



VOICE OF REASON

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Religious Voters Up for Grabs in November

America's religious voting blocs, from evangelicals to seculars, seem to be up for grabs in what may well be a historic general election. This is because the two largest groups are increasingly divided.

The evangelical quarter of the electorate seemed to be shifting away from its nearly three-decade-long embrace of the Republican Party and its candidate John McCain, who fared poorly among evangelical voters in the primaries. Mike Huckabee, former Baptist preacher and darling of Religious Right activists at the local level, outpolled McCain 39% to 33% in the GOP primaries. Mormon Mitt Romney received a respectable 20% of evangelical votes. However, polls in early September showed the McCain-Palin ticket pulling far ahead among evangelicals. A survey by the *Washington Post* just after the GOP Convention found that 81% of evangelicals expressed a favorable view toward Sarah Palin compared to 50% of all Americans.

Roman Catholic voters, also a quarter of the electorate, favored Hillary Clinton 61% to 36% in the Democratic contests. Barack Obama has a major task in convincing Hillary-loving Catholic Democrats, especially in the Hispanic community, to support him against John McCain, who won heavily among Catholic Republicans in the primaries. An evangelical fall-off for McCain could imperil GOP fortunes in such states as Iowa, Virginia, Tennessee, Missouri and North Carolina. A decline in

Catholic Democratic support could damage the Democrats in Pennsylvania, Michigan and New Jersey and lessen the likelihood of Democratic victories in Colorado, New Mexico and Nevada.

Mainline Protestants, about 20% of the vote, are moving toward the Democrats. Nearly half supported John Kerry in 2004. Both Obama and McCain were relatively popular among this group, whose middle-of-the-road politics still influence many voters in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Minnesota, Iowa and Wisconsin. Lutherans and Methodists are the two largest subgroups in the mainline community, though some in both groups lean toward evangelicalism. Historically, mainline Protestants were the most Republican voting group though they seem somewhat uncomfortable in both parties, which is probably why independents Ross Perot in 1992 and John Anderson in 1980 did somewhat better among these voters than among other religious groups.

The secular tenth (or seventh, depending on interpretation of data) are increasingly Democratic and supported Obama over Clinton by 57% to 40% in the primaries. Secular Republicans favored McCain, though quite a few backed Romney. Some nonaffiliated voters in the Western states are libertarian-oriented Republicans who supported Ron Paul, but most

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The Vice-Presidential Candidates on Church and State

Joseph Biden

Senator Joe Biden has had a moderately pro-choice voting record during his six terms in the U.S. Senate. Biden was elected just before *Roe v. Wade*, so he has participated in virtually every abortion-related vote in Congress. He has supported the pro-choice position on most issues, opposed the Reagan-Bush gag rules, opposed banning abortion on military bases, and supported legislation to protect clinics from violence. His rating from NARAL is in the 60% to 75% range, while National Right to Life gives him low ratings. Biden has opposed public funding for abortions and voted for the ban on late-term abortions.

Nancy Keenan, president of NARAL Pro-Choice America, issued this statement on August 23: "Sen. Biden has consistently expressed support for a woman's right to choose. While we have not agreed with him on every vote, we have a longstanding relationship with Sen. Biden that is open, positive, and constructive, and we are confident this will continue in a new administration under Sen. Obama's pro-choice leadership.

"Most notably, Sen. Biden has a strong record of opposing judicial nominees with hostile anti-choice records. He voted against George W. Bush's two anti-choice nominees to the U.S. Supreme Court, John Roberts and Samuel Alito, and he opposed anti-choice Justice Clarence Thomas' nomination to the Court as well as multiple anti-choice nominees to lower federal courts.

"In addition, Sen. Biden has a strong record in opposition to anti-choice clinic violence and voted to hold anti-choice extremists convicted of violent attacks against doctors and patients at women's reproductive-health centers accountable for their criminal actions.

"Sen. Biden, who is a cosponsor of the landmark Prevention First Act, also has joined us in supporting commonsense efforts to prevent unintended pregnancy by improving women's access to birth control, ensuring teens receive accurate sex education, and supporting family-planning programs."

Biden has already been attacked by the Catholic Right. The group Fidelis called him "an unrepentant supporter of abortion in direct opposition to the church he claims as his own."

Denver's reactionary Archbishop Charles Chaput sarcastically told the Associated Press, "I presume that his integrity will lead him to refrain from presenting himself for Communion, if he supports a false

'right' to abortion."

Biden supported the Stem Cell Research Act, opposed a federal constitutional ban on same-sex marriage, voted to include sexual orientation in hate crimes legislation and voted to ban employment discrimination based on sexual orientation.

He opposed many of the Reagan-Bush appointees to the Supreme Court and chaired the Senate Judiciary Committee when it rejected Robert Bork in 1987.

Biden voted against President Reagan's constitutional amendment to allow school prayer in 1984. His opposition to vouchers has evolved. After supporting tax credit bills in 1978 and 1980, he has voted against vouchers since the 1990s.

A practicing Catholic, Biden attended a Catholic prep school, Archmere Academy in Claymont, Delaware, before graduating from the University of Delaware and Syracuse University Law School. Of Irish Catholic ancestry, he grew up in a blue-collar neighborhood in Scranton, Pennsylvania. A no-nonsense pragmatist and centrist, Biden's choice is widely applauded in states like Pennsylvania, Ohio and Michigan, where a large undecided vote may well determine the national outcome. Biden's wife Jill, also a Pennsylvanian, has a Ph.D. in education, and taught 13 years in a public school and 15 years in a public community college.

Sarah Palin

The surprise selection of Alaska's first-term governor, Sarah Palin, as John McCain's running mate was undoubtedly made to rally social conservatives and the party base as well as to appeal to independents and women voters in the age 35 to 50 demographic. Some observers say it was an attempt to win disgruntled women supporters of unsuccessful Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton, though it is hard to know what they have in common besides gender.

Governor since 2007, and before that, mayor of the tiny town of Wasilla, Palin is anti-choice on abortion and a member of Feminists for Life. She favors parental notification, opposes late-term abortions and says she is against abortions even for rape and incest and is opposed to stem cell research.

A lifetime member of the National Rifle Association, she symbolizes
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Religious Voters Up for Grabs, *continued from page 1*

are “progressive” Democrats on the two coasts. (Vermont and Oregon had the highest percentage of Democratic primary voters who said they had no religious affiliation.)

Secular voters comprised one seventh (13.7%) of the Democratic primary electorate. Of the 34 states with exit polls, Obama won in 30 of them, with impressive majorities in Illinois, Wisconsin, Texas, Oregon, Pennsylvania and North Carolina. Clinton won the secular vote in only four states—Arkansas, Florida, Tennessee and West Virginia.

Jewish voters went three to one for Kerry over Bush and remain Democrats at heart, though Clinton beat Obama 57% to 40% in the primaries. The Israel issue is a wild card that may hurt Obama in the general election, according to several recent surveys. McCain’s pro-Israel posture and the prominence of 2000 Democratic vice-presidential nominee Joe Lieberman in the McCain campaign complicate the picture. Defections to McCain among Jewish voters in South Florida could make that state impossible for the Democrats to carry but observers expect Jewish Democratic Congress members to wage a major campaign to preserve the historic connection between Jewish voters and the Democratic Party.

Muslim and other non-Christian voters have moved dramatically toward the Democrats as a result of Bush administration foreign policies and domestic civil liberties postures. But they are not large except in Michigan and a few other Democratic-leaning states, limiting their overall impact. Eastern Orthodox Christians are also furious over Bush’s Middle East policies, which have decimated Eastern Christian communities in Iraq and threatened their security throughout the region.

The 2008 primary elections resulted in a record voter turnout, especially among Democrats. Exit polls conducted in most primary states open a window on the electorate in this volatile political season. A

A Portrait of the Parties

<i>Religion</i>	<i>% of Democrats</i>	<i>% of Republicans</i>
Catholic	26.9	24.4
Evangelical	n/a	43.9
Jewish	4.1	1.4
Mainline Protestant	25.7	15.0
Mormons	0.6	3.5
Other Christians	21.3	4.1
Other religions	7.7	2.5
Secular	13.7	5.2

<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>% of Democrats</i>	<i>% of Republicans</i>
African American	19.4	2.4
Asian American	1.6	1.6
Hispanic-Latino	11.0	5.5
Non-Hispanic White	67.0	90.0
Others	1.0	0.5

Source: Exit polls conducted during the primary season. Democrats were not asked if they were evangelicals. “Other Christians” includes African American Protestants, Eastern Orthodox Christians and Pentecostals. “Other religions” includes all religions other than Christian and Jewish.

composite merging of the results offers this picture of the various factions and the regional impact as the general election campaign begins in earnest. ■

Vice-Presidential Candidates, *continued from page 2*

the “God, guns and gays” wing of the GOP. Her blue-collar conservatism reflects the “Sam’s Club” wing of the GOP in contrast to its country club wing. Both Palin and her husband are union members.

Billed as a maverick and a reformer because she challenged the entrenched Republican establishment in a virtual one-party state, she trounced Governor Frank Murkowski in the 2006 Republican primary.

While she is completely unknown on the national stage, her campaign is expected to emphasize gender, small-town values issues and religion. Her appointment was universally hailed by Religious Right operatives, including James Dobson, Tony Perkins and Richard Land.

Palin’s religious background is the evangelical-Pentecostal Assemblies of God, a two million member denomination founded a century ago and headquartered in Springfield, Missouri. She was head of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes at her high school. As a youth, Palin attended the Wasilla Assembly of God. Today, she and her family apparently attend the Juneau Christian Center, and an “independent Bible church” called the Church on the Rock, according to Jeffrey Weiss of the *Dallas Morning News*. *National Catholic Reporter* and *The New York Times* reported that Palin had been baptized Catholic as an infant but was re-baptized as a teenager in the Assemblies of God. In June, 2008, she spoke to a graduation ceremony at the Wasilla Assembly of God, telling the audience that the Iraq War is “a task from God.”

Palin supported the teaching of creationism in public schools during her campaign for governor. She complied with an Alaska Supreme Court order to implement state benefits to same-sex marriage employees. Later,

she vetoed legislation that would have barred the state from granting benefits to partners of gay state employees upon advice from the attorney general, but she supported a 1998 constitutional ban on same-sex marriage that was approved by state voters.

According to *The American Prospect*, she differs from McCain on vouchers, which she opposed during her 2006 campaign, warning against “government intervention” in private schooling, which is rare in Alaska anyway. In 1976 Alaska voters, by 54% to 46%, opposed changing the constitution to allow tax aid for church schools. McCain reiterated his support for school vouchers under the guise of “school choice” in his convention acceptance speech.

While her reputation has been built on battling corruption and supporting ethics reforms, she is also under investigation for allegedly using her office to have a state policeman once married to her younger sister fired from his state job. When the state commissioner of public safety refused to fire her ex-brother-in-law, she fired him in July. An independent commission is expected to issue its report on the controversy in October, right in the middle of her campaign. If she is found guilty of abuse of power, it could certainly damage the Republican ticket. ■

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You can now visit Americans for Religious Liberty’s internet website: arllinc.org. The site contains information about the organization, books available on church-state issues, reprints of important articles, and back issues of our journal.

Democratic Platform: Highlights

Church-state issues formed a very small part of the 2008 Democratic platform. The party endorses abortion rights and added a pledge to support “programs for pre- and post-natal health care” and “caring adoption programs.” The platform endorses “grassroots faith-based groups” but pledges that these programs must “not endanger First Amendment protections” or “be used to proselytize and discriminate.”

On stem cell research the platform states: “We will lift the current Administration’s ban on using federal funding for embryonic stem cells —cells that would have otherwise have been discarded and lost forever—for research that could save lives.”

The Democrats pledge to “end the Bush Administration’s war on science, restore scientific integrity, and return to evidence-based decision-making.”

Selections from the 2008 Democratic Platform: “Renewing America’s Promise”

Faith

We honor the central place of faith in our lives. Like our Founders, we believe that our nation, our communities, and our lives are made vastly stronger and richer by faith and the countless acts of justice and mercy it inspires. We believe that change comes not from the top-down, but from the bottom-up, and that few are closer to the people than our churches, synagogues, temples, and mosques. To face today’s challenges

—from saving our planet to ending poverty—we need all hands on deck. Faith-based groups are not a replacement for government or secular non-profit programs, rather, they are yet another sector working to meet challenges of the 21st century. We will empower grassroots faith-based and community groups to help meet challenges like poverty, ex-offender reentry, and illiteracy. At the same time, we can ensure that these partnerships do not endanger First Amendment protections and that public funds are not used to proselytize or discriminate. We will also ensure that taxpayer dollars are only used on programs that actually work.



Choice

The Democratic Party strongly and unequivocally supports *Roe v. Wade* and a woman’s right to choose a safe and legal abortion, regardless of ability to pay, and we oppose any and all efforts to weaken or undermine that right.

The Democratic Party also strongly supports access to affordable family planning services and comprehensive age-appropriate sex education which empowers people to make informed choices and live healthy lives. We also recognize that such health care and education help reduce the number of unintended pregnancies and thereby also reduce the need for abortions.

The Democratic Party also strongly supports a woman’s decision to have a child by ensuring access to and availability of programs for pre- and post-natal health care, parenting skills, income support, and caring adoption programs. ■

American Religion Today: Tolerance and Continuity

The Pew Forum’s national religious survey released in June found that tolerance of other religions is rising even as belief in traditional views about God, the afterlife and miracles remains high.

The Separation of Church and State

Edited by Forrest Church

In this attractive pocket-sized, readable book, Church pulls together, with useful commentary, the more important writings of the Founders that show clearly that they intended our system of government to incorporate the principle of separation of church and state.

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The survey of 35,000 adults found that 70% of Americans believe that “many religions can lead to eternal life.” This included 57% of evangelical church attenders, a finding that astounded some researchers. “There’s a growing pluralistic impulse toward tolerance and that is having theological consequences,” said D. Michael Lindsay, a Rice University sociologist of religion.

