



# VOICE OF REASON

The Journal of Americans for Religious Liberty

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## South Dakotans Reject Restrictive Abortion Law

By a solid 56% to 44% margin, South Dakota voters turned down their state's passage of a law that would have banned almost all abortions.

It was an expensive campaign, fueled by \$4 million in contributions, mostly from out of state. The group promoting the ban, Vote Yes for Life, raised \$2.15 million, 65% from inside the state. The opposing group, The South Dakota Campaign for Healthy Families, raised \$1.8 million, with 91% of the contributions coming from out of state.

Proponents of the ban had hoped that a federal court would have declared it unconstitutional, thus triggering a U.S. Supreme Court review and possible overturn of *Roe v. Wade*. But South Dakotans derailed the effort. Sarah Stoesz, a Planned Parenthood official, said, "This means that there has been a rebellion against social, right-wing edge politics that have been dominating this country."

The bitterly fought campaign involved churches on both sides. The South Dakota Pastors for Moral Choices led the fight against the ban, saying in an October press conference in Sioux Falls, "This abortion ban restricts religious freedom." The Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice worked alongside the Pastors group. Its leader, Rev. Carlton W. Veazey, commented, "Moderation and compassion won the day."

South Dakota is a Republican stronghold, having backed 16 of the

last 17 Republican presidential candidates, ever since it was Wendell Wilkie's strongest state in 1940. It is the third most Lutheran state (Lutherans are the largest religious group), and is on the top 20 "evangelical" states. It is the second most evangelical state outside the South, according to analyst Paul Waldman. It is overwhelmingly white, with Native Americans (at 8.4% of the population) the only significant minority.

About a third of the state vote is cast in the metropolitan Sioux Falls and Rapid City areas at the opposite ends of the state. They voted No by 58.2% (62,270 to 44,740). But the rest of the state, mostly rural in character, also opposed the ban by 54.3% (123,664 to 103,924). Altogether, 185,934 South Dakotans voted No and 148,664, Yes. The measure (Referendum 6) was defeated in 43 of the state's 66 counties.

Strong opposition came from Clay County (69% No), where the University of South Dakota is located and Shannon County (64% No), home of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, an entirely Native American area where John Kerry crushed George Bush 85% to 13% two years ago. Other predominantly Native American counties (Buffalo, Dewey, Todd, Ziebach) also voted No. Episcopalians and Catholics are the predominant religions in the Native American counties, which collectively voted No by 60% to 40%.

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## Missouri Endorses Stem Cell Research

By a narrow margin of 51% to 49%, Missouri voters approved a constitutional amendment that would protect stem cell research. The unofficial final vote was 1,059,202 in favor of Amendment 2 and 1,013,850 opposed. The cliffhanger contest in the Show-Me state is typical of recent elections in this bellwether state. Missouri, like Ohio, is a good barometer of national opinion. It has supported the national winner in 25 of the last 27 presidential elections, missing only in 1956 when it backed Adlai Stevenson and 1900 when it supported William Jennings Bryan.

In Missouri the leadership of both of the state's largest religious groups, Catholics and Baptists, opposed Amendment 2. A majority in both communities voted against it, Catholics by 55% to 45% and white evangelicals (which would include Baptists) by an even larger 72% to 28% margin. White evangelicals also outnumbered Catholics 31% to 21% in the total electorate.

But dissenting Catholics were also active, supporting stem cell research. A group called Catholics for Amendment 2 was led by former U.S. Senator Tom Eagleton. "We believe that Amendment 2 strikes a responsible balance with clear ethical boundaries and safety guidelines,"

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# Buddhists and Muslims Win U.S. Congressional Seats

By Albert J. Menendez

For the first time in U.S. history, members of the Buddhist and Muslim faiths will join Christians and Jews in the U.S. Congress. In November, two Buddhists, Hank Johnson (D-GA) and Mazie Hirono (D-HA), and one Muslim, Keith Ellison (D-MN), were elected to the House of Representatives. These dramatic firsts suggest that U.S. politics is beginning to catch up with the increasing religious diversity of the country.

The only previous representative from a religion other than Christian or Jewish was D.S. Saund, a Sikh who was elected as a Democrat from California in 1956. Saund, who represented Imperial and Riverside Counties, was reelected in 1958 and 1960 and defeated in 1962.

Hank Johnson, who ousted Rep. Cynthia McKinney in the Democratic primary in August, won easily in November in his 54% African American district in Georgia. Johnson is a “practicing Buddhist” but believes that religion “is a personal matter,” according to *Congressional Quarterly*. Mazie Hirono, a former lieutenant governor of Hawaii who was born in Japan, is the first Buddhist elected to Congress from the nation’s most heavily Buddhist state. Hirono told CQ reporter Laura Blinkhorn that she is “a strong proponent of the separation of church and state” who respects “the right of the individual to practice his or her beliefs.”

Keith Ellison is noted for two firsts. He is the first African American elected to Congress from Minnesota and the first Muslim ever elected to the U.S. Congress. Ellison’s victory symbolizes the demographic changes in Minneapolis, the location of the Minnesota 5<sup>th</sup> District. Minneapolis was once a Scandinavian city, and its former congressman for the last 28 years was Martin Olav Sabo, a Democrat from a Norwegian Lutheran family. Minneapolis is increasingly diverse in culture and religion and is a Democratic stronghold, giving 72% of its vote to John Kerry.

