



VOICE OF REASON

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Voucher Opponents Mobilize in California, Michigan

Voters in two large and important states, California and Michigan, face hotly contested voucher referenda in November. Proponents of the schemes are flooding the states with money. In Michigan nearly 200 organizations, including ARL, and individuals have set up All Kids First (PO Box 80140, Lansing, MI 48903-0140, phone 517-327-2589) to fight the voucher proposal.

Michigan has seen enormous financial resources poured into the state by voucher advocates. The Kids First Yes! Group has received \$1 million from the DeVos family, which funds right wing political and fundamentalist religious causes. The Catholic Church has contributed \$765,000 so far, mostly from the Detroit archdiocese. Tom Monaghan, founder of Domino's Pizza and a leader of the Catholic right, has given \$100,000. National voucher advocates John Walton and Richard Gilder are supporting the campaign.

The pro-voucher coalition has also been seeking to stifle and muzzle public school districts, challenging any spending by them against a measure that would substantially weaken public education. The state secretary of state has ruled that local school boards can adopt positions against the voucher initiative but cannot spend public funds promoting the position.

In California Proposition 38, often labeled the Draper Voucher Initiative after millionaire tycoon Timothy Draper, faces voters. Venture capitalist Draper has pledged \$20 million of his own money to promote a scheme that would require the state to give a \$4,000 annual voucher to any parent, rich or poor, to send a child to a private school. Draper helped fund the initial signature-gathering to place the scheme before the electorate.

Draper, a prominent fundraiser for George W. Bush, has enlisted former aides of Newt Gingrich and Steve Forbes. The scheme, which for starters would cost taxpayers \$2.4 billion just for the 600,000 students who attend private and parochial schools, is being treated warily by many national voucher advocates and Catholic Church officials. Some estimates put the initial expenditure at \$3 billion.

Governor Gray Davis has called it "a big detour in the wrong direction" and state Democrats are fighting it.

The opposition, No 38 Vouchers, is headquartered at 1510 J Street, Suite 110, Sacramento, CA 95814 (phone 916-442-4512, www.NoVouchers2000.com). Opponents stress that Prop 38 will abandon neighborhood schools, provides no accountability or regulation of new voucher schools, and allows voucher schools to reject students based on gender, family income, religion, and disabilities.

State legislative analysts, who are nonpartisan, have said Prop 38 would "result in a major rearrangement of the state system of school finance." That is why conservatives John Coons and Stephen Sugarman, professors of law at UC Berkeley, have opposed the initiative, saying it would benefit students who need the least help and would further disadvantage the already disadvantaged.

Californians rejected a similar proposal by a wide margin in 1993. Other measures to aid private and parochial schools have been rejected by voters in Michigan and California, going back to 1970, when Michiganders added a strong prohibition on nonpublic school aid to the state's constitution.

In a related development, the People for the American Way (PFAW) Foundation released a study saying that private schools in Milwaukee received an additional \$11 million in state tax dollars during the 1998-99 school year through a loophole in the voucher law, which was upheld by the courts. The average tuition overpayment was \$2,437 per nonpublic school student. The PFAW report, *The 40 Percent Surcharge*, noted, "If that excess money is used to advance the school's religious mission or to reduce the sponsoring church's direct support to the school, the subsidy is clearly supporting the advancement of religion."

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Supreme Court Upholds Parochial in a Big Way

In a decision that is nothing short of devastating to advocates of strict church-state separation at the money line in education, the Supreme Court invented some new doctrines to uphold public aid to parochial schools. In a 6-3 ruling in *Mitchell v. Helms*, the court majority opinion, written by Clarence Thomas, held that the provision of computers and other educational materials to pri-

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Court Deals Heavy Blow to School Prayer

In a sweeping and unequivocal ruling, the U.S. Supreme Court handed mandatory school prayer advocates a defeat on June 19. The nation's highest court ruled 6-3 that a Texas public school district violated the constitutional ban on establishment of religion by encouraging students to select by majority vote a fellow student who would offer prayers at the high school's home football games.

The Santa Fe Independent School District's official policy authorized two student elections, one to determine whether "invocations" should be delivered at games and the second to select the spokespersons to deliver them.

The Supreme Court held, "The policy is invalid on its face because it establishes an improper majoritarian election on religion, and unquestionably has the purpose and creates the perception of encouraging the delivery of prayer at a series of important school events."

The decision was written by Justice John Paul Stevens and was joined by Justices Sandra Day O'Connor, Anthony Kennedy, David Souter, Stephen Breyer and Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

The majority upheld a Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruling, which had invalidated the school district policy.

The very act of state-sponsored prayer is patently unconstitutional, the Court held in *Santa Fe Independent School District v. Jane Doe*. "The religious liberty protected by the Constitution is abridged when the State affirmatively sponsors the particular religious practice of prayer," wrote Justice Stevens for the majority.

School-sponsored prayer is, by its very nature, coercive. "The delivery of a pregame prayer has the improper effect of coercing those present to participate in an act of religious worship." Furthermore, "The choice between whether to attend these games or the risk facing a personally offensive religious ritual is in no practical sense an easy one. The Constitution, moreover, demands that the school may not force this difficult choice upon these students."

The Court took a particularly dim view of the process of requiring elections to determine whether invocations should be offered and then to select the individual who will give the official prayer. The Court said that such a policy "impermissibly imposes upon the student body a majoritarian election on the issue of prayer." As a result, "The District has established a governmental electoral mechanism that turns the school into a forum of religious debate. . . . Such a system encourages divisiveness along religious lines and threat-

ens the imposition of coercion upon those students not desiring to participate in a religious exercise. Simply by establishing the school-related procedure, which entrusts the inherently non-governmental subject of religion to a majoritarian vote, a constitutional violation has occurred."

The decision also noted that "the majoritarian process implemented by the District guarantees, by definition, that minority candidates will never prevail and that their views will be effectively silenced." The school policy, said the Court, "involves both perceived and actual endorsement of religion, invites and encourages religious messages and has always entailed a focused religious message." Furthermore, "That is precisely how the students understand the policy."

The fact record of the case, revealed at the District Court level and further examined by the Fifth Circuit Appellate Court, apparently strengthened the resolve of the Supreme Court. Prior to 1995, the school mandated a Student Council chaplain, elected by the students, who delivered a prayer over the public address system before each varsity football for the entire season. Teachers at the school routinely encouraged student attendance at Baptist revival meetings and used "blatantly denominational religious terms in spelling lessons, denominational religious songs and poems in English and choir classes and denominational religious stories and parables in grammar lessons."

A Catholic family and a Mormon family challenged this attempt to run a public school system along the lines of a Southern Baptist parochial school. The District Court allowed them to remain anonymous because of threats of intimidation and harassment. The Santa Fe Independent School District, located in a rural part of Galveston County near the Texas Gulf Coast, has 4,000 students.

The District Court found that attacks on minority religious views were routinely allowed by school personnel, who also distributed Gideon Bibles on school premises and encouraged membership in religious clubs, practices which are unconstitutional. Most of the school's religious practices were ruled impermissible, and the Appeals Court concurred.