The survey found that 83% of mainline Protestants, 82% of Jews, 79% of Roman Catholics, 59% of black Protestants, 57% of evangelical Protestants and 56% of Muslims believe that adherents of faiths other than their own can achieve eternal salvation. (Only 42% of Mormons agreed.) Some religious leaders welcomed the findings. “It shows increased religious security. People are comfortable with other traditions even if they’re different. It indicates a level of humility about religion that would be of great benefit to everyone,” said the Rev. C. Welton Gaddy, president of the Interfaith Alliance.

The results have political implications since only 14% said their religious beliefs were the “main influence” on their political thinking (among evangelicals it was 25%). Most experts cite religion as an “indirect” influence on forming political views.

Evangelical attachment to the Republican Party is declining, especially among those who are 18 to 29 years old. “There appears to have been a shift away from the Republican Party even among evangelicals. This trend appears to be concentrated among younger evangelicals. But relatively few of the evangelicals who have moved away from the Republican Party have become Democratic; most have become independents,” said John Green, a senior fellow at the Pew Forum. ■

Too Much Religion in Politics? Voters Say Yes

A Pew Research Center poll shows that a majority of voters think churches should stay out of politics. This reverses a decade of poll results that had shown support for religious institutions expressing their views on political issues. Now, 52% of those polled say “churches should keep out of politics and social matters,” while 45% endorse churches “expressing views” on these issues. Four years ago, voters supported church involvement in politics by 51% to 44%.

Significantly, Republicans and conservatives have turned against church involvement. In the new poll, 51% of Republicans, 52% of Democrats and 55% of Independents are opposed to mixing politics and religion. Among Democrats there has been no change since 2004. But opposition increased 14 points among Republicans and 10 points among Independents. There was a 20-point increase, from 30% to 50%, among conservatives who wanted churches to stay out of politics. Among evangelicals, 36% say that churches should keep out of politics, compared to 20% four years ago.

The survey also found that 46% of voters, up from 40% in 2004, are uncomfortable when politicians talk about how religious they are. The increase in that view came mostly from Republicans.

The GOP is still seen as more “friendly” toward religion than the Democrats, by 52% to 38%, but Democrats have gained 12 points.

Nearly half of voters (48%) say that “religious conservatives have too much control over the Republican Party” while 43% agree that “liberals

who are not religious have too much control over the Democratic Party.” Both sentiments were up a few points. Two thirds of the public (66%) say that churches should not endorse candidates.

Religious conservatives are clearly disillusioned. Researchers for the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life wrote, “The greatest increases since 2004 in the view that churches and other houses of worship should not express themselves on political matters have occurred among less educated Republicans and people who say that social issues such as abortion and same-sex marriage will be important to their vote. For example, among people who rate gay marriage as a top voting issue, the percentage saying that churches should stay out of politics soared from 25% in 2004 to 50% currently; there was little change over this period on this question among people who do not view same-sex marriage as a very important issue. Another indication that disillusionment may be in play in increased opposition to the mixing of religion and politics is seen in the fact that this sentiment has increased most among people who rate the major parties as unfriendly toward religion. The views of citizens who see the parties as neutral or friendly toward religion have been more stable on the question of whether churches and other houses of worship should speak out on political issues.”

The survey was conducted in August among a national sample of 2,905 adults. ■

The Republican Platform

The Republican Party reasserts its absolute opposition to abortion, endorsing a constitutional amendment to make it illegal, refusing to fund abortions, and endorsing the appointment of judges who share that view. The GOP also says it will “not fund organizations involved in abortion nor would it sign international treaties that include a right to abortion.”

The Republicans endorse stem cell research that does not “destroy” embryonic “human life” and supports a ban on cloning.

They endorse “faith-based programs” without any restrictions on proselytizing or discrimination in hiring. The GOP endorses a constitutional amendment that bans same-sex marriage and encourages states to do the same if a national amendment is unsuccessful.

Both parties denounce human trafficking and sexual exploitation of women. Apparently buying into the argument that government is hostile to religious faith, the Republicans claim that the First Amendment’s “ideals” have “been distorted by judicial rulings which attempt to drive faith out of the public arena.” They claim that “Republican leadership has made religious liberty a central element of U.S. foreign policy,” though they do not cite specific examples of it.

The GOP also endorses the idea that health-care professionals should be allowed to refuse to perform certain acts that violate “their conscience,” “especially” for those who work for “religious organizations.” The Republicans urge “reasonable accommodation of religious beliefs in the private workplace,” and deplore “the increasing incidence of attacks against religious symbols, as well as incidents of anti-Semitism on college campuses.”

(The Democratic platform also endorses “increased support for religious freedom” and “encourages” China to “promote greater respect for human rights, including freedom of religion.”)

Highlights

Abortion

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. We oppose using public revenues to promote or perform abortion and will not fund organizations which advocate it. We support the appointment of judges who respect traditional family values and the sanctity and dignity of innocent human life.

Embryonic Research

Taxpayer-funded medical research must be based on sound science, with a focus on both prevention and treatment, and in accordance with the humane ethics of the Hippocratic Oath. In that regard, we call for a major expansion of support for the stem-cell research that now shows amazing promise and offers the greatest hope for scores of diseases—with adult stem cells, umbilical cord blood, and cells reprogrammed into pluripotent stem cells—without the unethical destruction of embryonic human life. We call for a ban on human cloning, the creation of human embryos for research purposes.

Faith-based Programs

We affirm every citizen’s right to apply religious values to public policy and the right of faith-based organizations to participate fully in public programs without renouncing their beliefs, removing religious objects or symbols, or becoming subject to government-imposed hiring practices. ■



Patients' Rights in Jeopardy

Proposed new regulations from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) will further restrict patient access to abortion and contraception under the guise of protecting the religious freedom of providers opposed to abortion. This bombshell, revealed by the *Washington Post* on July 31, is seen by some as another Bush administration ploy to use abortion to rally religious conservatives before the fall elections.

The draft regulations would deny federal funding to any hospital, clinic or health care plan that does not allow employees to opt out of participating in procedures that violate their personal religious convictions, usually regarding abortion and birth control. Religious Right groups, such as the Family Research Council and Concerned Women for America, support the proposal. So do some religious groups, such as the Catholic Medical Association, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and the Christian Legal Society, which represents evangelical lawyers. They are claiming a religious freedom exemption and cite instances of discrimination against some religious conservatives who work in health care professions.

Nothing is said, so far, about the religious freedom and rights of conscience of patients who request these procedures. Women's health care advocates are outraged. Planned Parenthood national leader Cecile Richards commented, "At a time when access to health care is at an all-time low, the idea that the Bush administration would be creating more barriers is frankly incredible." Critics say the regulation could trump dozens of state laws that require health plans to cover birth control, pharmacists to fill prescriptions for contraceptives, and hospitals to offer emergency contraception to women who have been raped.

The 39-page proposal has been circulated among several HHS agencies. The National Institutes of Health has raised objections, especially to the new definition of abortion that HHS is considering. One NIH researcher told the *Washington Post*, "This is causing a lot of distress. It's a redefinition of abortion that does not match any of the current medi-

cal definitions. It's ideologically based and not based on science and could interfere with the development of many new therapies to treat diseases."

Several bioethicists and medical researchers are also concerned that the new regulations could conflict with existing state and federal laws. (The Food and Drug Administration, as usual, is saying nothing). The issue is likely to generate new controversy as the national elections approach.

Thirty-two states guarantee contraception coverage to residents. The pattern reveals religious, regional and political preferences. In the Northeast every state except Pennsylvania requires coverage, as does every Midwestern state except Indiana, and every Far West state except Utah and Idaho. In the South, however, only three (Georgia, Arkansas, and North Carolina) of eleven states guarantee coverage. Religiously pluralistic, secular and Catholic areas are likely to authorize coverage, while most Mormon and evangelical states do not. (West Virginia, Kentucky, Missouri, and the three Southern states mentioned, all evangelical strongholds, do provide coverage).

There is also a political difference. Of the 18 states that do not guarantee contraceptive insurance coverage, 17 supported Bush in 2004. Only one (Pennsylvania) supported Kerry. Of the 32 states with coverage, 18 went for Kerry and 14 for Bush. Many Western states that supported Bush, including North Dakota, Montana, Colorado, Wyoming, Nevada, Arizona and New Mexico, provide coverage.

Sixteen states have passed laws guaranteeing access to emergency contraception in hospital emergency rooms. The are: Washington, Oregon, California, New Mexico, Colorado, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Arkansas, Texas, South Carolina, Pennsylvania, New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut and New Jersey. Four states (New Jersey, Illinois, California and Washington) have laws designed to guarantee access to contraception at pharmacies. ■

New Guidelines Protect Against Workplace Religious Bias

On July 22 the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) issued comprehensive new guidelines for handling religious diversity issues in places of employment. The "consolidated and updated" guidelines were released in response to a 13% increase in the number of religious discrimination allegations filed with the agency last year. The number of such complaints was 2,880 in 2007, double the number in 1992.

"For companies with more than 15 people, federal law requires employers to 'reasonably accommodate' an employee's religious beliefs. Employers are exempt only if they can show the accommodation would cause an 'undue hardship' on business."

The report (officially called "The Compliance Manual, Section 12, Religious Discrimination") notes, "Questions about religion in the workplace have increased as religious pluralism has increased."

Sample Copy

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Religion is broadly defined. "Religious beliefs include theistic beliefs as well as non-theistic 'moral or ethical beliefs as to what is right and wrong which are sincerely held with the strength of traditional religious views.'"

EEOC rules are an amalgam of federal court and previous EEOC decisions based on the requirements of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and subsequent court rulings affecting religious discrimination. There are several general principles underlying case law. They include:

1. Employees may not be treated in different ways because of religious preference. "Disparate treatment violates the statute whether motivated by bias against or preference toward an applicant or employee due to his religious beliefs, practices, or observances – or lack thereof."
2. "An employer may not refuse to hire an applicant simply because he does not share the employer's religious beliefs, and conversely may not select one applicant over another based on a preference for employees of a particular religion."
3. "Title VII also prohibits employers from disciplining or discharging employees because of their religion."
4. Employees cannot be discharged because some customers object to their religion. "If an employer is confronted with customer biases, e.g., an adverse reaction to being served by an employee

due to religious garb, the employer should consider engaging with and educating the customers regarding any misperceptions they may have and/or the equal employment opportunity laws.”

5. Hostile religious environments are forbidden. “Religious harassment in violation of Title VII occurs when employees are: (1) required or coerced to abandon, alter, or adopt a religious practice as a condition of employment...or (2) subjected to unwelcome statements or conduct that is based on religion and is so severe or pervasive that the individual being harassed reasonably finds the work environment to be hostile or abusive, and there is a basis for holding the employer liable.”
6. Proselytizing that is “unwelcome and unsolicited” is generally forbidden and can constitute religious harassment. Furthermore, “Religious expression that is repeatedly directed at an employee can become severe or pervasive, whether or not the content is intended to be insulting or abusive.”
7. Employers are liable for supervisory harassment when they fail to exercise reasonable care to prevent and correct harassing behavior by supervisors or co-workers. “Once an employer is on notice that an employee objects to religious conduct that is directed at him or her, the employer should take steps to end the conduct because even conduct that the employer does not regard as abusive can become sufficiently severe or pervasive to affect the conditions of employment if allowed to persist in the face of the employee’s objection.” However, “Employers should allow religious expression among employees to the same extent that they allow other types of personal expression that are not harassing or disruptive.”

Balancing competing interests, such as religious free expression and nondiscrimination, requires sensitivity and fairness to all. “While supervisors are permitted to engage in certain religious expression, they should avoid expression that might—due to their supervisory authority—reasonably be perceived by subordinates as coercive, even when not so intended.”

The law is still evolving in respect to dress and grooming standards and religious garb in the workplace, and these guidelines are likely to be refined in the future.

The 80-page document is available at: www.eecoc.gov/policy/docs/religion.html ■

Religion Shapes Attitudes on Abortion, Gay Rights

The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life released findings in June showing that an individual’s religious affiliation may be the best predictor of attitudes on abortion and gay rights. “Religion is highly relevant to understand politics in the United States,” said John Green, a senior fellow at the Pew Forum. The most liberal attitudes are held by Buddhists and Jews, followed by Hindus, the religiously nonaffiliated, and mainline Protestants. Catholics and Muslims are divided on abortion while Catholics hold liberal views on gay issues and Mormons are the most conservative of all. (Jehovah’s Witnesses are the most anti-abortion and anti-gay rights of all religious groups, but they do not vote.). Catholics are 15% more liberal on gay rights than on abortion while Muslims and Hindus are 13% more conservative on gay rights than on abortion. All other groups show little difference on the two issues. ■

	% Anti-Abortion	% Anti-Gay Rights
All	43	40
Mormon	70	68
Evangelical Prot.	61	64
Muslim	48	61
Catholic	45	30
Mainline Prot.	32	34
Hindu	24	37
Unaffiliated	24	20
Jewish	14	15
Buddhist	13	12

Source: Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, June 24, 2008.

Social Issues Referenda: A Roundup



Social, cultural and church-state issues will appear on numerous state ballots in November, some of which are detailed elsewhere in this issue. Here is a summary, as of early September. (Some states have not yet certified all referendum questions.)

- Abortion is an issue in three states. South Dakota voters will consider a ban on abortion except in cases of rape, incest, or threats to a woman’s health. Two years ago

South Dakotans rejected a similar though stricter measure by 56% to 44%. Colorado voters will be asked to define “personhood” as beginning “at the moment of fertilization,” while California will vote for the third time on parental notification.

- Amendments banning same-sex marriage are on the Florida ballot for the first time and will be considered for a second time in California (which approved it in 2000) and in Arizona, the only state that rejected a ban in a previous referendum. Similar amendments have been passed in 27 states.

