



VOICE OF REASON

The Newsletter of Americans for Religious Liberty

1999, No. 2 [67]

Voucher Movement Gains Momentum

With its approval of a massive voucher program in late April, the Florida legislature has given voucher advocates their biggest state victory. With the support and approval of Florida's governor, Jeb Bush, the Republican-dominated government in the Sunshine State has pushed the voucher issue to the forefront of the debate over education "reform."

Opponents of the program, which passed both houses by a 60%-40% majority, announced plans to challenge the new law as a violation of both the state and federal constitutions.

The euphemistically called "opportunity scholarships" will enable students in the lowest-rated public schools to opt for private or religious schools. The vouchers will range from \$3,000 to \$25,000 a year to pay the nonpublic school tuition. (The average is \$4,000.) Students will be eligible regardless of their income or grades. The legislature ignored the possibility that many private schools will simply not take students who fail to pass their rigid entrance exams, or fail to qualify for religious reasons.

Under the plan, public schools will be graded A, B, C, D or F, based on student performance on a standardized statewide test. Only students who attend F-rated schools will be eligible for vouchers.

Governor Jeb Bush made this "school-reform" plan a centerpiece of his legislative agenda. He called it "dramatic and precedent-setting." The vote in the legislature — 71 to 49 in the House and 25-15 in the Senate — was starkly partisan. Every Democrat but one — a legislator from rural North Florida, where fundamentalist private schools are burgeoning — opposed the Bush plan. Every Republican but one — Roberto Casas of heavily Hispanic Hialeah — voted yes.

Students at four schools are immediately eligible, but that number is expected to grow to 169 in the year 2000. An earlier Senate version of the bill would have limited the vouchers to only the lowest-performing students in the failing schools, but a House-Senate conference removed that provision. There are 3,000 public schools in Florida, which educate nearly 90% of the state's students.

While Bush claimed his proposal was aimed largely at the African-American community, state civil rights leaders did not see it that way. The NAACP vowed to fight the program in court. One NAACP leader, Hazel Dukes, said, "Public education is a civil rights issue. Vouchers siphon off money from public education. You can't use public money for private education."

Several statewide polls showed a majority of voters oppose the new law. And a *Miami Herald* survey found that 68 area private schools said they would not accept voucher students, fearing state encroachment on their independence.

Commented the *New York Times*, "State officials guess that anywhere from 10 percent to 30 percent of students in failing schools — nearly all in areas of high poverty — would take up the voucher offer. An exodus of thousands of students would drain

tens of millions of dollars from local school districts, leaving distressed institutions even worse off. Some children will be able to opt out. But the great majority will be left in classrooms that offer them even less of a chance at a decent education."

Illinois lawmakers approved a tax credit for tuition to parochial and private school patrons in May. As a sop to public school patrons, out of district public schools could also benefit from the plan, though most by far of the tax breaks will go to nonpublic schools.

The amount approved was \$500, or 25 percent of the cost of tuition and educational expenses. The estimated initial price tag is \$150 million per year. Republican Governor George Ryan said that he would sign the bill.

continued on page 3

The Democrats on Church and State

Whether from conviction or calculation, the Democratic Party remains far more committed to separation of church and state, religious pluralism and tolerance, public education and support for women's rights than its Republican counterpart. The divergence between the two parties has sharpened since the 1970s. These radically different approaches to religion as a public policy issue are seen in the party platforms and in their voting behavior in Congress.

(We reported on the Republican Y2K presidential hopefuls in our last issue.)

Some historians would argue that this has always been true, representing a historic difference between the two great American parties. The Democrats are, after all, the party of Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson, whose policies and personal preferences favored a more private role for religious conviction and public limitations on religion-based policies. Whether it was sup-

continued on page 4

Inside:

**Politicizing Religion . . . Prescribed Piety
. . . Smaller is Better . . . Home Schoolers
Survey. . . Abortion at the Polls . . .
Religious Right Influence on Foreign
Policy . . . ARL in Action . . . Update . . .
Books . . .**

Editorials

Politicizing Religion

An "aura of self-conscious irrelevance" (*Washington Post*) surrounded the June 17 House of Representatives debate on a "juvenile justice" bill reacting to the Columbine High School massacre. Said Barney Frank (D-MA), "This is not a serious conversation about youth violence. This is politics."

Crowning the debate was a 248-180 vote in favor of an amendment to the bill by Rep. Robert Aderholt (R-AL) that would authorize posting the Ten Commandments in public schools. Most Republicans supported the measure; most Democrats opposed it.

In interviews on June 17 we pointed out that the provision is clearly unconstitutional, as the Supreme Court ruled in a Kentucky case on a similar measure in 1980. A major problem is that major faith groups differ on the wording and numbering of the commandments (Does the first read "the Lord thy God" or "Jehovah thy Lord?") and having any level of government decide which is the preferred version puts government in the constitutionally dubious position of making judgements about religion.

The House also voted 238-189 for an amendment to allow religious expression and prayer in public schools. We pointed out in interviews that there is no evidence that school prayer or display of the Commandments would reduce juvenile crime. When the Supreme Court's school prayer rulings were handed down in the early 1960s, fewer than half of the nation's school districts had organized, school-sponsored prayer and there is no evidence that the presence or absence of school prayer made any difference. We also noted that mandatory prayer in all German schools after 1933 did not deter men in Nazi uniforms from their uncivilized behavior.

We agree with the reaction of Baptist minister and Interfaith Alliance executive director Dr. G. Welton Gaddy:

"Once again, religious freedom is under attack in Congress. As a student of the Bible who respects the sacredness of Holy Scripture I resent the manipulation of scripture to justify religious discrimination or to advance partisan politics."

"If legislators want to legislate commandments, they should adopt two that people of faith and goodwill expect of elected leaders in government: Thou shall not politicize the Ten Commandments for partisan purposes; and, Thou shall not manipulate religion or religious expression for partisan gain."

"These amendments have Pat Robertson's fingerprints all over them. When will Congress realize that Robertson's extreme agenda is bad for religion and bad for politics."

As we went to press it is uncertain how these congressional meddlings with religion would fare in the Senate or in conference committee.

Prescribed Piety

The National Day of Prayer, held this year on May 6, was designed to advance the religious and political objectives of evangelical Protestant Christianity. This has become painfully evident in recent years.

A full-time National Prayer Committee based in the evangelical bastion of Colorado Springs and presided over by Shirley Dobson, wife of right-wing psychologist and political activist James Dobson, coordinates the events. All fifty state governors now issue annual proclamations calling on Americans to pray on the first Thursday in May. (To his credit, Minnesota governor Jesse Ventura refused to do so.)

This strange admixture of church and state slipped by the courts and other guardians of separation of church and state in 1952 when Congress approved it. While relatively innocuous during its first three decades, the event was hijacked by the Religious Right during the Reagan years. Today there is no pretense of objectivity. Robert Velarde, a spokesperson for the National Day of Prayer Task Force admitted, "We do promote the event from a Christian perspective." He even sneered at interreligious services, saying that "we're prohibited biblically to give other faiths a platform to promote their beliefs."

The 5,000 "coordinators" for the annual event adhere to similar views. Illinois State Coordinator Claudia Dunne said the

continued on page 6

Voice of Reason is the quarterly newsletter of Americans for Religious Liberty, P.O. Box 6656, Silver Spring, MD 20916. (Telephone 301/598-2447.) The newsletter is sent to all contributors to ARL.

