



# VOICE OF REASON

The Newsletter of Americans for Religious Liberty 2000, No. 4

[73]

## The 2000 Vote: The Religious Factor

Conservative white Protestants and supporters of the Religious Right cast one of the most decided bloc votes in U.S. political history. Voting 79% to 19% for Republican candidate George W. Bush, these voters fueled a complete sweep of the entire South and the Border South states of Oklahoma, Kentucky, Missouri and West Virginia. This landslide margin for the Texas governor exceeded the 78% to 22% margin given to Ronald Reagan in his landslide reelection over Walter Mondale in 1984.

Evangelical America, the above states plus Kansas and Indiana, spoke with one voice in this bitterly divided election. The massive GOP vote among this constituency even cost Vice President Al Gore his home state of Tennessee and carried Bush to victory in such unlikely places as West Virginia, which backed only three Republicans in the last 17 presidential elections, and Arkansas, home of President Bill Clinton.

All white Protestants voted 63% to 34% for Bush. Catholics, a prime Bush target, voted 49% to 47% for Gore, though the *Los Angeles Times* exit poll showed Catholics 53% for Gore and 46% for Bush. The primary exit poll was conducted by Voter News Service, a consortium of ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox Channel News, CNN and the Associated Press. Its national sample of 13,067 voters presented some problems because the Hispanic sample totaled only 4% of the national vote, while county data and estimates from other sources found that 7% of the national vote was cast by Americans of Hispanic or Latino ancestry. This undercounting of Latinos, who voted 67% to 31% for Gore, and the almost total absence of Oregon and Washington from national exit polling data, where Catholics are more liberal and Democratic, may have skewed the data. While Catholic Republicans may try to claim a victory, they are really unable to do so. Gore carried 10 of the 12 most Catholic states (New York, Illinois, Wisconsin, New Mexico, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Vermont), while Bush carried only New Hampshire by 1% and Louisiana by a comfortable margin.

The Jewish vote favored Gore by 78% to 19% (or by 77% to 22%, according to the *Los Angeles Times*), an impressive margin

	Gore	Bush
West	58%	39%
East	53%	43%
Midwest	49%	49%
South	39%	59%

to be sure, but not substantially different from 1996 or 1992, when Bob Dole won 16% and George Bush 12% of the Jewish vote.

Voters who said their religious tradition was something other than



### The Church Attendance Factor

Church Attendance	Percent Voted for		
	Bush	Gore	Nader
More than Weekly	62	36	1
Weekly	56	41	2
Monthly	45	51	3
Rarely	41	55	3
Never	29	62	9

Christian or Jewish voted heavily for Gore 63% to 27% for Bush, with nearly 10% for Nader. This amorphous category included Muslims, Native American religions, Eastern Orthodox Christians and others. Those who said they adhered to no formal religious affiliation also backed Gore 62% to 29% for Bush, with 9% for Nader.

Mormons were overwhelmingly for Bush, by a whopping 86% to 13% in Idaho and by 77% to 22% in Utah.

These sharp religious divisions were the most intense in four decades, since the Kennedy-Nixon race in 1960, also a bitterly fought photofinish where the electorate was divided almost fifty-fifty.

Church attendance also loomed as an intriguing, though perhaps overrated and overcited phenomenon. For the third election in a row, the Republicans can claim to be the party of active, energetic churchgoers, while the Democrats claim the more casual church attenders. Bush won 62% of those who attend religious services more than once a week, 56% of weekly attenders, 45% of those who go monthly, 41% of those who rarely attend services and 29% of those who never attend reli-

*continued on page 3*

### Inside:

**Congressional Religious Affiliations Show Little Change . . . Other Referenda . . . The Religious Right in the Election: Quiet But Active . . . Are Courts Weakening Church-State Protections? . . . The Voters Speak, Again . . . Americans Ambivalent About Religion and Politics . . . Texas Charter Schools Receiving a Failing Grade . . . Federal Court Rules Church College Aid Unconstitutional . . . Update . . . Books**

# Congressional Religious Affiliations Show Little Change

The 107<sup>th</sup> Congress will have 150 Catholics, 72 Baptists and 65 Methodists in its membership. These three religious groups make up the majority of the 535 members of the U.S. Congress just elected. There will also be 49 Presbyterians, 41 Episcopalians, 37 Jews, 29 Protestants without a denominational affiliation, 20 Lutherans, 15 Mormons and eight members of the United Church of Christ.

In addition, eight members call themselves Christian without any further designation, while six belong to Eastern Orthodox churches, including freshman Republican Daniel Issa of California, a member of the Antioch Christian Church.

There are five Christian Scientists, four Disciples of Christ, three Assembly of God members, three Seventh-day Adventists, three Unitarian Universalists, and two members each of the Christian Reformed Church and the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Six small denominations have one member each, and seven members report no religious affiliation (see chart).

The top ten ranking by religious group has remained unchanged for several elections. In terms of change since the 1998 election, the Methodists picked up six new members, reversing a strong decline over the past four decades. Five new Methodist Democrats will serve in the U.S. Senate, including First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton of New York and billionaire businessman Jon Corzine of New Jersey. Methodist Democrats outnumber Republicans 10-6 in the Senate, but Methodist Republicans outnumber Democrats 33-16 in the House.

Baptists and Jews each gained three seats. The first Jewish Republican ever elected to Congress from Virginia was Eric Cantor of Richmond and its suburbs. Baptists are sharply divided between African American Democrats, who are staunch liberals and supporters of church-state separation, and Southern Baptist Republicans, who are among the strongest conservatives and are often counted as supporters of the Religious Right.

Presbyterians gained two seats, while Episcopalians lost one, almost reversing a long decline. There were seven newly elected

Episcopalians, which nearly offset the retirement or defeat of eight of their co-religionists. Both Presbyterians and Episcopalians remain preponderantly Republican.

First-place Roman Catholics declined by one, but remain by far the largest religious group in Congress, and despite intense Republican campaign efforts aimed at Catholic voters the Catholic delegation numbers 91 Democrats and 59 Republicans.

Lutherans and United Church of Christ ranks were down by two, and Mormons and unspecified Christians were each reduced by one. The religiously nonaffiliated were one fewer after this election. Altogether, there were 24 different religious groups represented in the new Congress. The largest decline in membership came from those who call themselves "Protestant," with no further designation. They declined by five members. This very slight shift to the Protestant center-right is unlikely to have a major impact on voting.

In terms of geographic strength, Catholics remain firmly anchored in their stronghold of the Northeast, the Great Lakes-Midwest, and in California. Baptist ranks are heavily Southern (49 of 72 Baptists are from the South or the Border South states). Methodists are also relatively Southern-oriented (33 of 65) as are Presbyterians (29 of 49). Baptists dominate the Alabama and Mississippi delegations, while Methodist are strongest in Texas, Georgia, Kansas and Nebraska. Presbyterians are strongest in North Carolina.

Episcopalians are strongest in Florida where they have seven members, including three new freshmen. Jews are strongest in New York and California, where 18 of their 37 members reside. Nondenominational Protestants are most numerous in the Far West, Lutherans in the Midwest and Great Plains states, and all 15 Mormon members hail from the West (seven of their 15 from Utah and Idaho). Religion does reflect geography to some extent.