- Arkansas voters will be asked to prohibit unmarried couples living together from adopting children or serving as foster parents after a Reli-

gious Right group submitted enough valid signatures to require a referendum. Present state law already bars unmarried couples from being foster parents.

- Michigan will consider a proposal to end a ban on embryonic stem-cell research.

- Finally, Washington State voters will consider a measure to legalize assisted suicide for people who are terminally ill, similar to a law in next-door Oregon. ■

Triumphalist liberal announcements of the death of the Christian Right notwithstanding, this network of social movements remains, and will remain, a potential political force in America for decades to come. They’ve spent decades building a movement that will not be undone by a few years of electoral losses.

— Chip Berlet and Katherine Hancock Ragsdale, “The Christian Right’s Staying Power,” *The Progressive*, July 2008.

Obama Proposes Expanding and Reforming Faith Programs

In a campaign stop in Zanesville, Ohio, on July 1, Democratic nominee Barack Obama said he intends to overhaul the Bush administration's faith-based programs. He plans a \$500 million Council for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships that would concentrate on summer jobs and education programs. Unlike Bush, who clearly favors faith-based programs over secular alternatives, Obama said, "I'm not saying that faith-based groups are an alternative to government or secular non-profits, and I'm not saying that they're somehow better at lifting people up." But the Illinois senator insisted that today's problems need private-public partnerships.

Obama says the Bush programs have not reached necessary funding levels to be effective and have become too bureaucratic and too political. Obama advisers said his program would ban religious discrimination in hiring and prohibit proselytizing of recipients of aid programs.

Anticipating criticism, Obama said, "I believe deeply in the separation of church and state, but I don't believe this partnership will endanger that idea—so long as we follow a few basic principles. First, if you get a federal grant, you can't use that grant money to proselytize to the people you help and you can't discriminate against them—or against the people you hire—on the basis of their religion. Second, federal dollars that go directly to churches, temples and mosques can only be used on secular programs. And we'll also ensure that taxpayer dollars only go to those programs that actually work."

According to Mike Allen in *Politico* (July 1, 2008), the Obama program has four goals:

Train the trainers to enable local faith-based organizations to learn best practices, grant-making procedures and service delivery so that they can better apply for and use federal dollars.

Partner with state and local offices so that federal efforts build on successes made at the state and local level.

Hold recipients responsible by conducting rigorous performance evaluation, researching what works well and disseminating best practices.

Close the summer learning gap by focusing faith-based and community-based efforts on summer learning programs for one million children.

While Obama's proposal was criticized by some religious liberty groups, it received cautious support from Baptist Joint Committee general counsel Hollyn Hollman, who wrote, "The speech reflects a keen appreciation for the separation of church and state's role to ensure religious liberty even while promoting partnerships between government and religious institutions."

Hollman cautioned, however, that church groups should not become direct recipients of government funding. "The Baptist Joint Committee would never recommend money going directly to houses of worship because of the risk of entanglement and the practical difficulties that may threaten the institution's integrity. We think best practices, legally and practically, weigh heavily toward creating a separate corporate entity if a house of worship is inclined to seek government funding for services it provides." ■

McCain No Moderate on Abortion Rights

While GOP nominee John McCain touts his independent record on a few issues, his support for the Republican platform on abortion has been consistent. While he tried to modify the 2000 platform plank by encouraging "exceptions" to the general call for a ban on all abortions, McCain's voting record in the Senate for over two decades has been anti-choice. According to *The Progressive's* political editor Ruth Conniff, McCain has voted anti-choice on 115 of 119 recorded votes, a whopping 97% of the time. He even opposed Medicaid funding for abortion in cases of rape or incest and voted to delete family-planning grants from a spending bill in 1988.

In the July *Progressive*, Conniff summarized McCain's voting record: "McCain also voted against allowing U.S. servicewomen to get abortion services at overseas military hospitals using their own money.

"He voted against lifting the ban that forbids federal employees from choosing health insurance that includes abortion coverage.

"He voted against funding teen pregnancy prevention programs and ensuring that 'abstinence-only' programs are medically accurate.

"He voted for the domestic gag rule, which would have prohibited federally funded family planning clinics from providing women with access to complete information, including information about abortion.

"He voted to uphold the global gag rule, which bans overseas health clinics from receiving U.S. family planning aid if they use their own funds to provide legal abortion services, give referrals, or even take a public pro-choice position.

"And he voted to defund the United Nations Population Fund, which provides family-planning services—not abortion—for the world's poorest women." ■



Parties Target Evangelicals

The evangelical quarter of the electorate has become a target for both the Obama and McCain campaigns, though several political scientists have argued that Catholics and mainline Protestants are more up for grabs than the traditionally Republican evangelical community.

The Paul Henry Institute for the Study of Christianity and Politics at Calvin College found that white Catholics were the group "most up for grabs" in the 2008 election. This community has supported every winning presidential candidate since 1976.

Another important group, one fifth of the electorate, are mainline Protestants, who are clearly drifting away from the GOP. Corwin Smidt, director of the Henry Institute, told a National Press Club audience on June 9: "Historically, mainline Protestants have been the mainstay of the Republican coalition. Even as late as 1992, they were heavily Republican, about 50 percent Republican and just 32 percent Democratic. But now mainline Protestants are for the first time since at least the beginning of the New Deal, about 70 years ago, more Democratic than Republican in their partisan identifications, about 46 percent Democratic to 37 percent Republican."

One reason for targeting evangelicals is that polls show a weakening of support for Republicans, especially by those under age 30. Many have grown disillusioned with Bush administration policies, while oth-

ers fear the close connection between conservative politics and evangelicalism has harmed the religious group's identity. A 2007 survey of young evangelicals by David Kinnaman, president of the Barna Group, which studies evangelicals, found that 47% of evangelicals under age 40 believed that "the political efforts of conservative Christians" posed a problem for America.

A Pew survey also found a 15 percentage point decline in Republican support among young evangelicals.

John McCain has still failed to ignite or excite evangelicals, only one third of whom supported him in the primaries. His break with Religious Right pastors John Hagee and Rod Parsley has not helped among hard-core evangelicals. As a consequence, one hard-right group, the Fort Lauderdale-based Christian Anti-Defamation Commission launched an online petition drive in June to get an evangelical picked as vice presidential nominee. Gary Cass, a follower of the late D. James Kennedy and former director of the defunct Center for Reclaiming America, told the Fort Lauderdale *Sun-Sentinel* that neither Obama nor McCain was a genuine Christian. "I don't think either of them are true Christians. So the best we're going to get out of this election cycle is an evangelical Christian running for vice president." His petition calls for "a born-again Christian who has a proven record of supporting traditional Christian morality."

The Obama campaign began stressing religious themes in the Kentucky primary in May, where it apparently failed, since he won less than a third of the vote. A new PAC, to be called "The Matthew 25 Network" was launched in June. Named for the chapter in Matthew's Gospel in which Jesus says that individuals will be judged by their concern for the poor and disadvantaged, the group is spearheaded by Mara Vanderslice, who was director of religious outreach for John Kerry in 2004. Former Clinton White House press secretary Mike McCurry is a prominent supporter. Obama's campaign has set up a grass-roots effort called Joshua Generation in an effort to reach young evangelicals. Adding to the mix is a new work by evangelical author Stephen Mansfield, who wrote *The Faith of George W. Bush* and now has produced *The Faith of Barack Obama*. McCurry defended these efforts as an attempt to reach "moderate Christians" and increase the Democratic support level from Kerry's 22% in 2004. A June Calvin College poll found McCain leading Obama 57% to 25% among evangelicals. A *Christianity Today* poll of readers put McCain ahead 55% to 33%. Both show McCain running well behind George W. Bush's level of support.

While the Obama campaign's religious outreach efforts have been criticized, Joshua DuBois, the candidate's director of religious outreach told Religion News Service the campaign is "not solely focused" on evangelicals and Catholics but "committed to reaching people of faith broadly and trying to bridge religious divides."

A joint appearance at the Civil Forum at Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California, on August 16 revealed the divergent views and styles of the candidates. While Obama spoke more directly about his personal religious faith, McCain's insider language on abortion, declaring that "life begins at the moment of conception" clearly won the audience. Retired history professor and long-time ARL member Richard Pierard explained his reactions in *EthicsDaily.com*: "The abortion controversy was yet another disturbing aspect. McCain dismissed the deep moral conflicts that women face in this crisis with the flip comment that he is pro-life from the point of conception, which the crowd greeted with loud cheers and acclamation. Obama honestly affirmed his pro-choice stance, but he tried to fathom the issues surrounding such a crisis and the need for a social system that does not leave a pregnant woman with the sense that she has no other way out. These people, who for the most part believe the right to life ends at birth—after that you are on your

own—simply did not want to face the complexity of the whole situation."

The issue is likely to affect Supreme Court appointments. "I will be a pro-life president, and this presidency will have pro-life policies," McCain pledged at the nationally televised event. Rutgers University political scientist Cynthia Daniels told the *Los Angeles Times*, "Whoever is elected president will have the power to fundamentally transform the future of abortion politics." ■

Religion's Importance Has Political Implications

For years religious affiliation has had political consequences. Jews are more Democratic than Catholics and Catholics are more Democratic than Protestants. Secular voters have grown increasingly Democratic while evangelical Protestants and Mormons have embraced the GOP with increasing fervor.

Then, since at least the 1990s, high church attendance correlates with Republican voting preference, while less frequent attendance is more characteristic of Democrats and Independents.

Now, a Gallup Poll released June 13 shows that Republicans do much better among voters who say religion is an important part of their daily lives. Writes Gallup Poll director Frank Newport, "The data show that Americans' self-reports of the importance of religion in their lives are powerfully predictive of voting preferences in the coming general election."

John McCain beats Barack Obama 47% to 42% among voters who say religion is important to them while Obama wins 58% to 33% among voters who say religion is not important. Since 64% of voters say religion is important, McCain runs close to Obama in the overall count, trailing 48% to 42% in the mid-June poll of 5,299 registered voters.

The religion gap is pronounced among white voters. McCain wins 57% to 32% among those for whom religion is important, while Obama wins 54% to 36% among those who rate religion as unimportant. Among other groups the religious importance factor is much less prominent.

Newport explained that demographics interact with religion. "This one dichotomous question about the importance of religion is by itself a potent predictor of white voters' presidential vote intentions. The reasons for this relationship are complex. Self-reported importance of religion is itself highly related to a number of other demographic variables, which in turn are related to political orientation. Younger voters, for example, are less likely than those who are older to say religion is important in their lives, and younger voters are among Obama's largest support groups. Unmarried voters are less likely to say religion is important in their lives and more likely to support Obama. Highly educated voters are less likely to say religion is important in their lives (although they attend church with equal frequency to those with less education) and highly educated voters constitute a strong voter bloc for Obama."

Other factors also come into play, according to Newport. "At the same time, importance of religion is related to a number of social and values attitudes that are themselves related to political orientation. Thus, it is difficult to pinpoint exactly what is driving the religion-vote relationship. It may be that religion per se is less important than some underlying causal factor—either demographic or attitudinal—that is correlated with both religion and voting propensity. Still, the fact re-

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Religion's Importance, *continued from page 9*

mains that at the overarching level, a simple answer to a question about the importance of religion in a person's life is a strongly suggestive clue as to how that person will vote in the November general election." ■

South Dakota's New Abortion Ban Campaign Begins

The South Dakota Campaign for Healthy Families (www.sdhealthyfamilies.org) kicked off its campaign at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., on August 12. The group said, "In 2006, South Dakota voters rejected a law that outlawed abortion in the state by a convincing 56-44% margin. This fall, South Dakotans will once again be faced with an abortion ban on the November ballot. Out-of-state, anti-choice forces have falsely framed the law as a reasonable restriction on abortion. The reality is that the ban would allow the government to recklessly interfere with a personal and private decision best made by women and their families. The proposed ban ignores the complex realities of women's lives, fundamentally endangers women's health and forces doctors to practice bad medicine."

Supporters include NARAL Pro-Choice America, ACLU, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, and Physicians for Reproductive Choice and Health. ARL also supports the coalition effort. ■

Colorado Schedules 'Personhood' Vote

An issue traditionally thought to be the preserve of philosophers and theologians will be on the November election ballot in Colorado. Voters there will be asked to decide when personhood begins and whether a fertilized egg is a "person." (ARL has published two books on the subject: *Abortion Rights and Fetal Personhood* and *Abortion and Public Policy*).

The Human Life Amendment says person or persons in the state constitution shall "include any human being from the moment of fertilization." The fertilized eggs would be entitled to full legal rights and protections. The ballot initiative was supported by Colorado for Equal Rights, whose purpose is to restrict abortion. Colorado Right to Life also endorsed the measure.

According to *Washington Post* staff writer Ashley Surdin, the measure has long-term goals. "The amendment carries broader implications, critics say, such as limiting medical research involving embryos, inviting intrusive government oversight of pregnancies, and banning certain contraception, including the morning-after pill and the intrauterine device, or IUD."

Law professor Bill Araiza of Loyola University in Los Angeles told Surdin, "Because this amendment would define a person in a given way and expand the universe of who persons are, it expands the reach of laws that deal with persons."

The powerful Colorado-based Focus on the Family is lukewarm on the effort, even though some supporters hope its passage will lead to a U.S. Supreme Court opinion that will affect or reinterpret *Roe v. Wade*.

Civil liberties and medical groups are expected to mount major

efforts to defeat the amendment. Though Colorado has been a Republican-leaning state since 1952 (only Johnson in 1964 and Clinton in 1992 have carried the state for the Democrats), its religious configuration is considered moderate to liberal, with large numbers of political independents and religiously nonaffiliated voters. ■

Megachurches Avoid Politics (Mostly)

America's 1,300 Protestant "megachurches," which attract 2,000 or more worshippers every week, are mostly avoiding partisan politics, according to a report issued by the Hartford Institute for Religion Research. The institute's Scott Thumma found that only 16% of megachurches had "engaged in organized political involvement over the previous five years," while 75% had never done so. About 9% had been politically active in the past but had become less so.