Editor: Edd Doerr

Associate Editor: Albert J. Menendez

Canadian Correspondent: John Clubine

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.

President: John M. Swomley; Treasurer: Kenneth K. Gjemre; Secretary: Anne Lindsay.

Board of Directors includes officers and Maury Abraham, Mary Jane DeFrank, Gilbert Feldman, Joanne Goldsmith, Marilyn Hutton, Gary Marx, Robert S. Peck, Mary Sosa, Rev. James E. Wood, Jr.

National Advisory Board: M. David Alexander, Francisco Ayala, Rev. Charles Bergstrom, Walter Brueggeman, Rev. John Buehrens, Burton Caine, Bob Chase, Joseph Chuman, Ramsey Clark, William Sloane Coffin, Denise Davidoff, Norman Dorsen, Niles Eldredge, Edward L. Ericson, Joseph Fahey, Augusta Finklestein, Rev. Carl Flemister, Keith Geiger, Laurie Godfrey, Morris Goodman, Stephen Jay Gould, Sister Pat Kenoyer, Frances Kissling, Paul Kurtz, Rev. James Lawson, Rev. Barry Lynn, Rabbi Morris B. Margolies, Ernst Mayr, James T. McCollum, Rev. Jack Mendelsohn, Rev. Robert Meneilly, Rev. O. Eugene Pickett, Alan Powell, Samuel Rabinove, Howard Radest, Rosemary Ruether, Rev. William F. Schulz, Eugenie Scott, Rev. Bruce Southworth, Rev. A. Knighton Stanley, Philippa Strum, Ruti Teitel, Sister Margaret Traxler, Rev. David D. Van Strien, Edward O. Wilson, Rabbi Sherwin T. Wine, Elin M. Winn, Walter Wink.

Executive Director: Edd Doerr

Research Director: Albert J. Menendez

Counsel: Ronald Lindsay

Midwest Regional Director: Matthew Stark

Administrative Assistant: Barbara Turner

Voucher Movement

continued from page 1

Illinois Education Association president Robert B. Haisman said that voucher supporters "now have their foot in the door." He added, "If this isn't declared unconstitutional, we're going to be back in the legislature every year increasing the tax credits by percentages until it really starts to divert money away from public schools." The state affiliate of the National Education Association plans to file a lawsuit against the measure.

The news was not all bad, however, on the voucher front. The New Mexico legislature resoundingly rejected Republican Governor Gary Johnson's \$3,000 per student voucher program. The May 10 vote came during a special legislative session the governor called to deal with vouchers and the state budget. The scheme was rejected 29-11 in the Senate and 50-20 in the House.

The Texas legislature refused to give Governor George W. Bush a voucher "pilot program" that he supported after an acrimonious and intensely fought debate. The Texas Freedom Foundation, teachers and civil rights groups beat back the voucher juggernaut.

In Pennsylvania Republican Governor Tom Ridge's voucher bill has stalled in the state legislature. The tuition voucher scheme proposed by the governor would grant \$1,400 per child to low and middle income families who utilize private and parochial schools. While there is a family income cap of \$15,000 in the first year, it rises to \$75,000 after five years. The estimated cost to taxpayers is \$60 million in the first year and \$600 million in the fifth year.

One reason why legislators balked at the plan is that it would apply only to seven counties, including Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and their suburbs. Legislators from the other 60 counties saw little to support what House Democrats called "a private school bailout plan."

A statewide poll of 1,227 adults by the respected Public Mind Survey of Mansfield University showed 45% opposed to vouchers, 37% in favor, and 18% undecided. Even labeling the proposal "equal opportunity grants" has not convinced residents of the Keystone State to support the plan.

Here are voucher-related developments in other states and cities:

Ohio: The Ohio Supreme Court struck down a voucher program applying only to Cleveland, in which four of every five voucher schools were sectarian. Cleveland's program diverted more than \$5 million from Ohio's aid to disadvantaged students program and spent one-fourth of the funds on students already attending private and parochial schools. Auditors found \$2 million in questionable expenditures, including \$1.4 million spent on taxi services for students. Unfortunately, the court sidestepped the church-state issue, ruling instead on a narrow constitutional provision barring legislative action on other grounds.

Virginia: Republican Governor James Gilmore endorsed a school voucher plan for nonpublic schools on his May 20 radio program. In the past Virginia's legislature has steadfastly refused to support programs aiding private or parochial schools.

Vermont: The town of Chittenden, which three years ago, tried to use public schools for religious schools until the state Supreme Court ruled the plan unconstitutional, has finally given up on plans to circumvent the ruling. The board voted to drop religious schools from its tuition reimbursement program rather than face another lawsuit. Initially, the town had planned to pay \$3,000 tuition for 100 students attending private Catholic schools. Chittenden is one of several rural Vermont towns that lack a

public high school.

New York City: Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, who is expected to become the Republican candidate for the U.S. Senate next year, has endorsed a voucher program to be run by the mayor's office. The mayor has not yet explained where the public funds for the voucher pilot program will come from, provoking strong opposition from Schools Chancellor Rudy Crew.

Milwaukee: Since the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear a challenge to the Wisconsin Supreme Court's upholding of Milwaukee's voucher program, the state is expanding it. The number of students is expected to increase from 6,000 to 10,000, at a cost to taxpayers of an additional \$50 million. Eighty-six private schools now participate in the so-called "Milwaukee Parental School Choice Program" this year, a figure that is expected to increase to 99 next year.

continued on page 5

A Quantum Leap

One bright spot in the generally gloomy skies of the voucher fight is a decision handed down by the First Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals which declared school vouchers unconstitutional.

The late May ruling in Boston determined that any student voucher program which would include private religious schools in the state of Maine would violate the constitutional provisions mandating separation of church and state. This appellate decision upholding a lower court ruling in Maine is the most damaging to voucher advocates because it represents the highest rung on the legal ladder except for the U.S. Supreme Court, which may ultimately have to rule on the controversial voucher programs.

The decision is binding in Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Puerto Rico.

In its decision upholding Maine's refusal to pay parochial school tuition in rural areas where public schools do not exist, the Appeals Court said that "approving direct payments of tuition by the state to sectarian schools represents a quantum leap that we are unwilling to take."

Maine law allows and pays parents who live in towns without public schools to send their children to the nearest public school or nonsectarian private schools. This policy was challenged by five families who wanted the state to pay for tuition to an all-male Catholic school. The Maine Supreme Court upheld the state policy in April. The right-wing Institute for Justice plans to appeal the First Circuit ruling to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The Vermont Supreme Court ruled unanimously on June 1 that a state tuition program may not include religious schools. Inclusion of sectarian schools would violate the Vermont Constitution's provision that no state resident should be compelled "to support any place of worship . . . contrary to the dictates of conscience." Vermont's highest court found that any use of public funds to support church-related private schools would be unconstitutional "in the absence of adequate safeguards against the use of such funds for religious worship." Vermont law allows school districts to pay tuition costs for students in nearby public or nonsectarian private schools in towns which have no public high schools.

