



VOICE OF REASON

The Newsletter of Americans for Religious Liberty

1999, No. 3 [68]

Revival Time in Congress

Summer is often the season for religious revivals and tent meetings among conservative Protestants. In the Congress, particularly in the House of Representatives, a spirit of religious fervor, bordering on extremism, and completely intermingled with partisan politics, broke out in June and July.

At least six major pieces of religious legislation received approval by the House. To begin with the most ridiculous and meaningless one, Idaho Rep. Helen Chenoweth's proposal that Congress mandate an annual day of "fasting, prayer and repentance" passed the House 275 to 140. Fortunately, under the rules governing fast-track legislation, the proposal just failed by two votes of achieving the required two-thirds. It is expected to be brought up again under a different rule that requires a simple majority.

Chenoweth, who vies with Rep. Bob Barr (R-GA) for having the most right-wing voting record in Congress, proposed that all Americans "unite in seeking the face of God through humble prayer and fasting, persistently asking God to send spiritual strength and a renewed sense of humility to the Nation." Rep. Chet Edwards of Texas opposed the measure, saying that "prayer should not be a government-imposed duty." Commented the conservative *Tulsa World* in a sternly-worded editorial, "Repent or else": "It is galling to have prayer, fasting and repentance pushed on us by the sanctimonious religionists who would change the American government into a theocracy along the lines of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, run by political theologians."
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Editorials

Toto, Kansas Is Oz

If Dorothy were to return to Kansas from Oz today she would find a certain similarity between the two places. On August 11 six Munchkins on the 10-member Kansas State Board of Education voted to delete evolution from the public school science curriculum. The action leaves local school districts free to require or forbid teaching evolution, allow or forbid teaching creationism, or skirt the issue entirely. The previous science standards directed that students develop an understanding of evolution before graduating from high school.

The board's new policy differed substantially from the recommendations drafted by a committee of 27 scientists and science educators.

Republican Gov. Bill Graves criticized the board's action as "a terrible, tragic, embarrassing solution to a problem that didn't exist."

There is virtual unanimity among scientists that evolution is a key principle in astronomy, physics, geology, biology, and anthropology. In the U.S. it is opposed mainly by fundamentalist biblical literalists. In 1987 the Supreme Court struck down a Louisiana law that sought to give equal time or equal treatment to evolution and creationism. The Court ruled, with Justices Rehnquist and Scalia dissenting, that evolution is science and that creationism is a religious doctrine that has no place in a science class.

The ACLU has warned Kansas school districts of potential lawsuits should any schools teach creationism in science classes.

Kansas is only the latest scene of attempts by fundamentalist interests to undermine science teaching and promote a particular fundamentalist viewpoint in public schools. Pressures to down-grade evolution in schools have been felt strongly in Alabama, Arizona, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Nebraska, New

Mexico, Ohio, and Texas. In 1996 the Tennessee legislature considered but rejected a bill that would have allowed teachers to be fined if they taught evolution as "fact rather than theory."

Meanwhile, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in Louisiana struck down on August 13 (*Freiler v. Tangipahoa Parish School Board*) a school board policy adopted in 1994 that required students to be informed that lessons on the "scientific theory of evolution" were meant to inform them "of the scientific concept and [are] not intended to influence or dissuade the Biblical version of creationism or any other concept." The federal appellate court held the policy unconstitutional because it had the effect of protecting and maintaining a particular religious viewpoint.

Opinion polls, meanwhile, point to widespread inadequacies in science teaching, as 44% of respondents hold creationist views and 68% favor teaching creationism along with evolution. Of course, if one religious view were to be taught in public

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School Voucher Update

Developments in the never ending battles over tax support for sectarian private schools are coming thicker and faster than ever before. Here are the latest details:

Ohio: Although the state supreme court upheld the constitutionality of the Cleveland school voucher plan last spring, save for a minor glitch easily overcome by the pro-parochial state legislature, federal district judge Solomon Oliver Jr. issued an injunction on August 24 halting the program until it can go to trial. Judge Oliver held that the voucher schools were "overwhelmingly sectarian" and therefore that the program has the unconstitutional "primary effect of advancing religion." Three days later Oliver modified his ruling, saying that students already attending nonpublic schools on vouchers could continue during the fall semester. The Catholic and Protestant schools participating in the voucher program make no pretense of being other than pervasively sectarian.

Florida: The Citizens Coalition for Public Schools, the NAACP, and other organizations have filed suit (*Holmes v. Bush*) in a state court challenging the constitutionality of Florida's new school voucher plan, dubbed "Opportunity Scholarships" by Gov. Jeb Bush. The plaintiffs charge that the plan violates three sections of the state constitution as well as the U.S. First Amendment. The voucher law, plaintiffs charge, does not ban participating private schools from imposing religious training and instruction on students nor does it ban the schools from requiring "passive" attendance at worship services and prayers.

The Florida voucher law does not bar participating schools from discriminating on the basis of religion in admissions and hiring. Nor does it prohibit the use of public funds for religious purposes, such as worship, religious training, purchasing religious books, clergy salaries, or maintaining religious facilities.

Pennsylvania: Gov. Tom Ridge, a possible Republican vice-presidential candidate, has conceded defeat for his scaled-down voucher plan for this year. His state has been a battleground over voucher and other parochial schemes for over 30 years.

Texas: Gov. George W. Bush, the current frontrunner for the Republican presidential nomination, failed to get a voucher bill through the state legislature despite an expensive lobby campaign for them. The Houston Independent School District, however, is on the verge of starting a "virtual voucher" program, which would involve contracting with the unaccredited Life Ministries Christian Academy in Houston, which proposes to set up a "nonsectarian affiliate," the Fifth Ward Preparatory School, if it gets the public funding. The existing academy says it does not teach religion, but it uses the A Beka curriculum, a fundamentalist set of texts exposed by ARL's Al Menendez in his book, *Visions of Reality: What Fundamentalist Schools Teach*.

Michigan: Although Michigan voters in 1970 voted to make airtight the state constitution's ban on direct or indirect tax aid to sectarian schools (ARL's Edd Doerr helped to write and campaign for passage of the tightened ban) and defeated a school voucher amendment 74% to 26% in 1978, the state will apparently have another referendum on the subject in November 2000. A campaign deceptively called "Kids First! YES" (KFY) has started gathering petition signatures to initiate a proposed state constitutional amendment to remove the ban on school vouchers and tuition tax credits. Amway Corporation president Dick DeVos, a major funder of Religious Right and ultraconservative causes, has said he will spend at least \$5 million to pass the school voucher measure.

Wisconsin: People for the American Way and the NAACP have filed a formal complaint with the state Department of Public Instruction charging abuses under Milwaukee's school voucher plan, such as requiring students to participate in religious activities.