Chief Justice Rehnquist dissented and was joined by Justices Scalia and Thomas. Rehnquist excoriated the ruling, claiming that it "bristles with hostility to all things religious in public life." The brief dissent was a surprisingly weak one, consisting mostly of

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vate and parochial schools in Jefferson Parish (county), Louisiana, does not violate the federal constitutional ban on establishment of religion. Thomas was joined by Chief Justice Rehnquist, and Justices Antonin Scalia and Anthony Kennedy.

To reach this decision Thomas and his allies (joined more narrowly in a concurring opinion by Justices O'Connor and Breyer) invoked "the principle of private choice" and neutral-based legislation that includes all kinds of schools as a broad class of recipients. Thomas wrote, "Where the aid would be suitable for use in a public school, it is also suitable for use in any private school."

Shockingly, Thomas has succeeded in overruling and apparently obliterating a quarter-century rule prohibiting aid to "pervasively sectarian schools." Thomas proclaimed, "Nothing in the Establishment Clause requires the exclusion of pervasively sectarian schools from otherwise permissible aid programs, and other doctrines of this Court bar it. This doctrine, born of bigotry, should be buried now." Thomas went out of his way to attack a straw man, namely the history surrounding the Blaine amendment controversy in the U.S. Congress nearly 130 years ago, when Congress came close to passing a constitutional amendment permanently banning all forms of public aid to religious schools. Thomas wrote angrily, "Hostility to aid to pervasively sectarian schools has a shameful pedigree that we do not hesitate to disavow. . . . Consideration of the Blaine amendment arose at a time of pervasive hostility to the Catholic Church and to Catholics in general, and it was an open secret that 'sectarian' was code for 'Catholic'."

The Thomas opinion also rejects the inquiry regarding who will benefit from legislation of this nature. It matters not a whit if 99% of the aid goes to religious schools as long as the legislation is neutral on its face. "The religious nature of a recipient should not matter to the Constitutional analysis, so long as the recipient adequately furthers the government's secular purpose," wrote Thomas. (The last phrase, however, may cause some concerns among very conservative private school administrators.)

Even if religious indoctrination is clearly a purpose of certain schools, aid to them is still constitutional unless "such indoctrination could be attributed to the government." The new doctrine allowing parochial rests on the twin pillars of "private choice and the absence of government-provided sectarian content."

Clearly, the Court has been moving in this direction for years. Thomas based his ruling in part on the previous cases, *Agostini* and *Zobrest*, which overruled the earlier anti-parochial decision *Aguilar* in full and *Ball* in part. Thomas went out of his way to note that this ruling also overrules *Meek* and *Wolman*, two classic defeats for parochial at the Supreme Court in the 1970s.

The ruling flies in the face of common sense and reason at one point, by denying that "reducing the cost of securing a religious education creates an incentive for parents to choose such an education for their children."

Justices Sandra Day O'Connor and Stephen Breyer concurred in this result but said they were "troubled" by the "expansive" nature of the Thomas opinion. Some of the sharply-focused criticisms of the "plurality" opinion (Thomas and his allies) by O'Connor still strongly suggest that future parochial programs, or tuition voucher schemes, might be struck down.

O'Connor chose to uphold the Chapter 2 programs in this case by invoking two concepts embedded in the three-year-old *Agostini* decision. They are (1) whether the aid results in governmental indoctrination and (2) whether the aid program defines its recipients by reference to religion. Using these narrow criteria, in addition to the ques-

tion of whether the aid creates an excessive entanglement between government and religion, O'Connor held the Louisiana implementation constitutional. She was convinced that "Chapter 2 aid is allocated on the basis of neutral, secular criteria" and that "No Chapter 2 funds ever reach the coffers of religious schools."

Still, O'Connor is unlikely to support any school aid program that allows "direct monetary subsidies" to church schools or to any "participating religious organizations (including churches) that could use that aid to support religious indoctrination." O'Connor also reiterated her personal doctrine of "endorsement" and "public perception," a view that would invalidate programs that could be conceived by the general public as endorsing religion.

Justice David Souter wrote a blistering and powerful dissent which chided the Court for going too far in accommodating religion in the question of church school aid, thus transgressing the Establishment Clause. Joined by John Paul Stevens and Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Souter wrote bluntly that the First Amendment's Establishment Clause "bars the use of public funds for religious aid."

In a succinct argument which could be used in future cases, Souter summarized the historic view of the Establishment provision: "The Establishment prohibition of government religious funding serves more than one end. It is meant to guarantee the right of individual conscience against compulsion, to protect the integrity of religion against the corrosion of secular support, and to preserve the unity of political society against the implied exclusion of the less-favored and the antagonism of controversy over public support for religious causes."

Souter angrily accused the majority justices (actually a plurality, since it took the two concurring judges to agree to this ruling) of ignoring long-established precedent. He said, "The plurality opinion espouses a new conception of neutrality as a practically sufficient test of constitutionality that would, if adopted by the court, eliminate enquiry into a law's effects. The plurality opinion breaks fundamentally with Establishment Clause principles, and with the methodology painstakingly worked out in support of it."

Souter reminded the Court that "compelling an individual to support religion violates the fundamental principle of freedom of conscience." Pointing out that neutrality in a law's language is only "one, nondispositive pointer toward intent," Souter accused the Court of ignoring the "mission and education level of benefited students" as a pathway by which a benefit could have a secular effect, the form of which would be determined by its ends and its effects on school budgets."

Souter noted that the factual record from Louisiana, noted in the two lower court decisions, suggested that the aid had been diverted to religious textbooks and possibly used for religious ends, especially since local authorities were initially less than careful in monitoring the program. Souter noted, for example, that "religious education in Roman Catholic schools is defined as part of required practice; aiding it is thus akin to aiding a church service."

Souter bluntly asserted that the Thomas opinion was "unequaled in the history of Establishment Clause interpretation" because of its "break with consistent doctrine" and "its manifold errors." Rarely has a dissent been more eloquent or hard-hitting than this one. Warning about future cases that might be influenced by the new Thomas-era doctrine, Souter concluded, "The plurality's mistaken assumptions explain and underscore its sharp break with the Framers' understanding of establishment and this Court's consistent interpretative course. Under the plurality's regime, little would be left of the right of conscience against compelled support for religion; the more massive the aid the more potent would be the influence of the government on

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Abortion Rights Upheld

The nation's highest tribunal strengthened abortion access and availability in two closely-watched rulings. By a narrow 5-4 margin, the Supreme Court invalidated three state laws banning a rarely-used third trimester abortion procedure labeled "partial birth" abortion by opponents.

Justice Stephen G. Breyer wrote the majority opinion in *Stenberg v. Carhart*, which originated in Nebraska. Breyer said the state's ban – similar in content to those of 30 other states – "lacked any exception for the preservation of the health of the mother" and "imposes an undue burden on a woman's ability to choose." The Nebraska ban was so vaguely worded that it could have been construed to forbid even the most common second trimester abortions, thus contravening *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*.

Breyer was also critical of the punitive nature of the Nebraska statute. "All those who perform abortion procedures . . . must fear prosecution, conviction and imprisonment. The result is an undue burden upon a woman's right to make an abortion decision." Breyer was joined by O'Connor, Stevens, Souter and Ginsburg in constructing the majority ruling.