Members of megachurches are likely to be Republicans, with only one in five identifying as Democrats or Independents, according to Thumma's book *Beyond Megachurch Myths*.

These churches are increasingly visible, however. Both Barack Obama and John McCain appeared on August 16 at a "civil forum" held at the Saddleback Church in Orange County, California, America's fourth largest place of worship.

Most of the ten largest megachurches are in the South or Midwest. The largest church in the country is Houston's Lakewood Church, which draws 47,000 people to its Sunday services. The late Jerry Falwell's Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Virginia, ranks ninth.

In an article in the *Washington Post* on July 27, Thumma said that megachurches exercise considerable political clout at the local level. "At the same time, however, many megachurch pastors are consummate politicians, keenly aware of the power of their platforms. I've seen numerous megachurch worship services at which politicians vying for positions from local school-board seats to the presidency have greeted the congregation, posed for pictures with the pastor and shaken hands with parishioners after the service. I've also seen megachurch pastors skillfully persuade town, county and state officials to work on behalf of a church's future, based on the votes the churchgoers could deliver." ■

Mainline Protestants Lean Democratic

After supporting the Republican Party since the days of Lincoln, America's "mainline," i.e., moderate and non-evangelical Protestants are moving toward the Democratic Party. Democrats now lead Republicans 46% to 37% among this large (but declining) electoral bloc, according to a poll conducted by a research institute.

During the last presidential election, Republicans outnumbered Democrats 44% to 38% among mainline Protestants, and a slight majority favored Bush over Kerry. In the three previous elections when Bill Clinton and Al Gore led the Democratic tickets, mainliners were even more Republican, about 50% to 33%. Polls showed that since World War II, the only Democrat to win among mainline Protestants was Lyndon Johnson in 1964.

The poll, conducted in April and May by the Paul Henry Institute



for the Study of Christianity and Politics at Calvin College, also classified mainline Protestants by theology into traditionalists, centrists and modernists. The traditionalists, roughly akin to evangelicals, still favored the GOP by 54% to 33% while centrists and modernists supported the Democrats two to one.

The biggest shift in allegiance came from the true middle-of-the-roaders, the centrists, who favored the Republicans by 13% in 2004 and the Democrats by 24% in 2008. The modernists remained overwhelmingly Democratic. In the polls, evangelicals remained two to one Republican, with a small increase for independents, while Catholics were still the classic swing voters, favoring the Democrats by only three points, with a whopping 21% undecided.

Among the entire population, mainline Protestants are about 18% of voters. Only 7% of all U.S. voters are “centrist” mainliners, but in a closely divided electorate a shift one way or the other among small voting groups can be decisive.

The Pew Forum’s John Green offered one explanation for the Democratic gains among this once Republican and now up-for-grabs group: “It may also be that some decided that the Democratic Party, with Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton seeking the presidential nomination, had more to offer than the Republicans this year.” Green added that both Obama and Clinton are mainline Protestants themselves, and that always counts for something among some voters. ■

Creationism: Republicans Si, Democrats No

A June Gallup Poll found that 60% of Republicans believe in some form of creationism as an explanation for the development of life. Only 38% of Democrats and 40% of Independents agree. Gallup Poll director Frank Newport said this is a result of the religious configuration of the parties today. “The significantly higher percentage of Republicans who select the creationist view reflects in part the strong relationship between religion and views on the origin of humans. Republicans are significantly more likely to attend church weekly than are others, and Americans who attend church weekly are highly likely to select the creationist alternative for the origin of humans.”

While not expected to be a major campaign issue of itself, creationism “could resurface in one way or the other between now and the November election,” Newport wrote.

John McCain may be caught in a bind, as he tries to satisfy his base and appeal to independent voters at the same time. Says Newport, “Presumptive Republican nominee John McCain is facing the challenge of gaining the confidence and enthusiasm of conservative Republicans. Turnout among this group could be an important factor in determining the final vote outcome in a number of key swing states. As seen here, Republicans are in general sympathetic to the creationist explanation of the origin of humans, and if the issue of what is taught in schools relating to evolution and creationism surfaces as a campaign issue, McCain’s response could turn out to be quite important.” ■

Anti-Abortion Zealot Loses in Kansas

Phill Kline, who seemed to have a personal vendetta against Planned Parenthood during his term as Kansas attorney general and as district attorney for Johnson County, was soundly defeated in the August 5
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Keys for Watching the Results on Election Night

- The **Mountain West** could be decisive in a close race. Democrats have been gaining in local races and are poised for a presidential victory in Colorado, Montana, Nevada and New Mexico. Demographic changes, disillusionment with the Religious Right and other factors are fueling this trend. Colorado and Montana are swing states, as both backed Clinton in 1992 but switched to Dole in 1996 and then Bush twice. Perot did well in both states. Mormons, Hispanic Catholics, and religiously unaffiliated voters are strong in these potential swing states. The wild card, however, is John McCain’s Arizona residence, which has given him a home field advantage.

- The **Upper Midwest** (Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin) have been squeakers in the last two races for the White House. Lutherans, Methodists and German Catholics are influential in these states, as is a growing evangelical movement. Less than one percentage point separated the winners in Iowa and Wisconsin in 2000 and 2004. Minnesota, the only state to back every Democrat since 1976, has seen a Republican trend, with Gore and Kerry barely winning. In the “swing” counties in the Minneapolis-St. Paul suburbs, and exurbs, Bush won twice even where Dukakis had won in 1988. This unpredictable terrain also backed Jesse Ventura in his 1998 election as governor and gave Ross Perot a big vote in 1992, so it is up for grabs again.

- The **Upper South** states of Kentucky and West Virginia essentially elected Bush over Gore in 2000 (along with the disputed vote in Florida and the Nader vote in New Hampshire) and those two states gave Bush a landslide win in 2004. If Obama gains here, it could indicate a return of the white working class electorate to the Democrats and would signify a similar shift in Ohio. But these overwhelmingly white states were Hillary Clinton’s strongest in the primaries and both have electorates that may be unsympathetic to the Obama candidacy. If McCain sweeps these states by a larger margin than Bush, Obama could be in trouble in Pennsylvania and Ohio.

- Finally, the so-called “**barometer states**” have an uncanny ability to go with the national winner, for no apparent or discernible reasons. Missouri has backed every winning presidential candidate since 1960, Ohio, Tennessee and Kentucky since 1964, and Arkansas and Louisiana since 1972. Since McCain is favored in most of these states, a pro-Obama trend nationally might show up in this region.

There are always upsets in every election, making for an intriguing election night. Democrats have targeted Virginia, a high-income, high-education state with significant demographic changes. No Democrat has carried the Old Dominion for president since Johnson in 1964, but Democratic victories in Senate and governor’s races and an Obama sweep in the primaries make it an ideal target. If there is a downturn in Democratic fortunes, it might well occur in Pennsylvania and Michigan, which have gone Democratic in the last four elections.

—Al Menendez

primary. Anti-abortion rights activists and bloggers had made his re-nomination in the Republican primary a top national priority, but he lost 60% to 40% to moderate Republican Steve Howe. In October 2007 Kline filed 107 charges against Planned Parenthood for allegedly performing illegal late-term abortions. Kline, the state's attorney general until he was defeated by a Democrat in 2006, was later appointed district attorney of Johnson County, the state's most populous and prosperous county and a major suburb of Kansas City. Johnson County has been a GOP stronghold for nearly a century. It last supported a Democrat in 1916, when Woodrow Wilson was reelected. ■

Texas GOP Endorses Religious Right Agenda

The Texas Republican Party has reiterated its opposition to all abortion without any exceptions for the life or health of the woman, endorsed spending taxpayer money for private and religious schools, and denounced same-sex marriage. The June convention, which drew 12,216 delegates, also embraced other hard-right positions, including U.S. withdrawal from the United Nations, abolition of the federal income tax, no amnesty for illegal immigrants, withdrawal of funding for bilingual education, and urging the U.S. to "stay the course" in Iraq. John McCain did not attend the Houston meeting but sent former rival Mitt Romney to speak in his place. ■

By the Numbers: Presidential and Vice-Presidential Firsts and Seconds

- If Barack Obama wins, he will be the first African American president, the first president born in Hawaii, and the first graduate of Columbia University to occupy the Oval Office. (Theodore Roosevelt and Franklin Roosevelt studied at Columbia Law School after their Harvard undergraduate days).
- If John McCain wins, he will be the first president born in the Panama Canal Zone, the first resident of Arizona to be president and the oldest president at the time of his election. He will be the second divorced president and the second graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy to be elected to the presidency.
- If Joe Biden becomes vice president, he will be the first Catholic vice president, the first resident of Delaware to hold the second highest office and the second Pennsylvania-born vice president. (The first was George Dallas, who took office in 1845 with President James K. Polk).
- If Sarah Palin wins, she will become the first female vice president, the first Alaska resident and the first Idaho-born veep. She will also be the first Pentecostal Christian to assume the vice presidency.



Church and State in the Courts

Colorado must provide scholarships to students attending Colorado Christian University, an evangelical school in Lakewood, according to a July 23 ruling by the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. State scholarships, which are granted to students at any accredited college in the state, had been denied to two schools deemed "pervasively sectarian," a Buddhist university and Colorado Christian University. The 10th Circuit ruling effectively weakens a three-decade-old prohibition on aid to "pervasively sectarian" educational institutions. The court reached its conclusion for two reasons. "The program expressly discriminates among religions without constitutional justification, and its criteria for doing so involve unconstitutionally intrusive scrutiny of religious belief and practice." The decision explains further, "The Colorado exclusion expressly discriminates *among* religions, allowing aid to 'sectarian' but not 'pervasively sectarian' institutions, and it does so on the basis of criteria that entail intrusive governmental judgments regarding matters of religious belief and practice."

The court was particularly critical of the stipulation in Colorado law that any required courses which "tend to indoctrinate or proselytize" are deemed to be indicative of pervasive sectarianism. This provision is "fraught with entanglement problems."

It is also chilling that the court majority refers to "then-existing Establishment Clause doctrine" as an explanation for the language adopted by the Colorado legislature. Once again, the 10th Circuit rather snidely refers to "doctrine applicable at the time" but adds, "Since that time, the Supreme Court has substantially modified its interpretation of the Establishment Clause." In fact, "It is now settled

that the Establishment Clause permits evenhanded funding of education—religious and secular—through student scholarships."

The appellate decision overruled a district court decision that "the State had a legitimate interest in 'vindicating' a provision of the Colorado Constitution that forbids appropriating public money to aid religious institutions."

Previous decisions in similar cases were determined by inquiry into the nature of the institutions and their underlying religious character and on the degree of supervision required to monitor sectarian tendencies. This court has thrown them out as determinants. The court objected that Roman Catholic Regis University and Methodist-related University of Denver were allowed to participate in the scholarship program, but Naropa University, a Buddhist school, and Colorado Christian were denied "on the basis of religious views or religious status."

This decision, validating aid to "pervasively sectarian" institutions, is not the first. The 4th Circuit reached a similar decision in 2001 in a Maryland case, *Columbia Union College v. Oliver*. But the 4th Circuit was considered a conservative anomaly. Today, other circuits are falling in line, reflecting years of Republican appointments to the federal bench. To say that a state cannot put reasonable financial limits on religious education ("We have held that the challenged statutes violate the First Amendment and have no constitutionally sufficient justification.") seems to be a major departure from what was once viewed as settled doctrine.



The University of California survived a legal challenge from religious conservatives when a federal judge in Los Angeles dismissed a religious discrimination suit brought by Calvary Chapel Christian School against the University. The August 8 ruling by U.S. District Judge James Otero concluded that the school had failed to show evidence that its students' constitutional rights were violated when the university system refused to accept some courses as preparation for college admission. Most courses were deemed acceptable but two courses that used Bob Jones University textbooks ignored generally accepted canons of history and propagated inadequate treatment of other religions were disallowed. (These textbooks were analyzed in Al Menendez's book *Visions of Reality: What Fundamentalist Schools Teach.*) The school and the Association of Christian Schools International claimed the state was violating their religious liberty rights to teach what their religion required.

Judge Otero said the university had a "rational basis" for determining which courses met college preparatory requirements and concluded that plaintiff "provided no evidence of animus" based on religion. The teaching of creationism was a major factor in the suit. One textbook, *Biology: God's Living Creation*, produced by A Beka Books at Pensacola Christian College, was deemed to have taken an "overall unscientific approach to the subject matter" by defense witness Barbara Sawrey.

Two expert witnesses for the university, ARL advisory board member Francisco Ayala and Donald Kennedy, also reviewed Bob Jones University Press' *Biology for Christian Schools* and concluded, "The problem is not...that the creationist view is taught as an alternative to scientific explanations, but that the nature of science, the theory of evolution, and critical thinking are not taught adequately."

University of California provost Wyatt Hume praised the ruling and added, "The University welcomes students of all religious faiths and recognizes that a diversity of educational backgrounds among our students, including religious education, enriches the UC community and the academic experience. As we have said all along, the question the University addresses in reviewing courses is not whether they have religious content, but whether they provide adequate instruction in the subject matter."

Robert Tyler, general counsel of Advocates for Faith and Freedom, a Religious Right legal advocacy group, said the decision has been appealed to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.



The Episcopal Church in Virginia lost the second round in its battle with conservative dissidents who left the denomination but have refused to relinquish their property. Fairfax County Judge Randy Bellows ruled on June 27 that an 1867 law allowing churches to keep their property in the event of a "division" from the denomination is constitutional. The Episcopal Diocese of Virginia argued that the law infringes on the First Amendment and prevents churches from managing their own affairs without government interference. Several mainline denominations, including the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, filed briefs supporting the Episcopal diocese and cited U.S. Supreme Court rulings from 1892 and 1979 as precedent.