Los Angeles: Presidential aspirant George W. Bush on September 7 promised that, if elected, he would use federal funds to provide vouchers for nonpublic 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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gians (and bad ones at that) . . . Government shouldn't be trying to tell us when to pray, when to fast and when to repent."

In a second action the House, a 300 to 127 vote required that lawsuits challenging the constitutionality of religiously-oriented school memorials or memorial services would have to pay their own attorneys fees and court costs. This is clearly an attempt to limit free expression by making constitutional rights dependent on ability to pay, an outrageous position that would surely provoke a constitutional test in the courts. The amendment, sponsored by Colorado Republican Tom Tancredo, also required the U.S. attorney general to support school districts in such potential First Amendment challenges, regardless of the merits of the case.

A similar amendment, proposed by Jim DeMint (R-SC), would bar the payment of attorney's fees for plaintiffs who successfully challenge school policies that violate separation of church and state. DeMint, like Tancredo, is a conservative Presbyterian who has frequently condemned public schools. DeMint claimed that "public schools are being intimidated into suppressing religious expression by the threat of costly litigation." The DeMint amendment passed 238 to 189.

Lawmakers voted 346 to 83 to expand the definition of "charitable choice" that would make pervasively sectarian institutions—not just so-called "faith-based organizations"—eligible to provide tax-funded social services to juveniles.

Rep. Mark Souder (R-IN) did not try to disguise his amendment's intentions, saying that religious groups providing social services "do not have to change their internal operations." He claimed that such groups would still be unable to "proselytize with any of the money." This amendment could greatly expand the independent religious sector in the broad social welfare field, and would have the effect of making religious groups dependent on government aid. They would be seen by many in the public as mere appendages of the civil bureaucracy. Texas Democrat Chet Edwards warned, "Five years from now, we will have the Baptists arguing with the Methodists, with the Catholics, the Jews, the Hindus and the Muslims, over who got their proportional share of the almighty federal dollar."

The above three amendments were riders added to the Consequences for Juvenile Offenders Act.

A fourth measure passed by the suddenly pious lower house was the controversial Ten Commandments amendment, sponsored by Robert Aderholt (R-AL) and approved 248 to 180. The Aderholt amendment provided that states have authority to display the Ten Commandments on any or all government property. Under a dubious interpretation of the Tenth Amendment, which reserves certain unenumerated powers to the states, this provision also declared that religious expression on public property is a "right" guaranteed by the Constitution. Since the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1980 that posting the Ten Commandments in public schools was unconstitutional, this amendment would almost certainly face a constitutional challenge.

The debate over Ten Commandments legislation was heated and revealed the sharp cultural and religious divisions that characterize Congress and the nation today. Aderholt, speaking largely for Southern conservative Protestants, claimed that "our nation was founded on Judeo-Christian principles" and that posting the Decalogue in public places would "promote morality and work toward an end of children killing children."

Aderholt and his Republican colleagues, joined by some Southern Democrats, continually used the public outcry over the Littleton, CO, school massacre to justify their religious agenda.

Leading the fight against the proposal was Manhattan Democrat Jerrold Nadler. He argued, "I think most people who talk about the Ten Commandments do not really know what they say. Whose Ten Commandments? Which version? The Catholic, the Protestant or the Jewish? They are different, you know. The translations are very different, reflecting different religious traditions."

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Faith and Politics

The Ten Commandments vote in the U.S. House revealed once again the influence of geography, party and religion on how representatives vote on highly emotional issues rooted in religious upbringing and values.

When it comes to issues like this, the U.S. is almost two nations: the South and everyone else. House members from the South voted 72% in favor of allowing the Commandments to be posted in public buildings and schools. The Border South voted 67% in favor. The 16 states of the cultural South supported the legislation 112 to 46. In the rest of the nation, there was almost an even split, 136 to 134 in favor. Every Southern and Border state except Maryland and Delaware cast affirmative majorities, including every member from Tennessee, Oklahoma and Kentucky, where fundamentalist Protestantism reigns supreme.

The Midwest and the Great Plains-Mountain states were 66% supportive. Mormons and conservative Protestants united in support in this region, producing somewhat surprising margins of victory in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Ohio and Wisconsin.

Three regions opposed the measure. In the Mid-Atlantic states only 43% were in favor, with strong opposition from New Jersey and New York. But even here culturally conservative Pennsylvania voted 13-8 yes. The Pacific Coast states gave only 41% support, a result of that region's pluralism, diversity and relative secularism. Heavily Catholic New England was the least favorable region, with only 17% support (mainly from New Hampshire and Connecticut Republicans Nancy Johnson, a Unitarian, and Chris Shays, a Christian Scientist, both considered "moderates"). All 10 Massachusetts representatives opposed the measure.

Political party differences were enormous. Over 93% of Republicans but only 21% of Democrats supported the amendment, reflecting the very different religious constituencies within the parties today.

Protestants were much more favorable to the amendment than those of other traditions, which, perhaps, reflects their majority status in most regions. Nearly 69% of Protestants but only 45% of Catholics voted yes. (Interestingly, 13% of Catholic Republicans opposed the measure, twice the percentage of all Republicans.) All seven religiously nonaffiliated members voted no, as did 20 of 21 Jewish members, the only Jewish vote being New York's Benjamin Gillman, the lone Jewish Republican in the House. Two groups cast nearly unanimous votes in favor of the amendment: Mormons and Southern Baptists, who tend to be religious majorities in the regions where most live.

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Finally, the House approved a major piece of legislation that had conservatives, liberals and religious liberty advocates on both sides. The Religious Liberty Protection Act (RLPA) passed the House on July 15 by 306 to 118. The RLPA is Congress's answer to the Supreme Court's 1997 decision to strike down the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) of 1993, which itself was passed to counter an earlier high court ruling which narrowed the free exercise of religion clause of the First Amendment. Most religious libertarians believe that the Supreme Court unnecessarily restricted religious rights, particularly those of minority faiths. Congress passed RFRA in an effort to restore the balance, but the Supreme Court ruled that the legislative branch had overstepped its authority. Thus, religious liberties have been tangled in a separation of powers debate.

The RLPA itself became entangled in an issue pitting religious liberty against other civil liberties. Rep. Nadler tried to amend the bill so that it "cannot be used as a sword to do violence to the rights of others." He cited recent court rulings upholding the right of landlords to refuse to rent to unmarried or gay couples because of religious convictions. Court rulings have gone both ways on this issue. The Congressional Black Caucus supported Nadler's amendment, expressing fears that religious groups might try to use religious convictions to justify racial discrimination. Rep. Barney Frank (D-MA) suggested, "You can evoke your religion and defeat many civil rights laws." The ACLU, NOW and many other groups urged support for the Nadler amendment.