Ellison told CQ that he did not stress his religion during the campaign and did not try to “make a political statement.” But he observed that his fellow Muslims should know they are “welcome to the table of American politics.” Ellison was particularly popular among the large community of Somali immigrants. He noted that “a lot of Muslims feel

highly vulnerable and feel that they are under a tremendous amount of scrutiny.”

While Ellison chose to downplay his religion, emphasizing instead his support for universal health care and withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq, Muslim Americans were naturally elated, as were Muslims overseas. *The New York Times* reported, “Attacks on Mr. Ellison’s religion helped galvanize Muslim Americans nationally, with supporters raising money from Florida to Michigan to California. . . . Mr. Ellison’s victory was widely noted in the larger Muslim world.”

All three of the Buddhist and Muslim members are Democrats, which points up a central difference between the two parties. Historically, the Democratic Party has been more welcoming of religious minorities than Republicans. The Democrats have nominated eight members of religious minorities for president and vice president since 1928. Three Catholics (Alfred E. Smith—1928, John F. Kennedy—1960 and John Kerry—2004) were presidential nominees while three Catholics were vice presidential candidates (Ed Muskie—1968, Sargent Shriver—1972, and Geraldine Ferraro—1984). The 1988 presidential nominee, Michael Dukakis, was Greek Orthodox, and the 2000 vice presidential aspirant was Joe Lieberman, who is Jewish. In contrast, only one Republican candidate since 1856, Rep. William Miller of New York, a Catholic who was Sen. Barry Goldwater’s running mate in 1964, belonged to a religious minority.

In the present Congress a majority of Catholics, Jews, and Eastern Orthodox Christians, as well as African Americans, Asian Americans and Hispanics belong to the Democratic Party. The Republicans are the majority among Mormons and Arab Americans. A large majority of secular, or religiously nonaffiliated, voters and Congress members also favor the Democrats.

Roman Catholics remain in first place, as they have since the early 1960s, with 154 members in the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress. They are followed by 66 Baptists, 61 United Methodists, 44 Presbyterians and 43 Jews. There are also 37 Episcopalians, 26 nondenominational Protestants, 18 nondenominational Christians, 17 Lutherans and 15 Mormons.

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the group said in a letter to Catholic voters. The letter challenged Missouri's Catholic bishops, who also sent letters urging parishioners to oppose the amendment. The Missouri Stem Cell Research and Cures Initiative, as it was officially named, ensures that federally approved research would be available in Missouri. Claire McCaskill, the successful Democratic candidate for U.S. Senator, who ousted Republican incumbent Jim Talent, is a Catholic and she made support for the measure a centerpiece of her campaign.

All white Protestants (including the 22% of state voters who are non-evangelical Protestants) opposed the measure by 57% to 43%. The amendment owed its success to the 82% endorsement from voters who are religiously nonaffiliated, 73% of those who adhere to "other" religious traditions, and to 69% of African Americans, most of whom are Protestant.

Gender was irrelevant, as both 51% of men and women voted Yes. The young were slightly more likely to vote for stem cell research (54% among voters under 30) than the old (48% among voters 65 and older).

Surprisingly, education and income were only slight predictors of the vote. College graduates were only 3% more supportive than non-graduates. Voters with the lowest and highest levels of education were more supportive than those with moderate levels. Income hardly mattered at all.

Party differences mattered. The amendment was backed by 76% of Democrats, 55% of Independents, and 24% of Republicans. Church attendance was a central factor. The measure was endorsed by 31% of weekly attendees, 66% of occasional churchgoers and 79% of those who never attend. Single voters were more supportive than married ones.

These are the major findings of the national exit poll of 2,589 Missouri voters.

Urban voters clearly led the way to victory, with 62% support. In the suburbs it was 48% and in rural areas 47%. Support was greatest in St. Louis City (67%), in Greater Kansas City (59%), and in the St. Louis suburbs (51%), according to the exit poll. Support lagged in Southwest Missouri (the fiercely conservative, Republican and fundamentalist Ozarks) where only 39% voted Yes. In the ten counties where President Bush received his greatest support, 63% voted against stem cell research, suggesting that the president's negative position is shared

by his most fervent supporters.

St. Louis County, the state's largest county and the largest suburb of St. Louis City, is significantly Catholic. It cast a 57% Yes vote, with a victory margin of 55,275, more than enough to carry Amendment 2 to victory (The statewide margin was 45,352). Boone County, where the University of Missouri is located, voted 63% Yes. Jackson County (Kansas City) was 61% in favor. Conservative Springfield ("Capital of the Ozarks") voted No by only 52%. Nearby Jasper County was 62% opposed. Missouri's Southeast Boot region, which is fundamentalist and Old South-oriented, voted No, as did "Mark Twain" country (Monroe County), another area of historic Southern migration.

Rural areas with large German ancestry populations were also opposed. Gasconade County, which has voted for every Republican since Lincoln, voted 59% No, even though its largest church is the liberal United Church of Christ. German Catholic Osage County (74% No) and German Catholic-Lutheran Perry County (69% No) led the opposition.

