	66.7
Christian Science	-	-	4	1	4	1	80.0	20.0
Unitarian	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	100.0
UCC	0	2	2	0	2	2	50.0	50.0

1 Jewish Independent voted no

Editorials

Irresponsibility

New York State lawmakers have a history of inadequately supporting public education while showing much solicitude for private schooling. A case in point: when the legislature in 1997 set up a \$500 million program for pre-kindergarten, they allocated money for teachers and aides but none for classroom construction. So New York City's overcrowded public schools have to provide classes in parochial and private schools.

Private preschools wishing to contract with the city to provide space are barred from providing religious instruction and must remove all religious symbols from classrooms. The New York Catholic archdiocese and some other private agencies have turned down participation in the program. Said an archdiocese spokesperson, "We are in the business of religious education. We probably would not sacrifice one of our own religious early-childhood programs for the sake of secular programs."

Most Americans want quality public education for all children and do not want public funds diverted to nonpublic institutions. Lawmakers in Congress and state capitals need to serve the public interest, not the special interests of sectarian pressure groups.

Inconsistent?

According to a new poll by the American Association of University Women, 80% of women voters are likely to support a congressional candidate who favors a "national investment" in education and making public education a "national priority." By 66% to 29% the respondents favored confining tax support to public education, and 68% agreed the federal government spends too little on education.

A majority of the women respondents, however, favored tax breaks to allow parents to put up to \$2,000 per year into tax-free savings accounts to pay for private school expenses. These results show a certain inconsistency, a certain level of confusion. It is this confusion that allows friends of public education and opponents of vouchers to support such schemes as Sen. Coverdell's "A+ Accounts" legislation that President Clinton has promised to veto.

As Clinton, many congressional Democrats, and even the Congressional Joint Tax Committee have pointed out, such tax-free education accounts favor the well-off over everyone else, do virtually nothing for poor parents, ultimately take money away from public education, and create the illusion that something worth while is being done.

As long as public schools are inadequately funded and funding for them so inequitably distributed, diverting even a little tax money to nonpublic education is irresponsible and foolish.

Jewish Voucher Opposition

The Jewish Council for Public Affairs (443 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016) has just released a 20-page publication, *Vouchers and the Jewish Community: A JCPA Reexamination*. The JCPA is a network of 13 national and 122 local public affairs organizations.

On the recommendation of its Ad Hoc Committee on Vouchers, the JCPA adopted "a policy statement that reaffirms strong opposition to public financing of nonpublic schools, because we believe that such funding will undermine the quality of public education and because we are committed to separation of church and state, which has protected religious freedom in America."

In the statement's conclusion, the JCPA resolved "to recommit itself to playing a leadership role in the quest to improve American public education, by seeking sound, innovative methods of improving public schools, and actively advocating for improved budgets and other reforms at federal, state, and local levels."

We believe that if every religious community in America would take a similar position, we would see vast improvements in our public schools and significant alleviation of social problems. Vouchers and other schemes to divert public funds to nonpublic schools can only fragment society and worsen our social problems.

Much of what is good and right about our country can be attributed to our public schools, despite our failure to adequately or equitably support them. Renewed across-the-spectrum religious support for public education is key to a prosperous, healthy, democratic society.

Black Hole?

Sen. Lauch Faircloth (R-NC) disclosed in June that the District of Columbia spends \$67 million per year to place 1,400 disabled students in residential schools outside D.C. That comes to about \$48,000 per student (national per student spending in public schools is about \$6,000) and about 10% of the D.C. total school budget, which is still unable to provide special education services for all eligible students.

A Maryland researcher has found that nearly all states spend comparable amounts on out-of-state placements.

Why can't states provide appropriate programs for disabled children closer to home and at lower cost?

Safeguarding the Future

Religious liberty and church-state separation will never be completely secure. But you can help provide the means for their defense in the future in two ways.

Include a bequest to Americans for Religious Liberty in your Will, add ARL to your Will, or, include ARL as a beneficiary in a life insurance policy. Bequests and insurance proceeds to ARL are tax deductible.

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Richard John Neuhaus's Dream: A Catholic-Evangelical Alliance

This is a continuation of Al Menendez' article, "Richard John Neuhaus: Guru of the Religious Right," in our last issue. Rev. Neuhaus, a former Lutheran minister turned Catholic priest, is the editor of First Things magazine and author of a number of books.

The Rev. Richard John Neuhaus, who sees the abortion issue as the linchpin to unite Catholic and evangelical political agendas, was a major player in the preparation and promotion of a 1994 statement called "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" (ECT).