The Democrats

continued from page 1

port for mail transportation on Sundays, opposition to prohibition, or support for religious and ethnic neutrality in immigration reform, the Democrats were more often seen as the religiously libertarian party. The Republicans, as successors of the Federalists and Whigs, favored a greater role for religion in public life and in the public educational system. In the North the Republican Party was the Protestant party, for both native-born Americans and for Protestant immigrants. The Civil War dismantled and modified party politics to some extent, since almost all white Southerners preferred the Democrats, even though most Southerners were evangelicals and supported religiously-oriented politics. But while some Southern Democrats favored a greater public role for religion and some Northeastern and Pacific Coast Republicans were more separationist, the two parties on a national level diverged rather sharply on religious matters.

Consequently, the Democrats have become the supporters of abortion rights, the opponents of public aid to religious education, and defenders of religious neutrality in public schools. A series of major votes in Congress shows this pattern clearly. A November 4, 1997, vote on vouchers showed 85% of Republicans

and only 2% of Democrats in favor of this scheme to aid private and religious schools. Abortion and contraception-related health issues usually show about 85% of Democrats on one side and 85% of Republicans on the other side. On issues relating to school prayer and religious group activities in public schools, Republicans are 85% to 90% in favor of such activities, while only 10% to 15% of Democrats want to see religious neutrality in education compromised.

Therefore, it is not surprising that both Democratic candidates for president adhere to these basic principles, with one exception on one issue.

Al Gore

Vice President Al Gore is a strong supporter of public education and supports expansion of federal support for public education. He has long opposed vouchers or other policy initiatives that would aid private and parochial schools. He opposes government-mandated or coerced school prayer. (His father, the late Tennessee senator Albert Gore, Sr., lost his seat in 1970 largely as a result of his principled opposition to school prayer, which, then as now, is an unpopular position in heavily Protestant and fundamentalist Tennessee.

Gore Moves Right

Vice President Al Gore has seemingly moved to the right on social and religious issues in recent months. He began the new look when, in addressing a memorial service in Littleton, Colorado, Gore stressed faith and religious values. Gore was praised lavishly for his Littleton comments by *Weekly Standard* editor Fred Barnes, a political conservative and a religious fundamentalist.

Gore went further in a May 24 address in Atlanta in which he proposed expanding federal aid to "faith-based" organizations which allegedly solve social problems. Congress approved a so-called "charitable choice" program in 1996, opening the way for millions of federal dollars to be channeled to religious organizations. Civil liberties and church-state separation groups vigorously opposed government aid or "partnership" between government and religious groups which stress religious transformation to solve social problems. Religious groups are not supposed to proselytize but there is no mechanism to assure that those programs are open to all individuals. Overwhelming Republican support and many Democratic defections helped pass the charitable choice bill, sponsored by Missouri Republican John Ashcroft. The program even allows religious groups to bid on government contracts for job training and welfare-related services.

Gore's address at a Salvation Army office went far toward appeasing religious conservatives. Gore said American life "can be strengthened when we are not afraid to make connections between spirituality and politics." Gore also pledged, "If you elect me your president, the voices of faith-based organizations will be integral to the policies set forth in my administration."

Gore said that it should be easier for religious organizations to receive federal grants, especially in combating homelessness, youth violence and drug addiction. He said religious groups can help solve social disintegration "with

public funds and without having to alter the religious character that is so often key to their effectiveness."

Gore added, "I believe that faith in itself is sometimes essential to spark a personal transformation." Gore criticized what he called "allergy to faith" in society and claimed, "The moment has come for Washington to catch up to the rest of America."

Going even further, Gore said the country needs a "new partnership" between church and state and should reject both "secularism and right-wing religion." He said America was afflicted by a "cultural soul sickness," while also declaring that he "believed strongly in the separation of church and state."

ARL executive director Edd Doerr wrote to Gore, urging the vice president "to reconsider" his support for expanding charitable choice. "There is more than enough work to be done by government without its having also to subsidize faith-based organizations. Let individual citizens and churches continue to do their good work with voluntary support."

Doerr added that Gore's position change "is not likely to win your campaign any votes from the Religious Right and will not please voters who have been happy with the Clinton-Gore administration's courageous defense of church-state separation."

People For the American Way president Carole Shields added her dissent in a letter to Gore. "What you are proposing is a constitutional lose-lose situation. This proposal will undermine the Constitution by supporting the practice of religion or it will undermine the churches' freedom by imposing limits on religious expression." Shields also criticized the vice president's reference to "hollow secularism," saying that "such divisive rhetoric is unworthy of this debate and undeserved by people who are wrestling with these issues in good faith."

The Clinton-Gore administration has made education a top priority issue, stressing educational reforms and widening opportunities within the public school system. Opposition to vouchers has been a touchstone of its policies on the controversial subject of school prayer and on-campus religious activities, Clinton and Gore have tried to steer a middle course, emphasizing that students do not need to leave their religious convictions at home and that schools need not be religion-free zones, but steadfastly opposing attempts to ally the schools with particular religious positions or the religious views held by a majority in a given area. This administration's guidelines on religious activities in public schools have sought to defuse religious controversies before they erupt into full-blown controversies that poison interfaith relations and lead to unending legal fights. While not totally successful, these efforts, supported by Gore, have preserved interfaith harmony in most regions of the country and contrast sharply with Republican attempts to cater exclusively to conservative Protestant agendas.

The vice president has been a strong supporter of abortion rights at home and abroad. He has shown interest in the problem of overpopulation and its attendant effects on economic and political developments in third world countries. At home he favors access to abortion services and opposes government intervention in what he sees as a private decision.

Admittedly, Gore's position on abortion has evolved considerably since his days as a House and Senate member, where in 1977 he voted for the Hyde Amendment, which restricts federal funding of abortion except in life-threatening situations. He voted against amendments that would have extended federal funding in cases of incest and rape. He also voted to prohibit federal employee health insurance programs from including abortion coverage in their plans. He continued to support so-called pro-life amendments in 1984 and 1987. By 1992 he had switched his positions on most of these issues. He endorsed the inclusion of abortion services in any national health insurance program. As Democratic vice presidential candidate that year, Gore articulated a coherent pro-choice position, especially in his debates with then Vice President Dan Quayle.

Gore is a Baptist who once studied theology at liberal Vanderbilt Seminary in Nashville. His religious and political views are decidedly to the left of the average Southern Baptist.

Bill Bradley

Former three-term New Jersey Senator Bill Bradley is the only other announced Democratic presidential candidate. Bradley, who grew up in a well-to-do Republican Presbyterian family in a Missouri suburb of St. Louis, attended public schools, Princeton University, and was a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford. Known as a star basketball player at Princeton, Bradley played in the NBA for the New York Knicks from 1967 to 1977.

In 1978 he was elected U.S. Senator from New Jersey, defeating ultraconservative Republican Jeff Bell, who is now an adviser to Gary Bauer. Bradley was reelected in 1984 and 1990, barely defeating now-New Jersey Governor Christine Todd Whitman in the latter year. Bradley did not seek reelection in 1996.

His record was generally that of a moderate liberal, more liberal than Al Gore, but less liberal than Ted Kennedy. His ADA ratings were generally in the 85% to 90% range. His support for progressive positions was higher on social and foreign policy questions than it was on economic issues.

Bradley voted against the Robert Bork and Clarence Thomas nominations to the Supreme Court, for handgun restrictions,

against the Gulf War and for the Reagan budget in 1981. Bradley supported more tax cut measures than most Democrats and he favored the line-item veto. He actively supported NAFTA and GATT.