Only 18 of Missouri's 116 counties supported the amendment, but they were the ones that mattered. The victory margin was 86,000 votes in metro St. Louis and 64,000 in metro Kansas City. Together they offset a 105,000 vote defeat in the remainder of the state. ■

### Sample Counties

<i>County</i>	<i>% Yes</i>	<i>Description</i>
St. Louis City	67	Urban, African American majority
Boone	63	University of Missouri
Jackson	61	Kansas City
Clay	57	Kansas City suburbs
St. Louis County	57	St. Louis suburbs
St. Charles	49	St. Louis Republican exurb
Greene	48	Springfield
Pemiscot	48	George Wallace country
Taney	43	Branson – County music mecca
Gasconade	41	German Protestant Republican
Cole	40	State capital, Jefferson City
Jasper	38	Joplin, Republican Old West
Monroe	38	Conservative Southern Democrats
Wright	35	Rural Baptist
Barton	30	Rural Republican (#1 Bush county)
Osage	26	Rural German Catholic

## South Dakota, *continued from page 1*

Support for the sweeping ban was highest in Dutch and German Protestant rural areas. In two heavily Catholic rural counties (Fall River, Stanley) residents voted No by 60% and 66% respectively. But rural Catholic Potter voted Yes. Lutheran counties also ended up on both sides of this referendum, though the five strongest Lutheran counties (Day, Deuel, Kingsbury, Lincoln, Marshall) were all opposed. Even the Episcopalian strongholds were split, with Bennett County voting No and Corson County Yes. Religious voters were clearly divided, though a majority in most faith traditions appear to have opposed Referendum 6. (There was no exit poll.)

Many Republicans undoubtedly voted against this restriction on abortion rights. Military-oriented Pennington County gave Bush 67% but only 39% voted Yes. Hughes County, where the state capital, Pierre, is located gave Bush 68% but barely 37% for Referendum 6. Lawrence County, which last backed a Democrat for President in 1916, gave Bush 65% and just 36% for the abortion ban. In Bush's number one county, Harding, the president received 86%, but only 44% approved the abortion prohibition. In Bush's top ten counties, where he

defeated Kerry 75% to 23%, the abortion ban was rejected 52% to 47%. ■

### South Dakota Sample Counties – Abortion Law Vote

<i>County</i>	<i>% Yes</i>	<i>Description</i>
Douglas	75	Dutch and German Protestant
Hutchinson	64	German Protestant
Campbell	58	German Protestant
Lincoln	48	Sioux Falls Republican suburb, Lutheran
Deuel	46	Norwegian Lutheran
Minnehaha	43	Sioux Falls largest county
Brookings	40	South Dakota State University
Pennington	39	Republican, military, Rapid City
Hughes	37	Republican-leaning, State Capital
Lawrence	36	Historically GOP Old West (Deadwood is county seat)
Shannon	34	Pine Ridge Indian Reservation
Clay	31	University of South Dakota

## Buddhists and Muslims, *continued from page 2*

Other groups with at least 4 members include 7 members of the United Church of Christ, 6 religiously nonaffiliated, 5 Eastern Orthodox Christians, 5 Christian Scientists and 4 members of the Assemblies of God. Seventeen other groups also are represented.

A larger than usual number of members list their religion as “Protestant” or “Christian” without any additional definition. This may symbolize the post-denominational society that 21<sup>st</sup> Century America has increasingly become. Many Americans attend megachurches or community churches that are unattached to any historic branch of Christianity.

While the number of Catholics remained about the same since the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress, the number of Catholic Democrats increased and Catholic Republicans decreased. This may be due to the strong Democratic gains in the Northeast and Midwest. Baptists, Presbyterians and Episcopalians declined. The 37-member Episcopalian contingent is the smallest recorded since religious membership data for Congress have been compiled, suggesting a long-term decline among this influential religious group. Episcopalians now rank sixth in membership. They were second in 1980, when Ronald Reagan was elected president. A factor in the Episcopalian decline may have been the rout of moderate Republicans in the 2006 elections. Both New Hampshire Republican Episcopalians lost their seats. So did Jim Leach of Iowa, a moderate Republican who was first elected in 1976. The Episcopal Church was often the religion of choice for moderate and liberal Republicans, who are now nearly extinct in the U.S. political system.

The Jewish contingent increased by six, and Jewish Democrats won seats in places like Louisville, Kentucky, Tucson, Arizona, and even in Memphis, Tennessee, where Stephen Cohen won Harold Ford’s old seat in a 60% African American district.

Editor’s note: This tabulation is based on 533 seats where winners were declared or certified at press time. Two seats in Louisiana and Texas will be decided in December runoffs. We will issue an update in our next issue, when tight races have been officially decided. Our website, [www.arlinc.org](http://www.arlinc.org), will be updated with the final information. ■

## Religious Affiliations, 110<sup>th</sup> Congress

<i>Religion</i>	<i>Members 110<sup>th</sup></i>
Roman Catholic	154
Baptist	66
Methodist	61
Presbyterian	44
Jewish	43
Episcopalian	37
Protestant – no denomination	26
Christian – no denomination	18
Lutheran	17
Mormon (Latter Day Saints)	15
United Church of Christ	7
No affiliation	6
Eastern Orthodox	5
Christian Science	5
Assemblies of God	4
Unitarian Universalist	2
African Methodist Episcopal	2
Buddhist	2
Evangelical	2
Seventh-day Adventist	2
Christian Reformed	2
Disciples of Christ	2
Churches of Christ	2
Congregational Baptist	1
Anglican	1
Reorganized Mormon	1
Quaker	1
Church of God	1
Muslim	1
Evangelical Lutheran	1
Church of the Nazarene	1
Evangelical Methodist	1

## Religious Right Winners and Losers

Some of the major figures of the Religious Right in Congress lost their seats in November’s election. Among them were:

- Senator Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania, who was noted for his vigorous advocacy of virtually every social conservative issue, lost in the religiously diverse Keystone State. The two term incumbent went down to a landslide defeat, 59% to 41%, by moderate Democrat Bob Casey, Jr. Santorum had been considering a presidential campaign but that appears unlikely.