The Democratic and Republican delegations in Congress reflect their constituencies. Among the Republicans 71% are

*continued on page 6*



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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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## The 2000 Vote, *continued from page 2*

gious ceremonies. Ralph Nader's vote also went up as church attendance declined. The Green Party nominee received 9% of those who never attend church and 1% among those attending services more than weekly.

Other sharp divisions characterized the electorate in this intensely fought, bitterly partisan first election of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Race was one. Only 8% of African Americans supported George Bush, the lowest support for a Republican since Barry Goldwater won 6% in 1964. Bush received only 3% of black votes in Mississippi and 5% in his home state of Texas.

White Southerners, most of them Protestant and Southern Baptist, supported Bush by 70% to 80% landslides, reaching 81% in Mississippi. Bush carried 17 of the 20 most heavily Southern Baptist large metropolitan areas and may have exceeded 75% of the Southern Baptist vote, a factor responsible for Bush's victory throughout Dixie and the Border States. Bush won 70% in Lexington County, South Carolina, 66% in Greenville, South Carolina, both Southern Baptist and fundamentalist strongholds.

More than in any election since the Hoover-Smith race in 1928, the divisions between city and countryside intensified. Gore swept the vote in the nation's largest cities by 71% to 26%, while losing decisively 59% to 37% in rural areas and small towns. The suburbs were almost evenly divided. Eastern high income suburbs, where many voters are Catholic and Jewish, voted for Gore, while middle income, predominantly Protestant suburbs in the Midwest and especially the South supported Bush.

Bush clearly gained support from a narrow segment of the electorate on certain issues. The exit polls showed that those voters who think all abortions should be illegal favored Bush by 73% to 23%. Pro-choice voters favored Gore by 71% to 24%. (Those who favored some abortion rights backed Gore 59% to 37%, while those who would allow only a few abortions supported Bush 68% to 29%). The small percentage of all voters (15%) who believe that the government should aid private schools in preference to improving public schools went for Bush by 71% to 22%. The much-larger bloc of voters who supported more aid to public education favored Gore 61% to 36%.

Religious, cultural and educational factors clearly influenced the vote in the closely-divided suburbs. In the Northeast, suburbs with large Catholic, Jewish and mainline Protestant populations – but with very few evangelical Protestants – stayed with Gore, often by larger margins than for Clinton in 1996. Three Philadelphia suburbs (Bucks, Delaware and Montgomery counties) gave Gore a 72,000 vote majority compared to Clinton's 54,000 vote margin. In Montgomery County, Maryland, Gore piled up a 100,000 margin over Bush compared to Clinton's 80,000 majority over Dole. In posh Fairfield County, Connecticut, Gore won by 34,000 and Clinton by 28,000.

Many of these counties had supported President Bush in 1992. Gore carried them, as he did in Suffolk and Richmond Counties in New York and Oakland County, Michigan. Gore easily carried high-income Bergen County, New Jersey, and Westchester County, New York.

Gore also won again in a number of Catholic-oriented, middle-income "swing" suburbs, such as Macomb County, Michigan, Baltimore County, Maryland, and St. Louis County, Missouri. Jewish voters also contributed to the Gore margins there and in Nassau and Rockland Counties in New York and Broward and Palm Beach counties in Florida.

Bush did better in the few remaining Protestant suburbs in

### How the Religious Right Voted

Nation	Bush	Gore	% All Voters
	79%	19%	14%
<b>Selected States</b>			
Alabama	82	18	23
Arkansas	75	23	30
Colorado	78	20	13
Georgia	86	13	20
Indiana	83	15	27
Iowa	77	22	15
Kansas	71	26	22
Kentucky	72	25	29
Louisiana	75	23	22
Maine	66	29	15
Michigan	67	30	21
Mississippi	90	9	28
Nebraska	77	21	23
North Carolina	85	14	23
Ohio	72	25	16
Oklahoma	83	17	29
Oregon	89	8	12
South Carolina	81	17	24
Tennessee	77	20	27
Texas	82	18	14
Virginia	82	17	16
Washington	81	16	13
West Virginia	68	29	31
Wisconsin	74	25	14

the East, winning Chester County, Pennsylvania, where David and Julie Nixon Eisenhower reside. In Lancaster County, Pennsylvania – the heart of Pennsylvania Dutch country – Bush won 66% to 31%.

Bush also carried the more evangelical and Protestant suburbs of the Midwest and South, usually by 2 to 1 margins or better. In the Baptist-oriented Dallas suburb of Collin County, Texas, Bush triumphed 73% to 24%.

While one should not overemphasize the Catholic-Protestant divide, since Gore won a large majority among almost all non-white Protestant voters, including the normally Republican Asian Americans, there is a clear pattern differentiating the two largest voting blocks. This is especially evident at the electoral college level. In the twelve most heavily Catholic states, Gore won 136 votes to Bush's 13. In the heavily evangelical states, Bush won all 168 votes, well over half his national total, and possibly the single most important factor in this disputed election.

There were sharp religious differences between Catholics and Protestants in the presidential race. In New Mexico for example, Catholics backed Gore 65% to 33% while Protestants went for Bush 66% to 31%. In California, Catholics went for Gore 57% to 39% while Protestants supported Bush 63% to 34%. Similar wide differences were found in Colorado (Protestants for Bush by 38 points, Catholics by 4), Pennsylvania (Catholics for Gore by 6, Protestants for Bush by 21), and Arizona (Catholics for Gore by 10, Protestants for Bush by 27).

In 19 states Catholics gave a majority to Gore, and Protes-

*continued on page 4*

## The 2000 Vote, *continued from page 3*

tants gave a majority for Bush. But even in the 20 states where a majority of both religious groups backed Bush, a much higher percentage of Protestants did so than Catholics. In Wyoming it was 77-20% for Bush among Protestants, only 58-40 among Catholics. In North Dakota it was Bush by 66-29% among Protestants and 54-42% among Catholics.

These differences can be found in metropolitan areas, where three-fourths of the electorate live.

Gore carried 41 of 51 predominantly Catholic metropolitan areas (large and small) while Bush carried 32 of the 40 most heavily southern Baptist metros, losing only those with a significant black population. Bush carried 25 of the 30 most Methodist metro areas, and carried 18 of the 30 metro areas where Lutherans are strongest.

The Republican National Committee's Catholic Task Force, which targeted millions of Catholic voters in key states and seemed to have the tacit endorsement of several cardinals and bishops, failed to achieve its objectives. Except in Louisiana and Minnesota, there was not a large shift in the Catholic electorate to Bush-Cheney. In Louisiana, Catholics voted like white Southerners. The French-oriented Cajun vote went for Bush, though still by 7 percentage points less than Protestants.