But Republicans and a few conservative Democrats beat back the amendment 234 to 190. More than 85% of Democrats but just under 7% of Republicans supported it.

This complicated the final vote somewhat, though RLPA's final margin of victory was impressive, with 91% of Republicans and 52% of Democrats supporting it.

President Clinton has indicated his "strong support" for RLPA, and a companion bill will soon be introduced in the Senate by Orrin Hatch (R-UT).

Ironically, some representatives of the extreme right predict that RLPA will be declared unconstitutional because of its use of the commerce and spending clauses to advance individual liberties. Michael Farris, attorney and founder of the Home School Legal Defense Fund, praised the goals of RLPA but said that it "helps only the big denominations" and "is a hoax on the American public which will be declared unconstitutional."

Capitol Hill staffers predict a tougher time for RLPA in the Senate, especially in the Senate Judiciary Committee, where additional hearings will be held.

Which Ten Commandments?

In their zeal to adopt religion-friendly legislation, members of the House seem to have ignored a basic fact: there is no single, agreed-upon version of the Ten Commandments. The Hebrew Bible (which Christians call the Old Testament) has two versions, one in Exodus 20:1-17 and one in Deuteronomy 5:6-21. The original Hebrew traditions do not even call these rules "Commandments" but the 10 "words" or "utterances."

The Jewish version begins with a preamble, "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt" but Christians begin their list with what Jews consider the second commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

Different translations through the centuries have further changed the wording and the enumerations. Most Protestants, for example, consider the "thou shalt not covet" phrase one commandment, but Catholics and Lutherans break this into two commandments, forbidding the coveting of a neighbor's wife and the other forbidding coveting his property.

Jews, Catholics and Lutherans consider the ban on idols to be part of the injunction against other gods, but most Protestants believe "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image" stands alone as a separate injunction.

These differences are not trivial. Frank Kirkpatrick, a professor of religion at Trinity College in Hartford, CT, said that "these different enumerations have theological significance." Scholar Robert Franklin, president of the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, warned, "Some of us forget that we are a religiously diverse society and that there are differences on the Ten Commandments even within the Christian family."

Therefore, posting these ancient prescriptions on a courthouse or school wall can only accentuate religious differences and reawaken religious discord. They place government in the tradition of favoring one religious position over others.

Christian Coalition Regroups

After years of battling the Internal Revenue Service and the Federal Election Commission, the Christian Coalition is undergoing major changes which may affect how it does business in the future and its potential impact on national politics.

To begin with, the Pat Robertson-founded religious and political pressure group gave up fighting for tax-exempt status. It was apparently clear to the decade-old group that the IRS did not consider its activities within the permissible group of nonpartisan, nonpolitical tax-exempt organizations. The Coalition announced plans in June to move its nonpolitical arm to the Dallas suburbs and to maintain its political arm in Chesapeake, VA, and in Washington, D.C.

A victory of sorts was won in August when U.S. District Judge Joyce Green threw out most of the major charges filed against the Coalition with the Federal Election Commission. The suit, which sought hundreds of thousands of dollars in fines, was prompted by complaints from the Democratic National Committee and the Virginia Democratic Party that the Coalition had engaged in partisan Republican activities.

Robertson hailed the ruling as a victory, even though Judge Green cited the group for two illegal partisan activities. Legal experts say the ruling will harm campaign finance reform legislation, since other advocacy groups may interpret this as approval for political activity that was held to skirt existing laws.

The judge's ruling may come too late, however. The Coalition has lost a half dozen key staffers in recent months, and its membership has declined by a fourth. *Newsweek* reports that Robertson gave the group \$1 million to keep it alive early in 1998. *The New York Times* reported that the Coalition is \$2.5 million in debt and can claim no more than seven strong state affiliates. (South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Texas, Oklahoma, Washington and Massachusetts.) Its new executive vice president is Roberta Combs of South Carolina, where the group reportedly still has clout in Republican politics.

The reorganization may make the group even more political. The taxable entity called Christian Coalition International may eventually endorse candidates, form political action committees, and donate funds to campaigns. The tax-exempt part, Christian Coalition of America, will merge with the tax-exempt Christian Coalition of Texas.

The group once claimed nearly three million members and a budget of \$26.5 million. Its claims of distributing 40 million voter guides through cooperating churches has long been dismissed as exaggerated. Its former national field director, Dave Welch, told *The New York Times*, "We never distributed 40 million guides. State affiliates took stacks of them to recycling centers after the election."

Still, the group is planning to fight back before the crucial 2000 elections. Roberta Combs announced plans to hold a series of "God and Country Galas," featuring Pat Robertson.

ARL in Action

ARL president John M. Swomley debated "Religion in Public Schools" in Hammond, LA, on September 28 at a meeting sponsored by the ACLU of Louisiana, ARL, and local Methodist, Presbyterian, and Unitarian Universalist groups. From October 20 to 24 he will speak at nine meetings in the Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN, area (local ARL members can get details from ARL).

Associate director Al Menendez' article on the First Amendment's establishment clause, "Hear Ye! Hear Ye!," appeared in the July/August issue of *Liberty*. His article "Voters Versus Vouchers" appeared in the September issue of the educational journal *Phi Delta Kappan*. The article summarizes and analyzes the 22 statewide referendum elections from coast to coast between 1966 and 1998 on voucher and other plans to divert public funds to sectarian schools. Another article by Menendez and Edd Doerr, "That Wall: Another Look at the Separation Issue," appeared in the September/October *Liberty*. Reprints of all three are available from ARL for \$1 each.

ARL executive director Edd Doerr was a featured speaker at the Boulder International Humanist Institute conference in Boulder, CO, on September 4. He was also a guest on talk shows in New Orleans, Baton Rouge, and Metairie, LA, and in Colorado Springs, CO.

Hatch Enters GOP Race

Utah senator Orrin Hatch entered the presidential race during the summer, just as Representative John Kasich of Ohio and Senator Bob Smith of New Hampshire withdrew. Hatch, first elected in a 1976 upset over three-term Democrat Frank Moss, is the longest of the long-shots, especially after his dismal 2% showing in the Iowa Republican Straw Poll in August.

Hatch has tried to emphasize his plain-guy persona, stressing his humble upbringing as a blue-collar worker's son in Pittsburgh. Hatch worked his way through Brigham Young University and the University of Pittsburgh Law School, where he claimed to have lived in a converted chicken coop. The poverty of his youth has apparently contributed to a less harshly conservative approach to government, even though Hatch's voting record remains 80% to 85% conservative.

Hatch has separated himself from other Republicans by his willingness to work with Democrats, including his personal friend

Ted Kennedy, on a number of bills supporting child care, health insurance for children of poor families, family and medical leave for working parents, and help for babies with AIDS. He supported the Americans with Disabilities Act.