He is anti-school prayer and pro-choice on abortion. He opposed the abortion gag rule imposed by the Reagan and Bush administrations.

But on the question of vouchers, Bradley has long departed from the Democratic mainstream. He even supported tuition tax credits twenty years ago. In his 1996 memoir, *Time Present, Time Past*, Bradley writes, "I had committed to support tuition tax credits during my first campaign in 1978. I had initially backed the idea because of the large Catholic school population in New Jersey and, in particular, because of the role that parochial schools played in urban settings."

Bradley claimed that his support for tax credits and then vouchers was predicated on the fact that half of New Jersey's urban-Catholic school children were black or Hispanic. But he also admitted that tax aid "might also provide some room for tuition increases, which would help the schools' finances." This kind of reasoning raises a serious question about Bradley's educational posture. He also makes extravagant claims for parochial schools when he writes, "In depressed American cities, the choice was not between public schools and private schools but — given the dysfunction of many urban public schools — between private schools and chaos."

Bradley, who celebrates his Scotch-Irish heritage, was once an active member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, which openly proselytizes in public high schools. Bradley participated in a Billy Graham crusade in London, but the racism, "narrowness of view and uncharitable attitudes of many who professed the same faith" caused him to break with evangelical Protestantism. He muses, "Like the Scotch-Irish who met in open fields so as to be unadorned and unencumbered by religious strictures, I seek my own individual faith."

Voucher Movement

continued from page 1

More than one-third of the schools have been charged with violating the random selection requirement, which requires voucher schools to submit plans on how they will accept students on a nondiscriminatory basis. The NAACP and People for the American Way have filed a complaint with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Two Lutheran schools appear to have violated the law in an egregious manner. Emmaus Lutheran School requires that potential students submit a certificate of baptism and the name of the church they attend. At Mt. Calvary Lutheran School, voucher applicants are required to complete a form enumerating the child's baptism, denominational affiliation, local church, and a statement explaining why they want their children in a Christian school. Both schools have been warned by state authorities that they cannot apply these religious tests under the program.

Moving?

Please send a change of address form to:
Americans for Religious Liberty
P.O. Box 6656
Silver Spring, MD 20916.

Smaller is Better

By Bob Chase

Each spring at Passover, Jews sing a song called *Dayenu*, which, loosely translated, means, “it would have been enough.” The gist of the song is that during the Exodus, one blessing would have been enough, but miraculously, good news kept coming.

I thought of *Dayenu* recently when more good news was released by the Tennessee STAR project, the nation’s most comprehensive study of the impact of class size on student achievement.

Certainly, every parent knows instinctively that reducing class size will improve a child’s education: Children thrive in the warmth of individual attention from adults. But the STAR project confirms this common sense with impressive empirical evidence.

The gold standard

Dubbed “the gold standard” by other class size researchers, the STAR project was launched in 1985 and has tracked some 6,500 students in 79 schools since kindergarten. Initially, it found that children who attended kindergarten through third grade in classes with 13-17 pupils did significantly better on tests than children in classes with 22-25 pupils.

Five years later, STAR found that children who’d been in smaller classes continued to outperform others in reading, math, and science, even though they, too, were now in larger classes. By eighth grade, in fact, kids who’d attended the smaller classes in K-3 were at least one full year ahead of their peers academically. This is huge.

Today, students in the study have begun donning caps and gowns for their high school graduations. And yet, some 14 years later, those from the smaller K-3 classes continue to reap benefits. A greater percentage are graduating from high school than students from the larger classes. Their dropout rate is lower and their GPAs higher. A greater number are ranked within the top 25 percent of their class and have taken the SAT or ACT exams.

Most impressive are the strides made by minority students. The initial STAR project showed that, while students of all backgrounds benefit from smaller classes, those who gain the most academically are poor, minority, inner-city, and rural children. Now STAR has found that, when class sizes are reduced, the gap that usually exists between black and white students taking college entrance exams is cut by more than half as well.

Research-tested reform

Currently, a cadre of businesspeople are touting “opportunity scholarships” — i.e., vouchers — as a cure-all for children in troubled school districts. Awarding \$600-\$1,600 in private school tuition to inner-city children through a lottery, they claim, is the only way to improve education. In Florida, such an assumption has become law. Under new legislation, students in troubled public schools will be given private school tuition vouchers, courtesy of the taxpayers.

The STAR project underscores how reckless and misguided such policies are.

Vouchers have not been shown to improve student achievement, and they drain precious resources away from the public schools that need them most. Meanwhile, reducing class sizes in the earliest grades is a *proven* reform that can improve student achievement *wholesale* for a *prolonged* period of time. It has more

opportunity, equality, and accountability built into it than any plan to funnel limited numbers of children into unaccountable private institutions.

Right now, the vouchers vs. smaller class sizes debate is being played out in Milwaukee. There, approximately 6,000 children are being educated through a voucher program costing \$25 million while 11,000 other children are being educated through SAGE, a statewide program that reduces class size in selected public schools — at roughly half the cost. Tests show that students in the SAGE program outperform their peers using vouchers.

A culture of success

Today’s youth culture often generates peer pressure not to succeed. However, reducing K-3 class size in inner-city public schools primes a critical mass of students for academic success early on. Scholastic achievement is no longer cast as the province of a few who have been estranged from their peers or transported elsewhere.

Yes, reducing class size costs money. But it’s an investment that’s proven to deliver increasing returns for years on end. This, I believe, is news worth singing about.

Bob Chase is president of the National Education Association. This article is reprinted by permission.

Prescribed Piety

continued from page 2

national occasion is only “for the body of Christ so we haven’t invited Mormons or Muslims.” She added, “The only people who get to the microphone are those we know have a personal relationship with Christ.”

Washington Times religion editor Larry Witham was right when he wrote that the Prayer Day “is mainly a Protestant evangelical push in a nation of growing religious pluralism.”

The Prayer Day’s defenders are hard-pressed to justify the event. U.S. Senate Chaplain Lloyd Ogilvie, a conservative Presbyterian who owes his job to an evangelical clique that selected him, claimed, “There is no intention of offending or excluding anyone. In fact, the inclusivity has been increasing.”

Ogilvie may see more inclusivity but it is not apparent to the rest of us. Americans do not need government telling them when, where, or how to pray. Polls show that large majorities of Americans pray daily, not just on the first Thursday in May. And Americans who do not wish to pray should not be asked to do so by official or quasi-official agencies.

Admittedly, the National Day of Prayer would be difficult to challenge because no federal funds are directly involved, and because the courts today seem reluctant to challenge symbolic, as opposed to substantive, examples of church-state collusion.

But it would be more in keeping with U.S. traditions of religious pluralism to let the annual May prayerfest go the way of other inappropriate activities that are no longer relevant to most citizens.

Home Schoolers Survey: High Marks, Privileged Families

The first-ever independent national survey of 20,760 students who are home-schooled showed that their achievement test scores were in the 70th to 80th percentiles, well above the average for all students in public and private schools. But the same study suggested that the high income and educational levels of the parents played a very significant role in spurring the children to high levels of educational achievement.

The survey was conducted in the spring of 1998 by Dr. Lawrence M. Rudner of the University of Maryland and released on March 23, 1999. It was underwritten by a \$35,000 grant from the Home School Legal Defense Association in Purcellville, Virginia. The students took either the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills or the Tests of Achievement and Proficiency, standard exams given widely throughout the U.S.