The exception that proves the rule was Minnesota, the only state where Catholics were more Republican than Protestants. This quirky state, which elects far-left Democrats, far-right Republicans and Jesse Ventura, proved unusual again. The best

### Religion and the 2000 Vote in Metropolitan Counties

Dominant Religion	Number of Counties	Gore	Carried by Bush	% for Gore
Catholic	51	41	10	80.1%
Baptist	40	8	32	20.0%
Methodist	30	5	25	16.7%
Lutheran	30	12	18	40.0%

explanation is probably ethnicity, since most Minnesota Catholics are of German ancestry and have tended to vote Republican since Wendell Wilkie in 1940. Most Protestants are Lutherans of Scandinavian ancestry, and they have leaned Democratic since Franklin Roosevelt, supporting fellow Scandinavians like Hubert Humphrey and Walter Mondale. Even in Minnesota, county results did not correspond to exit polls. Heavily Catholic St. Paul went for Gore by a margin of 51,000 votes, but rural Lutherans backed Bush. (Next door, Wisconsin's Catholics went for Gore and Protestants for Bush, proving that all politics is local.)

In one of the more disturbing trends in this election, it appears that Bush won huge majorities in those Southern counties that have been wracked by religious conflict between the Southern Baptist majority and other Christians, Jews and non-churchgoers over the role of religion in public schools. Counties noted for lawsuits against Protestant evangelical domination of public schools, and often accompanied by harassment of religious minorities, backed Bush by overwhelming margins. Bush's highest Florida margin came in Okaloosa County, where he won 74%. In this fundamentalist-dominated West Florida county, a Methodist public school teacher was fired for objecting to unconstitutional school prayer activities. A Jewish family brought suit against required Christian prayers at football games.

Other counties with historically nasty interfaith relations that backed Bush by huge margins include Pontotoc County, Mississippi, Douglas County, Georgia, Lubbock County, Texas, Etowah County, Alabama, DeKalb County, Alabama, Hawkins County, Tennessee, and Nassau County, Florida.

It may well be that Protestant evangelicals, most of them Southern Baptists, were hoping that Bush would restore some mythical Golden Age of Protestant-dominated public schools through his possible Supreme Court and federal appeals court appointments.

The divisions over religion in this election were greater than in any election since the Kennedy-Nixon race of 1960. In fact, they were worse, since 60 percentage points separated the most pro-Bush and pro-Gore religious constituencies. Even in 1960 the difference was 50 percentage points.

Even in relatively moderate Methodist rural areas like Sussex County, Delaware and Highland County, Virginia, there was a large gain for Bush.

These intense political divisions along religion lines are, said the U.S. Supreme court in a 1971 case, *Lemon v. Kurtzman*, "one of the principal evils that the First Amendment was designed to protect against."

Two counties in the West symbolize the sharp religious and cultural differences revealed in this election. Both are prosperous, well-educated and mostly white. Marin County, California, is a fashionable area north of San Francisco, noted for its trendy New Age and secular cultures. Republican for most of its history, it gave Al Gore 70% of its presidential vote. Colo-

### The Secular Vote 2000

Nation				% of All
	Gore	Bush	Nader	Voters
	62%	29%	9%	8%
<b>Selected States</b>				
Alaska	34	41	22	15
Arizona	55	34	7	10
California	67	19	13	15
Colorado	44	37	18	14
Florida	68	24	3	7
Georgia	61	35	0	7
Hawaii	64	22	12	14
Idaho	50	48	0	11
Illinois	77	21	1	8
Maine	59	24	15	13
Michigan	72	25	2	11
Minnesota	54	35	9	7
Missouri	55	37	5	8
Montana	43	34	23	11
New Hampshire	60	31	8	9
New Jersey	67	24	6	6
New Mexico	68	21	11	11
New York	64	23	10	9
North Carolina	66	28	2	7
Ohio	47	38	11	7
Oregon	69	22	8	26
Pennsylvania	58	39	2	5
Rhode Island	70	17	12	12
Vermont	64	21	12	14
Virginia	53	39	5	8
Washington	63	25	10	18

rado Springs (El Paso County), Colorado, has become the Evangelical Vatican, the home to James Dobson's Focus on the Family and numerous conservative Protestant parachurch agencies. Also home to the U.S. Air Force Academy, El Paso County gave 68% of its vote to George W. Bush. (Four decades ago, in another bitterly contested election between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon, Colorado Springs went for Nixon heavily, largely because of religious animus. Author James Michener called it one of the most bigoted cities he had ever visited.) Marin County and Colorado Springs represent two contrasting and clashing visions of America, one that the next president will have a difficult time surmounting and transcending.

The religious animosities revealed in this partisan (and disputed) national election cannot bode well for the future of American democracy. Coupled with racial divisions (81% of Mississippi whites voted for Bush compared to only 3% of the state's blacks), the nation may face renewed conflict even in a time of prosperity. It cannot be comforting that only 8% of African

Americans voted for George W. Bush (and only 5% in Texas), the lowest support for a Republican since Barry Goldwater in 1964. (Even Bob Dole received 12% in 1996). Religion and race remain the great unresolved dilemmas of American life, affecting national policies concerning education, employment and health care.

It is also disturbing to note that in all eight elections where one national party nominated someone other than a white Protestant as presidential or vice-presidential candidate, white Protestants voted against that party (the Democrats in 1928, 1960, 1968, 1972, 1984, 1988 and 2000, and the Republicans in 1964). White Protestant voters have shown themselves time and again unwilling to support anyone outside of their religious community for the highest offices in the land.

A presidency in jeopardy and a Congress divided almost evenly along some of the harshest partisan lines since the Civil War are legacies of this 2000 election.

#### Exit Polling Data

##### States Where Catholics Supported Gore, Protestants Supported Bush

Arizona	Iowa	Oregon
Arkansas	Maine	Pennsylvania
California	Massachusetts	Washington
Delaware	Nevada	West Virginia
Hawaii	New Hampshire	Wisconsin
Illinois	New Mexico	
Indiana	New York	

##### States Where Both Protestants and Catholics Voted for Gore

Rhode Island  
District of Columbia

##### States Where Protestants Voted for Gore, Catholics for Bush

Minnesota

##### States Where Both Protestants and Catholics Voted for Bush

Alaska	Louisiana	Ohio
Colorado*	Michigan*	South Dakota
Florida	Missouri	Tennessee
Georgia	Montana	Texas*
Idaho	Nebraska	Virginia
Kansas	North Carolina	Wyoming
Kentucky	North Dakota	

##### States Where Both Catholics and Protestants Were About Evenly Divided

Maryland  
New Jersey\*  
Vermont\*

\* Heaviest Catholic counties voted for Gore.

## Other Referenda

Voters in Maine rejected a physician-assisted suicide measure based on Oregon's law by 52% to 48%. By a narrow 51% to 49% margin voters also rejected a gay rights initiative that would have restored employment and housing protection to gays and lesbians. The Maine Christian Civic League, a Protestant lobby that fights so-called "moral and sin" issues, hailed the election results as a reaffirmation of Christian principles in public life. The League is an Old Right group that has merged with the Religious Right. Gambling, pornography and abortion are other concerns of the group.