The political bias of ECT is quite conservative when it addresses "the right ordering of society." Abortion is called "the leading edge of an encroaching culture of death." In addition, "Abortion on demand must be recognized as a massive attack on the dignity and needs of women. . . . That the unborn child has a right to protection, including the protection of law, is a moral statement supported by moral reason and biblical truth."

The ECT declaration repeats a charge often advanced by religious conservatives. "Religion, which was privileged and foundational in our legal order, has in recent years been penalized and made marginal." The statement criticizes sexual and cultural permissiveness, claiming, "We reject the claim that . . . tolerance requires the promotion of moral equivalence between the normative and the deviant."

The document also supports "parental choice in education," denounces "sexual depravity and antireligious bigotry in the entertainment media," endorses "a vibrant market economy" and commends "a renewed appreciation of Western culture."

While both sides gained some credibility in this document, Catholics may be said to have gained more by winning evangelical acceptance of the proposition that neither side should actively try to convert the other. Catholics have been losing millions of adherents to evangelicals in recent decades in Latin America and among Latino immigrants to the United States.

However, a Protestant backlash denounced ECT as soon as it was released in the spring of 1994. The virulent, vituperative, and fear-ridden reactions from many evangelicals can only be interpreted as typical of a siege mentality representative of fundamentalists and conservative evangelicals. The intensity of their rejection of the statement, and the power of these critics to force many evangelical signers to retract their signatures of accord or to submit modifications, shows how durable and unyielding is traditional anti-Catholicism among many conservative Protestants. Significantly, the denunciations were not aimed at the political or economic statements but contended that Catholics were not fellow Christians but adherents to a false religion and that the Protestant signatories were traitors to the Reformation and betrayers of the Gospel.

This unreconstructed animosity was widespread and even forced such prominent evangelical signers of ECT as Chuck Colson, J.I. Packer, Bill Bright, and Kent Hill to issue a mild disclaimer on January 19, 1995, saying that their original signature "does not imply acceptance of Roman Catholic doctrinal distinctives or endorsement of the Roman Catholic church system."

Other evangelical signers were forced to recant their signatures by pressure from the grassroots. John H. White, president of Geneva College and past president of the National Associa-

tion of Evangelicals, was forced to withdraw his name by his denomination, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America.

Richard D. Land, executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, came under fire from his denomination's foreign mission board, which claimed the ECT was "harmful to Southern Baptist work of global witness and missionary outreach."¹ Land "privately regrets signing" ECT, according to Geisler and MacKenzie.²

A Protestant Far Right counterattack on ECT developed, as dozens of books and articles attacking Catholicism appeared within the evangelical subculture. An additional theological statement on "Salvation" in 1997 brought forth another surge of evangelical disdain.

This brings us to the heart of the matter: America's evangelical and Catholic communities have little in common politically, socially, or culturally, not to mention religiously. In the past they have usually moved in opposite political directions, often in response to perceptions about the motives and objectives of each other.

Catholics remain far more committed to governmental solutions to economic and social problems. They see government as morally neutral, as an acceptable mode within which grievances can be resolved and social justice can be achieved. The "preferential option for the poor" undergirds and is embedded in Catholic social philosophy. Catholics are communitarian, by and large, and believe that gaps between the haves and have nots need to be addressed by government. They are realists; they know from long historical experience that private church-run charities, however noble in concept and beneficent in practice, cannot cope with the massive degree of social dislocation and despair found in modern society.

Catholic economic philosophy has always steered a moderate course between the Scylla of unrestrained capitalism and the Charybdis of state socialism. Catholic social philosophy prefers a mixed economy, with substantial contributions to the common good from mediating structures external to government. Catholics often see partnerships where others see conflict when problems needing resolution are addressed.

A vote in the House of Representatives on the minimum-wage issue on May 23, 1996, exemplifies the gulf in Catholic and Protestant attitudes on economic questions.

Of the forty-three Republicans who broke with their party to support President Clinton's proposal to increase the minimum wage, twenty were Catholic, twenty were Protestant and three were Jewish. This means that 46.5% of pro-minimum-wage Republicans were Catholics, but only 24.8% of all Republicans are Catholics. On the other hand, only two evangelical Republicans — Dunn of Oregon and Stockman of Texas — voted in the affirmative. Of the seven Democrats who voted against the president, six were Southern Protestant evangelicals and one was a Mormon from Utah. Three of the four Jewish Republicans in the House voted for the minimum wage bill.

Thus, on this key economic issue, which reflects the historic Catholic commitment to the concept of a "just wage," 34.5% of Catholic Republicans but only 12% of Protestant Republicans voted yes.