Justice Antonin Scalia wrote a scathing dissent, filled with inflammatory rhetoric referring to physicians as "abortionists" and calling the disputed procedure "live-birth abortion" and a "visibly brutal means of eliminating our half-born posterity." In a separate dissent Justice Clarence Thomas was only slightly milder in his rhetoric, referring to "profound respect for fetal life" and abortion that "borders on infanticide." Justice Anthony Kennedy, in still another dissent, denied that the Nebraska law placed an undue burden on the right to choose and said states had the right to enact such determinations. Chief Justice William Rehnquist joined the Thomas and Kennedy dissents.

The thirty-one states affected by the decision are mostly in the South and Midwest. Every Southern state except North Carolina and George W. Bush's Texas had enacted the ban as had most of the evangelical and Baptist-oriented Border states. In the Midwest and Plains every state but liberal Minnesota had such a ban as did the Mormon-dominated Rocky Mountain states. However, only two of the eleven Northeastern states (New Jersey and Rhode Island) are affected. Most of the Far West had no such statutes, except for conservative Alaska. The more libertarian but Republican states of Colorado and Wyoming also refused to enact the ban.

Some states are already contemplating ways to get around the ruling by drafting new legislation and looking for loopholes. Virginia Attorney General Mark Earley, an ally of the Religious Right, is spearheading this effort.

Dr. LeRoy Carhart, the Omaha surgeon who challenged the Nebraska law, said he was pleased but warned, "This shows *Roe* is hanging by a very fragile thread. It's a true wake-up call to the American people. If they want to keep abortion for their children and themselves, they need to go out and vote for choice." Carhart has survived death threats and economic pressures in recent years and is the only physician in Nebraska who performs late-term abortions.

Anti-abortion activists have vowed to fight again until all abortions are eliminated. Republican presidential candidate George W. Bush said he was "disappointed" by the ruling and would work to overturn it.

In a companion ruling, the Court upheld a Colorado law that requires anti-abortion demonstrators to stay at least eight feet away from people entering health care facilities. The restriction applies within a 100-foot radius around any clinic entrance. The vote in this case was 6-3, with the chief justice joining the majority. Justice John Paul Stevens, writing for the majority, said the Colorado law was "content neutral" and was based on "the right to be left alone." He wrote, "Private citizens have always retained the power to decide for themselves what they wish to read, and within limits, what oral messages they want to consider." The Colorado Supreme Court had originally upheld the law and expressed concerns about tension and violence around clinics.

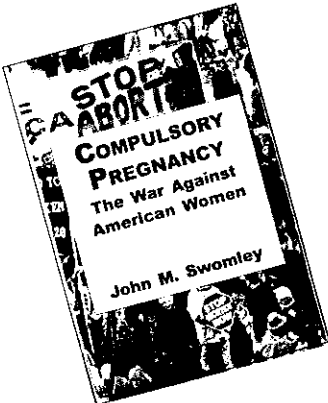
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the teaching mission; the more generous the support, the more divisive would be the resentments of those resisting religious support, and those religions without school systems ready to claim their fair share."

Souter said that "government can in fact operate with neutrality in its relation to religion," primarily by not aiding it financially.

This Supreme Court judgment overrules two lower federal district and appellate court rulings, which had held such aid unconstitutional. The case arose in 1985 when two Louisiana taxpayers with children in public schools filed suit to stop the distribution of federal Chapter 2 funds at area private and religious schools. In their county (Jefferson Parish, a New Orleans suburb), 41 of the 46 recipient private schools were church-related, and 30% of all federal Chapter 2 funds went to the nonpublic schools. The Eastern District of Louisiana held in 1990 in *Helms v. Cody* (the original name of the suit) that the aid had the primary effect of advancing religion. Strangely enough, another judge two years later reversed this ruling in part, especially after some of its benefits had been terminated. But a third ruling, *Helms v. Picard* by the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, reinstated the ban.

The Supreme Court overruled these findings and reached back to render null and void some of the High Court's prior rulings on the subject. This relatively rare reversal by the nation's highest tribunal now makes substantial government aid to church schools a possible reality.



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Editorial

The Issues That Matter

In two months the American electorate may well decide the future direction of this country on a host of economic, environmental, cultural, human rights, and world peace issues. The decisions made on November 7 will shape the course of future developments for this decade and perhaps beyond.

While there are many issues on which voters should properly focus, we should not lose sight of the vital principles of religious liberty, freedom of conscience, tolerance and openness in pursuing scientific, philosophical and religious truths. Nor can we ignore the importance of publicly controlled, religiously neutral education. A democratic society cannot risk division of the educational efforts into divisive, sectarian animosities that can only threaten interfaith harmony and community good will.

The fundamental rights of reproductive freedom for American women, with all of its corollaries, should be considered by voters when they make their decision in the privacy of their conscience.

Candidates and parties should be held to the highest standards. We should expect them to adhere to the principles inherent in the First Amendment to the Constitution and in Article 6 of that same document. The positions articulated by the candidates on these issues should be scrutinized by those who care about the preservation of a tolerant, humane, secular and free society. This applies to candidates at the federal, state and local levels.

These are the fundamental principles of the Republic. These are the issues that matter.

ARL in Action

Executive director Edd Doerr conducted workshops with literature displays at the Unitarian Universalist General Assembly in Nashville and at the American Humanist Association annual convention in Hasbrouck Heights, New Jersey, over the summer. He also spoke to audiences in Bowie and Silver Spring, Maryland, and did radio shows in Albany, New York, Springfield, Illinois, and Cleveland, Ohio. Doerr debated Father Frank Pavone, the director of Priests for Life, on America's Voice cable television in July. On the same network he debated the Reverend Paul Schenk on the question of abortion rights. His article on the Catholic vote in US politics appeared in the summer issue of *Conscience*, the quarterly journal of Catholics For a Free Choice.

Associate director Al Menendez's article on the Catholic vote appeared in the September issue of *USA Today*. His study of Bush religious affairs adviser Marvin Olasky appeared in the September-October issue of *The Humanist*. Reprints of the Menendez article from *USA Today* and the Doerr piece from *Conscience* are available for \$1.00 from ARL.

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sneers at the "oft-criticized" *Lemon* test which still undergirds Establishment Clause jurisprudence, one which essentially calls for a secular purpose and nonentanglement between church and state. Claiming George Washington as an ally, the dissenters said that prayer at a football game has "plausible secular purposes." Texas governor George W. Bush blasted the court ruling.

Democrats Support Abortion Rights and Public Education



The Democratic Platform for the 2000 elections came down hard on freedom of choice for American women and in opposition to vouchers for private and parochial schools.

On abortion rights the party position is unequivocal: "The Democratic Party stands behind the right of every woman to choose, consistent with *Roe v. Wade*, and regardless of ability to pay. We believe it is a fundamental constitutional liberty that individual Americans - not government - can best take responsibility for making the most difficult and intensely personal decisions regarding reproduction. This year's Supreme Court rulings show to us all that eliminating a woman's right to choose is only one justice away. That's why the stakes in this election are as high as ever.