Voters in Nebraska and Nevada passed referenda forbidding same-sex marriage or civil unions. South Carolinians approved a state lottery that was opposed by Protestant churches and the state's powerful Religious Right lobbies. The proceeds are to be used for college scholarships. Washington State voters turned down a charter school proposal backed by billionaire entrepreneur Paul Allen. Oregonians narrowly rejected a measure prohibiting public school teachers from "encourag-

ing, promoting or sanctioning homosexuality." Nevada voters approved by 65% to 35% a plan giving doctors the right to prescribe marijuana to patients who are gravely ill. Colorado voters rejected a parental notification requirement for minors seeking an abortion by 60% to 40%.



### Two Religious Right Victories

Two candidates associated with the Religious Right were victorious in November's elections. Alabama Judge Roy Moore, who defied court orders to remove the Ten Commandments from his Etowah County courtroom, won a seat on the Alabama Supreme Court. The Republican judge had also insisted on beginning his courtroom each day with formal prayers provided by the local Protestant ministerial association.

In Nevada John Ensign, a member of the Promise Keepers and a zealous advocate of far right religious causes, won a U.S. Senate seat on the Republican ticket.

## Congressional Religious Affiliations

continued from page 2

Protestant, 22% are Catholic, 4% Mormon, and only 3% are Eastern Orthodox, Jewish or nonaffiliated. Among the Democrats just 48.5% are Protestants, while almost 35% are Catholics and 13% are Jewish. Catholic and Jewish Democrats are almost equal to Protestant Democrats, while Republican Protestants outnumber Catholic and Jewish Republicans by more than 3 to 1. About 4% of Democrats are religiously nonaffiliated or belong to the Mormon or Eastern Orthodox traditions.

Factoring in African-American, Hispanic, Asian and Native Americans in the equation also shows strong party differences. Fully 70% of Republicans are white Protestants, while only 35% of Democrats are white Protestants. A majority of the Democratic delegation represent other religious, ethnic and cultural traditions. White Protestants represent 53% of the new Congress and 46% of the electorate.

The United States Congress has no Muslim, Hindu or Buddhist members, unlike many other democracies. The United Kingdom has a Muslim member of the Labor Party who represents a constituency in Glasgow, Scotland, while heavily Catholic Ireland elected a Hindu representative in County Clare.

### The 107<sup>th</sup> Congress — Religious Affiliations

	Total	Demo.	Repub.	Change
Roman Catholic	150	91	59	-1
Baptist	72	34	37	+3
Methodist	65	26	39	+6
Presbyterian	49	17	32	+2
Episcopalian	41	11	30	-1
Jewish	37	33	3	+3
Nondenominational				
Protestant	29	10	19	-5
Lutheran	20	11	9	-2
Mormon	15	3	12	-1
United Church of Christ	8	3	5	-2
"Christian"	8	3	5	-1
Eastern Orthodox	6	2	4	0
Christian Science	5	0	5	0
Disciples of Christ	4	4	0	0
Assembly of God	3	0	3	0
Seventh-day Adventist	3	1	2	0
Unitarian Universalist	3	2	1	0
Christian Reformed	2	0	2	0
African-Methodist				
Episcopal	2	2	0	-1
Congregationalist Baptist	1	0	1	+1
Evangelical Methodist	1	0	1	0
Quaker	1	1	0	0
United Brethren in Christ	1	0	1	0
Reorganized Mormon	1	1	0	0
Evangelical	1	0	1	0
No Affiliation	7	6	1	-1

Note: One Baptist and one Jewish member are Independents.

## The Religious Right in the Election: Quiet But Active

America's religious right zealots kept a relatively low profile in this pivotal election, hiding behind the Bush campaign's cosmetic attempts to stress inclusion. But they clearly rallied their forces and turned out a huge bloc vote that toppled at least fifteen states into the Bush-Cheney column and preserved a narrow Republican hegemony in Congress.

The Christian Coalition of America claimed that it had distributed 70 million copies of its voter guides. Its leader, Pat Robertson, commented, "I want to see a future where a religious public servant occupies the White House and fills federal positions of power with men and women committed to godly principles."

Former Moral Majority leader Jerry Falwell set up a new voter mobilization organization called "People of Faith 2000." He boasted that his group raised \$18 million and registered 25 million new voters, which most observers discount as a wild exaggeration. Falwell said he was trying to prevent "an era of paganism" in America, which he feared was becoming "a nation without God." His claims of nonpartisanship fell short when he proclaimed, "It is my experience that most people of faith in this country vote pro-family, pro-life, and that will mean George W. Bush."



The Madison Project, led by home-schooling activist Michael Farris, promised get-out-the-vote campaigns in key battleground states and distributed "faith-based" voter guides. The far-right Traditional Values Coalition concentrated on a "Get Out the Christian Vote" program in about 35 House districts and 15 Senate races. James Dobson's Focus on the Family called for a "Pray for Election Day" plan and encouraged pastors to turn out the vote. D. James Kennedy's Center for Reclaiming America emphasized voter registration, absentee voting, phone banks and "getting out the Christian vote."

The National Republican Congressional Committee supported these efforts, giving \$500,000 to the U.S. Family Network, a conservative lobby linked to House Whip Tom DeLay. The supposedly secular American Conservative Union distributed a 92-page book called *Al Gore: America in the Balance*, which claimed, "If Gore is elected, you can expect the War on Prayer to escalate."

There was even one group that claimed a vote for Al Gore was a sin, similar to some of the charges mounted against Bill Clinton in 1992. A shadowy group calling itself the "Capitol Hill Prayer Alert Committee Election Fund" sent out a booklet entitled *Can a Christian Vote for Gore/Lieberman?*, concluding that such a vote was impossible.

These stealth campaigns escaped the attention of most journalists, but they succeeded in energizing the faithful.

# Are Courts Weakening Church-State Protections?

Two late October federal court decisions have caused concern that the nation's judiciary is no longer adhering to the separation of church and state principles enunciated by the U.S. Supreme Court.

In Atlanta the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals reinstated its 1999 ruling that allows students to initiate and lead prayers in classrooms, assemblies and football games as long as school officials do not force other students to participate. The case reached the High Court from DeKalb County, Alabama, where students led Christian prayers over the intercom and before graduations and other school events.

After the U.S. Supreme Court rendered its Santa Fe, Texas, decision, disallowing all school participation in prayer activities at football games, it ordered the Eleventh Circuit to reconsider its ruling allowing student-initiated prayers in classrooms. But the Court did not order a new opinion.

The three-judge panel held that its initial ruling was consistent with the Santa Fe decision, holding instead that the Alabama school district's permissive policy on school prayer was "private speech that is constitutionally protected even though it may occur before nonbeliever students."

Critics say the Eleventh Circuit has deliberately ignored the far-ranging implications of the Santa Fe ruling, which addressed such issues as majoritarian imposition on an entire populace and repression of minority religious opinions and convictions. In the Texas case Catholic and Mormon families challenged the Baptist domination of the local school district. Since the decision, Jewish students have also been harassed in the school dis-

trict, which is located in Galveston County.

The Eleventh Circuit ruling applies to Alabama, Georgia and Florida, where a large number of cases involving religion-in-the-school conflicts have reached the courts during the past two decades.

In a related case, a federal judge in Alexandria, Virginia, upheld Virginia's controversial law requiring public school students to observe a daily minute of silence. The law, which went into effect in July, requires the one minute of silence so that "each pupil may, in the exercise of his or her individual choice, meditate, pray, or engage in any other silent activity."