- Rep. John Hostettler was crushed by 61% to 39% in his southwest Indiana district. Hostettler, a floor manager for Religious Right legislation, attacked Democrats as enemies of Christianity in a notably nasty floor speech on June 20, 2005. He said Democrats were involved in “a long war on Christianity in America that would eradicate any vestige of our Christian heritage.”

Other supporters of the Religious Right tossed out by the voters include Rep. Jim Ryun of Kansas and Sen. George Allen of Virginia, another presidential wannabe.

- Rep. Katharine Harris of Florida, who told a Baptist newspaper that only Christians were fit to hold public office and that non-Christian legislators would “legislate sin,” only garnered 38% of the Florida U.S. Senate vote.

- Ken Blackwell, the Religious Right’s poster boy, lost the Ohio

governor’s race by a 900,000-vote margin, winning only 37% of the vote in a state he helped George Bush carry two years ago.

- Kansas Republican Attorney General Phill Kline, who has waged war on women’s health clinics, lost his bid for reelection.

- Abortion rights groups say there are 20 new pro-choice members of the House. The influx of six new Jewish Democrats may strengthen those who question Bush’s faith-based initiatives, according to several observers. The Republicans lost in seven of the eight states targeted by James Dobson’s Focus on the Family campaign.

There are at least four new Religious Right supporters in the upcoming 110<sup>th</sup> Congress. Peter Roskam (R-Ill) supported anti-choice legislation in the Illinois legislature and supports outlawing all abortions except when a woman’s life is at risk. Michele Bachmann (R-Minn) is known for her opposition to abortion and same-sex marriage. She was the major sponsor of a proposed same-sex marriage ban. Bill Sali (R-Idaho) argued that abortion is linked to breast cancer, despite scientific evidence to the contrary. Tim Walberg (R-Mich) is a graduate of Fort Wayne Bible College, a former pastor in Michigan and Indiana and a leader of the Lenawee County Right to Life.

While the Religious Right suffered its worst setback at the polls since 1992, it remains a force to be reckoned with.

# Democrats Gain Among Religious Voters

The Democratic triumph in 2006 was fueled by real and often significant gains among voters of all religious persuasions. The Catholic vote, 26% of the total vote, led the pro-Democratic trend, going Democratic by 55% to 44%, after having given Republicans an edge in the 2004 congressional and presidential balloting. Some of the Catholic shift was due to the Hispanic/Latino vote, about two-thirds of which is Catholic. The Latino vote backed the Democrats by a whopping 69% to 29%, a 14-point gain over 2004. But white Catholics, who have leaned Republican since the Reagan years, voted 50% to 48% for the Democrats.

The white evangelical base of the GOP who were 24% of voters, remained Republican by 70% to 29%, a small overall decline from 2004 and 2002. Democrats cited solid gains among evangelicals in Ohio and Pennsylvania, key swing states. All white Protestants, including the mainline moderates, went Republican by 61% to 37%, reaffirming their historic preference for the GOP (but diminished somewhat this time). Jewish voters were heavily Democratic, 87% to 12%, a considerable swing since President Bush received 25% of the Jewish vote in 2004. Democrats also won 71% to 25% support among adherents of "other" religions, and 75% to 22% among the religiously non-affiliated. Mostly Protestant African Americans stayed Democratic 89% to 10%.



Church attendance remained a predictor of voting preference, with the Republican vote rising along with frequency of church attendance. But Democrats cut

the Republican advantage among weekly churchgoers from 18 points in 2004 to 12 points in 2006. (It was 24 points in the Bush-Kerry presidential race.)

While there was not much solid data for two Protestant subgroups, non-evangelical whites and Latino evangelicals, it appears that Democrats made gains among both. The non-evangelical Protestant white vote was about 52% Republican. Latino evangelicals, who went Republican in 2004, almost certainly shifted to the Democrats, probably because of the extreme anti-immigration rhetoric of Republicans in several races.

Both party bases held firm, but Democrats won decisively among Independents (57% to 39%) and "moderates" (61% to 38%). Nearly half of voters (47%) called themselves moderates, rather than conservatives (32%) or liberals (21%), so the Democratic sweep of moderates was crucial to their success. John Kerry also won among both groups two years ago, but by much narrower margins. In most presidential elections since the Nixon years, these two groups leaned Republican. Both appear to have been alienated by the Bush Administration and the Religious Right influences in the Republican ranks. ■

## The Religious Vote, 2006

Religion	% of All Voters	% Democrat	% Republican
Catholic	26	55	44
White evangelical	24	29	70
Jewish	2	87	12
Other	6	71	25
None	11	75	22

Church Attendance	% All	% Democrat	% Republican
Weekly or more	45	43	55
Occasionally	38	59	39
Never	15	67	30

Groups	% All	% Democrat	% Republican
African American	10	89	10
Latino	8	69	29
Asian American	2	62	37
White	78	47	51

## Religious Voting by Region

Catholics	% of all voters	% Democrat	% Republican
Nation	26	55	44
East	41	59	40
South	15	51	47
Midwest	27	52	47
West	25	57	42

White Evangelicals	% of all voters	% Democrat	% Republican
Nation	24	29	70
East	12	38	61
South	35	28	71
Midwest	27	32	67
West	17	18	80

No Religion	% of all voters	% Democrat	% Republican
Nation	11	75	22
East	11	83	15
South	7	70	28
Midwest	8	73	26
West	18	74	21

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Thank you,  
Edd Doerr, President

# A Report on the Referenda: Same-Sex Marriage Bans

Bans on same-sex marriage were approved by voters in seven of the eight states where the issue was on the ballot. Only Arizona rejected a ban, by a 51% - 49% margin, making it the only state so far to oppose the anti-gay marriage movement in recent years.