Home schoolers performed well at every grade level, K-12, and 25% of them are enrolled at one or more grades above their peers in public and private schools. There was no difference in achievement by gender, but students from the wealthiest and best educated families did significantly better than students from less affluent families, a finding replicated in studies of all schools in the U.S.

It is the family profiles that explain most or all of these high test scores, according to Rudner. For example, home schoolers' parents have a median family income of \$52,000 compared to \$36,000 for all U.S. parents, a 45% difference. A remarkable 54% of home school parents have family incomes exceeding \$50,000 compared to 32% of all families. And while 35% of all families have incomes below \$25,000, only 8% of home schoolers are at the low end of the income levels.

A similar difference is found in the educational attainment level of parents. Nearly 65% of home school parents are college graduates, compared to 22% of all U.S. adults. Nearly 88% of home school parents have some education beyond high school compared to 48% of all adults. Nearly 77% of home school mothers do not work outside the home, compared to only 30% of all U.S. mothers.

Other differences are stark. Over 97% of home schooled children live with both parents who are married, in contrast to 72% of all families with school-age children. About 94% of home schoolers are non-Hispanic whites, compared to 67% of all American students. And while 29% of all U.S. school pupils are black or Hispanic, just 1% of home schoolers belong to these large minority groups. (Oddly, 5% of home schoolers are Asian American or Native American, compared to 4% nationwide.)

Home schoolers also live in larger families, where 3.1 children are the norm. A surprising number, 24%, of home school parents possess teaching certificates, far above the percentage of all Americans. And home schoolers watch much less television than all U.S. children, with 65% watching one hour or less per day, compared to 25% of all students who watch that little television. Nearly 39% of all students watch more than four hours of television per day, but less than 2% of home schoolers spend that many hours in front of the tube. Interestingly, computer usage is much less common among home schoolers. At grade eleven 41% of home schoolers never use computers compared to 16% of all

students, while 31% use computers several times a week or daily, in contrast to half of all students who do so.

One flaw in the survey analysis, admitted by Rudner, is that home schoolers should be compared to comparable samples of public and private school students (upper middle income, white or well educated groups) rather than with all public and private students, but the data are not readily available for that level of sophisticated analysis.

One significant difference between home schoolers, who may total as many as 1.2 million students nationwide, and all students is religion. Nearly half of all home schoolers' religious preference is Baptist or "Independent Fundamentalist," while only one-fourth or less of the U.S. population classifies itself this way (and less than 20% of whites). Almost 15% of home schoolers are Pentecostals or Charismatic Christians, compared to 2 or 3% of all Americans. Only 5% are Catholics, though 28% of all U.S. residents claim to be Catholics. Protestants of all types make up 88% of home schoolers, compared to 58% of all Americans, and the vast majority of home school families who are Protestant are evangelical or fundamentalist Protestants, not mainstream groups like Methodists or Lutherans. (Only about 11% of home schoolers belong to the Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran or Reformed Churches.)

The survey also found that students performed better at every grade level if their families spent more than \$600 per year on books and educational materials. Ohio, Virginia, and Georgia were the top three states in number of students participating in this survey, followed by Texas, North Carolina, New York, Florida, California, Colorado and Minnesota.

This survey, "Scholastic Achievement and Demographic Characteristics of Home School Students in 1998" is available on the web at www.11epaa.asu.edu.

ARL in Action

ARL president John M. Swomley has recently addressed audiences in Lawrence, Kansas, Basalt, Colorado, Cleveland, Ohio and Gainesville, Florida. Executive director Edd Doerr addressed conference, church, and other audiences in Erie, Pennsylvania, New York City, Newark, New Jersey, Elgin, Illinois, Columbus, Ohio, Salt Lake City, Utah, Indianapolis, Indiana, and Richmond and Fredericksburg, Virginia. He was also a talk show guest in Grand Rapids, Michigan and Gainesville, Florida.

Doerr's article, "Give Us Your Money . . .", a report on the U.S. Department of Education's 1998 study on using private and church schools to relieve public school overcrowding, was published in the June issue of the *Phi Delta Kappan*, the professional educational journal. Reprints are available from ARL for 50 cents or a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Abortion at the Polls: Washington State, 1998

Throughout the Clinton presidency, Republicans in Congress have pressed for a constitutional amendment banning a late-term, rarely performed abortion procedure they have mislabeled "partial birth" abortion. The Republican-dominated Congress since 1995 has just fallen short of the two-thirds necessary to override President Clinton's vetoes on the ban. Polls repeatedly show a majority of Americans favor this policy. But do they?

Last November voters in Colorado and Washington, where Republicans won a majority of Congressional seats, rejected state proposals to ban late-term abortions. An analysis of the Washington State results shows how exaggerated are Republican and conservative claims that a nationwide ban would be acceptable to the U.S. electorate.

Washington State voters were asked to approve Initiative 694, which would "limit partial-birth infanticide" and make the performance of this medical procedure a felony, punishable by imprisonment. While claiming not to apply if performed to "prevent the death of a mother," it contained no provisions relating to the health of the mother, the reason President Clinton repeatedly vetoed congressional actions on the subject. Anti-choice activists, frustrated by their inability to induce the state legislature to ban the procedure, gathered the necessary signatures, mostly in churches, to place the initiative on the ballot. The bias of the advocates of Initiative 694 can be seen in the paragraph that defined abortion as "intentionally killing a living human fetus."

The voters resoundingly rejected the ban by 58% to 42%. The raw vote was 950,574 to 701,756, a nearly 250,000 vote plurality. The divisions by county and region show how divisive is the abortion rights issue. Opposition ranged from 74% in San Juan County to 40% in Franklin County. This 34-point difference on the abortion issue from high support to low support compared to only a 16-point difference on the school voucher issue in 1996.

The Washington results roughly mirror those in other states. The strongest pro-choice victory came in the state's highest income and best educated county, San Juan. King County, the greater

Seattle area, voted 67% pro-choice (or "No" on Initiative 694), which provided 183,000 of the 249,000 vote plurality since about one-third of the statewide vote is cast in King County. Liberal Seattle was overwhelmingly pro-choice but so were the suburbs, which generally prefer moderate Republican congressional candidates — a clear warning to the national GOP.

Three rural and small town counties in western Washington, Jefferson and Pacific, which border the ocean, and interior Mason County, were also in the top half dozen pro-choice counties. They are liberal Democratic strongholds, though Mason was also one of Ross Perot's strongest counties in 1992 and 1996. Pacific County is an old liberal labor area. Thurston County, in the same area, includes the state capital, Olympia. It, too, is an increasingly liberal and Democratic area, which is often true of state capitals, with their governmental bureaucracies and research agencies. Voters in public service tend to be pro-choice, environmentally aware, and supporters of progressive politics. Ralph Nader, for example, did well in the pro-choice counties in 1996, winning 7% of the presidential vote in San Juan, 5% in Jefferson and 4% in King Counties.

Political orientation of the counties affected the abortion rights referendum. The five most Democratic counties voted 66% against the abortion ban. Perot strongholds were near the state average of 58% against, particularly in blue-collar Snohomish County, a Seattle suburb and 1992 Perot stronghold, which voted 56% No. Six of the nine counties where Perot did best supported the pro-choice position. On the other hand, four of Bob Dole's five strongest counties supported the ban. Of the fifteen counties carried by Dole, 12 supported the abortion ban.