Chief U.S. District Judge Claude M. Hilton wrote that the Virginia statute "was enacted for a secular purpose, does not advance or inhibit religion, nor is there excessive entanglement with religion."

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) brought suit on behalf of several students who argued that the law was a thinly veiled attempt to induce them to pray. A previous Virginia law, enacted in 1976, was voluntary. Under the present law, students in several schools refused to participate and left the room, but some were given detention by school authorities. In some schools students are encouraged to pray.

ACLU officials expressed disappointment with the ruling and promised to appeal it. Observers suspect that the law may some day reach the U.S. Supreme Court. Virginia's Republican Attorney General Max Earley hailed the decision and promised to defend it in the appellate process.

## Editorial

### The Voters Speak, Again

Voters in two important American states, California and Michigan, had an opportunity to decide whether to divert taxpayer money to the support of private and parochial schools. On election day they said no, and resoundingly so.

In California 71% of the electorate in America's largest state turned thumbs down on a reckless voucher scheme that would have cost billions and very probably have wrecked public education. A more limited plan but still a voucher scheme to drain money from public schools was soundly rejected by 68% of Michigan voters.

In both states powerful special interest groups supported these voucher proposals generously. In Michigan the Catholic dioceses poured an estimated \$2 million into the campaign coffers of the voucher advocates. Pastoral letters were also sent to Catholic families, urging a yes vote. But to no avail. Voters saw through the hollow promises, unsubstantiated claims, and threats to public education. Catholic voters in Michigan were 64% to 36% against vouchers, and in California Catholics voted no by 66% to 34%.

The results of these twin referenda suggest several conclusions that even the most obtuse politicians should be able to understand. These defeats represent the 23rd and 24th out of 25 times American voters have been asked to render judgment on programs designed to aid nonpublic schools. The average opposition vote in these referenda over three decades has been more than 68%. When voters have a chance to look carefully at spe-

cific voucher proposals, they invariably turn them down. All of the artfully-crafted and inaccurate polls in the world cannot deny the results of these statewide referendum elections.

Congress and the state legislatures should take heed. Voters do not want private and parochial schools to be funded, directly or indirectly, by state resources raised from the taxes imposed on all citizens.

Finally, it should be clear to advocates of vouchers in California and Michigan that voters in those states are tired of having to vote on these schemes every few years. Three times the voters in California and Michigan have gone to the polls and said no by convincing margins. How many times does it take to convince voucher ideologues that their schemes are not wanted?

All Americans who cherish religious liberty and public education should congratulate the voters of the Golden State and the Wolverine State for their wisdom and common sense.

### *Compulsory Pregnancy: The War Against American Women*

**John M. Swomley**

*A collection of ethicist John Swomley's writings on reproductive freedom.*

Paper \$12.95

Americans for Religious Liberty  
P.O. Box 6656, Silver Spring, MD 20916

# Americans are Ambivalent About Religion and Politics

A new poll released by the Pew Research Center finds that Americans are intensely ambivalent about the role that religion should play in politics and public life. For example, while 51% of voters think churches should express their views on political matters, only 32% think the clergy should discuss politics from the pulpit. And while 70% think "it is important for a president to have strong religious beliefs," 50% say they are "uncomfortable with politicians discussing how religious they are."

Churches, synagogues and other religious institutions are seen as positive forces in addressing society's problems, but only 54% of Americans support funding religious organizations that can administer government programs such as drug treatment and job training. This "charitable choice" option receives the support of 67% of Americans when it is framed as allowing religious organizations to apply for government funding on the same basis as secular organizations.

The charitable choice question elicited some surprises. Democrats favor charitable choice by 61% to 36% while Republicans oppose it 51% to 46%, even though it was a centerpiece of George W. Bush's presidential campaign. Blacks are overwhelmingly supportive (74% to 24%), while whites narrowly favor it 51% to 46%. Evangelical white Protestants were also lukewarm on charitable choice, while young, more secular-minded voters favor it by a wide margin.

Low support is also given to charitable choice among the most ideologically-inclined voters, liberals and "staunch conservatives" alike.

On the question of a president's religious faith, strongest support for public expressions of religious commitment comes from women, older voters and Republicans. The lowest support comes from younger voters and from political independents. Support for church involvement in politics is highest among blacks and younger voters, and lowest among older voters, who grew up in a generation when churches and clergy were more reticent to engage the political process directly.

The Republicans still have the edge, 39% to 30%, as the party "most concerned with protecting religious values," though their edge has declined from a similar poll taken in 1996.

Most religious groups are seen favorably by those polled. An exception are atheists, who are seen unfavorably by 52% of Americans compared to 32% who view them favorably. The most unfavorable views toward atheists are expressed by blacks and by evangelical white Protestants, and by women under age 30. The most favorable views were expressed by men under age 30, college graduates, the well to do, Jewish and secular voters and by Independents. Interestingly, Protestants are 14% more unfavorable toward atheists than are Catholics.

This survey of 2,000 registered voters was conducted from August 24 to September 10 by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press.

## Moving?

Please send a change of address form to:  
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## ARL in Action

On November 16 ARL executive director Edd Doerr was presented the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice's "Courage, Commitment and Choice Judy Halperin Mensch Award." Doerr is a founding board member of the Coalition and has served on its board for 27 years.

Since our last report Doerr has addressed education, student, church, and other audiences in Minnesota, Michigan, Ohio, Maryland, the District of Columbia, Virginia, Delaware, and New York. He was also a guest on talk shows in Minnesota and Washington, D.C.

ARL co-founder Sherwin Wine's book, *Staying Sane in a Crazy World* (The Center for New Thinking, P.O. Box 309, Birmingham, MI 98012, \$22.00) has just been released in a Spanish edition, *Cómo mantener la cordura en un mundo loco*, translated by ARL's Edd Doerr and his wife Herenia Doerr (\$12.95).

ARL president John Swomley addressed audiences in Oregon and Washington. Associate director Al Menendez was interviewed by a newspaper in Amarillo, Texas, and did election-related articles for the United Methodist News Service and for Catholics For a Free Choice.

## Texas Charter Schools Failing

According to a new report released by the Texas Freedom Network Education Fund, the state's 166 charter schools are performing poorly. Only 59% of charter school students passed the now-required statewide Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) tests for 1998-99, compared to 78% of all Texas students. The gap was especially high for African-American students; less than 43% of African-American students in charter schools passed the TAAS, compared to 64% of all African-American pupils.

But these dismal scores are not the only problems plaguing charter schools, says the report, *Broken Promises: Charter Schools in Texas*. Complaints have been filed with the Texas Education Association from teachers, parents, students, private organizations and school districts. They allege a wide range of abuses, including financial mismanagement, failure to pay salaries and retirement funds for teachers and school employees, verbal and physical abuse of students, verbal abuse of parents and teachers, inadequate facilities and curriculum, and nepotism.

The Texas Freedom Network blames state legislators for capitulating to the charter school lobby and allowing a massive increase in charter schools "without basic safeguards and accountability procedures in place."