## Exit Polls

### Arizona

The national exit poll examined voter reaction to this issue in Arizona, Virginia, Tennessee and Wisconsin. Unfortunately, the geniuses who devise these often valuable polls failed to include a religious question in Arizona, apparently believing that religious affiliation was irrelevant. This is disappointing, since Arizona has large Mormon, Catholic, Baptist and secular communities that might have shed light on why Arizona, surely a more conservative state than Oregon, which approved a ban in 2004, and Wisconsin, which did so this year, rejected a ban. County data offer some clues. Graham County, the most heavily Mormon, was the most in favor of the ban (69%). Latino-Catholic majority San Juan County voted 55% No, while opposition was 57% in the Tucson area (Pima County), which is also significantly Hispanic and Catholic. Apache County, which has an American Indian majority, voted No 51% to 49%, while Coconino County, home to Northern Arizona University and many religiously nonaffiliated voters, cast a solid 59% to 41% No vote. Conservative Phoenix (Maricopa County) surprisingly opposed the ban (Proposition 107) by a narrow margin, but its suburbs (Mohave, Pinal and Yavapai) favored it. The measure lost by 48,000 votes in Phoenix and Tucson but won rural Arizona by 16,000 votes.

### Virginia

Virginia, where a ban on same-sex marriage and civil unions passed by 57% to 43%, revealed sharp religious differences in the vote. White Catholics voted 53% to 47% against Amendment One, while all white Protestants favored it 67% to 33%, a 20-point difference. White evangelicals voted 88% to 12% in favor of Amendment One. Voters of "other" religions voted 65% No, while those who are not affiliated with any religion voted 80% against the ban. Catholics defied their church leaders. The Virginia Catholic Conference and the state's bishops urged a Yes vote.

Church attendance frequency, a major defining difference in political attitudes during the past decade or so, showed up in the Virginia referendum. The more frequently voters attend religious services, the more likely they were to support the same-sex marriage ban.

Vote by Church Attendance		
Church Attendance	% Yes	% No
More than weekly	80%	20%
Weekly	64%	36%
Monthly	51%	49%
A few times a year	47%	53%
Never	27%	73%

In Virginia 85% of Republicans, 47% of Independents and 32% of Democrats voted for the ban. Support for the ban was much higher among those who never attended college (73%) than among college graduates (49%). Among those with two or more college degrees, only 44% were in favor. Voters over age 65 were 13 points more favorable than voters under age 30.

Income was a factor. Lower income voters were more supportive of a ban (70% for those under \$15,000) than higher income (48% for voters whose income topped \$100,000). Men were 6 points more in favor (60% to 54% for women), but race was irrelevant. The ban won the support of 58% of whites and 56% of African Americans.

### Tennessee

The Volunteer State, where 53% of voters were white evangelicals, voted 81% in favor of Amendment 1, the ban on same-sex marriage. Evangelicals, mostly Southern Baptists and Church of Christ members, supported the ban by 90% to 10%. All white Protestants were 85% in favor, as were 85% of African Americans. The small Catholic community only gave 67% support. Many rural counties approached or exceeded 90%, and the ban carried every county and every region of this conservative state. Only the tiny secular community (7% said they had no religion and 9% said they never attended church) voted No by 55% to 60%. Weekly church attendees gave 89% support.

### Wisconsin

The "bellwether" state of Wisconsin, where recent presidential elections have been cliffhangers (though Democrats have managed to win since 1988), went 59% to 41% for Referendum 1. Protestants (47% of the vote and mostly Lutherans) backed the ban 64% to 36% while Catholics (31% of voters) supported it 60% to 40%. Religious differences were much smaller in Wisconsin than in other states. But party affiliation, ideology, and church attendance were central factors. Those who attend church more than weekly voted 88% yes, while those who never go gave only 25% yes. More frequent church attendance led to higher support for the ban. Also, those who classified themselves as "other" religion or "no religion" voted over 70% against the ban. The proposal received the support of 84% of Republicans, 50% of Independents and 35% of Democrats. Similar results were registered for conservatives (87%), moderates (54%) and liberals (26%). There was little difference by region or size of community.

Opposition was strongest in liberal Madison (Dane County) where the measure was rejected 2-1, and in other counties with large college student populations. Support topped 70% in the Milwaukee exurbs and in rural German Lutheran counties.

### Idaho

Conservative, Mormon Idaho passed the same-sex marriage ban by 63% to 37%, but that was actually *lower* than President Bush's 68% to 30% drubbing of John Kerry two years ago. Some Republicans must have opposed the ban, since Boise, the state's only large city (Ada County) backed the ban narrowly 52% to 48% after giving 61% to Bush. The largest No vote (66%) came from Blaine County, the Sun Valley ski resort area and the only county to go for Kerry. Latah County, home to the University of Idaho, also voted No 55% to 45%. But ultra-conservative Mormons in the state's far East counties were the strongest sup-



porters of the ban. Madison County, which gave Bush 92% of its vote, returned 88% for the ban, the highest support in the state. Two other rural Mormon bailiwicks, Franklin and Jefferson Counties, voted 85% and 80% respectively for the ban.