But he strenuously opposes abortion rights and supports school prayer and other religious activities in public schools. He voted for the confirmation of Robert Bork and Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court. He favors a constitutional amendment making flag burning illegal. As chair of the Judiciary Committee since 1995, he has been a relatively conservative force.

Hatch is a Mormon and only the second member of that faith to run for president (Michigan Governor George Romney was briefly a contender for the Republican nomination in 1968). He is also something of a puritan, never known to swear and an opponent of tobacco, gambling and drinking. He opposes gay rights and has said publicly that "homosexuality is a sin because the Bible says so." (But he did support the confirmation of gay San Francisco philanthropist Robert Hormel as U.S. ambassador to Luxembourg.)

It is difficult to see why Hatch would consider himself a credible contender for the GOP nomination. He has no base, philosophically or geographically. He is identified with no major causes or issues, as is, say, Pat Buchanan. He will certainly be the sentimental favorite in Utah and Idaho and among the 741,000 Mormons in California, most of whom are registered Republicans. California, which has moved its primary to early March, will be influential on the nomination process for the first time since 1964, when Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater defeated New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller and clinched the GOP nomination. The question for Hatch, who is underfunded, is whether he can survive as a viable candidate until then.

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Religious Conflicts Dog the Military

How to accommodate religious expression in the U.S. military remains a problem. In July the Air Force punished a junior officer, Lt. Ryan Berry, because he objected on religious grounds to serving alone with a female officer in an underground missile launch center. Berry, described as a devout Catholic, is married and a father. He received a religious exception from May 1977 to December 1998 at Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota, until commanders revoked the accommodation. The decision was made by Major General Thomas H. Neary, who is also a Catholic but who saw Berry's complaint as a breach of duty.

The young lieutenant has received strong support from Archbishop Edwin O'Brien, the military vicar for Roman Catholic members of the armed forces. O'Brien and Berry claim that close proximity in a confined space constitutes a potential "occasion of sin" or "appearance of sin." One-fourth of missile-manning officers in the Air Force are women and no previous objections have ever been made to the sexually-integrated units.

Religious conservatives seized on the incident, blasting the Air Force for "capitulating to radical feminism." The Family Research Council and 50 House Republicans calling themselves the Conservative Action Team have vowed to defend the officer and have asked military authorities to revoke a critical performance evaluation that may prevent his promotion to captain. The Rutherford Institute, a Virginia-based Religious Right legal group, has offered assistance.

On another front, the Army has come under fire from evangelicals for allowing military personnel at Fort Hood, Texas, to practice the Wiccan religion, usually described as a form of witchcraft. Opposition from local Baptists soon spread to the U.S. Capitol, where Georgia Rep. Bob Barr and others tried to pressure

the military into denying Wiccan activities on the base. But the military chaplaincy said that the First Amendment protects all forms of religious expression.

About 50 Wiccans assemble regularly at Fort Hood in Killeen, Texas, the largest U.S. military base. The army base granted the polytheistic, nature-based religion official recognition in 1997. Since then, four other military facilities have followed suit.

Local Christian groups denounced the military's tolerance for Wiccan worship. The Rev. Jack Harvey, pastor of the Tabernacle Baptist Church, denounced them, "We believe they are Satanic and do not deserve to have any place at Fort Hood." The Wiccans deny that they worship Satan. *Time* magazine reported, "Their paganism is drawn from pre-Christian European tribal religions that invoke spirits in nature and celebrate the seasons."

Conservative Christians have turned to Congress, winning the support of South Carolina's aging Senator Strom Thurmond, who promised to introduce legislation to outlaw witchcraft in the armed forces. A dozen Religious Right groups, including Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition, the Traditional Values Coalition, the Home School Legal Defense Association, and Paul Weyrich's Free Congress Foundation, announced plans for a Christian boycott against the Army. The groups called on Christians to refuse to enlist or re-enlist until Wiccan rituals are banned. The Free Congress Foundation's William S. Kind remarked, "Some things should be discriminated against. All religions are not equal."

The Army apparently plans to ignore the critics. Responded Major General William Dendiger, chairman of the Armed Forces Chaplains Board, "This belief is protected under the First Amendment."

Poll Shows Sharp Social Issue Divisions

A nationwide survey of 2,011 adults conducted in June by *The Wall Street Journal* and NBC News found sharp and potentially irreconcilable differences on social and cultural issues. Americans are intensely divided on these issues, and religious and educational factors frequently shape and determine the outcome.

Support for the position that there should be "no interference with a woman's access to abortion" won a solid 65% to 30% backing of those surveyed. But on vouchers those surveyed divided 47% to 47% between "government funding for public schools only" and "taxpayer-funded vouchers for private or religious schools."

As expected, Americans endorsed "allowing prayer in public schools" by 65% to 32%, suggesting once again that most people are unaware that private acts of voluntary prayer are allowed in public schools and always have been. Pollsters always fail to ask the conditions under which school prayer should be allowed. Government-sponsored or mandated prayer, or prayer promoted by teachers and school personnel, generally draws less support.

The poll found that 49% of Americans want to "keep laws banning discrimination against homosexuals," while 42% thought such statutes "give special rights to homosexuals."

On all of these issues, and on other social issues such as government regulation of firearms and censorship of violence in videogames, those surveyed expressed "strong" views as opposed to more moderate or nuanced ones. Most people polled said they felt "strongly" about these issues. Still, because many Americans were on the conservative side of some issues and the liberal side

on others, the poll found that 52% were "middle of the road," while 25% were "left or liberal" and 23% were "right or conservative."

Education, income and religion were big factors in shaping or influencing American opinion. For example, 38% of fundamentalist Protestants were on the right, a figure twice as high as that for all other religions. A third of those who adhere to "other religions" but only one in seven fundamentalists were liberals. A majority of Catholics and "non-fundamentalist" Protestants were moderate, though Catholics were 6% more liberal than all Protestants.

Education was even a stronger factor than religion, since 42% of those holding post-graduate degrees were liberal on social-cultural issues, compared to 20% of those who never attended college. The strongest social-issue liberals were those who earn \$100,000 a year or more, while the strongest social-issue conservatives were those whose income was below \$20,000. This extraordinary difference by income and education shows why social issue coalitions have long disrupted conventional political wisdom, and why economic issue coalitions are frequently the reverse.

Other groups in the population that give disproportionate support for social issue liberalism are those whose jobs are professional or managerial, registered Democrats, college-educated women, and single people.

Much greater support for social-issue conservatism was found among Republicans, Southerners, non-college educated women,

and those who are married. Homemakers were twice as likely to be conservative as liberal on these issues.