Of all House members voting, 70% of Catholics supported

the minimum-wage bill compared to only 44% of Protestants. All Jews except one (96%) voted yes but all ten Mormons voted no. The four religiously nonaffiliated members voted yes and the two of Greek Orthodox faith voted no.

Several votes during 1997 and 1998 showed this difference. Members from states with a small percentage of evangelical citizens were twice as likely to support a minimum-wage increase as were those from states with a high percentage. Among white evangelicals, the vast majority were opposed.

In regard to education, Catholics have grown fond of public education at the very time when other groups have soured on it. Nearly three-fourths of U.S. Catholic children are educated in public schools, a sharp increase during the past three decades. While Catholics probably want more involvement in and contributions from religious communities in education, they are generally unwilling to see public school life disrupted by religious strife and factionalism.

As a result, Catholics are still more likely than are evangelicals to vote Democratic for president and Congress, and to support moderately liberal legislative initiatives. Catholics are far less likely to own guns than are evangelicals (and other Protestants, too) and are more likely to support gun control and bans on assault weapons. They are more sympathetic to civil rights legislation and are more supportive of a welcoming immigration policy than are white Protestant evangelicals.

Catholics consistently vote Democratic by 20-30 more percentage points than do evangelicals. On most political issues they are at least 20 points more liberal. In California the *Los Angeles Times* exit poll in 1994 found that 69% of Protestants and only 49% of Catholics supported Proposition 187, which curtailed government and educational services for illegal immigrants.

Kosmin and Lachman have noted these differences: "Polling data show that Catholics remain more likely than white Protestants to support an expanded role for government. This is in keeping with the stance of their church, which has never endorsed laissez-faire capitalism and has frequently advocated a communitarian view of society. This gap is particularly reflected among the middle class. National Opinion Research Center data for the 1980s show that 34% of Catholic college graduates believe that government should do more to improve society, whereas only 16% of white Protestant college graduates hold that opinion."³

Evangelicals tend to see government as inherently evil and coercive, a behemoth that needs to be permanently restrained — except in areas of national defense and, ironically, personal morality. Evangelicals are individualists, both in social philosophy and in religious matters. Their solutions, such as they are, to social problems posit a much-reduced governmental role, and an enhancement of voluntary self-help groups, free enterprise, and church-oriented charities, which they honestly believe will end social disorders on a more permanent basis than governmentally oriented proposals. This is the gist of Marvin Olasky's proposals, which are widely popular among evangelicals in particular and social conservatives generally. Olasky favors a central role for religious organizations and individuals, even to the point of encouraging religious conversion (to evangelical Christianity).

This individualism has made evangelicals, unlike Catholics, relatively unfavorable to trade unions and the union movement. Evangelicals also tend to have an uncritical regard for capitalism and, with some exceptions, like former Senator Mark Hatfield of Oregon, an unswerving kind of my-country-right-or-

wrong nationalism. Evangelicals to a large extent invented and shaped American civil religion, and they often see America as a nation uniquely blessed by God and deserving of uncritical praise, especially for its foreign policy. This blend of American exceptionalism and naivete tends to push evangelicals further to the political right.

Catholics are likely to be the losers in any alliance with evangelicals. Two evenly sized groups with such different cultures and divergent historical memories will not coexist as equals for long. There will be inevitable clashes over the spoils of victory.

No one can predict the future, of course, but the past offers some guidance for future projections. The intensity of past evangelical dislike of Catholics and Catholicism and the reality of lukewarm, grudging mutual regard do not augur well for the development of a permanent political alliance. One or the other will inevitably seek domination.

Evangelicals are likely to dominate the public schools, owing to their generously financed and well-staffed parachurch organizations specializing in school proselytism. This is almost a certainty if school prayer or religious equality amendments ever become the law of the land.

Even in today's somewhat restrictive environment, evangelicals are aggressive in their public-school outreach programs. They show little or no respect for those who adhere to other religious traditions. America's schools may be the primary battleground, where religious strife and rancor will add a new (and certainly unhelpful) element to an already cloudy and unpredictable educational future.

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ARL in Action

Since our last report ARL president John M. Swomley has addressed university, conference, church, and other audiences in California, New York, Missouri, and Kansas. Swomley received the American Humanist Association's distinguished service award in May. He writes regularly in *Christian Social Action*, *Christian Ethics Today*, *Human Quest*, and *The Humanist*.

Swomley's most recent book is *Confronting Systems of Violence: Memoirs of a Peace Activist* (Fellowship of Reconciliation, 1998, 150 pp., \$12.95). Copies are available from ARL.

In May ARL's Edd Doerr presented a statement to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights in connection with its hearing on religion and public education. Doerr told the Commission that the 1995 Department of Education advisory guidelines for public schools have had major beneficial effects. He pointed out, however, that serious problems remain regarding proselytizing in public schools and discussed the problems with teaching "about" religion. Copies of the statement are available from ARL.