"Our goal is to make abortion less necessary and more rare, not more difficult and more dangerous. We support contraceptive research, family planning, comprehensive family life education and policies that support healthy childbearing. The abortion rate is dropping. Now we must continue to support efforts to reduce unintended pregnancies, and we call on all Americans to take personal responsibility to meet this important goal."

The education plank includes this firm statement: "Let there be no mistake: what America needs are public schools that compete with one another and are held accountable for results, not private school vouchers that drain resources from public schools and hand over the public's hard-earned tax dollars to private schools with no accountability...."

Joseph Lieberman

Connecticut junior senator Joseph Lieberman is the Democratic nominee for vice president. A self-styled moderate centrist, Lieberman has often departed from the party mainstream on some issues. But he remains far more progressive on social and economic issues and more favorable to church-state separation than the Republicans and his Republican counterpart, Dick Cheney.

Lieberman favors abortion rights and voted to uphold President Clinton's vetoes of bans on partial-birth abortion. He told CBS's Dan Rather that "abortion should be a matter between a woman, a physician, and her moral base and personal conscience." He opposes formalized school prayer but has expressed support for "a moment of silence" in public school classrooms. He has voted three times for voucher experiments that include private and parochial schools, which sets him apart from Al Gore and most Democrats. He has already begun to moderate these views.

Lieberman is the first Jewish candidate for president or vice president in the nation's history. Once again, this shows the Democratic Party's willingness to expand the religious horizons and open the highest positions of its leadership to religious minorities. Lieberman is an observant Orthodox Jew who takes his religious responsibilities seriously. He refuses to work or to travel from sundown Friday until sundown Saturday, but has made exceptions in times of grave national emergencies. His second wife, Hadassah, is a daughter of Holocaust survivors and was born in Czechoslovakia in 1947.

Lieberman's political hero is John F. Kennedy, who overcame a two-century heritage of religious prejudice to win the presidency in 1960, becoming the nation's first and only Roman Catholic chief executive. Lieberman served in the Connecticut state senate and as attorney general before he ousted liberal Republican Senator Lowell Weicker, a champion of church-state separation, in 1988. Ironically, in that election a majority of Connecticut's Jewish voters supported Weicker, as did white Protestants, who tend to favor Republicans. The state's largest voting group, Catholics, favored Lieberman, as did African Americans, who are largely Democrats. Catholic swing voters are critical in the Northeast, and Lieberman may appeal to them. The Jewish vote, while small (2-3%) nationally, is significant in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Florida and California.

Lieberman's reputation as a man of high principle and moral character may appeal to middle of the road swing voters and independents in an election that is expected to be close and bitterly fought.

Lieberman won a 67% to 31% landslide in his 1994 reelection in a Republican year. He is considered strongly pro-labor and something of an interventionist in foreign policy, supporting the Gulf War and NATO operations against Serbia. He voted to protect the employment rights of gays and lesbians and opposed a constitutional amendment banning flag burning. He has also been an active participant in the move to involve the United States in fostering religious freedom overseas.



Republican Platform Reiterates Support for Vouchers, No Abortions

The 2000 GOP platform reaffirmed a long-standing opposition to abortion rights and a pledge to appoint only judges who support banning abortion and/or limiting access to abortion services for America's women. Pro-choice Republicans had virtually given up hope of attaining changes or modifications to the party's document of principles, especially after Governor George W. Bush indicated that he wanted the harsh and absolutist language of 1992 and 1996 retained.

On education the Republicans endorsed charter schools, "school choice" that includes religious schools financed in part by the taxpayers, and an "abstinence only" approach to school sex education programs. At the same time they call for a "progressively limited" federal role in education while dropping calls for abolishing the federal Department of Education.

The GOP reiterated its opposition to gays and lesbians serving in the U.S. military and restated its rejection of civil rights laws that include sexual orientation. They endorsed the Defense of Marriage Act but rejected calling marriage "an institution ordained by God," apparently at the request of Governor Bush, who wanted a "sweetness and light" document.

The Republican platform plank on family matters represents a rigid approach reflective of its domination by evangelical Protestants. It calls not only for "abstinence from sexual activity until marriage as the responsible and expected standard of behavior," but opposes "school-based clinics that provide referrals, counseling and related services for contraception and abortion." They also endorse more adoptions, homes for unwed mothers, and stricter divorce laws.

The Republican Platform: Selections From

"We renew our call for replacing 'family planning' programs for teens with increased funding for abstinence education, which teaches abstinence until marriage as the responsible and expected standard of behavior. Abstinence from sexual activity is the only protection that is 100 percent effective against out-of-wedlock pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases, including H.I.V./AIDS, when transmitted sexually. We oppose school-based clinics that provide referrals, counseling, and related services for contraception and abortion. We urge the states to enforce laws against statutory rape, which accounts for an enormous portion of teen pregnancy. We support the establishment of Second Chance Maternity Homes, like the ones Governor Bush has proposed, to give young unwed mothers the opportunity to develop parenting skills, finish school, and enter the work force. Because many youngsters fall into poverty as a result of divorce, we also encourage states to review their divorce laws and to support projects that strengthen marriage, promote successful parenting, bolster the stability of the home, and protect the economic rights of the innocent spouse and children. Finally, because so many social ills plaguing America are fueled by the absence of fathers, we support initiatives that strengthen marriage rates and promote committed fatherhood. . . ."

Family Matters

"The Supreme Court's recent decision, prohibiting states from banning partial-birth abortions - a procedure denounced by a committee of the American Medical Association and rightly branded as four-fifths infanticide - shocks the conscience of the nation. As a country, we must keep our pledge to the first guarantee of the Declaration of Independence. That is why we say the unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life which cannot be infringed. We support a human life amendment to the Constitution and we endorse legislation to make clear that the Fourteenth Amendment's protections apply to unborn children. Our purpose is to have legislative and judicial protection of that right against those who perform abortions. We oppose using public revenues for abortion and will not fund organizations which advocate it. We support the appointment of judges who respect traditional family values and the sanctity of innocent human life.

"Our goal is to ensure that women with problem pregnancies have the kind of support, material and otherwise, they need for themselves and for their babies, not to be punitive towards those for whose difficult situation we have only compassion. We oppose abortion, but our pro-life agenda does not include punitive action against women who have an abortion. We salute those who provide alternatives to abortion and offer adoption services, and we commend congressional Republicans for expanding assistance to adopting families and for removing racial barriers to adoption. The impact of those measures and of our Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 has been spectacular. Adoptions out of foster care have jumped forty percent and the incidence of child abuse and neglect has actually declined. We second Governor Bush's call to make permanent the adoption tax credit and expand it to \$7,500."

Dick Cheney: A Hard-Line Conservative

George W. Bush's choice of former Defense Secretary and Wyoming Congressman Dick Cheney as his vice presidential running mate clearly pleased the conservative wing of the GOP. It symbolized, if any symbols were needed, the complete control that the political right has over the Republican Party. Moderate or liberal Republicans are so dwindling a segment of the party's faithful that no one in authority pays them any heed. The hope for a pro-choice running mate or a more moderate tone to the party's abortion plank in the platform proved illusory.