Legal scholars say the outcome of the Virginia controversy could be far-reaching. "The ruling could encourage the dozens of Episcopal parishes in similar court battles across the U.S., and shake the confidence of mainline Protestant denominations that fear losing churches and people to breakaway groups," wrote Daniel Burke in Religion News Service. The diocese said it may appeal Bellows' decision and would "explore fully every option available to restore constitutional and legal protections for all churches in Virginia." The diocese also warned that the decision "reaches beyond the Episcopal Church to all hierarchical

churches in the Commonwealth."

Round three comes in October when a trial is scheduled to decide remaining legal issues, including the distribution of \$30 million to \$40 million in properties that predate the 1867 law.

The dispute could end up in the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled in 1892 that decisions involving church property disputes and internal divisions within churches should be determined by the type of church government chosen by each denomination. That ruling would seem to contradict Virginia law, but experts say the issues have become more complex in today's strife-ridden climate. (For a summary of the first ruling in this dispute, see *Voice of Reason*, Issue 103, page 13)

Judge Bellows strengthened his June ruling with another one on August 19 when he ruled that the U.S. Constitution's "contracts clause" would not apply in Virginia because Virginia's churches could not legally own property before 1867. Only trustees of each church could possess legal ownership.



The Texas Supreme Court has ruled that exorcism, an ancient rite for "casting out demons," is protected by the First Amendment. The 6-3 ruling on June 30 exonerated the Pleasant Glade Assembly of God for a 1996 exorcism of a 17-year-old girl, the daughter of missionaries. The Texas Court held that the church is protected from court oversight of religious conduct that might involve church doctrines, thus entangling church and state.

In 2002 a Tarrant County jury found the church guilty of abuse of Laura Schubert and awarded her \$300,000 for mental anguish, but an appeals court reduced the verdict to \$178,000.

The church appealed the ruling. The majority opinion, written by Justice David Medina, said, "The imposition of tort liability for engaging in religious activity to which the church members adhere would have an unconstitutional 'chilling effect' by compelling the church to abandon core principles of its religious beliefs." The dissidents, led by Chief Justice Wallace Jefferson, retorted, "This sweeping immunity is inconsistent with United States Supreme Court precedent and extends far beyond the protections our Constitution affords religious conduct. The First Amendment guards religious liberty; it does not sanction intentional abuse in religion's name."



Taxpayers lack standing to challenge religious content in health care programs run by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. That decision was reached by the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit on August 5. The court held that three plaintiffs from the Freedom From Religion Foundation had no legal standing to bring the case. The court cited a U.S. Supreme Court decision last year in which the same group unsuccessfully challenged the Bush administration's faith-based initiative. Both cases hinged on whether Congress had appropriated funds for the programs. If not, the programs, funded by the executive branch, could not be challenged. The 7th Circuit ruled that Congress never authorized spending on chaplain services or pastoral care, portions of the Veterans program that were challenged by plaintiffs. The Veterans Department health care program now makes "spiritual assessments" of patients and incorporates religion into treatment programs for some but not all patients.

Annie Laurie Gaylor, co-president of Freedom From, expressed dismay. "The courts are moving to the position where government can fund religious activities and endorse religion without restraint," she

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Church and State in the Courts, *cont. from page 13*

said. “It’s really very disturbing.”



In what might be the last chapter of a long saga lasting 20 years, the San Diego Cross apparently will remain in a city park on Mount Soledad. The July 29 ruling by U.S. District Judge Larry Burns is the first since the property on which it is located was turned over to the federal government in 2006 as a veterans memorial. Judge Burns said the plaintiffs, a group of Jewish war veterans and atheist Steve Trunk, had failed to prove the cross was primarily a religious symbol. “The memorial is not designed for worship services, and there is no evidence the cross, which is surrounded by a tall fence and not approachable by visitors, is – or is intended to be – the object of religious devotions. The primary effect of the Mount Soledad memorial is patriotic and nationalistic,” the judge wrote.

The case has bounced back and forth in several courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court on a technical issue. Plaintiffs vow to appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit.



A federal appeals court has upheld a lower court ruling that requires generic or non-denominational prayers at city council meetings in Fredericksburg, Virginia. On July 23 a three-judge panel for the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a 2006 decision holding that city councilman Hashmel Turner’s prayer that mentions Jesus was “government speech” rather than private speech. “Turner was unwilling to (pray) in the manner that the government had proscribed, but remains free to pray on his own behalf, in non-governmental endeavors, in the manner dictated by his conscience,” retired Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor wrote in the court’s opinion.

Turner, who is also a Baptist clergyman, filed suit in 2006, complaining that the city’s requirement of nondenominational prayer violates his First Amendment rights. The Rutherford Institute, which argued Turner’s case, plans an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.



South Dakota’s “informed consent” law regarding abortion was presumptively upheld by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 8th Circuit on June 27 by a seven to four vote. A three-judge panel of the 8th Circuit had originally agreed with U.S. District Court Judge Karen Schreier’s decision to block implementation of a law passed in 2005 by the South Dakota legislature. That law requires doctors to tell abortion patients that abortion will “terminate the life of a whole, separate, distinct, living human being.” According to reporter Melanie Brandert, writing in *The Argus Leader* on June 27, “A federal appeals court decided Friday that a state law requiring abortion doctors to get written consent from women who want an abortion should be enforced. Physicians who perform abortions now will be required to gain a pregnant woman’s written consent, a process that includes informing her that abortion will terminate a human being’s life and will end her constitutional rights to her relationship with the fetus, and about known medical risks such as depression and suicide.”

Planned Parenthood argued that “the law violates doctors’ free-speech rights by forcing them to tell women things the doctors might not believe.” Writing in the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* on July 1, Sarah Stoesz,

CEO of Planned Parenthood Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota, noted, “Planned Parenthood challenged the 2005 law because it violated the constitutional rights of doctors and patients by forcing doctors to give ideologically charged, nonscientific and inaccurate messages to their patients.”

The 8th Circuit ruling sends the case back to Judge Schreier for proceedings that will determine the constitutionality of the law. Voters will also vote on Measure 11 in November which would outlaw most abortions.



The South Carolina legislature’s unanimous adoption on May 22 of an “I Believe” license plate, containing a bright yellow cross and a stained glass window, has been challenged in federal court.



Americans United filed suit (*Summers v. Adams*) on June 19, charging that the Christian plate gives preferential government treatment to one faith. The bill became law without the signature of Gov. Mark Sanford. Support for the challenge has also come from the American Jewish Congress and ACLU. Jeremy Gunn, director of ACLU’s Program of Freedom of Religion and Belief, said, “This is an example of the government’s underhanded attempts to endorse one particular religious viewpoint over all others under the guise of neutral education. Religion belongs where it prospers best: with individuals, families and religious communities.” South Carolina adopted a plate that was rejected by the Florida legislature in April.

Three Christian clergy, one rabbi and the Hindu American Foundation are plaintiffs in the case. The Palmetto State’s Republican-controlled legislature also passed bills allowing for the posting of the Ten Commandments and the Lord’s Prayer in public places, along with several “secular” documents, in an apparent attempt to pass muster with a 2005 U.S. Supreme Court decision.



Public schools throughout Illinois are barred from holding the daily “moment of silence” passed by the Illinois General Assembly. U.S. District Judge Robert Gettleman extended his original March 28 preliminary injunction applying only to a suburban Chicago school district to the entire state on May 29.



The 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals will soon decide whether a sheriff can require his employees to attend an evangelical ceremony. A federal district court ruled in September, 2007, that Milwaukee County Sheriff David Clarke unconstitutionally coerced his deputies and violated their freedom of religion when he required them to attend 16 events presented by the Fellowship of Christian Centurions, an organization run by an evangelical church in Brookfield, Wisconsin. A Roman Catholic deputy and a Muslim deputy objected to the proselytizing, which resulted in a law suit. The case is *Milwaukee Deputy Sheriffs Association v. Clarke*.



Five convicted sex offenders filed suit in federal court on June 29 charging that a Georgia law banning them from volunteering at churches violates their religious freedom. The suit alleges that the law “criminalizes fundamental religious activities” and thus violates the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment. Georgia’s sex offender statute was adopted in 2006 and bans offenders from living, working or loitering within 1,000 feet of where children gather. Individuals convicted of sex offenses are barred from working at churches and under a revision passed in April cannot volunteer at houses of worship. Doing so would result in a prison sentence of from 10 to 30 years. The law also forbids them from singing in choirs or serving as secretaries or accountants with a religious organization.

The suit on behalf of five offenders was filed by the Southern Center for Human Rights, an Atlanta-based group. The civil rights organization claims that religious activities have a “rehabilitative influence” and should not be restricted. The group’s attorney, Sarah Geraghty, told the Associated Press, “Certain people on the sex offender registry should not work with children in a church setting or elsewhere. But criminalizing the practice of religion for all 15,000 people on the registry will do more harm than good.”



On August 4 a federal judge in Kentucky made permanent an injunction banning a Ten Commandments display alongside other historical documents in two Kentucky counties. But U.S. District Judge Jennifer Coffman agreed to hear arguments from officials in McCreary and Pulaski Counties that the displays are part of a secular, educational, not religious, display.

The counties originally posted the Commandments with other religious-themed documents but their display was found unconstitutional. The next display tried to incorporate more secular documents but still extolled “Jesus Christ as the ‘Prince of Ethics’ and claimed the American founders’ ‘explicit understanding of... God as the source of America’s strength and direction.’” A third display, called the Foundations of American Law and Government, added the U.S. Constitution, the Mayflower Compact, the Magna Carta and lyrics to “The Star-Spangled Banner” to the mixture.

A divided Supreme Court in 2005 ruled against the Kentucky display but allowed a similar one in Texas that was deemed more secular. Since then, federal courts have allowed mixed secular and religious displays in Mercer and Rowan Counties in Kentucky and Elkhart County, Indiana, but disallowed displays in Garrard and Grayson Counties in Kentucky. This topsy-turvy legal record has understandably confused legal experts and local officials.

Both counties are represented by the Liberty Counsel, a Religious Right legal group that advocates more public expression for religion. The ACLU of Kentucky is opposing the counties’ attempt to re-enact displays. ACLU attorney William Sharp noted, “Given the history of this case and the resolutions that came before, one would certainly have to be at least cautious in accepting any such statement of purpose by the counties.”



Former Texas state science curriculum director Christina Comer filed suit in federal court on July 3, alleging that her dismissal last fall violated the due process clause of the U.S. Constitution. Comer, who was state science director for nearly a decade, sent an e-mail about a lecture critical of the intelligent design movement, an action that supposedly violated a policy that employees of the Texas Education Agency must be “neu-

tral” in the dispute between evolution and creationism.

Comer charges in her suit that “The agency’s ‘neutrality’ policy has the purpose or effect of endorsing religion, and thus violates the Establishment Clause of the U.S. Constitution.” The suit seeks her reinstatement.



An Ohio middle school teacher, John Freshwater, was fired and a federal court complaint was filed on June 13, after repeated incidents involving creationist propaganda and religious intolerance in his classroom were documented. An investigation concluded: “Mr. Freshwater engaged in teaching of a religious nature, teaching creationism and related theories and calling evolution into question. He had other materials in his classroom that could be used for that purpose.”

The complaint added that Freshwater displayed posters with Bible verses in his classroom and had branded crosses into the arms of his students. The complaint alleges that school authorities, including the principal, superintendent and board of education allowed the incidents to occur without reprimand for 11 years at a Mount Vernon school. ■

Look Closely at Texts That ‘Explore’ Evolution

Recently passed by the state legislature and signed into law by Gov. Bobby Jindal, the Louisiana Science Education Act (Senate Bill No. 733) states that teachers may use, in addition to a standard textbook, “supplemental textbooks and other instructional materials to help students understand, analyze, critique, and review scientific theories” (“Vouchers, Evolution Top Issues in La.,” July 16, 2008). Among topics specifically listed as those a teacher and students may critique are “evolution, the origins of life, global warming, and human cloning.”

As if in anticipation of this bill and others like it, the Seattle-based Discovery Institute released a “science” supplemental textbook in 2007 called *Explore Evolution: The Arguments For and Against Neo-Darwinism*. The book appears to “explore” evolution in order to distort and discredit it, however. Scientific studies of evolutionary causal factors are presented as arguments against “universal common descent.” Either/or thinking is called “an inquiry-based approach to modern evolutionary theory.” “Intelligent design is not mentioned—it was, after all, determined to be a nonscientific form of creationism in the 2005 Pennsylvania federal court case *Kitzmiller v. Dover Area School District*—but the content and reasoning are much the same.

Promotional materials for the supplement also are less than forthcoming. At www.exploreevolution.com, the book’s Web site, one is not told, for example, that all five of its authors have promoted intelligent design for years; that the publisher, Hill House, is known for the creationist perspective of its founder, Bernard d’Abrera; or that the Discovery Institute is distributing the book.

—Brant Abrahamson

This letter appeared in *Education Week* July 30. Mr. Abrahamson is a long-time member of ARL.



The Voucher Watch

• On September 3 the Florida Supreme Court blocked proposed constitutional amendments, originally scheduled for the November elections, that would have opened the door to tax support of sectarian private schools. Amendments 7 and 9 would have undone state court rulings striking down former Gov. Jeb Bush's school voucher programs. Amendment 7 was also intended to remove from the state constitution the language prohibiting tax aid to churches and religious institutions. The Florida Education Association opposed the amendments in part because they were deceptive. The amendments had been concocted by the state Taxation and Budget Reform Commission, which meets every 20 years. Florida ACLU executive director Howard Simon said that "It's naive to think this is the end of the battle." Had the amendments actually gotten on the ballot it is quite probable that they would have been rejected by the state's voters, as has happened in 26 other state referenda on vouchers or their variants.

• Louisiana enacted a \$10 million voucher program specifically for New Orleans. Both houses of the legislature approved the plan that would provide vouchers to 1,500 students to attend private, including faith-based, schools this fall. Governor Bobby Jindal signed the bill into law. The Louisiana plan would provide up to \$6,300 for tuition per child under formulas relating to family income and school performance. Several educational and civil liberties groups are contemplating a lawsuit to block implementation of the New Orleans plan.