Age is a moderate factor, with 30% of those 18-34 being on the liberal side, compared to 19% of those age 65 or older. Political independents were also more liberal than conservative by 11 points, despite Republican leanings on economic issues. Race was a surprisingly minor factor. Hispanics were slightly more liberal than whites or blacks, while 61% of African Americans were "moderates" or middle of the road on social issues. Other groups with a substantial majority falling in the middle position were suburbanites with children, blue-collar workers, non-college-educated men and mainline Protestants.

While these issues cut both ways, *Wall Street Journal* reporter Albert R. Hunt wrote that, "Politically, in a reversal of a decade ago, the social issues today help Democrats more than Republicans."

Bradley Revisited

In our last newsletter we reported that Democratic presidential hopeful Bill Bradley had supported school vouchers and tuition tax credits while he served in the Senate. In early September, however, during a campaign swing through Missouri and Iowa, Bradley was asked, "Is it true that you are in support of school vouchers, and if so, why?" His answer: "No, I am not in support of school vouchers as the answer to the problems of public education. When I was in the Senate, I voted for vouchers as an experiment in six urban areas of the country." He said he "thought, well, why don't we try and experiment," but added, "I don't think vouchers is the answer to the national school problems."

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school science classes, then so too should the other myriad creation stories around the world be taught.

An excellent, concise treatment of this subject may be found in *Science and Creationism*, just published by the National Academy of Sciences, available for \$9.95 from National Academy Press (1-800-624-6242) or a local bookstore.

Defending science teaching and public school religious neutrality will be a hot issue for years to come.

Redoubling Efforts

The 31st annual Phi Delta Kappa poll of public attitudes toward public schools has just been released. Among its many findings are some good news. When asked whether public schools should be reformed and improved or whether vouchers should be provided to enable parents to choose private or parochial schools, the majority favored improving public schools by a whopping 70% to 28%. On a related question, only 41% of those polled favored more privatization of education, while 54% were opposed. Opposition to the movement to contract school services to private, for-profit corporations has increased 7% since 1994.

The public also continues to have a relatively positive assessment of public schools, despite the barrage of hostile media commentary over the years. Nearly half (49%) give the public schools in their community an A or B rating. Another 31% assign them a C rating. This 80% acceptability rating represents an increase over last year's results. Nearly the same number, 79%, said that the public schools in their community are "very effective" or "somewhat effective" in preparing students for the job market.

The public also highlights the top three problems in public schools as lack of discipline, violence and lack of adequate financial support. Those polled also favor high performance standards, improved salaries for teachers, and scholarships to attract new teachers.

Additional good news is found in the result that 55% of those polled oppose "allowing students and parents to choose a private school to attend at public expense." Opposition to vouchers has increased 5% over last year's results. Two other voucher-related questions showed a close division of opinion. Voters opposed by 52% to 41% the proposal that vouchers be used to

pay the entire tuition in private schools. The public also opposed by 48% to 47% the proposal that vouchers be provided for part of nonpublic school tuition costs.

Unfortunately, the public came down 52% to 41% for tuition tax credits for parents of private school students. The public sees this as going directly to parents rather than to the schools, a view explicitly rejected by the U.S. Supreme Court more than two decades ago.

On the other hand, the public overwhelmingly favors by 77% to 21% the idea that "church-related schools that accept government tuition payments should be accountable to the state in the way public schools are accountable." By 74% to 21% they also say that nonpublic schools "should be required to accept students from a wider range of backgrounds and academic ability" than is now true.

Those who work tirelessly to preserve democratic publicly-accountable public education have their work cut out. Making the case for improved public education in a religiously neutral environment and for only privately-funded private alternatives must redouble their efforts. This is especially true in light of some findings buried in this comprehensive annual poll: Support for vouchers is highest among African-Americans, those in the 18 to 29-year-old age group, city residents, and public school parents whose children are now performing well academically. These individuals need to be convinced that the voucher route is not the way to go, that it will not lead to permanent, far-ranging educational improvements but is likely to make the situation far worse. Public officials, school boards and educational professionals must also redouble their efforts to restore American education to its prominence.

Scouts' Honor

When the Boy Scouts of America is criticized for excluding gays or nontheists, its leaders fall back on the argument that the BSA is a purely private organization and therefore not subject to laws banning sexual orientation or religious discrimination.

Not so, ruled the New Jersey Supreme Court unanimously on August 4 in *Dale v. B.S.A.* The court held that the B.S.A. is a "place of public accommodation" subject to the state's Law Against Discrimination.

Critics of the ruling went ballistic, accusing the court of picking on a private organization and threatening the independence of

continued on page 8

churches and other institutions. The critics seem not to have read the ruling, which spelled out how the B.S.A. fits the public accommodation law by engaging in "broad public solicitation" and by maintaining "close relationships with federal and state governmental bodies." Specifically, the court noted, the Scouts benefit from close ties to the military, using facilities at military installations for "scouting shows, meetings, training activities" and other "similar scouting events." The Scouts also enjoy considerable benefits from state and local governments, fire departments, law enforcement agencies, and public schools. The B.S.A. publication "Organizations that Use Scouting" advises that "the education field holds our greatest potential." The Scouts recruit members in public schools and use their facilities. A large percentage of Scout troops, packs, and posts are chartered by public schools.

If the Scouts want to be really private and not subject to anti-discrimination laws, they should give up their government benefits and quit recruiting in public schools. We do not advocate that course of action, however. It would be better if the Scouts would follow their own advice and recognize that each scout's "moral fitness" should be determined by his "courage to do what his head and heart tell him is right.. Also, the *Scoutmaster Handbook* encourages members to "respect and defend the rights of others whose beliefs may differ."

The New Jersey Supreme Court ruling points to the day when the B.S.A. will end its religious test for members and its discrimination against gays.

(By the way, your editor must disclose that he is a former Scout, a member of Troop 126 in Indianapolis.)

Voice of Dissent

The New York Times recently ran an obituary for the Rev. Mario Zicarelli, 78, an Italian-born Catholic priest who served parishes in the New York metro area. Zicarelli was apparently in hot water with the New York Archdiocese because he was a strong champion of public rather than parochial schools. He held that tax aid for denominational schools violated the constitutional separation of church and state. He warned parishioners from the pulpit not to regard parochial schools as refuges from integration.

Fr. Zicarelli also disagreed with church leaders on birth control and abortion. "I don't think the Catholic Church has any business meddling in sex," he declared in 1974. When asked for advice on sexual matters, he urged parishioners to consult their own consciences and make up their own minds.

The point to be made, which many non-Catholics and especially politicians do not understand, is that Fr. Zicarelli is not really so unusual. Indeed, opinion polls and abundant other data make clear that most Catholics think for themselves regardless of what church leaders say. We have only to look at the 1992 and 1996 presidential elections, in which Catholic voters twice preferred pro-choice and anti-voucher Bill Clinton over anti-choice and pro-voucher George Bush and Bob Dole.

Moving?