Cheney, who opposed Head Start, civil rights, unemployment insurance and every form of gun control and gun safety, is also safely and rigidly anti-abortion. During his decade (1979-1989) as Wyoming's only Congressman, Cheney voted against abortion rights and abortion availability on 26 of 27 votes cast. He also opposed hate-crimes legislation and legislation aimed at diminishing legal discrimination against gays and lesbians.

Republican Emphasis on Catholics May be Rebuffed

The Republican Party set up a "Catholic Task Force" during the summer to target America's largest religious community. Some say it was done to allay fear and disgust among some Catholic voters about George Bush's campaign appearance at fundamentalist and anti-Catholic Bob Jones University in South Carolina and the party's clumsy handling of the US House chaplaincy matter.

Now, two sociologists and researchers, William V. D'Antonio and Jacqueline Scherer, have issued a report challenging Republican claims to be supportive of Catholic social teaching and therefore deserving of Catholic voter support. In a study published in the *National Catholic Reporter* (August 11, 2000) they concluded, "Our extensive analysis shows clearly that, aside from the Republican Party's anti-abortion stand, and its support for educational vouchers and funds for Catholic schools, the party's claim to best represent Catholic views is greatly exaggerated. In virtually every other area of concern to Catholic leaders and to Network, the Catholic social justice lobby, support by Democrats in Congress for positions aligned with church teaching far outrank support by Republicans."

The researchers cited such issues as the minimum wage, health insurance, housing assistance, Medicaid eligibility, a patients' bill of rights, trade with Cuba, the death penalty, cuts in military spending and support for peacekeeping efforts in Bosnia and Kosovo.

For example, on dozens of roll call votes in the 104th and 105th Congresses, the level of Republican support for positions endorsed by official Catholic agencies ranged from 8% to 34%, while Democratic support ranged from 63% to 86%. The overall level of support for Catholic social justice positions was 76.1% among Democrats and 18.3% among Republicans, a 4-1 ratio.

While D'Antonio and Scherer stressed that neither party supported church positions on some issues such as capital punishment and immigration, the Republicans' long-term opposition "to using federal tax dollars for social programs that would relieve the burdens of the poor" was directly antithetical to centuries of Catholic Church teaching on public policy.

Religion and Ethnicity Reveal Sharp Differences Between Democrats, Republicans

The Democrats are far more likely to appeal to the bright mosaic of America's different religious and ethnic heritages than the Republicans. The Democrats have shown this not only by being welcoming to many religious traditions historically but by nominating candidates from minority faiths for the highest offices in the land, president and vice president.

The Democrats have nominated Catholics twice for president, losing with New York Governor Al Smith in a hate-filled 1928 campaign in which high Republican officials joined the smear campaign, and winning narrowly in 1960 with Massachusetts Senator John F. Kennedy. Senator Ed Muskie of Maine ran unsuccessfully with Hubert Humphrey in 1968, as did Maryland's Sargent Shriver, who was George McGovern's running mate in 1972. New York Congresswoman Geraldine Ferraro was Walter Mondale's running mate in 1984. She was also the first woman and the first Italian-American nominee for vice president.

The only Greek Orthodox Christian to be nominated by a major party was Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis, who lost to George Bush in 1988. Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut, the party's vice presidential candidate in 2000, is the first nominee of the Jewish faith.

The sole Republican candidate from a minority tradition was a little-known upstate New York Congressman, William Miller, who ran with Barry Goldwater in 1964. Miller was a Catholic of German ancestry. Goldwater himself, a practicing Episcopalian, came from a Polish-Jewish

family on his father's side.

Throughout all of U.S. history, the Republican nominees have been white, Protestant and male, and almost all of them were of British ancestry. Two exceptions were President Dwight Eisenhower, who was of Swiss-German descent, and Vice President Spiro Agnew, who was of Greek ancestry. The Bush-Cheney ticket repeats this 150-year domination of the GOP by WASPs (a term coined by the patrician Philadelphia sociologist E. Digby Baltzell).



Minority Candidates for President and Vice President

Democrats

1. Alfred E. Smith, Catholic, president, 1928
2. John F. Kennedy, Catholic, president, 1960
3. Edmund Muskie, Catholic, vice president, 1968
4. Sargent Shriver, Catholic, vice president, 1972
5. Geraldine Ferraro, Catholic, vice president, 1984
6. Michael Dukakis, Greek Orthodox, president, 1988
7. Joseph Lieberman, Jewish, vice president, 2000

Republicans

1. William Miller, Catholic, vice president, 1964

The Minor Parties on Church and State

America's increasingly active minor parties rarely address church-state issues, since economic and foreign policy concerns tend to dominate their agendas. This year the Green Party endorses abortion rights and opposes vouchers, reflecting the sentiments of its candidate Ralph Nader. The Libertarians and their nominee Harry Browne oppose vouchers on the assumption that government will take over private schools. Most Libertarians are pro-choice on abortion, though party candidates in Pennsylvania stressed their opposition to abortion rights. Howard Phillips' far-right Constitution Party (formerly the U.S. Taxpayers Party) is stridently anti-abortion, pro-school prayer and generally anti-public education. Its candidates are Phillips, a fundamentalist Protestant, for president and columnist Joseph Sobran, a fundamentalist Catholic, for vice president.

The Reform Party assiduously avoided church-state issues when its standard bearer was Ross Perot in 1992 and 1996. Now that right-winger and ex-Republican Pat Buchanan and his forces have taken control of part of the Reform Party, church-state issues are likely to become central. Those Reform Party members who support John Hagelin, also the candidate of the Natural Law Party, are mum on church-state issues.

The World According to Marvin Olasky, Bush's Religious Advisor

Marvin Olasky is a professor of journalism at the University of Texas and author of more than a dozen books about history and politics. He is outspoken in his self-identification as a former atheist and Communist Party member turned fundamentalist Presbyterian. His previous books have ridiculed twentieth-century welfare policy and the abortion rights movement. He much prefers the harsher, more religion-saturated approach of nineteenth century evangelicals, who linked "charity" to the "truly needy" and to those who needed moral reformation and conversion to evangelical Christianity. Like many pseudoconservatives, Olasky glamorizes previous eras of history which never really existed.

His skewed framework of values can be discerned in a 1999 book, *The American Leadership Tradition: Moral Vision from Washington to Clinton*, in which he argues that the greatness of U.S. presidents depends almost solely on "religious beliefs and sexual morality," a crabbed vision rejected by most historians. Does any rational person actually think that Rutherford B. Hayes and Calvin Coolidge were better presidents than Franklin Delano Roosevelt or John F. Kennedy just because the pious Republicans were teetotalers and faithful to their wives?

Olasky recently labeled journalists as soulless and godless individuals. He ridiculed women in the journal *Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, writing, "God does not forbid women to be leaders in society, . . . but when that occurs it's usually because of the abdication of men, as in the situation of Deborah and Barak, there's a certain shame attached to it." Perhaps Margaret Thatcher and Golda Meier would dissent from that view.