• The future of the D.C. student voucher program remains uncertain as of this writing. The \$15 million, five-year pilot program is scheduled to expire at the end of this year. But proponents are determined to extend its life. In June a House appropriations subcommittee voted unanimously to let the program continue for one more year, and the Bush administration's budget for fiscal year 2009 calls for an increase in funding to \$18 million. Congress will scramble in September to decide the fate of numerous programs before the October recess to prepare for the general election.

The D.C. program received a setback when a U.S. Education Department report issued on June 16 found little or no measurable educational improvement for voucher students. There was no statistically significant difference in performance in math or reading between voucher students and other students. Critics say this proves the program has not justified its expenditures. This is the second "progress report" conducted by the Institute of Education Sciences (a branch of the Department of Education), finding no real gains across the board during the program's history. Researchers also found that 26% of students who won vouchers in a lottery turned them down and opted for other educational venues.

• The Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, a leading pro-voucher think tank, named Patrick M. Byrne, founder of the Internet shopping site, Overstock.com, its new co-chairman. Byrne helped spearhead a campaign to create a full scale voucher program in Utah, which voters soundly rejected last year.

• Pope Benedict's top point man for Catholic education, Polish Cardinal Zenon Grocholewski, told U.S. audiences that the U.S. government should support Catholic education since most other countries do so. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, the cardinal, who is prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education, told an audience in Rockville Centre, New York, on May 31, "In many countries, Catholic education is state-supported. In Europe, for example, even the most liberal and secularized countries support Catholic schools. True democracy should respect the needs of its citizens."

• Two educational researchers, Chad d'Entremont and Luis A. Huerta, conclude that many voters have opposed vouchers because they "vigorously object to policies that undermine local authority and redistribute local resources. Specifically, vouchers have the potential to erase municipal boundaries, dissolve neighborhood ties, lower housing prices, and upset student enrollments." Their findings appear in *Education Policy*, Vol. 21, No. 1, 40-72 (2007). ■

ARL in Action

ARL's board of directors has been augmented by two new members, Dr. T. Jeremy Gunn, director of the American Civil Liberties Union Program on Freedom of Religion and Belief, and David J. Nolan, editor of *Conscience*, the journal of Catholics for Choice.

ARL staff have been preparing two new books for publication in the fall. One is *The Lord Is Not on Trial: The Inside Story of the Supreme Court's Precedent-Setting McCollum Ruling*. Written to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the first successful application of the Establishment Clause to the states, the volume is a gripping account of the often high costs of fighting existing practices and standing up to community pressures and mores. The author is McCollum family member Dannel McCollum, former three-term mayor of Champaign, Illinois.

A Quarter Century on the Firing Line is an anthology of some of the best writing in ARL's newsletter/journal, *Voice of Reason*. Compiled by editors Albert J. Menendez and Edd Doerr, the volume features unique articles, legal overviews, editorial commentary, political articles, and original research encompassing the dramatic events in church-state relations from the presidencies of Ronald Reagan through George W. Bush. It closely follows the rise of the Religious Right.

ARL supports the CARD (Coalition Against Religious Discrimination) draft statement on faith-based organizations. In a June 19 open letter to Senators John McCain and Barack Obama, the group, of which ARL is a member, urged the "restructuring of constitutionally required safeguards and civil rights protections that were in place for decades prior to the passage of the charitable choice statutes and the creation of the Faith-Based Initiative."

ARL president Edd Doerr is one of the signatories of the "Defend Science" statement publicized in a quarter-page ad in *The New York Times* on September 9. The full statement and list of signatories can be accessed at www.defendscience.org. The statement scores the widespread opposition to evolution and the subordination of science to political, corporate, and conservative religious interests. Signed by 14 Nobel laureates and over 2,000 other scientists, the statement concludes: "It is time to take a clear and decisive stand in defense of science. This is of crucial and urgent importance not only for scientists but for people throughout society, for humanity as a whole and for future generations."

Editorials

Look Who's Talking

Pope Benedict XVI, speaking in Sydney, Australia, in mid-July, deplored the "squandering" of our planet's resources "in order to fuel an insatiable consumption." He's right, of course, but he neglected to mention overpopulation as the major cause of resource depletion, environmental degradation, and climate change.

He also called for "nonviolence, sustainable development, justice and peace," but again said nothing about how overpopulation leads to social unrest, violence, and even genocide. As we have noted a number of times in the past, the National Security Study Memorandum 200 report on overpopulation approved by President Ford in 1975, calling for universal access to family planning information and wherewithal, was mysteriously "classified" and deep-sixed until shortly before the 1994 UN population conference in Cairo and, significantly, not long before the slaughter of more than half a million people in Rwanda, Africa's most densely populated country, one with a strong Catholic majority, thanks to German and Belgian missionaries during the colonial period.

Benedict carefully avoided connecting the dots between overpopulation and resource depletion, on the one hand, and the Vatican's uncompromising and consuming opposition, on the other, to contraception and safe, legal abortion. This is one of the reasons for the Bush administration's failure to provide the UN Population Fund with money appropriated by Congress these past seven-plus years.

Ironically, while Vatican influence has largely stymied effective steps toward dealing with overpopulation (and the concomitant horrible effects on countless women and children), Catholics in North America, Europe and Latin America pay little or no attention to the Vatican's condemnation of contraception and abortion. Indeed, it is a Catholic organization, Catholics for Choice, that has been leading the struggle to reduce the Vatican's influence on this issue in the US and around the world.

Updates

Saudi Texts Come Under Fire

A *Washington Post* review of textbooks used in a Saudi-funded academy in Fairfax County, Virginia, found widespread slurs against Christians and Jews and a general intolerance for all non-Muslims. The July 15 report found: "At least one book still contained passages that extolled jihad and martyrdom, called for victory over one's enemies and said the killing of adulterers and apostates was 'justified'."

Many texts had been revised since the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom urged the U.S. State Department to close the school two years ago. One of its commissioners, Nina Shea, told the *Post*, "Saudi Arabia, of all countries, needs to be quite clear about what's permitted in jihad and what isn't." She added that the textbook revisions had not been satisfactory. "They may have ripped out some pages, but we don't know what they ripped out and whited out, so it's difficult to make any comparisons."

The Islamic Saudi Academy was founded in 1984 and educates about 1,000 students from pre-kindergarten to grade 12. Students are segregated by gender, 70% are U.S. citizens, and 25% are Saudi citizens or embassy personnel. The Saudi ambassador to the U.S. is chairman of the school's board of directors. The school exists at the sufferance of the

Were the Catholic Church run democratically and were women allowed to participate in its governance, we could effectively tackle the overpopulation problem. ■

—Edd Doerr

Look Who's Talking, II

Saudi King Abdullah, speaking at about the same time at a Saudi-sponsored conference in Madrid to bring Muslims, Christians, and Jews closer together, called for religious tolerance and reconciliation and for turning away from extremism. Fine words indeed! But Abdullah, who heads what is probably the most religiously intolerant country in the world, should set an example by cleaning up his own kingdom. Islam is the only faith allowed in Saudi Arabia and a Muslim there who leaves Islam for anything else can be executed. Rigid Sharia law is enforced by "religious police." (And we won't even mention the almost nonexistent rights of women in the oil-rich patch of sand.)

Further, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom has criticized a Saudi-funded private school in Alexandria, Virginia, for using textbooks that promote intolerance toward non-Muslims. And the Center for Islamic Pluralism reports that Saudi spending on Islamic schools worldwide exceeds \$75 billion.

If King Abdullah is serious about religious tolerance, he has the power to set an example in his wealthy desert kingdom.

We might also comment, in the spirit of Jefferson, Madison, and Washington, that mere religious tolerance or toleration is not enough. What is needed is full religious liberty, what Madison and Congress had in mind when they wrote the First Amendment, liberty that requires complete separation of church and state. ■

—Edd Doerr

State Department, and the annual lease of \$2.2 million is paid by the Saudi Embassy to the Fairfax County government. The county Board of Supervisors extended the lease in May for a year but has asked the State Department to review future applications.

The school has its defenders. Teachers and graduates told *Post* reporters that controversial religious material was either avoided or downplayed. The school has a graduation rate of nearly 100% and sends graduates to many top-ranked universities. It trains U.S. soldiers in Arabic. (But one of its graduates, Ahmed Omar Abu Ali, was convicted of plotting to assassinate President Bush.)

The existence of the school is likely to remain contentious for years to come.

Anti-Evolution Law Signed in Louisiana

On June 26 Louisiana conservative Republican governor Bobby Jindal signed into law the so-called "Louisiana Science Education Act," which passed both houses of the legislature by large margins. Local school boards may now approve "supplemental materials" for public school science classes. Supporters urged teachers to offer critical views of evolution, human cloning and global warming.

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Many scientists and educators had urged Jindal, a Brown University biology graduate, to veto the legislation, but it almost certainly would have survived a veto. *The New York Times*, in an editorial entitled “Louisiana’s Latest Assault on Darwin,” said, “If Mr. Jindal has the interests of students at heart, the sensible thing is to veto this Trojan horse legislation.”

One of Jindal’s professors at Brown, Arthur Landy, urged his former student to veto the bill. “Gov. Jindal was a good student in my class when he was thinking about becoming a doctor, and I hope he doesn’t do anything that would hold back the next generation of Louisiana’s doctors.”

But Jindal apparently wanted to appease his religiously conservative constituents. Commented the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* on June 27: “Political observers said Jindal’s signature will please one of his key local constituencies: conservative Protestants in north Louisiana.”

Several civil liberties groups plan to monitor the implementation of this law, which itself promised “not to promote any religious doctrine.”

Bible Classes Remain Controversial

Attempts to include Bible courses in high school curricula remain divisive in a number of states. In Texas a 2007 state law that opens the door to widespread Bible classes continues to raise constitutional questions. Attorney General Greg Abbott said on July 9 that his office “cannot ensure that the implementation of any particular curricula and courses in Texas schools are, or will be, constitutional.” Abbott claimed, however, that the Bible study law complied with the First Amendment’s requirement of religious neutrality.

The Texas Freedom Network urged the attorney general and the Board of Education to develop specific standards for the classes that ensure objectivity and prevent indoctrination in a particular view of the Bible, but on July 18 the State Board of Education rejected calls for specific guidelines, opting instead for a vague statement. Courses should follow “all federal and state guidelines in maintaining religious neutrality and accommodating the diverse religious views, traditions, and perspectives of students in their school district.” Courses shall not “endorse, favor or promote, or disfavor or show hostility toward, any particular religion or nonreligious faith or religious perspective,” the rule says.

The 10 to 5 vote dismayed many scholars and constitutional lawyers. Mark Chancey, chairman of the religious studies department at Southern Methodist University and author of a critique of the courses already used in many Texas schools, told the *Houston Chronicle*, “I predict we’re headed for a constitutional train wreck. The people who suffer will be the educators and the students, and the people who will foot the bill will be us the taxpayers.”

Criticism of the board decision has been fierce throughout the Lone Star State. Opined the *Austin American-Statesman* on July 22: “How will those vague guidelines play out in more than a thousand Texas

school districts? In every possible way. Bible study will be a cats-and-dogs course with untrained teachers drifting, or marching, into unconstitutional territory with regularity. We expect to see numerous state school districts in court—and paying hefty legal bills with taxpayers’ money—because their Bible courses promote Protestant Christianity over other religions. It will be impossible for some teachers to use the Bible in teaching without proselytizing. . . . It would be difficult to design a public school course using the holy text of Christianity without crossing the line separating church and state even with stringent guidelines. The airy, empty standards approved by the state board offer no help at all to local school districts trying to avoid the courthouse. What the board should have done is write the standards to reinforce the Legislature’s stated intent that the course be presented in a neutral way, and stress that proselytizing and preaching must be avoided to prevent lawsuits. The board’s guidelines should have outlined what is actually expected from a Bible course and what must not be indulged.”

Blogger Joe Antel added, “It is significant that this is not a course in ‘The History of Religion in the Western Tradition’ or even the ‘Philosophy of Religion’; this is a class about the Bible. The entire exercise is disingenuous. Any course that really wanted to give students an objective understanding of religion in Western civilization would not only consult the Bible, but also a greater body of theological work presumably absent from this course’s curriculum. It should also be noted that though most of Western religious tradition accepts certain parts of the Bible to various degrees, it has particular significance for Protestants, who view it as the sole inspiration for faith, divorced from any kind of church or other established orthodoxy. I cannot escape the conclusion that the entire course is authored, supported, and will be taught by people with such a tacit acceptance of a particular Christian God as to make objectivity not only impossible but incomprehensible. It is dumbfounding to see the government indulge one faith, but it is insulting to watch it prefer one over the others.”

The Bible courses will be offered as electives during the 2009-2010 school year. On August 28 Attorney General Greg Abbott ruled that the Bible courses are optional. The legislation “authorizes but does not require school districts and charter schools to offer elective courses on the Hebrew Scriptures and its impact, or on the New Testament and its impact,” the attorney general said.

Meanwhile, three public high schools in Chesterfield County, Virginia, will offer a one-semester comparative religion course in the fall. Apparently, the course was developed to forestall efforts by religious conservatives to introduce slanted Bible study classes. “Comparative religions, rather than a Bible course, will be offered because of the system’s lack of experience in teaching any type of high school religion course,” explained Tim Bullis, the Chesterfield County school system’s director of community relations. Bullis added that the survey course would emphasize “the basic elements and historical developments of world religions. After establishing a common definition of the purpose of religion and ways to study religion, students study Buddhism, Taoism, Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Other religions are studied as time and interest permit.” The course will be taught by “certified social studies teachers,” according to Donna Gregory, a reporter for the *Chesterfield Observer*.