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Update

Maine's Abortion Referendum

Maine voters will decide on November 2 whether or not to ban a late term abortion procedure in a dangerously deceptive initiative so vague that it could severely restrict a woman's right to choose. Similar initiatives were defeated last November by Colorado and Washington State voters.

Americans for Religious Liberty has joined with an array of medical professionals, women's organizations, the legal community, labor and religious groups to defeat the initiative. Coordinating the pro-choice campaign is the NO on 1 Coalition, P.O. Box 10899, Portland, ME 04104, which is in need of funds and volunteers.

The Catholic bishops are reportedly willing to spend up to \$1 million to pass the initiative, which was placed on the ballot by Religious Right forces in Maine.

Istook-Hyde Redux

Rep. Ernest Istook (R-OK) has reintroduced the school prayer/school voucher constitutional amendment that was defeated in June of 1998 in the House of Representatives. That amendment fell 61 votes short of the two-thirds majority needed to pass (see ARL newsletter No. 63). The new amendment, H.J.R. 66, is identical to the one defeated last year.

H.J.R. 66's text reads: "To secure the people's right to acknowledge God according to the dictates of conscience: Neither the United States nor any state shall establish any official religion, but the people's right to pray and to recognize their religious beliefs, heritage, or traditions on public property, including schools, shall not be infringed. Neither the United States nor any state shall require any person to join in prayer or other religious activity, prescribe school prayers, discriminate against religion, or deny equal access to a benefit on account of religion."

The first part of the proposed amendment is intended to authorize organized devotions in public schools, while the last part, apparently attributable to House Judiciary Chair Henry Hyde (R-IL), is intended to authorize tax aid to sectarian schools.

Much the same array of mainstream religious and civil liberties groups as last year will oppose the new Religious Right attempt to weaken the constitutional guarantee of religious liberty and church-state separation.

According to Catherine LeRoy of People for the American Way, the whole exercise, which is sure to fail, is intended to get a recorded vote to use in Religious Right voter guides during the year 2000 election.

Prayer Confusion

In October the U.S. Supreme Court may decide if it will review conflicting lower court rulings on whether public school public address systems may be used for invocations before athletic events, a practice popular in some southern states. In February the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals (Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi) ruled against prayers at athletic events, but in July the Eleventh Circuit ruled to the contrary in an Alabama case. Then, on September 3, Texas federal judge Jim Lake disagreed with the Fifth Circuit and approved a football game prayer in Santa Fe, Texas. Lake said that the school district guidelines "favor atheism over

any religion" and this amounts to "state-sponsored atheism." Lake's improper ruling triggered a wave of civil disobedience in Texas, where many people seem to think they cannot pray without government approval or sponsorship.

NPR Poll Nixes Vouchers

A new National Public Radio/Kaiser Family Foundation/Kennedy School of Government poll on education, released in September, registered opposition to school vouchers at 54% to 42%. Among other findings: 83% favor equalizing school funding even if it means taking money from wealthy school districts to give to poor ones; 75% indicated willingness to have their taxes raised at least \$200 per year to pay for specific school improvements, while 55% said they would be willing to have their taxes raised by \$500; 71% of parents rate their children's schools A or B, 60% rate their community's schools A or B, and 23% rate schools nationally A or B, a finding consistent with the annual PDK/Gallup surveys; majorities rate classroom overcrowding and inequality of funding among school districts as major problems nationally.

Catholic Hospitals Limit Choice

A study released by Catholics for a Free Choice (CFFC) charges that 82% of 589 emergency rooms in Catholic hospitals do not provide emergency contraception, even to women who have been raped. Almost a third of these hospitals refuse to provide a referral to another hospital or provider. All or most reproductive services were eliminated in non-Catholic hospitals following a merger with Catholic hospitals.

The CFFC report, "Caution: Catholic Health Restrictions May Be Hazardous to Your Health," reveals that about 15% of all hospital care in the U.S. is under Catholic Church auspices. *USA Today* responded to the report with an editorial stating, in part, that "Hospitals that neither provide rape victims emergency contraceptives nor refer them to those that do teeter on the brink of medical malpractice."

No Bonds for Pat's Regent U.

Richmond Circuit Court Judge Randy Johnson ruled on July 30 that Pat Robertson's Regent University does not qualify for tax-exempt construction bonds because it is a "pervasively sectarian" institution whose "primary purpose is religious training." The school wants to use \$55 million in bonds to pay for construction on its Virginia Beach campus and to create a satellite campus in Alexandria. The Alexandria location was to have included a branch of Regent's school of divinity, which trains clergy.

Judge Johnson based his ruling primarily on the admission and employment policies of the university, which require all courses to be taught "from a Biblical perspective" and encourage students and faculty to attend daily religious services. Admission applications inquire into a student's church membership and request recommendations from a pastor.

Kent Willis, executive director of the ACLU of Virginia, said, "This is an important ruling that reaffirms the doctrine of the separation of church and state."

The university is undecided about appealing the ruling to the Virginia Supreme Court, which in 1991 denied Jerry Falwell's Liberty University \$60 million in state funds on similar grounds.

The Fourth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld Maryland's denial of tax dollars to Columbia Union College, a Seventh-day Adventist institution in Takoma Park, MD. The college is appealing the ruling.

Americans for Religious Liberty is supporting a suit in federal court in Tennessee challenging use of municipal bonds to aid a pervasively sectarian university in Nashville.

Fundamentalist Texts Nixed

In response to an ACLU lawsuit, the tiny Belridge, CA, school district agreed in September to discontinue use of pervasively fundamentalist textbooks. A suit had been filed in August on behalf of a retired Methodist minister and a parent.

Good Friday Holiday OK'd

On August 20 the U.S. Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in *Koenick v. Felton* that a Maryland law making the Friday before Easter a school holiday did not violate church-state separation. The Court held that the holiday could be justified on secular grounds (possibility of high absenteeism), but failed to deal with plaintiff Koenick's contention that the law put the state into the position of favoring the Catholic/Protestant dating of Easter over the Eastern Orthodox dating. An appeal to the Supreme Court is being considered.

ARL was instrumental in getting the ACLU of Maryland to represent the plaintiff and joined with other organizations in an *amicus curiae* brief in support of the plaintiff.

Ridge Moves Rightward

Pennsylvania's Governor Tom Ridge, frequently mentioned as a potential Republican vice-presidential nominee, has aligned himself with religious conservatives on yet another issue, albeit a trivial one. He announced in July that he would appeal a state

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supreme court ruling making Bibles and other religious books and publications subject to the same taxation as secular materials. The appeal will act as a stay on the decision, and no sales tax will be collected until the U.S. Supreme Court decides whether to hear the appeal.

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court held that exemptions for religious publications violate the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. Many observers wonder why the governor is appealing a decision since the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on a similar fact situation from Texas during the 1980s, holding that exemption for only religious books was unconstitutional.