Many private and church-related schools converted to charter school status, allowing them to receive state funding and no longer have to charge tuition. While religious activities and religious-based curricula are supposed to be banned in charter schools, this may not be the case. At least two dozen charter schools are housed in churches or church-related buildings, and eight schools have religious leaders on their boards of directors. Several of these schools have been charged with unsafe and unsanitary buildings, a lack of due process in regard to suspensions and expulsions, and a refusal to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. One wheelchair-bound student at a Corpus Christi school

*continued on page 9*



# Federal Court Rules Church College Aid Unconstitutional

After nine long years, a federal court for the Middle District of Tennessee ruled on October 24 that the Nashville metro government and its Industrial Development Board may no longer issue tax-exempt bonds to benefit Lipscomb University or any other pervasively sectarian institution.

U.S. District Judge Aleta A. Trauger held that a bond issue for a major redevelopment project on the campus of Nashville's Lipscomb University violated the First Amendment's ban on religious establishment by advancing the Church of Christ school's religious beliefs.

Trauger wrote, "If the religious mission of Lipscomb is so intertwined with the academic goals that they cannot be separated, no matter what worthwhile projects the tax-free bonds financed, they were state support for Lipscomb's religious message. Metropolitan government cannot support or promote religion - any religion - and be in conformity with the First Amendment."

The case arose in 1991 when Nashville attorney Joe Johnston, representing five local taxpayers and Americans for Religious Liberty, filed suit to challenge \$15 million worth of tax-exempt bonds in 1990 and 1991 so that Lipscomb could build and equip a new library, an addition to the Business Center and construct new sports facilities.

Judge Trauger cited factual evidence that Lipscomb requires Bible instruction every day for its students, requires daily attendance at chapel services for all students and faculty, requires faculty to be active members of a local Church of Christ, and fails to adhere to the AAUP Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom.

The Church of Christ is a fundamentalist Protestant sect with about two million members. Founded in 19<sup>th</sup> century America, its membership is mostly confined to the American South and is strong in Tennessee, Texas and Alabama.

The university is expected to appeal the decision to the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals.

The Tennessee Supreme Court ruled unanimously in 1997 that the bonds used to finance the construction projects were taxable and that state income tax was due on them.

About twenty private colleges and universities in Tennessee, two-thirds of them with religious ties, have benefited from tax-exempt bonds in recent years.

The case, *Steele v. Industrial Development Board*, mandated a permanent injunction enjoining the Board and the Metropolitan government of Nashville and Davidson County from issuing additional tax-exempt bonds for the benefit of David Lipscomb University or for any other pervasively sectarian institution. This could be far-reaching in its implications.

Since the U.S. Supreme Court has weakened its own rulings on "pervasively sectarian" institutions, this ruling is seen as remarkable in its investigation of the nature and ethos of Lipscomb University. Among the factors which convinced the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Tennessee was the fact that all members of the university's Board of Directors are "required to be in good standing with the Churches of Christ and all members of the faculty and staff, with the exception of food services and grounds maintenance, must be members of the Churches of Christ."

The court observed, "Every Lipscomb student unofficially majors in Bible and all students are required to take one class in the Bible every day of every semester. Failing the Bible course results in a student's being placed on Bible probation. Students who do not pass every Bible course are dropped from the school." Furthermore, "All religion classes are Bible classes, not theology classes." No students are allowed to disagree with the instructor's teachings. "They are not broad, encompassing theology classes," Judge Trauger observed.

A former dean, Norman Parks, explained in a deposition some of the beliefs required of Lipscomb faculty: "No person can be employed at Lipscomb who is not a member of the main-line Church of Christ. He cannot be a premillennialist or believe that instrumental music is acceptable for worship of God. He must believe that a divorced person cannot remarry and continue in church. He must believe that a woman cannot teach a class in religion to men."

A faculty handbook added that the university "refuses to employ faculty members who use tobacco or alcohol or who engage in activities that might be considered worldly by others."

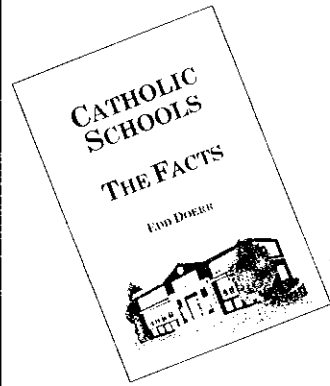
ARL executive director Edd Doerr hailed the ruling as an "important and timely victory for religious freedom and our American constitutional arrangement of separation of church and state."

## Texas Charter Schools, *continued*

was forced to crawl to the inaccessible toilet facilities. That incident has resulted in a lawsuit, *Jason Liano Crystal L. v. Seashore Learning Center*.

While some charter schools have been revoked, the majority are still operating and have 27,000 students enrolled in them.

The Texas Freedom Network, an independent group which supports church-state separation and public education, concluded that charter schools are guilty of a "lack of accountability, poor academic performance and sometimes even gross mismanagement." The report adds, "Instead of improving public education for Texas students, charter schools' performance has been less than stellar. Student satisfaction has fallen sharply and corrupt management practices seem to plague the charter system. Across the board, promises made to parents and taxpayers by those selling charter schools have been broken."



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# Update

## Ohio Vouchers Unconstitutional

For the second December in a row, a federal court has ruled that the Cleveland school voucher program is unconstitutional because it "has the effect of advancing religion through government-supported religious indoctrination."

The Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals on December 11 upheld a December 1999 federal district court ruling striking down the program.

Under the Cleveland plan, low-income parents receive up to \$2,500 per child in state-funded payments for tuition to private schools. The overwhelming majority (96%) of the voucher recipients attend religious schools.

Voucher advocates, led by Clint Bolick of the Institute for Justice, are urging the U.S. Supreme Court to hear an appeal to the rulings. At present 4,000 students are attending mostly parochial schools under the program. The appeals court has allowed them to remain in the schools until the Supreme Court decides whether to take the case.

In 1998 the nation's highest court let stand a Milwaukee voucher program upheld by the state supreme court. But a year later it allowed Maine to subsidize some private schools while disallowing tuition vouchers for religious schools. Some Supreme Court watchers expect this difference of opinion might be settled by the acceptance for review of the Cleveland case.

## Many Catholic HMOs Defy Church Rules

A newly released report by Catholics For a Free Choice (CFFC) reveals that more than half of all Catholic health plans cover reproductive health services, especially contraception, that are contrary to official church doctrine.

About half of Catholic health care plans pay for contraception and tubal ligations while others contract with other providers to deliver reproductive services. Some plans arrange for third-party administrators to handle the funds received for health services that pay for contraceptive services.

The report, *Catholic HMOs and Reproductive Health Care*, questions whether any Catholic health organization needs special exemptions from legislation that requires health providers to cover contraception.

CFFC president Frances Kissling, commented, "The results of this survey show that women in the United States want access to a full range of health care services, including reproductive health care, in their local hospitals and for these services to be covered by their managed care plans, whatever the religious affiliation of the organization. Catholics for a Free Choice distinguishes between the conscience of an individual and that of an institution. We respect those medical professionals who opt to exempt themselves from services that they personally oppose. We question whether an entire institution can have a single conscience. Most importantly, we see the need to respect the consciences of the vast majority of women and men who want to be responsible parents by ensuring their right to reproductive health services."