Since our last report Doerr has addressed audiences in California, New York State, and Maryland, and appeared on radio and TV talk shows in Illinois, New York, Washington, and South Carolina. One of the appearances was on the Spanish language TV network Univision; the other was a debate with televangelist Jerry Falwell on Fox Cable News.

The 1996 elections represented a major setback for advocates of a Catholic-evangelical political alliance. Not only did the bulk of Catholic and Protestant voters support different presidential candidates, but they moved in the opposite direction since 1992. National exit polls showed that Catholics voted for President Clinton by 54% to 37%, while Protestants favored Senator Dole by 53% to 37%. In comparison with 1992, Catholics gave Clinton a net gain of 5% while Protestants gave the G.O.P. a net gain of 3%. Evangelical Protestants voted for Dole by a 65% to 26% margin, a gain of 3% over 1992. Even nonevangelical Protestants favored Dole by a larger margin than they favored Bush. The religious divide was greater than it had been since 1972.

Three states with historic differences in voting patterns by religion indicate this trend. In Texas metropolitan areas which are predominantly Catholic, Clinton won 56% to 39%, a 4% net Clinton gain. In predominantly Baptist metropolitan areas, Dole was the victor by 54% to 37%, a 3% gain for the Kansas senator. Dole gained 5% among white Protestants in rural areas, winning 57% to 36%. In Hispanic Catholic rural areas Clinton won decisively 72% to 24%, a gain of more than 6%. The president's support increased by 9% in the Hispanic areas of Houston.

In Pennsylvania Clinton piled up a 61% to 27% margin in heavily Catholic precincts, a gain of 5 percentage points over 1992. Among Protestants Dole won 51% to 34%, a gain of one point. In heavily Presbyterian areas of Western Pennsylvania Dole gained nearly 6% over Bush. In 68 Protestant towns which voted for Democrat Adlai Stevenson in 1956 but switched to Republican Richard Nixon in 1960 in order to vote against a Catholic, John F. Kennedy, Dole won 49% to 41%, a 3 point gain over Bush.

Clinton, on the other hand, won an incredible 83% to Dole's 11% in three Hispanic wards in Philadelphia, a gain of 17 percentage points over his 1992 showing. Clinton's support rose 12 percentage points in Italian Catholic South Philadelphia, home of Rocky and Mario Lanza. "South Philly," which voted for Reagan and Bush three times in the 1980s, supported Clinton 66% to 25%.

Even in the Philadelphia suburbs, where Catholic and Prot-

estant communities are comparable in income and educational attainment levels, Clinton gained 4% and carried Catholic areas easily, while Dole gained 2% in Protestant areas and outpolled Clinton. Dole gained 3% in the "Pennsylvania Dutch" suburbs, the outermost exurbs in Bucks and Montgomery counties, where the population is German-American, rural and often adhering to the Mennonite, Brethren, Reformed, Moravian and Schwenkfelder religious faiths. Significantly, the Catholic suburbs of Philadelphia have high levels of parochial school enrollment. But they resisted the Republican Party's attempt to win their allegiance on this issue.

In Wisconsin, where voting behavior has long been shaped by ethnic ancestry and religion, Clinton made his largest 1992-96 gains among Catholics of Dutch and German ancestry, who have a fairly high parochial school attendance. The strongest Catholic precincts gave Clinton a 7% gain. In strongly Protestant rural precincts, where anti-Kennedy voting was heavy in 1960, Dole gained one percentage point.

But Wisconsin exhibits another trend which raises questions about the feasibility of a Catholic-evangelical alliance. Wisconsin's mainstream Protestants, most of whom are Lutherans, also gave Clinton a stronger vote in 1996 than in 1992, especially in traditionally Republican middle-income areas. Even Missouri Synod Lutherans, who have an above average utilization of parochial schools, trended toward Clinton. It is highly significant that Waushara County, a rural Missouri Synod Lutheran county with a solid German ancestry population, supported Clinton in 1996. The last Democrat to carry the county was Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1932.

In parts of the Upper Midwest and in New England, mainstream, nonevangelical Protestants and Catholics have been moving in the same political direction, which suggests that any political "alliance" between Catholics and evangelical Protestants simply does not exist.

Notes

¹ Norman L. Geisler and Ralph E. MacKenzie, *Roman Catholics and Evangelicals* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), p. 498.

² *Ibid.*

³ Barry A. Kosmin and Seymour P. Lachman, *One Nation Under God: Religion in Contemporary American Society* (New York: Harmony Books, 1993), p. 200.