Ridge commented, "It is entirely appropriate for the state to encourage religion in our communities." Maybe he is angling for higher office, since this seems to be the Republican Party's preferred position.

Faithhealing Shrink Delicensed

Arizona psychologist Kenneth J. Olson had his license revoked by the Board of Psychologist Examiners in 1993 after he allegedly performed an exorcism on a child patient and billed the state \$180 for psychotherapy. The Ninth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals in September rejected Olson's claim that the state board had violated his civil rights.

Abortion vs. Crime?

University of Chicago economist Steven Levitt and Stanford law professor John Donohue III created a bit of a stir with their recently published study showing that up to half of the decline in crime since 1991 is due to the Supreme Court's 1973 ruling recognizing abortion as a constitutionally protected right. Simply put, the decline in unwanted births after 1973 decreased the number of young males after 1987 or so likely to engage in crime. Neuropsychologist James W. Prescott (co-editor with Edd Doerr of *Abortion Rights and Fetal Personhood*) got similar results in a study two

years ago.

The Levitt-Donohue findings are consistent with those of Sweden's Hans Forssman's study more than 30 years ago showing that children born to mothers denied permission to have abortions had higher rates of crime, mental illness, welfare dependence, school misbehavior, alcoholism, problems in military services, and (for unwanted girls) more early and out-of-wedlock pregnancies.

If the Levitt-Donohue thesis holds up, a decrease in crime is but a side benefit of the legal recognition of the right of women to choose if and when to become mothers.

Religion Questions a No-No

One "faith-based" organization recently ran into trouble when its policy of asking personal questions about the faith and religious experiences of those it helped was revealed. Operation Blessing, a North Carolina-based group that received a \$50,000 federal grant to house, clothe and feed the homeless, has lost its federal funding. It had asked applicants whether they "considered themselves saved from eternal damnation because they are observant Christians" and asked whether people needing aid "believe they will go to heaven." Asking these questions is a violation of federal regulations.

Religious Discrimination Hit

A Maryland Circuit Court ruled in July that a fundamentalist parochial school would not have to pay \$169,000 in damages to three former employees who sued for discrimination after being fired on religious grounds in 1996. Montrose Christian School, a Baptist school in Rockville, fired 14 employees who were not church members. Three sued on grounds of religious discrimination, and a jury ruled in their favor earlier this year. The judge ruled that the school has "a charitable immunity," but he held the school's former principal liable. Attorneys for the plaintiffs plan to appeal to the Maryland Court of Special Appeals. The school's attorney, Craig Parshall, insists that the school did nothing wrong in the first place. "The jury is punishing the school for its religious stance," he said.

'Charitable Choice' in New Jersey

New Jersey's "faith-based organizations" have received a financial windfall from Governor Christie Whitman. The Republican governor announced grants totaling \$1.65 million for 27 Christian, Jewish and interfaith agencies to provide day care, job training and senior citizen services to their communities.

Something Fishy

A federal court ruled in July that the town of Republic, MO, must remove a Christian symbol, the ichthus (Greek for fish), from the municipal seal. The symbol, ruled Judge Russell Clark, "pervasively invades the daily lives of non-Christians and send a message that they are outsiders." The town's board of aldermen voted not to appeal the ruling.

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.

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Mormons Go Political

California's Mormon Church has instructed its adherents to support a state ballot initiative to ban gay and lesbian marriages. Church officials in Salt Lake City sent a letter which was read to all California Mormons, urging them to contribute money to and to vote for a referendum set for March 2000, the so-called Protection of Marriage Act, defining marriage as between a man and a woman.

There are 740,000 Mormons in California. The church, governed by Twelve Apostles and a president, Gordon Hinkley, said to be a divinely inspired prophet, is becoming increasingly political. It spent \$500,000 in Alaska and \$600,000 in Hawaii on similar referenda in 1998. Some observers and church-state specialists believe the church is skirting the laws, since tax-exempt organizations are not supposed to engage in partisan politics. Others say the nature of the campaign and the fact that it is a referendum question rather than a partisan dispute may protect the Mormon involvement on this emotionally-charged issue.

International

New York: The October *Vanity Fair* published a major excerpt from *Hitler's Pope*, a new book by British Catholic writer John Cornwell, due in October from Viking. Cornwell, who had access to Vatican archives, explores Eugenio Pacelli's (Pope Pius XII) extensive relations with Germany and the Nazi regime from 1917 to 1945 and concludes that Pacelli was all too cozy with the Nazis and largely uninterested in their genocidal activities.

Belgrade: The Serbian Orthodox Church has joined with opposition leaders trying to bring down the government of Slobodan Milosevic. Patriarch Pavle, the 84-year-old leader of Serbia's national church, called on Milosevic to resign for the good of the nation. Earlier, in June, the Holy Synod – the church's governing body – denounced Milosevic and called for "a government of national salvation." Pavle is now routinely invited to address opposition rallies, but he has so far declined in order to avoid the appearance of being too political or partisan. Pavle has himself expressed equivocal and somewhat contradictory statements regarding Serbian atrocities in Kosovo. While seeming to admit the Serbian role in ethnic cleansing in Kosovo and Bosnia, Pavle has more recently denounced revenge killings of Serbian residents in Kosovo and has appealed openly to Serbia's historical sense of victimization.

Bonn: The German Catholic bishops conference agreed to Vatican demands that church-run counseling services take a more aggressive stance against abortion. In Germany, 1500 counseling services exist to determine whether women may have abortions. About 15% of them are run by the Catholic church, which receives income from the state for providing the services. Abortions can be granted under German law only when women receive certificates from these state-financed counseling centers.

The Vatican had wanted the German church to remove itself entirely from the procedure but the local bishops, not wanting to lose the revenue, agreed to continue in the system but to toughen the language by warning that the certificates "cannot be used for legally carrying out abortions." The government's Family Minister, Christine Bergman, said the decision "adds a psychological burden to women who are already facing a difficult situation."

A liberal Catholic leader of the lay-oriented "We Are the Church" movement called the new anti-abortion move "a catastrophe for women in need and for the German church."

Books

The Constitution and Religion: Leading Supreme Court Cases on Church and State, edited by Robert S. Alley, Prometheus Books, 1999, 545 pp., \$24.95 paper, \$74.95 cloth.

This handy volume by First Amendment and Jefferson-Madison scholar Robert Alley contains the texts of the U.S. Supreme Court's most important rulings on church-state issues, covering such subjects as tax aid for religious institutions, religion in public schools, and various free exercise matters. Alley supplements the rulings with commentary, with a strong introduction making clear that the Bill of Rights authors intended to "erect a wall of separation between church and state," and the texts of Madison's "Memorial and Remonstrance" and Jefferson's Act Establishing Religious Freedom. This book will be useful in resisting the ongoing campaign by the Religious Right to undermine one of our most important liberty guarantees.