Congress Visits Religious Minefields

Congress has been focusing on controversial religions in recent months. Senator Charles Grassley (R-Iowa) has initiated an investigation of the financial practices of six megachurch pastors associated with the “prosperity gospel” movement among Pentecostals, provoking criticism from many evangelicals that the IRS, not Congress, is the appropriate place for investigations of this nature.

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The U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee held hearings in July on polygamy. Democratic majority leader Harry Reid of Nevada introduced legislation on July 23 calling for a national task force on polygamy and proposing \$4 million to bolster law enforcement efforts to curb crime in polygamous communities. Some of the crimes cited by Reid are abuse of women and children, tax evasion, welfare fraud, kidnapping and extortion.

Helen Thomas Honored

Veteran White House correspondent Helen Thomas was featured in an August documentary on HBO. Her 60-year career was celebrated in "Thank you Mr. President: Helen Thomas at the White House," produced by filmmaker Rory Kennedy, daughter of the late Robert Kennedy. Thomas received a Religious Liberty award from Americans for Religious Liberty in 2003 (VOR Issue 84, page 5).

Canadians Reject Creationism

A national poll shows that a majority of Canadians accept Darwinian evolution while only 22% support creationism. Since nearly half of Americans accept the creationist view, Canadian opinion is much closer to Western Europe than to the United States.

The Angus Reid poll released in August found support for evolution greatest among those aged 15 to 34, college graduates and those with a household income exceeding \$100,000. Support for creationism was strongest among those over age 55 as well as members of the Conservative Party and residents of Alberta, the nation's most conservative province, often called Canada's Texas.

International Updates

Algiers: The Algerian government is cracking down on Christian converts in an apparent attempt to appease militant Islamists, who have disrupted life in the North African country for the past decade. On June 7 four converts to Christianity received fines and suspended jail sentences for holding illegal religious services in a private home. In February a Catholic priest received a one-year suspended sentence for celebrating Mass in an unregistered location. In June a judge suspended the trial of Habiba Kouider, a convert to Evangelical Protestantism, for "possessing unauthorized Bibles." Prosecutors are increasingly filing charges under a 2006 law banning "practicing a non-Muslim religion without authorization."

The London *Tablet* reported on June 12 that the head of the Higher Islamic Council, Abu Amrane Chikh, told courts, "This is a new form of colonization that is hidden behind freedom of worship." The Catholic weekly also reported that retiring Archbishop Henri Teissier urged the government to drop all charges that violate international standards of religious liberty, a view endorsed by France's Minister for Human Rights, Rama Yade, herself a Muslim of Senegalese descent. There are about 10,000 Christians among Algeria's 33 million people.

Christianity Today reported in September that the government "has closed more than half of the country's 50 Protestant churches in the last six months." The monthly magazine added, "Most of the closures stem from enforcement of Ordinance 06-03, a law restricting non-Muslims from worshipping. The law passed in February 2006, but Algerian officials did not enforce it until this year. In addition to closing churches, authorities have arrested Protestants in western Algeria as they have traveled between cities or exited religious meetings. Authorities have also barred Catholics from ministry outside their church walls."

Asunción: Paraguay's newly-elected reformist president, Fernando Lugo, had an unusual job before his election. He was a Catholic bishop. In late July his resignation from the episcopacy was granted by the Vatican.

Bern: Swiss voters will face a nationwide referendum on whether to ban the construction of minarets, the traditional place in mosques where the "call to prayer" is heard at specified times daily. The Swiss People's Party, a rightwing nationalist and anti-immigrant party which has gained strength at the polls in recent years, spearheaded the effort to collect signatures forcing a referendum. Nearly 115,000 valid signatures were certified by the Interior Ministry in July. The campaign is seen as part of an anti-Muslim backlash in parts of Europe. While the date of the plebiscite has not been announced, opponents say the proposed ban violates religious freedom. About 310,000 of Switzerland's 7.5 million residents are Muslims. The historically Protestant nation has more Catholics than Protestants today, and a significant percentage of the population adheres to no religion.

Istanbul: Turkey's supreme court decided on July 30 that the Islamic-oriented ruling party (Justice and Development, or AK) could remain in power. The court decided to cut state funding in half for a year in lieu of outlawing the popular party, which won 47% of the vote in last year's parliamentary elections. Six of the court's 11 judges voted to ban the party for violating the country's secular constitution, but seven votes were required. Court chairman Hasim Kilic said the ruling was a "serious warning" that the party and its Prime Minister Recep Erdogan should not stray further toward diluting "secularism," the prevailing philosophy of the Turkish state. Turkey is trying to enter the European Union and is beset with domestic terrorism. A flashpoint issue has been whether women can legally wear a headscarf in public places.

Kiev: Ukraine's president Viktor Yushchenko used a church anniversary on July 26 to call for an independent Ukrainian Orthodox Church separate from the Russian Orthodox Church. On the 1,020th anniversary of the introduction of Christianity in the Kingdom of Kievan Rus, forerunner to both Russia and Ukraine, Yushchenko asked Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to bless the creation of a wholly separate Orthodox Church. Russian Patriarch Aleksy II did not take kindly to the gesture. He called Kiev, Ukraine's capital, "the mother of Russian cities where Orthodoxy began" and later cancelled a trip to another Ukrainian city. Religious jurisdictions and allegiances overlap with politics in Ukraine, once the bread basket of the former Soviet Union and the site of the famed resort area, the Crimea, where a 19th Century war was fought. The Russian church is expected to use its close ties to the government to ward off independence efforts, though, in fact, there are three Orthodox churches in Ukraine, two quasi-independent and one under the direct control of Moscow. Adding to the mix is the Byzantine Catholic Church, with a wide following in western Ukraine. It retains Orthodox liturgy but recognizes the Vatican and is one of Catholicism's Eastern Rites.

Mexico City: On August 28 Mexico's Supreme Court upheld Mexico City's 2007 law allowing unrestricted abortions during the first trimester. The ruling will allow other states to liberalize their abortion laws. The ruling was a defeat for Catholic Church leaders and for President Calderón's conservative national government. One of the justices, José Ramón Cossío Díaz, said that "by decriminalizing abortion, women are free to decide over their bodies, their physical and mental health, and even their lives." About 12,500 procedures have been performed since the law was passed in April 2007.

continued on page 20

Ottawa: Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper issued a public apology before Parliament on June 11 for the mistreatment of aboriginal children in church-run schools under a government policy that lasted for decades. A 1920 law made it compulsory for all aboriginal children aged seven to fifteen to attend boarding schools run by the Anglican, United, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic churches. The schools closed in 1996.

During the 1980s former students alleged that they were victims of sexual and physical abuse, and a 2006 class action suit resulted in a huge financial settlement. The Presbyterian, United, and Anglican churches apologized for these incidents in the 1990s and contributed to the restitution fund, which totaled \$1.9 billion by 2005 and went to 65,000 survivors. The Roman Catholic Church, which ran 72% of the schools, has never apologized or contributed to the compensation program. ■

‘A Teachable Moment’

Paul Tough [‘A Teachable Moment’, Aug 17] neglected to mention two facts regarding the school voucher plan championed by Gov. Bobby Jindal: the Louisiana Constitution clearly prohibits direct or indirect tax aid to any private or sectarian schools, and a 2004 statewide poll of voters by *The Advocate* in Baton Rouge registered opposition to school vouchers by 60 percent to 34 percent, a margin quite close to the rejection of vouchers or their variants in 26 statewide referenda from coast to coast.

—Edd Doerr

This letter was published in the *New York Times Magazine* on August 31, 2008.

Books and Culture



Christianity Today is evangelicalism’s leading journal of news and opinion. While usually conservative, the magazine’s August editorial criticized the abuse of religion in this election season. It said, in part, “This year’s primaries suggest a new truism about American political campaigning: While *generic* religiosity brings life, *particular* religious connections risk political death—or serious injury. . . . In a pluralistic religious environment, showing your cards – or creeds—can be a bad move politically. Identifying particular religious commitments or accepting pastor endorsements may bring candidates closer to a narrow slice of voters, but it often distances them from even more Americans.”

In its July 26 issue, *The Economist* hailed the United States for its historic insistence that people have an implicit constitutional right to change their religion. “America’s foundation as a refuge for Europe’s Christian dissidents has endowed it with a deep sense of the right to follow and propagate any form of religion, with no impediment, or help, from the state.”

This concept has become normative in Western nations. “In the West it is generally taken for granted that people have a perfect, indeed sacred, right to follow their own religious path, and indeed to invite—though never compel—other people to join them. The liberal understanding of religion lays great emphasis on the right to change belief. . . . In most modern societies, the elaborate discrimination which made religious allegiance into a public matter is felt to be a thing of the past.”

Unfortunately, many nations, from Russia to Afghanistan, are narrowing religious freedom rights to the dominant, state-supported religions. *The Economist* noted a change for the worse in India and Malaysia. “Religious freedom is receding, not advancing, in India. Half a dozen Indian states have introduced laws that make it hard for people to leave Hinduism. These states are mostly ruled by the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). . . . Hindutva, the teaching that India is a Hindu nation and that Christians and Muslims are outsiders, has been a vote-winner for the BJP.”

Elsewhere in South Asia, a similar pattern is emerging. “The contest between theocratic politics and a notionally secular state looks even more unequal in another ex-British land, Malaysia, where freedom of choice in religion is enshrined in the federal constitution, but Islamic law is imposed with growing strictness on the Muslim majority.” The losers are the minority Christians and Buddhists.

Change We Can Believe In: Barack Obama’s Plan to Renew America’s Promise, with a foreword by Barack Obama. Three Rivers Press (Crown Publishing Group), 2008, 273 pp., \$13.95 paperback.

This is the kind of book that politics needs—one that illuminates rather than obfuscates political discourse. An antidote to the smear campaign already directed at Senator Obama from the Far Right, this volume includes detailed descriptions of the senator’s plans for revitalizing the economy, improving health care and achieving fiscal responsibility and energy independence.

Restoring alliances and partnerships abroad, seeking peace through diplomacy but also emphasizing security and military preparedness are his foreign policy goals.

The section on values highlights service and partnership. Readers of *Voice of Reason* will appreciate this pledge: “In an Obama Administration, the effort to work with faith-based and community groups will be guided by a core set of principles to ensure that such work is done in a way consistent with our values and constitutional principles. First, no program will be favored based on partisan or philosophical reasons. Second, faith-based organizations cannot use federal funds to proselytize or discriminate and must be held to the same standards of accountability as other federal grant recipients.”

This compact, readable guide includes seven outstanding addresses by this gifted speaker who may be America’s next president.

—Al Menendez

Science, Evolution, and Creationism, National Academy of Sciences and Institute of Medicine, 2008, 70 pp., \$12.95. [Available from ARL, see ad on page 21.]

Darwin’s Gift to Science and Religion, by Francisco J. Ayala. Joseph Henry Press, 2007, 237 pp., \$24.95.

Both of these important, concise, readable books, intended for lay readers, are useful in the seemingly endless struggle to defend public school science teaching from the assaults of the fundamentalists who would intrude creationism or its variant, “Intelligent Design” (ID), into biology classes. Both explain evolution and show how the various forms of creationism fall well short of being science.

Francisco Ayala, an eminent evolutionary biologist with a background in theology, not only does a masterful job of explaining Darwin’s natural selection theory and of showing how genetics and molecular

biology have filled in the gaps that Darwin himself acknowledged, but also makes a strong case for why religious people, except for those mired in biblical literalism and fundamentalism, should have no problem in accepting natural selection evolution.

Ayala, incidentally, chaired the National Academy of Sciences committee that produced *Science, Evolution and Creationism* and is a member of ARL's national advisory board.

—Edd Doerr

The Age of American Unreason, by Susan Jacoby, Pantheon Books, 2008, 356 pp., \$26.00.

Susan Jacoby's new book is surely one of the most important published this crucial election year and merits the widest possible readership. Her basic thesis is that "the scales of American history have shifted heavily against the vibrant and varied intellectual life so essential to functional democracy. . . . America's endemic anti-intellectual tendencies have been grievously exacerbated by a new species of semiconscious anti-rationalism, feeding on and fed by an ignorant popular culture of video images and unremitting noise that leaves no room for contemplation or logic."

She blames this state of affairs on dumbed-down mass media, the resurgence of fundamentalist religion, "misguided objectivity. . . [that] ignores the willed ignorance that is one of the defining characteristics of fundamentalism," and the "widespread failings of American public education and the scientific illiteracy of much of the media."

Worth notice is Jacoby's showing how the upsurge in fundamentalist private schools (a source of support for the school voucher movement) began as private schools "originally designed to avoid desegregation." She also shows that the 45-year Religious Right ruckus over public school prayer, triggered by the Supreme Court's 1962-63 rulings, has been a largely "manufactured" campaign because school prayer was a feature of only a third of the nation's school districts. She also points out that "there is unquestionably a powerful correlation between religious fundamentalism and lack of education."

Jacoby also scorns "junk science" and "junk thought," citing as an example the Supreme Court's 2007 upholding a ban on "partial birth abortion" based on a wholly "junk science concept—'post-abortion syndrome'—invented by anti-choice organizations." Additionally, she blames much of the decline of serious reading and thinking on mass "infotainment."

Jacoby's book includes a strong endorsement of church-state separation.

This book rates five stars.

—Edd Doerr

Sex, Science and Stem Cells: Inside the Right Wing Assault on Reason, by Diana Degette. The Lyons Press, 2008, 248 pp., \$24.95.

A six-term Democratic member of Congress from Colorado, Degette is both courageous and eloquent in her assessment of how religious conservatives have shaped and dominated the debate over many issues of reproductive health while liberals remain supine and frightened of political retribution.

The child of immigrants, Degette credits her diverse (Jewish and Catholic) family with instilling her with "tolerance, idealism, and righteous indignation."

She writes, "Over time, I realized that the politicization of science by the Republicans and the religious right was at the most insidious over any issue relating to human reproduction." She adds, "The schism between politics and science is only heightened when you add religion to the mix."