These quirky views would hardly cause a ripple of interest if it were not for the fact that Olasky's greatest fan is Texas Governor George W. Bush, the GOP's presidential candidate for the 2000 elections. Bush's entire political philosophy – such as

it is – is, by his definition, something called "compassionate conservatism." What he means by this murky concept is largely spelled out in Marvin Olasky's new book, *Compassionate Conservatism* (The Free Press, \$24.00).

Bush's foreword hails the idea that only religion-based charities can provide meaningful change in people's lives and thus can and should be supported by government funds. Bush calls for "a government that helps organizations of all faiths."

Olasky's book is mostly the recollections of a journey he and his fourteen-year-old son Daniel took to investigate "faith-based" enterprises around the country. Since Olasky does not believe in the Constitution's First Amendment, he thinks it is perfectly acceptable for government to fund religious charities and "life-changing" groups, even if proselytism and evangelism are carried out on the premises. What will result, of course, is government-sponsored conversion, mostly to various forms of fundamentalist Protestant Christianity. While Olasky claims to support religious groups in general, his selection of preferred charities is almost entirely of one religious persuasion.

Olasky especially adores Texas, a place he calls "the land of social entrepreneurs," where the state's vast prison industry is increasingly under the control of evangelical religious groups such as InnerChange and Prison Fellowship. Olasky cites very preliminary data suggesting that these church-based programs are effective and have a low recidivism rate. Of course, Olasky ignores the state's poor ranking in percentage of its population living in poverty and degradation, not to mention air and water pollution and children without health insurance. Olasky urges a return to "multiple establishment" of religions and "the eighteenth century triad of church, charity and school." He rejects all of the historical evidence that America's founders wanted a secular government that separates church and state for the overall good of both. Pointedly, he writes, "One wall, however

– the wall of separation of church and state – would stop compassionate conservatism in its tracks if it were part of the Constitution. But it's not." Well, it is, and it might be our only protection if a Bush administration attempts to implement this flawed approach to welfare and criminal justice.

The book is padded with a speech by Governor Bush, delivered in Indianapolis on July 22, 1999. Bush said, "In every instance where my administration sees a responsibility to help people, we will look first to faith-based organizations, charities and community groups that have shown their ability to save and change lives." Furthermore, said, Bush, "We will never ask an organization to compromise its core values and spiritual mission to get the help it needs."

Bush pledged to set up a new government agency, "an advocate position reporting directly to the president to ensure that charities are not secularized or slighted."

Bush and Olasky fail to see that government-subsidized religious charities will soon become just another branch of the bureaucracy, thereby diluting their unique character. Individual citizens who do not wish to pay for the expansion of religious groups whose views they do not share will lose their freedom of conscience. Religious groups will fight for the ever-expanding distribution of federal funds. The larger and more politically powerful religions will become ever more dominant in the culture.

That's what "compassionate conservatism" ultimately means.

– Al Menendez



Update

Public Shows Satisfaction with Public Schools, Declining Support for Vouchers

The 32nd Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of Public Attitudes Toward Public Schools indicates a high level of satisfaction with their local schools. The poll reveals nearly an all-time high among parents whose children attend those schools. Seven out of ten public school parents assigned an A or B grade to the school their oldest child attends.

The survey's directors, Lowell C. Rose and Alec M. Gallup, concluded, "The notion that the public is dissatisfied with its public schools is based on myth instead of fact."

Public satisfaction is evident when Americans are given a choice between reforming and improving the public schools or giving vouchers to stimulate private school attendance. The public favors the improvement of the existing system by 75% to 22% over the voucher alternative.

Support for vouchers has declined from last year's poll. By 56% to 39% Americans say they oppose rather than favor "allowing students and parents to choose a private school to attend at public expense." Allowing parents to choose "any" public or nonpublic school through "government-paid tuition benefits" is also opposed by 52% to 45%. Voters also say, by 76% to 21%, that private and church-related schools "that accept government tuition payments should be accountable to the state in the way that public schools are accountable." By 74% to 21% Americans think that "nonpublic schools that receive public funding should be required to accept students from a wider range of backgrounds and academic ability than is now generally the case."

Those polled also said that lack of adequate funding for public schools was the most critical issue facing public educators.

The most significant change, say Rose and Gallup, is about public support for nonpublic schools: "The responses suggest that support for the use of public funds to pay for students to attend private schools may have peaked and has begun to trend downward."

Religious Battle at the DC Council

Religious views on contraception and medical insurance coverage interacted to cause a nasty dispute in the District of Columbia Council during the summer. The City Council overwhelmingly passed a measure that would allow women, rather than their insurers, to determine what health services they can use. Since this specifically allowed contraceptive prescriptions, the city's Roman Catholic leadership reacted with a fury.

Cardinal James A. Hickey, archbishop of Washington, accused Council members of trying to infringe on Catholic consciences and deny free exercise of religion to church-related institutions such as Georgetown University and Providence Hospital. The archdiocese protested to the Council, the mayor, Anthony Williams, who is a Catholic, and to Congress.

Originally, the bill was expected to have a "conscience clause" exempting religious institutions from including certain kinds of reproductive services in their coverage if they had religious objections. But the Council removed the clause, holding that such an exemption would deny freedom of choice to the individuals who work for church-related institutions.

Referring to the area's Catholic hospitals, *The Washington Post's* Colbert King wrote, "The hospitals may have religious affiliations, but they also serve the general public, have a secular purpose, receive

public funds and are major providers of key health services. To let them opt out of providing health services to which they are religiously opposed is tantamount to allowing Georgetown and Providence to impose their religious beliefs on staff and workers who don't happen to share those convictions."

This is apparently what is likely to happen when Congress and the DC Council reconvene in September. The Republican-dominated Congress is moving toward demanding the insertion of a conscience clause in the health insurance coverage bill. Mayor Anthony Williams also announced that he would probably veto the bill unless such an exemption was added. Supporters of the legislation say that the capital's women employees will be the big losers, as is, once again, the concept of home rule for the citizens of the District.

Religious Zoning Bill Passes, Goes to President

Just before the summer recess, Congress passed a bill providing houses of worship greater protection from zoning laws. The Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA) would also give persons in government-run prisons, hospitals, and group homes more protection for religious exercise. Nearly 50 religious and civil liberties groups supported the measure, and its backers included liberals like Ted Kennedy and Jerry Nadler and conservatives like Orrin Hatch and Charles Canady.

The bill, expected to be signed into law by President Clinton, requires zoning boards to have a "compelling reason" to reject expansions of church property. It does not provide religious institutions with immunity from land use regulations but does provide a way to challenge such regulations if they substantially burden the free exercise of religion. In some instances around the country, local officials have tried to limit the number of churches in a community, the size of the congregation, and even church social outreach and food distribution programs.

Not everyone was enthusiastic, however. The *Lakeland Ledger* in conservative Polk County, Florida, said the act "seems a prime piece of political mischief that will almost certainly run into constitutional problems."