### Colorado

Sharp divisions typified the Colorado electorate, which is often liberal on social issues like abortion and vouchers. The state that is seen as moving leftward, giving Democrats a good shot at majority status, pulled back a bit on the same-sex marriage question, as the ban, embodied in Amendment 43, passed 56% to 44%. (A similar question allowing domestic partnerships also failed 53% to 47%). The evangelical stronghold of Colorado Springs (El Paso County), home to Focus on the Family and other parachurch groups, voted unsurprisingly 66% yes. Douglas County, a wealthy Denver exurb and Republican bastion, voted 62% yes. Support was even higher in rural evangelical, farming and ranching counties in the eastern part of the state. But support also exceeded 60% in the rural Hispanic areas of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains (Conejos, Costilla, Huerfano, Las Animas and Pueblo Counties). The opposition won 62% in Denver, 65% in Boulder, home of the University of Colorado, and in the liberal ski resort areas around Aspen (Pitkin County voted 70% No). Unlike Idaho, Colorado backed the same-sex marriage ban by a bigger margin than it gave George Bush. For example, German Catholic Lake County went for Kerry 55% to 43% but supported the ban 52% to 48%. Hispanic Pueblo voted 65% to 35% for the ban after supporting Kerry 53% to 46%. The ban also carried in the high-population growth areas in the Denver suburbs.

### South Carolina

The conservative, Republican, and evangelical/Baptist Palmetto State gave a whopping 78% Yes vote for Amendment 1. It carried every county, though the margin was higher in rural areas and in the fundamentalist Up Country than in the Low Country and resort areas from Myrtle Beach to Hilton Head. The support level reached 90% in Cherokee County, the most heavily Southern Baptist county. But it also won 83% in Newberry County, a Lutheran stronghold, and in Marlboro County, a Methodist area. In Greenville County, where Bob Jones University is located and where Republicans have been dominant since Eisenhower, the ban received 79% support. Only in more cosmopolitan and religiously diverse Charleston did support dip to 65%. (The liberal state capital and University of South Carolina area in Richland County gave 67% support). Allendale, a predominantly African American rural area, which gave Kerry 71%, backed the ban with 84% support. This is one cultural issue on which there is virtual unanimity in the Deep South.

### South Dakota

Red-state South Dakota is becoming a positively liberal area. Voters turned down a sweeping ban on abortion and only gave 52% for a same-sex marriage prohibition, the lowest level of support in any of the 27 states which have thus far approved these measures. The vote was close (51% Yes) in the two metropolitan counties, Minnehaha (Sioux Falls) and Pennington (Rapid City). Pennington has a large military vote (Air Force) and gave Bush 67% in 2004. But on social issues it is moderate. The highest support for the ban (71%) was recorded in Douglas County, a Dutch-German area that was noticeably anti-Catholic in the 1960 presidential race. (Kennedy dropped 11 points behind Stevenson).

Some Republican rural areas showed a considerable No vote. Harding County (86% for Bush) only gave a 59% Yes vote, while Haakon County (81% for Bush) only favored the marriage ban by 52%.

Two counties voted 65% No. One was Shannon County, the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, which was John Kerry's strongest county in the entire U.S. (Kerry 85%, Bush 13%). The other was Clay County, where the University of South Dakota is located. Brookings County, where South Dakota State University is located, voted 55% to 45% No. ■

### Same-Sex Marriage Bans

State	% Yes	% No
Arizona	49	51
Colorado	56	44
Idaho	63	37
South Carolina	78	22
South Dakota	52	48
Tennessee	81	19
Virginia	57	43
Wisconsin	59	41
Average	62.6	37.4
Total Vote	6,598,502	3,944,517

### Same-Sex Marriage Bans – Sample Counties

County	State	% Yes	Description
Chesterfield	South Carolina	90	rural Baptist
Buchanan	Virginia	90	coal mining area
Grainger	Tennessee	90	rural Baptist
Madison	Idaho	88	rural conservative Mormon
Washington	Colorado	77	rural Republican evangelical
Dodge	Wisconsin	73	small town German Lutheran
Douglas	South Dakota	71	rural Dutch, German Protestant
Graham	Arizona	69	rural Mormon
Shannon	South Dakota	35	Pine Ridge American Indian Reservation
Blaine	Idaho	34	ski resort (Sun Valley)
Pitkin	Colorado	30	ski resort (Aspen)
Arlington	Virginia	26	liberal professionals – upper income
Charlottesville	Virginia	23	University of Virginia

### How the Cities Voted – Same-Sex Marriage Bans

City	% Yes
Memphis, Tennessee	80
Greenville, South Carolina	79
Nashville, Tennessee	68
Colorado Springs, Colorado	66
Charleston, South Carolina	65
Virginia Beach, Virginia	57
Milwaukee, Wisconsin	55
Boise, Idaho	52
Sioux Falls, South Dakota	51
Phoenix, Arizona	49
Norfolk, Virginia	46
Tucson, Arizona	43
Denver, Colorado	38
Boulder, Colorado	35
Madison, Wisconsin	33
Richmond, Virginia	31
Alexandria, Virginia	30

# Voters Endorse Abortion Rights and Evolution Education

In two little-noted referenda, California and Oregon voters rejected a requirement for parental notification for young women seeking abortion. The margin was 54% to 46% in both states.