Educational attainment has long proved to be a factor in voting on abortion rights and other social issues. All of Washington's well-educated counties voted heavily pro-choice, including Whitman County, in the far eastern part of the state bordering Idaho. Whitman is the home of Washington State University and has the highest percentage of college educated adults. Historically Republican, Whitman supported Barry Goldwater in 1964 but bolted to Bill Clinton in 1992 and 1996, showing once again how Republicans have lost ground in many of their traditional strongholds when the alliance with the Religious Right became so pronounced. Five of the eight counties with the lowest level of education voted for the abortion ban.

Income closely parallels education, though not quite to the same degree. The pro-choice vote rose as income increased but lower income voters split pretty evenly on the referendum, with small pro-choice majorities among urban blue-collar voters.

Religious affiliation is a factor in abortion rights voting, but it is not clear cut denominationalism that matters. It is the adherence to the more conservative wing of each religious group and the intensity of involvement in religious communities that have shaped voting decisions, according to a growing body of scholars.

Washington is unique in its low level of religious adherence. Only a third of voters are members of any religious group and only 29% attend religious services on an average week, the lowest percentage in the country, according to a 1998 Gallup Poll. Most religiously non-affiliated voters and independent-minded adherents tend to be pro-choice on abortion, a factor clearly revealed in the Washington referendum. Of the five counties where a majority of the population are church members, four supported the anti-abortion ban. Many voters in these counties are evangelicals, Mennonites and Seventh-day Adventists. Interestingly, though,

NEW FROM ARL

Who Goes to Nonpublic Schools: A Study of U.S. Census Data

by Albert J. Menendez, 32 pp., \$10.00

Four factors emerge as central to higher than average nonpublic school enrollment, according to this first-ever analysis of U.S. census data on the subject by ARL associate director and political demographer Al Menendez: religious affiliation, high income, ethnic ancestry, and the racial profile of local public schools.

Available from:

Americans for Religious Liberty
PO Box 6656
Silver Spring, MD 20916

Lincoln County, the county with the highest church membership, voted 51% pro-choice. Lincoln County is a farm county in the east, and most voters are Catholic and Lutheran. It is a Republican stronghold which last backed a Democrat for president when Harry Truman carried it in 1948. It may be that membership in more "mainline" churches predisposes voters to a more moderate position. Spokane County, for example, with a large Catholic population centered around Gonzaga University, also voted 51% against the abortion ban.

It may be significant that Garfield and Franklin Counties, which have large religious populations, were the strongest anti-abortion and pro-voucher counties and have a long heritage of religion-dominated voting. A generation ago, Franklin, Douglas and Cowlitz Counties supported Democrat Adlai Stevenson for president in 1956 but switched to Republican Richard Nixon in 1960 solely to oppose Democratic nominee John F. Kennedy because he was Catholic. Ironically, most of the anti-Catholic counties from 1960 were anti-abortion in 1998, suggesting that "alliances" between Catholics and fundamentalists are shaky at best, given the anti-Catholic attitudes of many conservative Protestant voters.

Finally, regionalism and size of community were important in the 1998 vote. A solid 61% pro-choice vote came in the metropolitan (city and suburban) areas of the state, while rural areas were closely contested. In rural western and coastal area, 53% voted pro-choice. In eastern Washington 51% voted anti-choice. One surprise came in Clark County (Vancouver) in the southwest, nearer to Portland than Seattle. Clark voted for Clinton but also supported the anti-abortion ban 53% to 47%.

Rural eastern Washington is ultraconservative and has few minority voters of any kind. The John Birch Society was strong in this region in the 1960s and Barry Goldwater ran well in 1964. It not only favors Republican candidates but prefers right-wing Republicans. This region of the state supported the fundamentalist Republican candidate for governor, Ellen Craswell, in 1996, while the rest of the state soundly rejected her theocratic campaign. Craswell, a long-time Religious Right zealot, broke with the GOP in 1998 and formed the Christian Heritage Party, costing the GOP a U.S. House seat in the November elections. It is not surprising that the anti-abortion position received its highest level of support in a region of Washington that resembles the bordering state of Idaho politically.

Religious Right Influence on Foreign Policy

William Martin, professor of religion and public policy at Rice University, has concluded that the U.S.' domestic Religious Right has "taken advantage of a Congress that has proved itself to be extremely assertive in its efforts to shape U.S. foreign policy and has also sought to widen the scope of their international agenda."

Writing in the spring 1999 issue of the prestigious quarterly *Foreign Policy*, a publication of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Martin says that "the Christian Right not only sees the United Nations as a threat to the American family but as a mechanism that allows a secular elite to threaten family values worldwide." Martin continues, "The campaign against the United Nations has had an impact. In large measure because of opposition from the Religious Right, the United States did not contribute to the UN Population Fund in 1998, jeopardizing a program that provides contraceptives to nearly 1.4 million women in 150 countries."

Thanks to House Republicans and the Religious Right, the U.S. has refused to pay \$1 billion owed to the UN, unless the federal government bars aid to all organizations which provide abortion services in the developing world. Martin adds that "Christian Right leaders have pressured Congress to withhold U.S. contributions to organizations such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the United Nations. Delays in funding have jeopardized U.S. voting rights in the UN and threatened the IMF's ability to stabilize collapsing currencies in Asia and Latin America."

The Religious Right has sought to deny most-favored nation trading status to China, because of allegations of religious persecution against Christians, and has pressured the U.S. government to impose unilateral sanctions against many governments which are said to violate the International Religious Freedom Act passed by Congress.

Martin, a theologically informed observer, notes that the Religious Right is dominated by "isolationism and a fear of compro-

missing American safety and economic interests and sacrificing national sovereignty to an international, liberal world order." Some of this hard-line isolationism stems, Martin argues, "from a conviction that increasing globalization is a fulfillment of dire biblical prophecies foreshadowing the return of Christ and the onset of Armageddon."

Martin warns, "It is patently mistaken to imagine that religious conservatives will soon give up the fight to reshape American domestic and foreign policy to fit their vision of what a godly nation should stand for. . . . [T]he Religious Right has an endurance that goes beyond the zeal of its activists."

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.

Please contact us if you would like further information.

Americans for Religious Liberty
P.O. Box 6656
Silver Spring, MD 20916
Telephone: 301-598-2447

Update

Kiryas Joel Loses . . . Again

In an action reminiscent of the movie "Groundhog Day," New York State's highest court ruled on May 11 that the state legislature's third try at creating a special school district for the Satmar Hasidic sect village of Kiryas Joel is unconstitutional. Previous attempts to set up the special, religiously segregated school district were struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court and New York's highest court.

American Jewish Congress executive director Phil Baum said the latest ruling sent an "unambiguous message to legislative supporters of the district: Stop defying the Constitution." Baum said that the legislation re-establishing the district is "nothing but a sham."

Reproductive Rights

Maine voters in November will face a referendum vote on a proposed constitutional amendment to outlaw a late abortion procedure. Similar initiatives have been defeated in Colorado and Washington State. Interested pro-choice readers may contact the Campaign to Protect Women's Health, P.O. Box 10899, Portland, ME 14104.