## Religious Freedom Declining Worldwide

About three-quarters of the world's population lives in nations with limited or nonexistent religious liberty, according to a survey by Freedom House, a New York-based organization which monitors international trends affecting individual freedoms.

Nearly 36 percent of people live in countries where religious liberty is "fundamentally violated," while 39 percent reside in nations which place restraints on religious practice, said the Freedom House Center for Religious Freedom.

The report says that "recent violence in the Middle East has increasing religious overtones," and cited such nations as Burma, Iran,

North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tibet (Chinese-occupied), and Turkmenistan for the worst records on religious freedom. "The world's largest countries are worsening," the report noted, and singled out China and India for deteriorating conditions for religious believers of all kinds and especially for religious minorities.

Only 25 percent of the world's population lives under conditions of broad religious freedom, including most of Europe, North America and Australasia.

## Churches Reluctant on Charitable Choice

The Center for Public Justice, a nonprofit Christian policy research center in Annapolis, Maryland, released a report indicating that 37 states had not implemented charitable choice rules under the Welfare Reform Act of 1996. Many of the states are reluctant to provoke potential church-state separation legal hassles, and some church groups fear a loss of autonomy and a limitation on their ability to proselytize.

Under charitable choice religious groups are allowed to receive government money for social programs without requiring them to censor their forms of religious expression or to dilute their religious identity. Religious symbols are allowed on their property and religious principles and concepts may be used in counseling program participants. But the groups are not allowed to compel participation in religious worship activities or other religious practices.

Critics have long charged that overzealous church groups will ignore the law's restrictions. This has already happened in Texas, where authorities aggressively promote religious group participation in social programs and require state agencies to appoint liaison persons to religious groups. The Jobs Partnership of Washington County received \$8,000 in Texas state funds and bought Bibles for students, required them to study scripture and "to find employment through a relationship with Jesus Christ." The Texas Civil Rights Project has filed a federal lawsuit in a federal district court in Austin, Texas, charging the group with violating federal law. The trial, set for next year, is supported by a third of the program's students, who said they had been pressured to join an evangelical church.

Most "faith-based" groups operating under the charitable choice provisions concentrate on job search skills, employment training programs, high school equivalency classes, English-as-a-second-language courses, nutrition, drug treatment, maternity homes for unwed mothers, and sex education programs that stress abstinence.

The Center for Public Justice, which supports more religious group involvement, rated Texas, Indiana, Ohio and Wisconsin as the most favorable states in allowing sectarian groups greater involvement in the process. Arizona, Illinois, Pennsylvania and Virginia were given high marks.

The programs vary widely in terms of their overall effectiveness. The *New York Times* reported, "Visits to church-based programs in Indiana revealed a wide disparity in the professionalism, curriculum and religious emphasis of church programs that have been awarded government contracts."

### Safeguarding the Future

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

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

Please contact us if you would like further information.

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## “60 Minutes” Tackles Controversial Issue

The Sunday evening installment of CBS's popular “60 Minutes” program on December 10 included a segment on mergers between Catholic and non-Catholic hospitals. The program, drawing heavily on research presented by Catholics For a Free Choice, revealed how the rules governing Catholic hospitals can have a negative impact on quality health care, especially in reproductive matters, for American women of all faith traditions.

The CBS documentary showed that when hospitals merge, as they are increasingly doing because of high costs and other factors, many reproductive health care options, including sterilizations and medically required abortions, are no longer available in the community.

The question is reaching crisis proportions in some regions of the country, where hospitals imposing sectarian medical codes are the only ones available for all residents.

The situation may worsen since the Vatican is placing additional pressure on U.S. Catholic bishops to reduce further the reproductive health care alternatives offered in hospitals affiliated with the Catholic Church. America's Catholic bishops are revising their directives before a June, 2001 meeting.

The CBS network is already receiving a barrage of criticism from religious conservatives for airing the exposé.

## Catholic Charities: An Arm of the State?

Conservative Catholic critics say that Catholic Charities, a 90-year-old conglomerate of social service and welfare agencies, has “become an arm of the welfare state over the last three decades, with 65 percent of its \$2.3 billion annual budget now flowing from government sources.” Brian Anderson, an editor at the conservative Manhattan Institute's *City Journal*, made these charges in the ultra-conservative *Catholic World Report* in October.

Anderson further claimed that there is “little that is explicitly religious, or even values-laden, about most of the services its 1,400 member agencies and 46,000 paid employees provide.”

While progressive Catholics disagree vigorously with Anderson's assessment, some outside observers have long wondered whether the dependence on government funding has altered the outlook and approaches that religious charities maintain in their programs. Sociologist Stephen Monsma found that one-third of Catholic child-care agencies had felt government pressure to curtail their religious practices. Since taxpayers of many and no religious traditions are providing the bulk of the operating funds, this diminution of religious distinctiveness is understandable, perhaps inevitable. The alternative would be to refuse government subsidies.

## Another Look at Equal Access?

Since Congress passed and the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the Equal Access Act passed during the Reagan administration, most authorities accepted this as settled law, as long as school administrators do not influence the content of student speech at religious clubs which meet on public school premises. The act, which allows student religious groups to meet on middle school (junior high school) or senior high school campuses before or after instructional hours, has been the subject of several lawsuits seeking further clarification from the courts.

A case which began in the small Upstate New York town of Milford will be heard by the U.S. Supreme Court this term, with a ruling expected by next June. In 1996 the Milford Central School denied a request from the Good News Club to use classroom space for after-school meetings. The group's aim, said its leader, the Reverend Stephen D. Fournier, pastor of the Milford Center Community Bible Church, is to teach grade school children Christian values through Bible songs, stories and games.

But the federal district court and the Second U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the school's ban on the Good News Club. The U.S. Supreme Court accepted the appeal in October. At present the Good

News Club holds its meetings at the Bible Church. Reverend Mr. Fournier charged that secular groups such as the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and the 4-H Club are permitted to use the facilities but religious groups are banned. The two lower courts have cited the age group of the students involved, since Congress specifically limited the Equal Access Act to older children. The tiny community's only school houses all grades from kindergarten through senior year.

Some local residents have suggested that the club could use a private facility such as the American Legion Hall. Unlike the South, where disputes over religious activities in the schools have led to religious animosity and community discord, the residents of Milford have maintained amicable relationships and expect to retain them after the Supreme Court's decision.

## State Legislative Roundup

Despite a nearly 70% to 30% rejection by voters in California and Michigan, voucher proponents are sponsoring legislation in 23 states, according to the National Conference of State Legislators. Legislation regarding tuition tax credits or deductions is pending in 14 states. Most states have no such laws, but in a few states the parochial and private school lobbies are pressing for more funding or more generous legislation. Vouchers: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio (changes to existing law), Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin (changes to existing law). Tuition Tax Credits/Deductions: Arizona (already has law), Colorado, Hawaii, Illinois (already has law), Iowa (already has law), Kansas, Kentucky, Massachusetts, New York, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia.