California Proposition 85 lost 54% to 46%, especially in the cities, where 59% voted No and in liberal suburbia (Marin County, north of San Francisco, voted 75% No). San Francisco voted 77% against the measure. The vote was 50/50 in the suburbs while 54% of rural residents voted No. About 56% of whites and African Americans voted No, while the Latino vote split evenly, and 53% of Asian Americans voted for it. Opposition was strongest among the young (65% of those ages 18-29), high income (59% among those whose income exceeded \$100,000) and the well educated (58% of all college graduates and 65% of those holding post graduate degrees). Democrats and Republicans were sharply divided: 72% of Democrats voted No, and 73% of Republicans voted Yes. Independents voted No by 63% to 37%.

The exit poll also showed that 64% of Californians think abortion "should be always or mostly legal," while 32% think it should be "mostly or always illegal."

Opposition was most intense in the San Francisco Bay area and in Coastal counties, and moderately strong in Los Angeles. Silicon Valley was also opposed. Southern California, the Southern-flavored Central Valley and the rural Northern Interior were the only regions voting in favor of parental notification. (The Yes vote was 62% in Kern County, the country-music mecca of Bakersfield.)

There were no exit polls in Oregon, but county data reveal patterns similar to California. Liberal Portland (Multnomah County) voted 70% against Measure 43, as did 63% in Benton County, where Oregon State

University is located. Suburban Portland (Washington County) cast a 56% No vote. Rural eastern Oregon approved the measure but by smaller margins than their support for Bush in 2004. The highest support (69% Yes) was recorded in Malheur County, which is the most Mormon county in Oregon. Three counties with above average Catholic populations (Harney, Lake and Marion) voted in favor of the measure.

In Ohio advocates of evolution education were successful in races for the state board of education. Deborah Owens Fink, a Republican school board incumbent who supported teaching creationism and other theories critical of evolution, went down to a stunning 25-point defeat by former U.S. Rep. Tom Sawyer, a Democrat. Scientists and educators campaigned for Sawyer. A moderate Republican, G.R. Schloemer, was also elected to the Ohio State Board of Education. One district elected an anti-evolution candidate but pro-evolution members held the majority. In Kansas pro-evolution moderates hold a 6 to 4 majority on the state board, though an attempt to unseat two anti-evolution conservatives failed, one by a 51% to 49% margin. ■



## California Parental Notification Vote – Sample Counties

County	% Yes	Description
Imperial	67	Rural Hispanic
Kern	62	Bakersfield-Southern emigrants
Tulare	62	Central Valley
Shasta	57	Republican Northern CA
Orange	55	Republican Suburbia
Ventura	48	Simi Valley
Sacramento	47	State Capital
Los Angeles	44	Diverse mega-county
Trinity	42	Perot Country
Santa Barbara	41	Coastal rich
Napa	36	Wine country
San Mateo	35	Silicon Valley
Alpine	32	Republican-turned Democrat mountains
Mendocino	31	Naderite Coastal area
Santa Cruz	26	Coastal Liberals
Marin	25	Liberal Upper Income Suburbia
San Francisco	23	Liberal City

## The Boise Affair

By Tom Flynn

Idaho was the scene of what may be the decade's strangest church-state controversy. In Boise, the state capital, a stone Ten Commandments monument had stood for almost four decades in the city's Julia Davis Park. One day in 2003, the city government was contacted — not by a secularist complaining about the monument, but by the Rev. Fred Phelps of Westboro Baptist Church in Topeka, Kan. Phelps is a antigay minister notorious for his hate website godhatesfags.com and for staging raucous antigay protests at funerals of soldiers killed in Iraq.

Phelps said the Decalogue monument made Julia Davis Park an open forum, and applied to raise an antigay monument alongside it. Phelps's church is a bona fide religious organization, so the city would have little leeway for refusing. So in January 2004, the Boise City Council voted on its own initiative to remove the Decalogue monument and give it to a religious organization. This was done, extinguishing the open forum and ending Phelps's potential entree to the park.

Religious conservatives forced a statewide referendum on the November 2006 ballot. If successful, Boise would have been compelled to erect a new Decalogue monument next to a stone inscribed with a quote from Jefferson's Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom. (Presumably, Phelps would have been back on the phone the next day.) Idaho is a red state, but apparently most voters absorbed Fred Phelps's lesson about the downside of operating an open forum. The referendum failed, the monument stays on private property, and Boise remains in control of its park.

*Editor's note: The vote on returning the Ten Commandments to Julia Davis Park was 37,568 against and 33,747 for, a margin of 53% to 47%.*

*Tom Flynn is editor of Free Inquiry. Gary Bennett assisted in this story.*



## Editorials

# What the Democratic Victory Means for Church-State Separation

Speculation about future events is always difficult. One is just as likely to be wrong as right. But past events can suggest the likelihood that the Democratic gains in Congress will at least slow down, if they don't stop altogether, the excesses of Religious Right-inspired legislation.

Since Democrats will control the committees and the procedures affecting floor votes, they are less likely to report out favorably some of the more extreme legislation favored by Republicans, such as "protections" for partisan political activities in churches, religious expression in public places, special favoritism for their evangelical allies in the military chaplaincies and at military academies, and legislation designed to whittle away at abortion rights. While bills like these have repeatedly passed the House during the Bush #43 years, they have failed in the more moderate Senate, either to reach a floor vote or even to win committee approval. Now, they may be less likely to reach the House floor.