Wal-Mart, the country's fifth largest drug retailer, announced in May that it will not sell the "morning after" pill Preven in its 2,450 stores. Women's health experts say this decision will hurt many women in small towns and rural areas where Wal-Mart is the only pharmacy. (Wal-Mart owner John Walton, incidentally, is a major supporter of school voucher plans that would seriously damage public education and undermine church-state separation.)

Sen. Jesse Helms (R-NC) has blocked U.S. funding for the International Planned Parenthood Federation affiliate in Haiti, the hemisphere's poorest country, where the population has tripled since the 1950s.

Both houses of Congress voted again this spring, for the tenth time since 1995, to ban access to abortion in military hospitals for service members and their families, even if the patient pays for the procedure herself. The ban endangers the health of military personnel and their families overseas and violates service women's privacy by requiring them to disclose their reasons for medical leave to their superiors.

Charter School Ups and Downs

Pennsylvania governor Tom Ridge, a fervent advocate of vouchers for private and parochial schools, has now moved to support the charter school movement. Pennsylvania's Charter School law gives local school boards the final authority to grant or to disallow the establishment of charter schools which are by definition public but often promote singular styles of education.

Because of Ridge's insistence, a Charter Schools Appeal Board, which may overrule the local school boards, has been established. The seven-member board includes the secretary of the state Department of Education and six appointees. These six, all recently appointed by Ridge, include parents, school board members, university faculty, public school teachers, and a member of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education. At least six local school boards face appeal challenges after they rejected permission to establish charter schools in their jurisdiction.

Meanwhile, the District of Columbia City Council has slashed funding for charter schools by \$15 million, saying the enrollments were inflated and the success rate of the schools is prob-

lematic. About 6,800 students are expected to enroll in the District's 27 charter schools next school term, the fall of 1999.

Ventura and National Prayer Day

Minnesota's feisty and plainspoken governor, Jesse Ventura, refused to proclaim the National Day of Prayer on May 6. Said Ventura, "I believe in the separation of church and state. We all have our own religious beliefs. There are people out there who are atheists, who don't believe at all. They are all citizens of Minnesota and I have to respect that." The governor was denounced by several Religious Right groups.

Parochial Busing Upheld

By a 4 to 3 margin, the Kentucky Supreme Court has upheld the state's long-time program of using public funds to transport students to religious private schools. In a unique twist, the majority held that the City of Louisville and Jefferson County, where the program had been challenged, complied with the state constitution because the money, \$480,000 a year, is sent to transportation companies, not directly to the religious schools. The court held that the aid benefited the "health and welfare" of the children and did not subsidize religious education. In vigorous dissents, however, three justices held that the aid did benefit parochial schools because it relieved them of having to pay the transportation costs. The dissenters argued that religious schools are inherently religious and should not be aided by all taxpayers, many or most of whom do not share the underlying religious mission of the nonpublic schools.

Graduation Prayer

The 11th Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta has declared unconstitutional a decision by the Duval County (Florida) School Board to allow prayer at high school graduation if the majority of students favor it. The 2-1 decision, affecting 17 high schools in the Jacksonville metropolitan area, said the policy violated the constitution because students and families who objected to the prayers had no alternatives except absenting themselves from the ceremony. The school board is seeking a rehearing, prior to an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Catholic Right's Own Law School

Leaders of the Catholic Right political movement have decided to reject the 24 Catholic-related law schools in the U.S. and establish their own center of ecclesiastically-dominated legal studies.

Moneyman Thomas Monaghan, billionaire founder of Domino's Pizza and frequent bankroller of far right causes, has indicated he will donate an initial \$50 million to set up Ave Maria School of Law in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The school's advisers include Justice Antonin Scalia, the U.S. Supreme Court's leading advocate of church-state accommodationism, and Robert Bork, another foe of church-state separation, who was himself rejected by the U.S. Senate in 1987 when then-President Ronald Reagan named him to the Supreme Court. While Scalia is a zealous Catholic, Bork called himself a "generic Protestant" during his Senate confirmation hearings.

Monaghan said that Ave Maria will conform to Pope John Paul II's exhortation that Catholic colleges and universities must strengthen their Catholic identity and must allow stronger hierarchical control over the teaching of religion. This demand, in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, has been widely resisted by most of America's 230 Catholic colleges.

The new law school will not be affiliated with an accredited university. It may also take decades for the school to be accredited, a problem that has in the past faced evangelical law schools established by Oral Roberts and Pat Robertson.

Robert F. Drinan, a professor at Georgetown University Law Center, had little good to say about Ave Maria. He wrote, "Some in Catholic legal education deem Ave Maria an affront. Some also think that the new school is essentially a political statement by a very conservative group of people who are utilizing Catholicism as a justification for their political convictions. Ave Maria will almost certainly continue its boast that it is more Catholic than any other Catholic law school. It will be self-righteous. By generous scholarships, it will invite students to attend a law school billed as more loyal to the church than any other. It will mock other law schools as too secularized and, in essence, unfaithful to the magisterium."

Baptist School Guilty of Discrimination

A fundamentalist Baptist private school in Rockville, Maryland, was found guilty in March of firing three long-time school employees because they were not members of Montrose Baptist Church. After a four-day trial, officials of Montrose Christian School were found guilty of violating a county anti-discrimination law and ordered to pay \$169,000 in lost pay and emotional damages to the trio. The three school employees were fired in 1996. They are Catholics and Methodists.

The case was filed by ACLU lawyer Arthur B. Spitzer. Evidence revealed that 18 employees who were not church members had been fired while most who were retained were church members. The church plans to appeal the decision by challenging the constitutionality of the law. Several years ago, Montrose Baptist Church mounted a campaign to defeat Montgomery County's ban on discrimination against gays and lesbians.

Jordan-Hatfield Award

Rep. Chet Edwards (D-TX) received the first Barbara Jordan-Mark Hatfield Courage Award of the Baptist Joint Committee (BJC) for his role in defeating the proposed Istook amendment last summer. The Istook amendment would have allowed government sponsored prayer in public schools and tax support for religious schools. (See *Voice of Reason*, No. 63.)

The BJC, an important voice for church-state separation, is also producing church bulletin inserts that explain what is wrong with school voucher plans.

Political Pulpit Penalized

IRS revocation of the tax exemption of the Church at Pierce Creek, near Binghamton, New York, was upheld by the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia on March 30. The IRS found that the church had violated the ban on partisan political activity by running ads in national newspapers attacking candidate Bill Clinton four days before the 1992 election. Pat Robertson's American Center for Law and Justice said it would appeal the ruling.

International

Buenos Aires: Argentina this year established March 25 as the official "Day of the Unborn." Argentine civil law, following Catholic Church canon law, prohibits abortion and President Carlos Menem, a convert from Islam to Catholicism (as required by the country's constitution) has supported the Vatican's position in international forums.

Manila: Though abortion is illegal and punishable by long prison terms in this 85% Catholic nation, the practice remains widespread. A 1998 survey by the Asian Development Bank found that one-third of all pregnancies in the Philippines that year were terminated by illegal abortions.

Jerusalem: The Israeli elections on May 17, toppling right-wing prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and putting the Labor Party's Ehud Barak in power, revealed the increasing religious divisions in that beleaguered nation of six million. The ultra-Orthodox religious parties increased their representation in the Knesset from 14 to 22 seats while a strongly secular party saw its total increase from 10 to 15. The middle of the road parties lost seats. Secular, cosmopolitan Tel Aviv supported Barak by a 3 to 1 margin while religion-dominated Jerusalem voted for Netanyahu 2 to 1. These sharp divisions over religious and cultural issues are likely to remain a central feature of Israeli political life for years to come.