Coverdell Plan Faces Veto

In the wake of President Clinton's veto of a bill to provide \$6.4 million for school vouchers for 2,000 students in the District of Columbia, the Republican Congress has passed and sent to the White House another parochial bill. This one, sponsored by Sen. Paul Coverdell (R-GA) would allow parents to make tax-free withdrawals from special education savings accounts for K-12 expenses, including nonpublic school tuition.

Democrats opposed to the bill and its "A+ Accounts" charge that most of the benefits of the plan would go to well-off families who have children in private schools. Less well-off families are not likely to have an extra \$2,000 per year to set aside for K-12 school expenses.

The Congressional Joint Tax Committee estimates that the average tax savings for most families would be only \$7 per year and that even more well-off families are likely to get only \$37 per year in tax savings.

In a letter to House Speaker Gingrich on June 16, President

Clinton said he would veto the bill because it would be "bad education policy and bad tax policy." Clinton said that the plan, which would cost the Treasury \$1.6 billion over ten years, "would weaken public education and short-change all children. This \$1.6 billion proposal, while siphoning limited federal resources away from public schools . . . would disproportionately benefit the highest-income taxpayers -- almost 70% of the benefits would flow to families in the top 20% of income distribution -- and families struggling to make ends meet would never see a penny of it."

Clinton called on Congress to work with him "to support our public schools by helping ensure that every child in America has the opportunity to learn in a modern, safe, state-of-the-art school."

The Coverdell plan, even with some support from Democrats, did not pass with enough votes to override an expected veto.

Update

Prop 226 Defeated

California voters in the June 2 primary defeated ballot Proposition 226 by 53% to 47%. The so-called "paycheck protection" amendment was intended to sharply limit the role of teacher organizations and labor unions in politics by requiring annual written permission from each member to use dues for electoral politics. The initiative would have placed no limits on corporations. In any event, union members already had the right to opt out of payments for political use.

Prop 226 had been initiated by several Orange County supporters of Religious Right causes. They were joined by Indianapolis financier and school voucher promoter J. Patrick Rooney, who donated \$441,000 to the effort. The campaign was also strongly supported by Grover Norquist of Americans for Tax Reform and Republican Governor Pete Wilson.

One clear motive for Prop 226 was to drastically weaken the California Teachers Association, which had led in the 70% to 30% defeat of a school voucher initiative in 1993.

Clinton vs. Istook

On Saturday, May 30, just days before the House of Representatives defeated Rep. Ernest Istook's misnamed Religious Freedom Amendment, President Clinton devoted his weekly radio address to the subject of religion in the schools. He pointed out that public schools are not "religion free zones," as claimed by the Religious Right, and clarified what is and is not allowed by law in public schools. Clinton said there was no need for a school prayer amendment.

Clinton also announced that Education Secretary Richard Riley was reissuing the guidelines on religion and public education that were originally sent to all school districts in August of 1995.

Pennsylvania Vouchers Challenged

A small public school district just outside of Philadelphia has become a pawn in the national campaign for vouchers. The Southeast Delco school board, which represents 4,100 students, voted unanimously in March to give \$1,000 for every child in the district who attends or chooses to attend a private or parochial high school, \$500 for each child attending a private elementary or middle school and \$250 per child attending a private kindergarten. The plan could cost the district \$1.2 million per year.

How did a public school board in a mostly lower middle income area choose to aid private schools out of public funds, something expressly forbidden by the Pennsylvania Constitution? Supporters of the plan on the board said they were "concerned" that parochial school enrollment in their district had declined from 40% a decade ago to 32% today. These board members failed to answer inquiries at a public hearing as to why the level of private or parochial school enrollment in the district should be of any concern to elected officials who manage the areas's public schools.

Angry parents reminded board members that several public

elementary schools had inadequate and out of date textbooks, leaky roofs and littered playgrounds with broken equipment. (A local parents association has been repairing playgrounds out of privately-raised funds.)

Still, the board persisted, apparently having decided before the March 18 public hearing. A hint of conflict of interest was raised when it was discovered that two board members send their own children to parochial schools and would benefit from the income transfer. (One of them voted for the proposal, while the other abstained.)

Amazingly, board member Byron Mundy said the voucher plan would "stabilize enrollment" in the public schools, which have gained students from transfers into them from parochial schools. Mundy supported the use of taxpayer funds to help the private schools regain students.

Then a national right-wing organization, the Washington-based Institute for Justice, announced it would defend the school board if legal action was brought against it. One of its attorneys, Dick Komer, said of the Southeast Delco scheme, "If it works in Pennsylvania, which has 501 school districts, then that means there are 500 more places that could do this." Observers believe the Institute for Justice (a misnamed organization if there ever was one) may have instigated the plan from the outset as a national test case.