## Vouchers Threaten Private Schools

“No one wins under public vouchers,” said Elizabeth Lugg, an associate professor at Illinois State University. Addressing a November conference of the Education Law Association in Atlanta, Lugg argued that government-sponsored voucher programs would inevitably compromise the autonomy of religious schools. “Voucher programs put religious institutions between a rock and a hard place,” she told conference participants.

## Ten Commandments Monument Removed

In November a federal judge ordered Lawrence County, Indiana, officials to remove a monument inscribed with the Ten Commandments from the courthouse lawn. County officials were expected to comply, or face a \$1,000 a day fine under U.S. District Judge Sarah Evans Barker's order.

## International

**Bologna:** Cardinal Giacomo Biffi urged that Italy give preference to Christian immigrants over Muslims in order to preserve Italy's Christian culture. “There is no such thing as a right to invasion,” said Biffi, who added, “There is nothing to stop the Italian government from controlling immigration in a manner that would safeguard our national identity.” Biffi warned that Muslims want to impose Islamic law on others and would unite religion and government.

**Bucharest:** Romania's efforts to gain entry into the European Union are threatened by the country's definition of homosexuality as a criminal offense. The ban on homosexual behavior was enacted in 1968 by the communist dictatorship. The Romanian parliament voted to decriminalize homosexuality but maintained a prison sentence of up to five years for sex acts performed in public. The Romanian Orthodox Church, which claims the allegiance of 87% of the population, has long supported these provisions. The church's leader, Archbishop Nifon, announced plans to petition the government to maintain the ban, even

if it costs Romania membership in the European Union, which could help the nation's economic torpor.

**Edinburgh:** Scotland's Roman Catholic Church is facing a legal threat under the European Convention of Human Rights, which could force the church to hire teachers who are not Catholic. The Human Rights Convention, which came into force in the United Kingdom in October, bans employment discrimination on the basis of race, religion, gender, nationality or sexual preference. A Catholic Church spokesperson argued that the church favors "positive discrimination whereby it is better to employ Catholic teachers in Catholic schools." Scotland funds Catholic schools and has traditionally allowed church authorities leeway to hire only teachers who practice Catholicism. Scotland's largest teachers' union favors an end to discrimination in employment.

**Lisbon:** *The Economist* reported in its December 2 issue that Catholicism's influence on Portuguese life and society has continued to decline. Church attendance is not particularly high, and only two out of three couples marry in church, compared to 90% in 1960. Divorces, forbidden for centuries, now total 14,000 a year, or about 20% of the annual number of weddings. One out of five children are born outside of wedlock. Fertility rates have plunged to among the lowest in Europe, in common with such other predominantly Catholic countries as Italy, Ireland and Spain. About 63% of women are in the work force, and 60% of all university graduates are women.

**Ottawa:** Canadian voters overwhelmingly rejected the Canadian Alliance, the nation's main right-wing political party in the November 27 parliamentary election. Its leader, former Pentecostal preacher and church school administrator Stockwell Day, had threatened holding referenda on abortion rights and capital punishment. Leaders of the other four parties denounced Day's plans as dangerously radical and potentially undermining social stability and harmony. Prime Minister Jean Chretien and his Liberal Party coasted to victory for the third straight time, winning 172 seats in Parliament to the Alliance's 66 seats. Three other parties shared 63 seats. Exit polls found that, while Chretien remained personally unpopular, voters simply did not want to take a chance on American-style right-wing extremism, including the poisonous interjection of religion into the political realm. The Alliance Party's strength was based in rural Western Canada and among evangelical Protestants. It received almost no support from Catholics, Jews, Anglicans, Lutherans, Muslims, Sikhs or Buddhists. Several Alliance candidates made racist appeals, attacking Asian Canadians and Canadian Indians. The Canadian campaign was regarded as negative and personal in comparison to previous Canadian elections, which were more issue-oriented and less personal in nature.

Unlike its U.S. neighbor, Canada's election was speedy (36 days from beginning to end), relatively inexpensive, and quickly counted and completed. Canada's 13 million paper ballots were counted by hand, and results were known throughout the nation in four hours.

**Regina:** Lawsuits filed by thousands of former Indian boarding school students in Canada are threatening to bankrupt the financial resources of four large Christian churches - the Anglican, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian and United Church bodies. The Canadian government predicts that 16,000 Indians will have entered claims against the churches by the end of next year.

Allegations of child abuse against church-run schools that existed until 1970 have been mounting since 1995, when the Royal Canadian Mounted Police started a task force to investigate the charges. In Manitoba a Roman Catholic religious order, the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, have offered to hand over all of their property in the province to the federal government in return for a federal assumption of liability against 2,000 claims.

Nationwide about 3,400 complaints against 170 church schools have been received by the Mounties. It is one of the greatest church-state scandals in Canadian history.

**Vancouver:** A ruling by the British Columbia Labor Relations Board that the province's Catholic bishop of Prince George was wrong to close down a school after a conflict with teachers over the teaching of the Catholic faith. The bishop insisted on removing a teacher for "failing to uphold Catholic doctrine on abortion, homosexuality and divorce." The Government Employees Union, to which teachers at

the school belong, insisted that the bishop violated provincial law. In response, Bishop Gerald Wiesner closed the school. The labor board ruling held that all the dismissed teachers should be compensated for their loss of employment. In British Columbia independent schools receive 50% of their funding from the government. Several hundred such schools, including 75 Catholic schools, are located in Canada's westernmost province.

**Warsaw:** President Aleksander Kwasniewski easily won reelection with 55 percent of the vote, defeating all of his opponents and avoiding a runoff. Poland's president won despite charges of anti-Catholicism leveled against him by the rival Solidarity Party. Some militant clerical groups demanded an investigation of the president and his staff for allegedly ridiculing Pope John Paul II. Polish law makes incidents of fending religion a criminal offense. Voters in the 90% Catholic nation ignored the charges.

## Books

*What's God Got to Do With the American Experiment?*, edited by E.J. Dionne Jr. and John D. DiIulio Jr., Brookings Institution Press, 2000, 188 pp., \$15.95.

This anthology of almost two dozen essays concerning religion and the broader culture of politics, ethics and "faith-based social action" contains many points of view, though neo-conservatives and accommodationists seem to have the upper hand.

Co-editor E.J. Dionne Jr. of the *Washington Post* and the Brookings Institution observes, "The turn of the millennium in America may well be remembered as a time when the country renegotiated the relationship between religion and public life, faith and culture." If this is true, one hopes that separation of church and state and religious liberty for all U.S. citizens will not be casualties.

Two of the essays stand out. Former *Time* religion writer Richard N. Ostling's "America's Ever-changing Religious Landscape" places the religious world in the context of the times in which we live. Ostling describes the Catholic Church in America today as "a federation of internally divided quasi-denominations."

Melissa Rogers' essay on charitable choice rightly warns that this law "attempts to obliterate any legal distinction between religiously affiliated and pervasively religious organizations, allowing both to receive tax funds." Rogers warns that "government will regulate tax-subsidized social service providers, even if they are houses of worship," and she suggests that "churches and other religious ministries could come to be viewed as administrative centers of government benefits and services." Charitable choice will also "cause religious freedom to suffer."

-- Al Menendez

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