Kigali, Rwanda: A Roman Catholic bishop, Augustin Misago, was arrested in April for participation in genocide five years ago.

Bishop Misago is being held in "preventive detention," according to Rwanda's Justice Ministry for his alleged role in refusing shelter to Tutsis who were fleeing death squads from the Hutu tribe and for sending 19 schoolgirls to their deaths. The girls were reportedly expelled from Kibeho high school sixty miles south of the capital. Justice Department officials said he will be tried either in Kigali or in his diocese of Gikongoro in southern Rwanda.

The Rwanda News Agency reported that Misago was attempting to escape the country through the offices of the Vatican envoy and with the help of the French Embassy when he was arrested. French authorities denied the report, and the Vatican nuncio refused to answer inquiries.

President Pasteur Bizimungu called on the bishop to explain his actions in the genocide which took the lives of more than 500,000 people in 1994. Nineteen Catholic priests have been jailed on the same charges, as has one Seventh-day Adventist pastor, who later fled to the U.S. More than 125,000 people are in jail on genocide charges, and 1,000 have been tried. Missionary-run schools were scenes of some of the worst massacres.

Said a Vatican spokesman, "The arrest of a bishop is an act of extreme gravity that wounds not only the church in Rwanda but the entire Catholic Church."

Quebec City: A task force set up by the Quebec government has recommended that Catholic and Protestant schools, which are state-funded and "public," should be replaced by a non-denominational school system that offers "neutral" instruction about the history and culture of religion.

Headed by practicing Roman Catholic university professor Jean-Pierre Proulx the commission's report concluded that "the
continued on page 12

Need a Speaker?

Americans for Religious Liberty can provide expert speakers for:

Conferences • Meetings • Debates • Universities
Churches • Synagogues • Radio talk shows
TV talk shows • Etc.

Write or phone:

Americans for Religious Liberty
P.O. Box 6656, Silver Spring, MD 20916
(301) 598-2447

so-called right of parents to have their children taught, at taxpayers expense, according to the teachings of one religion or another simply does not exist in Canadian law, in Quebec law or in Charter of Rights." The Proulx report argued forcefully that "lay schools are a fundamental right in a democratic society," and that "lay schools are a must in a just, pluralistic and democratic society." The report called for a broader approach to religious studies, not the blanket removal of religion from the curriculum.

Most Quebec newspapers praised the recommendations, saying the report has forced a question that has poisoned Quebec educational reform for more than three decades. While Quebec has moved from a confessional Catholic society, with high rates of church participation and clerical control over education and social welfare, to a nation which increasingly spurns and rejects religion, the schools are tradition-bound.

Religion permeates the curriculum, though students and parents are allowed to choose a more secular "moral values" curriculum rather than the distinctive denominational ones. Rural areas reportedly favor continuing the present religious courses while the more secular urban areas of Montreal and Quebec City favor the changes. In recent years the separate Catholic and Protestant school boards have been replaced by French and English language school boards, though religion remains a de facto area of separation between student bodies. This religious division was built into the original Canadian Constitution as a way to induce Quebec to remain in Canada.

The government must now implement or reject the Task

Force's recommendations by September, 2001. Opposition from conservative Catholics, especially the English-speaking Catholic minority, is expected to be intense.

While 86% of Quebec's 6.8 million people called themselves Catholic at the 1991 census, weekly church attendance has plummeted from 85% in 1965 to 15% today. The province has Canada's highest rates of divorce, abortion and cohabitation. The "Quiet Revolution" that emptied Quebec's churches may soon be coming to the schools, if only because it reflects the changing reality of life in the province.

Vatican City: Eleven years after his death, Indian Jesuit writer Anthony de Mello has had his books condemned by the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (the old Holy Office, a.k.a. the Inquisition). The Vatican released a "notification" warning of errors in Father de Mello's many books, which have proved popular in many countries. The Vatican document says "an examination of the whole of his writing shows a progressive distancing from the essential content of the Catholic faith." To "protect the good of the Christian faithful, this congregation declares that the above mentioned positions are incompatible with the Catholic faith and can cause grave harm," the document concluded.

At about the same time, Pope John Paul II rejected calls for more democracy in his church. Meeting with Australian bishops, he declared that "truth cannot be arrived at through opinion polls and in a democratic manner. Nor can truth be decided by someone from below," an apparent reference to the laity.

Books

Henry Hyde's Moral Universe: Where More than Space and Time are Warped, by Dennis Bernstein and Leslie Kean, Common Courage Press, 1999, 236 pp., \$12.00 paper, \$29.95 cloth.

If hypocrisy were a virtue, Henry Hyde would be a candidate for canonization. In this trenchant book two veteran journalists deflate the congressional windbag who was one of the leaders in the recent effort to "get" President Clinton. They expose his key role in the campaign to restrict abortion rights, his "youthful" seven year extramarital affair, his evasion of responsibility in the S&L scandal, his involvement in the Iran-Contra and Ollie North affairs, his disregard for human rights and civil liberties, and much more. Curiously, the authors neglect to mention Hyde's long support for school vouchers, his disdain for church-state separation (about which I debated him on television), and his role in adding sneaky pro-voucher language to the proposed school prayer constitutional amendment of Rep. Ernest Istook that the House of Representatives decisively rejected in June of 1998. Though his long career has earned him the opprobrium of decent citizens, he has been rewarded with a private audience with Pope John Paul II in 1994, a papal knighthood in 1995, and the *Gratiam Dei* ("Pleasing to God") award by a Catholic press group in 1998 for his decades of anti-abortion work.

— Edd Doerr

Religious Institutions and Minor Parties in the United States, by Christopher P. Gilbert et al., Praeger Publishers, 178 pp., \$59.95.

Four political scientists use sophisticated statistical analyses to determine the connection between religious affiliation and minor party voting in the United States in the 20th century. Nothing like this has been attempted before and the authors are to be commended for uncovering a useful and important fact: minor parties, from Bob LaFollette to Ross Perot, draw the bulk of their support from the religiously nonaffiliated sectors of the population, especially in the West. "Religious adherence and minor

candidate market shares move in opposite directions," they conclude.

In 1992, for example, they found "a significant inverse relationship between religious adherence and Perot voting. Ross Perot's support came disproportionately from people who do not attend church, a confirmation of both the aggregate findings and our hypotheses about the negative nature of the relationship between religious factors and independent candidate voting."

The reasons probably have a lot to do with the fact that historically the Democratic Party has built a strong positive relationship with Catholic, Jewish and, since 1936, with black Protestant voters. The Republicans are primarily the white Protestant party, leaving nontraditional and secular voters ripe for third-party appeals.

— Al Menendez

Americans for Religious Liberty

P.O. Box 6656, Silver Spring, MD 20916

I want to do my part to help Americans for Religious Liberty halt the threats to religious, intellectual and personal freedom. I enclose a check for my tax-deductible contribution of:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Individual | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Sponsoring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30 Family | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1000 Patron |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Sustaining | <input type="checkbox"/> \$10 Student and Low Income |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Supporting | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership Renewal |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> New Membership |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Donation |

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

(The ARL newsletter is sent to all contributors.)