On April 16 the Pennsylvania State Teachers Association (PSTA) and local public school parents filed suit in a Delaware County court, charging that the plan violated ordinances prohibiting the expenditure of public school funds on anything not related to public education. The plaintiffs decided to keep it simple at the first level of legal engagement, rather than raising immediate constitutional objections. This would defuse the attempt by national voucher advocates to make this a test case. Even so, the Pennsylvania Constitution could easily be invoked, providing as it does that "No money raised for the support of the public schools of the Commonwealth shall be appropriated to or used for the support of any sectarian school."

Strong support for the legal action has come from the local Home and School Association (HSA), which has raised private contributions to pay for new public school library furniture, computers, school assemblies and field trips. The HSA also gives every teacher \$100 for the purchase of basic supplies like pencils and chalk. The local school board claims it is unable to provide these essentials, and has cut art classes and sports teams from the budget. Parents question how these board members could even consider taking money from their underfunded local projects and transfer them to private and parochial schools. Astonishingly, Republican Governor Tom Ridge said he was "inspired" by the local board action.

Religion, Schools, Civil Rights

On May 20 the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights held the first of three little-noticed hearings on "Schools and Religion." Most of the witnesses, including ARL's Edd Doerr, agreed that U.S. public schools have generally been on the right track, keeping reasonably close to the goal of religious neutrality, and that the Clinton administration's advisory guidelines sent to all school districts in the country in August 1995 had been an enormous help to school officials.

Several Religious Right witnesses told the hearing tall tales about alleged instances of infringement of students' rights in schools, but other witnesses pointed out that those incidents were

about as rare as "man bites dog" accounts and concerned problems easily corrected by phone call or letter.

Doerr's statement (available from ARL) called attention to continuing problems in some schools with proselytizing, music programs that are insufficiently religiously neutral, and with teaching "about" religion.

Teacher Preacher Fired

Pentecostal substitute teacher Mildred Rosario was fired by the New York City school board in mid-June for proselytizing and other religious activity in her Bronx classroom. Among other things, she asked students in her sixth grade class if they would like "to accept Jesus as their personal savior." Mrs. Rosario probably would not have been fired if she had been willing to admit having made a mistake and promised not to repeat it. She declined.

The family of the student who complained about the incident are conservative evangelical Christians, Jehovah's Witnesses.

ARL's Edd Doerr debated televangelist Jerry Falwell about the matter on Fox Cable News on June 17.

Reproductive Rights

The House of Representatives voted 224 to 198 to approve a measure, sponsored by Rep. Nita M. Lowey (D-NY), that will require most federal employees' health care plans to cover the costs of prescription contraceptives. Lowey said the action was the "biggest victory for reproductive rights" in Congress in four years. It had been vigorously opposed by the Religious Right.

Anti-choice forces in Congress, however, are pressing on other fronts. The House voted in June to block the FDA from researching, testing, or approving any abortifacient drug, such as RU-486. They are also pushing legislation that would bar anyone except a parent or guardian from transporting a minor across a state line to have an abortion. A vote is scheduled to be held soon on an attempt to override President Clinton's second veto of a bill to prohibit the late term abortion procedure referred to by anti-choicers as "partial birth abortion."

Court Rejects Bauchman Case

The Supreme Court in June declined to review a Tenth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals ruling in the Rachel Bauchman case in Utah. The case involved a public school choir director who used the choir to promote his Mormon religion, proselytize students during class time, and coerce students into participating in religious activities. When student Rachel Bauchman complained, the director retaliated by harassing and embarrassing her. Director Richard Torgerson told students that he disagreed with Supreme Court rulings barring religious advocacy in public schools.

The Tenth Circuit ruling virtually barred the courthouse

door to students challenging proselytizing in school.

Americans for Religious Liberty joined the Unitarian Universalist Association and other groups in an *amicus* brief to the Supreme Court in the case. ARL president John Swomley provided an expert deposition when the case was first brought in federal district court.

Alabama Governor Loses

The Supreme Court ended its 1997-98 term by summarily rejecting an appeal by Alabama Gov. Fob James of a federal district court ruling holding unconstitutional a state law authorizing "non-sectarian, non-proselytizing student-initiated voluntary prayer" in public schools. District judge Ira DeMent not only ruled the law unconstitutional but also proscribed other sectarian activities at school functions. The case is on appeal to the Eleventh Circuit in Atlanta.

Gov. James' appeal to the Supreme Court insisted that the First Amendment's religion clauses do not apply to the states and that the federal courts lack jurisdiction. His appeal was rejected without comment.