In a related matter, the Fourth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond upheld a Montgomery County, Maryland, ordinance exempting parochial schools located on land owned or leased by a church from having to obtain a permit. The 2-1 majority said the land-use ordinance was constitutional because "government is entitled to accommodate religion without violating the Establishment Clause." The August 14 decision overruled a 1999 district court ruling that the ordinance had no secular purpose and advanced religion by favoring parochial schools.

Did the Media Suppress the Vatican Story?

A new book, *Censored 2000*, by Peter Phillips (Seven Stories Press, New York) criticizes the media's failure to explore the Vatican's growing power in the international health field and at the United Nations, where it has "non-government observer" status. Phillips says, "Although some aspects of this story received coverage, the extent and reasons behind the Vatican's power in the UN were not explored."

Phillips continued, "With 300,000 health facilities worldwide, the Roman Catholic Church is a major global health provider. When challenged to provide abortion services or other contraception services, the church repeatedly responds that if forced, it will stop health services. As governments privatize social services worldwide, and more and more public hospitals fall under Catholic control, the Vatican's power grows."

Polygamist Leader Favors Home Schooling

Nearly 8,000 followers of a polygamist branch of Mormonism in southern Utah and northern Arizona have been ordered by their religious leader, Warren Jeffs, to remove their children from area public schools and teach them at home. About 1,000 students in Colorado City, Arizona, and 300 in Hildale, Utah, are affected by the diktat.

The fundamentalist breakaway Mormons are numerous in this isolated region. Polygamy is against the law in both Arizona and Utah, but no prosecutions of the practice have been filed. Many teachers in the local public schools belong to the sect and have resigned, leaving the districts in a bind.

Mohave County (Arizona) School Superintendent Mike File said the school district will lose at least \$3 million by the exodus.

Evolution Wins in Kansas

Supporters of returning evolution to Kansas public school science classes and including knowledge of evolutionary principles in state student assessment tests won a solid victory in largely Republican Kansas in August. Three of the four candidates for the state school board who favored these standards triumphed over incumbents who had adopted anti-evolution policies in 1999. A larger than expected turnout fueled the victories. In a US House race in suburban Kansas City (Johnson County), however, a more conservative Republican candidate, state Rep. Phill Kline, won the GOP nomination to oppose the state's only Democratic congressman, freshman Rep. Dennis Moore. The evolution issue may help to keep the seat in the Democratic column if moderate Republicans refuse to support Kline.

Ten Commandments Monument on Hold

A federal judge issued a temporary injunction at the end of July barring the state of Indiana from erecting a Ten Commandments monument on the Statehouse lawn in Indianapolis. The legislature

enacted a law allowing schools and government buildings to post the Ten Commandments if they are displayed with other relevant historical documents.

The Indiana Civil Liberties Union sued to block the monument on establishment of religion grounds. The judge agreed that the planned monument "lacks a secular purpose and has the effect of endorsing a religious belief."

A Ten Commandments monument was erected at the Statehouse in 1958 but removed in 1991. The state has not yet decided whether to appeal the decision.

Parental Notification Law Loses in New Jersey

A New Jersey law that required a doctor to wait at least 48 hours after a parent received notice before performing an abortion on women under age 18 was struck down by the New Jersey Supreme Court in August. The law, signed by Republican Governor Christine Todd Whitman in 1999, would subject doctors to potential civil lawsuits brought by the minor's parents. The law had never been enforced because of the legal challenges.

By a 4-2 vote, New Jersey's highest court held that the statute violates a state constitutional mandate guaranteeing minors equal protection under the law. An appeal is unlikely.

New Jersey is the fifth state to have parental notification laws invalidated on the basis of individual protections accorded to minors. About 20 states have enacted such laws, but six states have been barred from enforcing them, pending court decisions on their constitutionality.

Washington State Constitution Under Fire

Can a state scholarship program for high-achieving, low-income students be barred to students who major in religion or plan a career in the ministry? The question may be resolved by the courts in Washington State, which has one of the nation's strictest constitutions mandating separation of church and state, particularly in education.

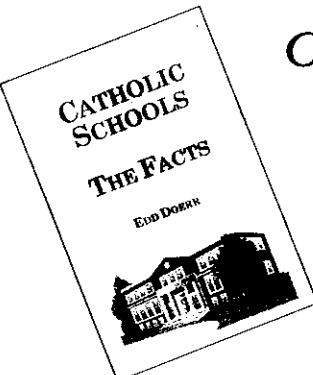
At issue is whether Joshua Duvey, a nineteen-year-old high school valedictorian who now attends Northwest College, affiliated with the Assemblies of God, can continue to receive a state scholarship. He received a financial aid reward in 1999, but it was withdrawn after state education officials discovered that he is a religion major preparing for the ministry. He filed suit in June asking that the state's policy be declared unconstitutional. He is being supported by the conservative American Center for Law and Justice.

Not Kosher

A federal judge in Brooklyn struck down a century-old kosher food law in New York State in August. Judge Nina Gershon ruled that "the entanglements involved here between religion and the state are not only excessive in themselves but have the unconstitutional effect of endorsing and advancing religion."

Under the kosher food laws, state market inspectors visit kosher retailers to see that the products have been processed in accordance with what the statutes call "Orthodox Hebrew requirements."

Conservative and Reform Jewish groups supported the ruling. They cited long-standing disagreements on what constitutes kosher and contended that the state should not be enforcing purely religious laws. Orthodox groups said that appeals are likely. Similar laws were struck down by courts in New Jersey in 1992 and in Baltimore in 1995.



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Commandments Okayed on Book Covers

Chicago public school officials have decided to allow a religious group, Total Living Network, to distribute book covers including the Ten Commandments to schools who wish them. All distribution has to be done off campus. The school book covers also include inspirational quotes from Mark Twain, Oprah Winfrey and Michael Jordan. The distribution is a constitutional close call, but may fall within previous rulings allowing Bible and religious book distributions off campus as long as there is no school sponsorship.

Public school leaders have given a cautious endorsement. Interestingly, the deputy chief of the Chicago school system, Wilfredo de Jesus, is a minister of the Assemblies of God sect. He claimed "100 percent support" for the distribution efforts.

International

Moscow: The Russian Orthodox Church has been much in the news of late. A Moscow University research report said Russia's largest church is "a gigantic corporation" that encourages corruption, bribery and money laundering. The church has developed huge business interests, even though local parish priests largely live in poverty. The church, say the researchers at the Moscow Center for Research, is "a grandiose offshore zone with its own independent financial and manufacturing activity and huge potential for money laundering by the economy's shadow and criminal sectors." The Patriarch, Aleksy II, refused to comment on the findings.

The church's Council of Bishops issued a formal statement condemning homosexuality, abortion, euthanasia and genetic engineering. It endorsed private property and praised the military. It endorsed the separation of church and state and warned the state against interference in church life.

It also supported ecumenism but warned other churches against attempts to convert Orthodox believers. The Russian church had condemned the NATO action against Yugoslavia and has remained wary of Roman Catholic missionary activity in the Orthodox sphere of influence.