As co-chair of the Pro-Choice Caucus, she has seen Republican obstructionism up close on stem cell research and related issues. She says that religious conservatives "concoct a willful distortion and present

it as fact."

She urges "science-based, compassionate, effective and sensible policies" as a new administration is soon to take office.

—Al Menendez

The Conservative Ascendancy: How the GOP Right Made Political History, by Donald T. Critchlow. Harvard University Press, 2007, 359 pp., \$27.95.

This book, by a respected historian of American conservatism at St. Louis University, is one of the most depressing volumes I have read in a long time. He portrays rather graphically what has been done to us by the Right and how its people carried this off in the face of ineffective responses by progressives.

The GOP Right, a coalition of anti-liberal intellectuals and anti-Communist activists, seized control of the Republican Party by defeating its liberal eastern wing. Although experiencing setbacks from time to time (e.g., the Goldwater and Nixon fiascos), they steadily pressed their agenda of undermining the New Deal liberal vision of the good society, until at last the Right ascended to political power and vanquished the moderates in the GOP. Critchlow tracks this dismal story from the days of the "old" Right in the 1950s through the Goldwater fiasco, Nixon's resurgence and fall, the Jimmy Carter interlude, Ronald Reagan's triumph, the setbacks under George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton, and the final victory under George W. Bush, marked by his triumphant re-election in 2004.

The author has an excellent grasp of the personalities and literature of the Right, although he could have been a wee bit stronger on the religious dimension. Since he ignored my work on the Christian Right, he made a couple of small mistakes (pp. 34, 133) that he could have avoided, and he should have noted that the Supreme Court ruling in the Bob Jones University case was the primary factor in galvanizing the individuals who formed the New Religious Right in 1979. Also, I felt he was too hard on Carter and too soft on Reagan. Still, the story is here, graphically told, how the Right gradually but surely gained control of the GOP and turned it into the reactionary body it is today.

—Richard V. Pierard

Professor of History Emeritus

Indiana State University & Gordon College

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Science, Evolution and Creationism

National Academy of Sciences and Institute of Medicine
70 pp., \$12.95

Not in Our Classrooms: Why Intelligent Design is Wrong for Our Schools

ed. by Eugenie C. Scott and Glenn Branch
171 pp., \$14.00

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—Edd Doerr

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when ordering either or both.)

Heroic Conservatism: Why Republicans Need to Embrace America's Ideals (And Why They Deserve to Fail If They Don't), by Michael J. Gerson. HarperOne, 2007, 302 pp., \$26.95.

This is the memoir of a quintessential conservative Republican evangelical. A 1988 graduate of Wheaton College, Gerson served as a senior policy advisor at the Heritage Foundation, worked for Senator Dan Coats and as a speechwriter for Bob Dole and ghostwriter for Charles Colson, was a senior editor at *U.S. News and World Report*, and was recruited by Karl Rove for the Bush campaign. He quickly emerged as the president's lead speechwriter, a position he occupied until leaving the administration in June 2006. Afterwards he became a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, a contributor to *Newsweek*, and a columnist for the *Washington Post*. He is a person with a huge ego, something that is obvious in the book, and this irritated many of his fellow conservatives.

The book says little about Gerson's life except during the six years he served George Bush. He was close to the president and claims that Bush heavily depended on him. In turn, he was an uncritical admirer of the president, virtually to the point of fawning. He defends Bush's use of evil as a "plainly accurate" way to describe our enemies, while the treatment of the Iraq War is a pure apologia for Bush's actions and rests upon tired just war categories. Not only does he not grasp why the war policy was flawed from the very beginning, but also he simplistically dismisses Democratic opposition to the conflict as a manifestation of "McGovernism," the same forces that led to defeat in Vietnam.

A theme running through the book is Gerson's mythological concept of "heroic conservatism," which he defines as a radical concern for human rights and dignity. He assiduously promoted evangelical social causes under the guise of compassionate conservatism—anti-abortion (right to life), the faith-based initiative, combating HIV-AIDS and malaria in Africa, exposing the Darfur genocide—which his fellow-believer president tried to advance but was thwarted by anti-government conservatives who rejected the idea of limited government. As for the response to Hurricane Katrina, it was that of a dysfunctional government, not Bush's own incompetence.

The book gives some insight into the functioning of the Bush administration, but it is mainly a personal document where Gerson grinds his own axe. Unlike the memoirs of Richard Clarke and Scott McClellan that courageously describe things as they actually were in the Bush White House, Gerson simply sloughs over Bush's missteps. Nothing is said of the administration's failure to heed the warnings of terrorist activity before 9/11, the erroneous State of the Union speech in 2003 and the outing of Valerie Plame, or the neoconservative direction of U.S. foreign policy and military actions. He could have told us what was happening on the inside but he was much too bedazzled by George Bush. I doubt if Gerson would be able to grasp why historians now are rating him as the worst president in American history.

—Richard V. Pierard

The Faith of Barack Obama, by Stephen Mansfield. Thomas Nelson, 2008, 164 pp., \$19.99.

Mansfield, an evangelical writer who has previously tackled biographies of such disparate figures as George W. Bush, Booker T. Washington, Pope Benedict XVI, and Winston Churchill, portrays the Democratic nominee as a highly principled man whose personal religious faith impels him toward social justice and politically progressive positions. Obama, the author says, "roots his political liberalism in a theological worldview."

Mansfield is sympathetic in his assessment. "For Obama, faith is not simply political garb, something a focus group told him he ought to try. Instead, religion to him is transforming, lifelong, and real. ... While

It is, no doubt, hard to talk about religious freedom when it means protecting those who hold beliefs different from ours. It is even harder when we fear religious liberty may be abused to deprive individuals from making clear religious choices for themselves or to harm children. Regardless, laws must be applied without fear or favor. Cases dealing with the rights of unpopular religious groups, family autonomy, and harm to children underscore the importance of an independent judiciary sensitive to particular circumstances of individual cases. As beneficiaries of religious freedom protections, we must insist that the law treat all people with fairness, regardless of religion. We know that our religious freedom under the law is connected to the amount we are willing to give to others.

K. Hollyn Hollman, General Counsel, Baptist Joint Committee, in *Report from the Capital*, June 2008, page 6.

Americans are used to religious insincerity from their political leaders, Obama seems to be sincere in what he proclaims."

He calls the Religious Right "a movement that used faith to divide and conquer while in pursuit of political power" and says its influence is "dissolving."

The author sees Obama as a revitalizer of the Religious Left and as the voice of the future, win or lose, in November. "Obama is what America is becoming."

—Al Menendez

One Nation, Divisible: How Regional Religious Differences Shape American Politics, by Mark Silk and Andrew Walsh. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2008, 269 pp., \$44.95.

Silk and Walsh, director and co-director, respectively, of the Greenberg Institute at Trinity College, marshal an impressive array of data demonstrating that regional religious differences increasingly shape the direction of American politics. Religious styles, related to denominational distinctives, influence the culture of the various geographical regions of the U.S. Voting patterns are pervasively influenced by religion, and frequently overshadow economic differences, creating an ethno cultural or ethno religious political system. These "public cultures" reveal much about the life and character of America's diverse regions, and also tell us a great deal about why people vote as they do.

America's regions, and even subregions, reflect distinct religious patterns. The authors, using both data and anecdotes, depict a nation in great flux. Politically, the Mountain West may be "a new swing region," noted for "shifts in religious demography and developments in religious politics."

Colorado is divided symbolically between Boulder's "religious cosmopolitanism" and the evangelical power base of Colorado Springs. "Both Boulder and Colorado Springs function as protected spaces with sometimes visible and coherent religious boundaries that contribute to collective senses of local identity." Other than the Mormon areas, "Colorado's western slope and eastern plains counties have become the most conservative religious areas in the subregion," constituting "a regional evangelical culture in the northern Rockies."

Religious liberals, New Agers, and moderate Catholics threaten to topple the evangelical-Republican alliance in the state that hosted the Democratic Convention in 2008.

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Utah is still an example of a monolithic religious culture despite the migration of many non-Mormons. This Mormon base has strong political implications. "The LDS Church makes its presence felt in politics not only indirectly through elected officials but also in direct ways. Each year in Utah, representatives of the state legislature meet formally with high-ranking church officials who are assigned to monitor political issues. . . . More commonly, the LDS Church uses its political influence to protect its ecclesiastical programs, economic interests, and moral order." Challenges are certain to come. "Polarized by their demographic and cultural minority status, Utah's non-Mormon population often defines itself in public opposition to the Mormon majority."

The authors forecast that the "moderate" Midwest, which is close to the national average in presidential voting and in religious demography, may be the key to the 2008 outcome. "Having served as the fulcrum of national politics in successive presidential elections, the Midwest shows every sign of remaining a good barometer of the national mood, and perhaps even providing the model for religion in American public life in the twenty-first century."

This may be, since the Midwest seems committed to "a greater emphasis on the common good, on the values of community. . . and social reform." All religious players are somewhat evenly matched in this region, which even elected the first two Muslims to Congress. Therefore, the authors predict, "If there is to be a new style of religious pluralism in America, there is something to be said for having it emerge from the

Midwest."

Anyone who cares about politics should read this book.

—Al Menendez

The Way We'll Be: The Zogby Report on the Transformation of the American Dream, by John Zogby. Random House, 2008, 235 pp., \$26.00.

John Zogby is America's "odd-man out" pollster. That is, his polls often differ from the other major survey takers. In this book he takes the pulse of the American people and describes what he believes are the major trends of the past twenty years.

All kinds of political, economic, social and life-style trends are put in perspective, including religion and its influence on politics and values.

The cutting edge of the future will belong to a group he calls "Secular Spiritualists," people who value broad spiritual goals over materialist ones. They defy precise characterization, and exist in all religious and political groups. "They attend church far more regularly than Materialists and are far more likely to be born-again. And yet they are also more likely than Materialists to identify themselves as liberal and to have voted for John Kerry in the 2004 presidential election."

Demographically, they are slightly more likely to be women and younger than age 40. They are "the stealth force in American society today."

Even the born-again conservatives in these polls are growing in tolerance and political sophistication. In sum: "In 2004, John Kerry was preferred by three times as many agnostics and atheists as George Bush, and Bush was preferred by three times as many of those who believe in what is largely an Old Testament God, but about half of the support for both men came from Americans whose view of religion is very much akin to the deism of many of our founding fathers, including Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, and Thomas Jefferson."

—Al Menendez

A Nation for All: How the Catholic Vision of the Common Good Can Save America from the Politics of Division, by Chris Korzen and Alexia Kelley. Jossey-Bass, 2008, 145 pp., \$24.95.

Leaders of two "progressive" Catholic organizations outline a plan of action to challenge church conservatives and the increasingly tentative political alliance between conservative Catholics and evangelical Protestants. They urge the implementation of political solutions that preserve "the dignity of the human person" and reject "excessive individualism and materialism."

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Books and Culture, *continued from page 23*

Praising JFK and the Second Vatican Council, they write, "True faith cannot be obtained by coercion of conscience; and no power, Catholics believe, has the rightful authority to impose religion on any human being." They argue, "Where public policy is concerned, it is possible to reflect the values of one's faith in democratic society without forcing one's religion on others."

The authors are contemptuous of the Bush campaign's attempt to manipulate Catholic voters in 2004. "One of the best-kept secrets of the election was the unprecedented degree to which Republican outreach committees, conservative power brokers, and organizations outside the Church institution sought to convince Catholics to support the far right's political agenda. It was a low point for Catholics and the democratic process, and for the most part completely out of line with the social teachings of our church."

Attacking Bush's record, they observe, "As well intentioned as an idea like compassionate conservatism may be, it is in fact neither compassionate nor conservative, having done little more than accelerate the divide between rich and poor and create budget deficits that threaten the entire economy."

Emphasizing social justice, peaceful solutions to world conflict, and the eradication of poverty, the authors are outspoken, "Poverty is a parent of crime, disease, war, and drug abuse. It drives migration and immigration; it leads to environmental destruction; it allows terrorist leaders to recruit from the ranks of people who see few other options"

On abortion, they are not solidly pro-choice but they do urge the adoption of policies that might reduce the incidence of abortion.

The foreword was written by Pennsylvania Senator Robert P. Casey, Jr.

—Al Menendez

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Commentary

Education Poll Favors Dems on Education

For 40 years the prestigious PDK/Gallup Poll has measured public opinion regarding our public schools. The results are both consistent and interesting. When asked to give a letter grade to public schools nationally, a mere 22% this year gave them a grade of A or B, no doubt due to the endless propaganda attacks on our schools. But when respondents were asked to grade the schools in their community, 46% gave them an A or B. And when asked to rate the public school their oldest child attends, 72% graded them A or B. This means, obviously, that parents who know their kids' schools personally like them and ignore what they hear about schools nationwide.

Respondents also know that our schools have problems. Foremost is lack of adequate funding, cited by 17%. In second place is discipline, cited by 10%, but this is a problem related more to the home than the school. In third place is overcrowding, at 6%, and this, of course, is linked to underfunding.

As this is an election year, the poll asked which candidate would be more likely to strengthen public education. Respondents preferred Obama over McCain by 46% to 29%. Asked which party "is more interested in improving public education," respondents picked Democrats over Republicans by 44% to 27%. On the questions of "closing the achievement gap," "supporting research," and "funding education," respondents preferred Obama over McCain on the three issues by 59% to 18%, 48% to 25%, and 48% to 28%.

On the question of "allowing students and parents to choose a private school to attend at public expense," opposition registered at only 50% to 44%, lower than the average two to one level of opposition found in 26 statewide referenda on the subject from coast to coast. The tightened result in the poll is likely due to the fact that the question omitted any mention of the generally sectarian and discriminatory nature of the vast majority of nonpublic schools. The PDK/Gallup Poll also showed a huge difference between Democrats and Republicans on allowing tax support to faith-based and other private schools. Democrats opposed the aid 60% to 33%, while Republicans favored it 54% to 44%.

—Edd Doerr