James, meanwhile, won the Republican primary and is now campaigning for reelection. He also used a state airplane, at taxpayers' expense, to fly to Dallas in June to speak at a religious meeting.

Kiryas Joel, Again

A New York State appeals court ruled on July 9 that the third and most recent try by the Governor and Legislature to create a special, religiously segregated public school district for children of the Satmar Hasidic sect in the Kiryas Joel village violates the Establishment Clause. Two previous tries were ruled unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court and the state's highest court.

Mormons Preferred

The U.S. Department of Education has allowed Mormon Church-run Brigham Young University to use religious criteria in choosing among faculty applicants, despite federal regulations barring discrimination in schools receiving federal aid. Brigham Young gets federal research funds and some of its students get federal aid.

Applicants for faculty positions are questioned about their marital status, must be approved by their own Mormon church, and are required to tithe. So only a small percentage of the faculty are non-Mormon.

"Brigham Young University," the *Arizona Daily Star* editorialized in July, "shouldn't be able to have it both ways. It either should run strictly as a church school that can select faculty based on religious principles, or if it is going to accept federal money, it should also accept federal law prohibiting discrimination."

Commandments Bill Filed

Rep. Robert Aderholt (R-AL) has introduced in Congress a bill called the Ten Commandments Defense Act. The bill would

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authorize display of the Decalogue in government-owned buildings, but does not specify which version, which would obviously lead to preferment of one version over others.

The bill would also authorize "the expression of religious faith by individual persons on or within property owned or administered by the several States or political subdivisions thereof." This is apparently another attempt to undermine the Supreme Court precedents on school prayer.

Town Seal Challenged

The ACLU of Western Missouri has filed suit challenging the inclusion of a fish symbol on the seal of the town of Republic. The complaint charges that the symbol, added to the seal in 1989, unconstitutionally promotes Christianity over other religions.

Falwell's Fortunes

Televangelist Jerry Falwell, who has made a career out of mixing religion and ultra-right politics, is building a new church next to his Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia. The new building, to seat 12,000 and cost \$20-\$25 million, will be the largest church in North America.

International

Canada: The United Nations Human Rights Committee in Geneva has formally accepted a complaint that Ontario's funding of Catholic but no other denominational schools violates the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to

Books

Teaching About Evolution and the Nature of Science, National Academy of Sciences (Box 285, Washington, DC 20055), 140 pp., \$19.95.

Too many public school students receive little or no exposure to the most important concept in biology: evolution. Powerful fundamentalist special interests have persuaded or intimidated teachers, administrators, school boards, publishers, and legislators to downplay or eliminate evolution, and sometimes intrude the fundamentalist religious view known as "creationism."

Useful and timely, then, is the National Academy of Sciences' publication of this book. Evolution must be taught if students are to understand biology. "There is no debate within the scientific community over whether evolution has occurred," the book states. It succinctly explains evolution and the nature of science, shows how to deal with "creationism" and creationists, provides suggestions for teachers, and makes clear that "religion and science answer different questions about the world." It also summarizes the relevant court rulings, provides a useful bibliography, and presents positions by science and science education organizations.

Although intended primarily for educators, the book is a handy guide for the general reader.

-- Edd Doerr

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which Canada is a signatory. The action, brought by Friends of Public Education of Ontario, seeks either government funding of all schools on an equal basis or confining the support to public schools. . . . The Catholic Church in Newfoundland is trying in court to block the consolidation of sectarian schools into a single public school system, as approved 3 to 1 by the province's voters in September of 1997. . . . The Ontario government has stirred controversy by agreeing to pay off \$30 million in debt incurred by the Essex County Roman Catholic School Board. . . . The Ontario government has agreed "philosophically" to provide funding for Jewish day schools. . . . The merger of St. Michael's Hospital, Roman Catholic, and Wellesley Hospital, non-Catholic, has upset many in Toronto as Wellesley will no longer permit abortions, vasectomies, and tubal ligations, in keeping with church policy. . . . Ten years have passed since Canada's Supreme Court issued its *Roe*-like ruling removing legal restrictions on abortion. Polls show that 78% of Canadians agree that abortion is a private matter, up from 71% in 1988.

Religion and the War in Bosnia, edited by Paul Mojzes, Scholars Press, 294 p., \$19.95.

Nearly two dozen scholars contributed to this survey of the role played by the religious communities and their ideology in the Bosnian conflict. While their opinions and interpretations vary widely, most argue that religious conflict is pivotal to the antagonisms that destroyed Yugoslavia. "For the battling troops, religious symbols offered a framework of belief or psychological comfort," wrote contributor Leonard Cohen.