— Edd Doerr

The Pope's Armada, by Gordon Urquhart, Prometheus Books, 480 pp., \$26.95.

British author Urquhart presents a devastating picture of three new movements within the Catholic Church — Focolare, Communion and Liberation, and the Neo-Catechumenate, which, he says, are central to the Vatican's current stance. These movements, all founded in Italy or Spain and headquartered in Italy, have an international character. They are conservative and traditionalist in theology and social relationships. They are enthusiastic supporters of John Paul II's policies. Why should this matter, some might wonder?

The author warns that these movements are gaining political influence, particularly in Eastern Europe. At a huge rally in Rome on May 30, 1998, Urquhart writes, "The Vatican threw its weight behind them in an unprecedented and highly public manner. In the final years of the millennium, the specific role envisaged for the new movements by the Vatican became clear. The main thrust of the Holy See's efforts has been directed at the secular field — especially national and international politics, business and high finance and the phenomenon of globalization. The new movements are tailor-made for a clandestine penetration of these fields. . . . The promotion of its right-wing 'family-values' package in international politics is the Vatican's top priority at the start of the new millennium."

These movements, argues the author, have also gained a foothold in the U.S., where they have cordial relations with many bishops and cardinals. Focolare, in particular, is the most politically adept and has made overtures to Black Muslims. He warns, "The future of the movements looks rosy. They are a model of privatization, offering the central government of the church, for the first time ever, the opportunity to carry out large operations on a worldwide scale without it costing a penny. They are also cashing in on a spiritual rebirth of a markedly fundamentalist kind."

— Al Menendez

People Behind the Peace: Community and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland, by Ronald A. Wells, Eerdmans Publishing Company, 126 pp., \$13.00.

Ronald Wells, professor of history at Calvin College, gives a brief history of the three-decade long "troubles" in Northern Ireland and portrays the conciliatory roles played by three interfaith peace groups that have transcended religious divisions.

He admits that religion is both "a cause and a cure for the

conflict in Northern Ireland" and chides those journalists who have tried to minimize the importance of religion to the conflict. Many academics and journalists have "failed to understand and appreciate the continuing impact of religion in the modern world." He believes that in Northern Ireland and in several other divided societies "religion was so important in causing the conflict" that it may "also be vital in finding the way to peace."

Acknowledging errors and asking for forgiveness are important factors in the peace process, as Wells suggests, but credit should also be given to those courageous men and women in secular public life who have worked tirelessly to achieve a workable political settlement.

— Al Menendez

P.S. The Autobiography of Paul Simon, Bonus Books, 398 pp., \$24.95.

Former Illinois Senator and Congressman Paul Simon has some choice words about the influence of religion on politics in his autobiography. Simon, a strong liberal and church-state separationist, is both son and brother of pastors of the very conservative Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

When he was growing up, anti-Catholicism was the main "church-state issue" among Protestants. Simon remembers, "Anti-Catholicism played a significant role in the thinking and theology of Missouri Synod Lutherans, as well as much of the non-Catholic religious world. Anti-Catholicism was a sort of respectable Ku Klux Klanism, without the sheets and violence."

As a young Illinois state senator, Simon campaigned for John F. Kennedy in 1960, discussing the serious implications of the religious issue in downstate Illinois, where Baptists and Lutherans deserted the Democratic ticket in droves. Simon also courageously spoke to a gathering of Lutheran ministers in Wisconsin and wrote a now famous article for the *Cresset*, a Lutheran journal published by Valparaiso University. He also tells of trying to defend the Kennedy candidacy at evangelical Wheaton College, where "the only two people in the audience on my side of the debate were my wife and mother." The Wheaton campus voted 95% for Nixon over Kennedy.

Of Kennedy's presidency, Simon says it showed the nation "the ridiculousness of anti-Catholicism's claims." "The 1960 campaign produced the last gasp of the virulent form of anti-Catholicism — years of indoctrination, of fear and hatred collided with reality in 1960." Simon argues that "Kennedy's presidency lifted our vision and spoke with an eloquence unmatched by any president since Abraham Lincoln."

Simon is a critic of today's religious right, which opposed him consistently. Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority gave Simon a "0" rating in 1980. Comments Simon, "I knew I was morally imperfect. I just didn't realize the extent of my imperfection. One of the immoral votes I cast, according to the Moral Majority, was one for foreign aid to help poor and hungry people." Because of his pro-choice position on abortion, Simon was opposed in the 1980 Democratic House primary by a Catholic priest. Simon won by a decisive 73% to 27% margin. He beat GOP Senator Charles Percy in 1984 in a bitter election in which Percy tried to use school prayer and a thinly-veiled anti-Semitism against the pro-Israel and libertarian Simon.

Simon expresses impatience with "the absolutism and rigidity which is too often part of religion," adding, "Religion is the only field where many leaders assume all truth has been revealed." He writes, "Through the years I have become more sensitive to the great harm that religious beliefs can cause as well as the great good they can create."

This is a compelling story by a great man who would have made a great president.

— Al Menendez

Framing a Life, by Geraldine A. Ferraro, Scribner, 224 pp., \$24.00.

In this personal and political memoir, the 1984 Democratic vice presidential candidate celebrates her Italian-American ancestry, her feminism, her liberality of spirit, and her genuine family values — not the kind dragged out by hypocritical politicians seeking votes from the pious at election time.

Some of her most provocative observations touch on religion and religious issues in today's politics. She remembers the experience of 1984: "My ethnicity and gender formed the subtext of every attack, and I was getting used to it. But I had hoped that religion would not enter the arena. This was another sacred matter, the private practice of faith."

Dogged by the abortion issue, Ferraro writes, "I had long ago made peace with my convictions on the subject of abortion. On a personal level, I abided by my church's teachings. Abortion could not have been my choice. But I absolutely believed that it was a personal decision that every woman has to make on her own. It wasn't my place to condemn — either as a woman or as a political figure. Abortion was the law of the land, and I felt it had no place in politics."

But her church's leaders felt otherwise, and at least some of them did so publicly and vocally. She was attacked openly by bishops in New York, Philadelphia and Scranton, provoking this retort, "The blurring of distinction between church and state was very troubling: It distressed me greatly when Archbishop John O'Connor of New York stepped over the line."

She includes the text of her remarks to an enthusiastic rally in Scranton. When the local bishop made his pro-Reagan views known, Ferraro said, "When I take my oath of office, I accept the charge of serving all the people of every faith, not just some of the people of my own faith. I also swear to uphold the Constitution of the United States, which guarantees freedom of religion. These are my public duties. And in carrying them out, I cannot, and I will not, seek to impose my own religious views on others."

— Al Menendez

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