The church leaders also announced plans to canonize as a saint Russia's last czar, Nicholas II, his wife, Empress Alexandra, and their children, who were executed by Bolsheviks in 1918. The family are to be venerated as "passion bearers," the lowest status in the hierarchy of saints. Nicholas will become the fourth Russian ruler since the Middle Ages to be declared a saint. Church officials stressed that Nicholas and his family were to be canonized for their deaths, not their lives, which were not noteworthy in terms of charity or religious fervor. The bishops also canonized 850 martyrs of the 20th century, who died under Communist persecution. Some critics fear that Nicholas himself will become the banner of nationalist, right-wing movements in the nation and the church.

Ottawa: Is Canada moving toward the political far right? A new political party, the Canadian Alliance, formerly the Reform Party, hopes so. This party, based in the West, hopes to rally social, economic and religious conservatives.

The Alliance's newly-elected leader, Stockwell Day, is a Pentecostal preacher, and a former Christian school administrator who served 14 years in the Alberta legislature and seven years in that province's cabinet - roughly equivalent to a state legislature and the governor's cabinet in the U.S.

What makes Day a controversial and polarizing candidate is that he vigorously opposes abortion, equal employment rights for gays and lesbians, and all forms of gun control - popular positions,

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to be sure, in the wild and woolly province of Alberta (Canada's Texas in many respects), but gravely suspect in the larger cities of the East, in Ontario, Quebec, and in the maritime provinces of Atlantic Canada.

Day is not reticent about promoting his social views, which polls show represent only a small minority of all Canadians. He has also attacked the federal government's settlement of land claims with aboriginal and Native Canadian peoples, as "race-based" social engineering. Day has said that he will not try to impose his moral views on Canadian society if he becomes prime minister but has proposed referenda on such issues as abortion, euthanasia and capital punishment. Traditionally moderate Canada has never seen such a politics of resentment, and many critics accuse Day of trying to upset the social order by appealing to fear and antagonisms that have long been resolved at the legislative and judicial levels.

The Alliance has not yet been tested at the polls by voters, but its predecessor, the Reform Party, came in second in the last election by sweeping rural Western Canada and winning a large chunk of evangelical Protestant voters of Dutch, English and Scots ancestry. The party was shut out in Ontario, Quebec and the East and has virtually no Catholic or Jewish support. Its appeal to secular voters and to Canada's large ethnic and cultural minorities is nil. But an election is expected by the spring of 2001 and Prime Minister Jean Chretien's Liberal Party is suffering some downturn in support. The left-of-center National Democratic Party and the Quebec separatists could poll a large enough vote to make the final outcome in doubt, or cause a coalition government to be created. And the old Progressive Conservative Party has gone the way of moderate and liberal Republicans in the U.S., leaving the Canadian Alliance in a relatively strong position.

Vatican City: The September beatification of 19th century Pope Pius IX, who reigned for 32 years, longer than any other pope in history, has created a furor. Jewish groups are especially disappointed, since Pius was a convinced anti-Semite who approved of the forcible kidnapping of a little Jewish boy, Edgardo Mortara, by police. In those days the Papal States were sovereign political and civil territory in central Italy, and Vatican religious decrees were enforced in the civil law. The boy in question had been surreptitiously baptized by the family's Catholic servant, believing that the boy was near death from an illness. Despite outcries from Jewish, Protestant, liberal Catholic and secular organizations and governments, Mortara was raised Catholic and was personally befriended by Pius. Mortara became a priest who worked to convert Jews to Catholicism.

Mortara's relatives denounced the decision. Many neutral observers, including many Catholics, say the decision sends the wrong message to the world today, since Pius also denounced religious

freedom, separation of church and state, and democratic values in general.

Pius was loathed in his late years, and his death in 1878 was more an occasion of rejoicing in Italy rather than sorrow.

Vatican watchers say Pope John Paul II needed to beatify a conservative traditionalist since the beatification of World War II-era Pope Pius XII is now "on hold." Popular liberal Pope John XXIII, who tried to steer the church in a new, more progressive direction, was also beatified – the first step on the church's official road to sainthood.

The Vatican also released a statement claiming that Roman Catholicism alone was the true and authentic religion in which human salvation was most secure and certain. This unusual and unexpected document, released in September by Cardinal Ratzinger, the Vatican's doctrinal expert, has offended Eastern Orthodox Christians, Anglicans and Protestants, and is seen as a blow to the ecumenical movement.

Books

The Diminishing Divide: Religion's Changing Role in American Politics, by Andrew Kohut, John C. Green, Scott Keeter, and Robert C. Toth, Brookings Institution Press, 178 pp., \$15.95.

The most up-to-date and comprehensive collection of data on religious voting patterns today, this book is essential reading for the election campaign. The four authors, all specialists, conclude that while "religion is an important influence on contemporary politics," there is "little evidence that a great awakening of religious enthusiasm is the underlying cause of the diminishing divide between religion and politics."

Cultural and sexual issues have moved the debate toward different conceptions of values and the role of the state in shaping and influencing the framework within which conflicts are resolved. Attitudes and party affiliations are increasingly in tension, and religion-based voting reflects numerous cross pressures. In general, people more committed to the institutions of religion and to values rooted in the past are more conservative and Republican-leaning, regardless of their formal affiliation. Individuals open to new ideas and more respectful of tolerance and diversity are moving toward the Democrats.

Kohut and his colleagues also suggest that "the political mobilization of conservative Christians has stalled" and that "religious groups

with a liberal political agenda remain quite active and are likely to achieve greater influence in the future."

— Al Menendez

A Brief, Liberal Catholic Defense of Abortion, by Daniel A. Dombrowski and Robert Deltete, University of Illinois Press, 158 pp., \$20.00.

A carefully reasoned, philosophical and ethical defense of abortion rights from a distinctively Catholic viewpoint is both welcome and timely. The authors, both philosophy professors at Catholic-related Seattle University, argue from reason and history. They point out that the present-day official opposition to abortion by the Vatican is not well-grounded in history but stems, in fact, from the reactionary and regressive regime of Pope Pius IX. In 1869 Pius excommunicated all those directly involved in abortions, without distinction between early and late abortions, and with no concern for the life of the mother. This was contrary to centuries of tradition, which allowed for a more flexible, realistic approach. The book is a challenging and important contribution to the debate on a complex subject.

— Al Menendez

The Catholic Character of Catholic Schools, edited by James Youniss, John J. Convey, and Jeffrey A. McClellan, University of Notre Dame Press, 259 pp., \$28.00.

With campaigns for tax-paid school vouchers in high gear, this scholarly book abundantly documents the pervasively sectarian nature of Catholic schools. This backs up my newly-updated and reissued book, *Catholic Schools: The Facts*. The authors concur that the church schools' first goal is religious indoctrination, note that 96% of Catholic school teachers are members of the church, and point out that the schools seek to convert the small minority (13%) of their students who are not Catholic.

One of the book's contributors, historian Timothy Walch, candidly admits that "Catholic school advocates had worked hard for Reagan's victory," though they were ultimately disappointed. Interestingly, another of the authors, Paul Galetto, O.S.A., found in surveying Catholic school teachers that only 26% agreed with the Vatican position on "elective abortion" and only 10% on "artificial birth control," and, curiously, 2.5% do not identify with the church's position on "God's existence."

— Edd Doerr

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