Whether religion is cause or excuse, it is central to the cultural self-understandings and identities of the participants even though "Scholars found evidence that a portion of the population attributed their rejection of religion to the terrible inter-ethnic bloodletting during World War II." Since religious slaughter reappeared during the 1990s, one wonders how many people today in this region will reject institutionalized religion in the future.

-- Al Menendez

The 1996 Presidential Election in the South, edited by Laurence W. Moreland and Robert P. Steed, Praeger, 252 pp., \$59.95 (available at 1-800-225-5800).

This most recent of an excellent series of volumes on the

presidential campaign and vote in the eleven Southern states is essential for political scientists and for political junkies. The authors -- a varied group of political scientists -- all tend to agree that "mobilization of Christian conservatives has given southern Republicans new vitality." On the other hand, they observe, "Fundamentalists rarely constitute a majority of the GOP electorate and, in the 1996 presidential primaries, their activities were not determinative." Religious Right supporters backed Dole everywhere, in margins ranging from 64% in Tennessee to 80% in South Carolina and Georgia. But "moderates," women, and racial and cultural minorities supported Clinton by large margins -- so that the South ended up a 50-50 split in popular vote.

-- Al Menendez

The Bully Pulpit: The Politics of Protestant Clergy, by James L. Guth et al., University Press of Kansas, 221 pp., \$19.95 paperback.

Five eminent political scientists whose academic specialty is the influence of religious belief and affiliation on voting have united their efforts to produce this first rate study. Concentrating on survey data, the volume details the present political orientation of the clergy of eight Protestant denominations. The results indicate a growing Republican and conservative orientation to the Assemblies of God and Southern Baptist groups, a continuing Republican bias to the "ethnic" Dutch Reformed and Swedish Evangelical Covenant faiths, and a Democratic bias among Presbyterians and Disciples of Christ. Methodists are divided almost equally between the parties.

The study confirms a well known fact, that "there is a powerful tendency for orthodox clergy to take conservative positions on a wide range of political issues, especially moral and cultural issues, while modernist clergy are more uniformly liberal on these same issues." There is also, they say, a "yawning gap between ministers' views and those of their parishioners."

A considerable political realignment is occurring among the clergy as a result of theological orientation, especially among Southern Baptists, among whom "fully half the current Republicans are former Democrats and Independents." Education, income and gender are minor factors in the overall shift. Clergy are engaging frequently in political activities and in the formation of public policy positions among their congregations.

-- Al Menendez

The Rise of Baptist Republicanism, by Oran P. Smith, New York University Press, 320 pp., \$38.50.

Southern Baptists, the unofficial Established Church of much of Dixie, has been transformed from "a once apolitical denomination" to one that is "politically aware and energized toward conservatism," argues the author of this valuable and unique study. In terms of their history, culture, and theology, Southern Baptists "were the perfect mark for the fundamentalist right and the new conservative Republican Party," says Smith, a South Carolina magazine editor and teacher. His impeccable study concludes, "The Southern Baptist Convention is less and less ambivalent about its core identity. It is a large, complex structure with a rock-ribbed conservative agenda certain to have a major impact on the larger American culture. And its capacity to achieve defined goals is growing. . . . The culture war is far from over. Arguably, it is just beginning, and its outcome will

define or redefine the nature of the country. Whatever the outcome, the Southern Baptists will be major combatants in the moral struggle for a long time to come."

-- Al Menendez

Minority Faiths and the American Protestant Mainstream, Jonathan D. Sarna (ed.), University of Illinois Press, 1998, 377 pp., \$21.95.

How religious minorities (Jews, Catholics, Mormons and the German Protestant immigrant faiths) fared in the strongly evangelical Protestant climate that pervaded American life from the Civil War to World War I is the focus of this excellent anthology of ten well-chosen essays by leading authorities in U.S. religious history.

Robert T. Handy sets the book's framework, "Most Protestants were convinced that they were the chief custodians of the cultural, moral and religious life of the nation, and they were often so regarded. . . . Although they professed to believe strongly in religious freedom, the separation of church and state, and voluntarism in religion, they also firmly believed that their country was in fact if not in law a Christian nation. Many local, state and federal courts reflected the dominance of the mainstream religious position in their rulings. Battles were especially severe in public schools and on Indian reservations, where a virtual holy war between Protestants and Catholics was fought (with the federal government clearly on the Protestant side)."

The authors all agree that minority religious faiths developed educational and cultural strategies to preserve their traditions in a hostile environment. They also stressed the compatibility of their beliefs with American democracy. By doing so, they advanced pluralism and created a framework in which religious tolerance could flourish in the future.

-- Al Menendez

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