On more substantive issues, regarding stem cell research, abortion access, and the life and death issues such as the Terri Schiavo case, the picture is uncertain. Some Democrats from the South and Southwest join Republicans on some of these issues, making it imperative that civil liberties and religious freedom groups maintain vigilance to assure that freedom of conscience is preserved.

The culture wars are by no means over, or even reduced in scope. But the new Congress has an opportunity at least to reduce the rhetoric and limit nuisance legislation that exacerbates the conflicts. More civility and rationality will be welcome and perhaps can be expected as a result of the 2006 midterm election.

—Albert J. Menendez

## Lessons from the U.K.

Education developed quite differently in the United States and the United Kingdom. Early on the U.S. put its chips on public education, while the U.S. federal and state constitutions generally disallowed tax support for private faith-based schools.

Things came together quite differently in the U.K., where the principle of separation of church and state never really took hold.

Adam Smith urged free, compulsory education for the "inferior ranks of the people" as a state function. Thomas Paine and T.R. Malthus both urged the creation of public schools. Yet education in the U.K. remained private until 1833 when public funds began flowing to private Church of England schools. Fourteen years later British taxpayers began supporting Catholic and Methodist schools as well. By 1870 the British government was providing £500,000 annually to Anglican schools and £200,000 to Catholic, Methodist, and other private schools.

It was not until 1870 that Britain established what we in the U.S. call public schools.

Today English and Welsh public schools (the U.S. definition of public schools; in the U.K. "public schools," like Eton and Harrow, are private schools) enroll about two-thirds of all the students in the U.K., with the remainder in a confusing mix of private and faith-based schools, all supported in various ways by public funds. Public schools are required by law to teach religion and hold daily worship activities, which may be one reason why church attendance is lower in Britain than in the U.S.

(Northern Ireland is quite different. After Ireland was partitioned in the early 1920s religious leaders insisted on having religiously segregated schools supported by taxes, one set for Catholics and another for everyone else. Most people in Ulster would prefer integrated education, but this is impeded by politicians and church leaders.)

According to a recent report in the *Christian Science Monitor*, all is not rosy in the U.K. A study of all U.K. primary schools shows that on average church school kids came from more affluent families under the system's "byzantine" admission rules. When church schools are oversubscribed, admission "is often governed by regular church attendance and energetic parish involvement."

According to Terry Sanderson, vice president of the National Secular Society, while faith-based schools must follow a national curriculum and teach about other religions, they barely disguise their efforts to indoctrinate.

There are 7,000 faith-based schools in the U.K. They are mostly Christian, but there are also 36 Jewish, seven Muslim, and two Sikh schools!

Britain's experience should be a warning to the U.S. against adopting vouchers or any other scheme for tax support of nonpublic schools.

—Edd Doerr

## By the Numbers

- Only 37% of Americans polled by *Newsweek* in 2006 said they would vote for an atheist for president, down from 49% in a 1999 Gallup poll.
- There were no Republican U.S. Senators from the South when Dwight D. Eisenhower was elected in 1952. After George W. Bush was reelected in 2004, there were 18 Republican Senators (out of 22) from Dixie.
- Nearly two-thirds of churchgoing Canadian Protestants voted for the Conservative Party in the 2006 parliamentary election, suggesting that Canadian politics may also be realigning along religious lines. Stephen Harper is Canada's first Protestant Prime Minister in more than three decades.
- Of 1,031 school districts in Texas, 25 offered elective classes on the Bible in the 2005-2006 academic year.
- More than 60% of the residents in Mississippi, Alabama, Arkan-

sas, Tennessee, Oklahoma and South Carolina are evangelicals. Fewer than 20% in Vermont, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Utah, Rhode Island, New Jersey and New York apply the evangelical label to themselves.

- While 28.5% of Americans call themselves "Born-again Christians," only 14.9% say they are "Evangelical" and only 8.3% support the Religious Right.

- New Jersey public school kids have a choice of 75 approved religious holidays during which they may be absent from classes. Not only such traditional days as Christmas, Good Friday and Passover are allowed, but the Birth of the Bab, Bodhi Day, Rama Navami, Buddha's birthday, and the Exaltation of the Holy Cross are included in a list that began in 1951.

(Sources: *Newsweek* September 11, 2006; *Choice* (Autumn 2006); *Religion in the News* (Summer, 2006); Texas Freedom Network; Ryan Sager's *The Elephant in the Room*, p. 165; Baylor University Institute for Studies of Religion; *Newark Star-Ledger*, September 5, 2006.)

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## Baylor Poll Finds New Religion, Politics Connections

A new national poll conducted by Baylor University in Waco, Texas, the world's largest Baptist college, underscores the relationship between religion and politics in early 21<sup>st</sup> century America. Voters who see God as "authoritarian," both judgmental and highly involved in world affairs and in the lives of individuals, are more likely to favor capital punishment, support wars, oppose abortion and gay rights, and to vote Republican and conservative. About 31.4% of the 1,721 people polled conceived of God in that way. They were also more likely to say that God favors the U.S. in world affairs.

Other views of God held by voters were "distant" (24.4% of respondents), a nonjudgmental and uninvolved deity; benevolent (23.0%), a nonjudgmental but highly involved deity; and critical (16.0%), a God who is judgmental but uninvolved. Only 5.2% said they did not believe in a supreme being according to the Baylor Religion Survey, conducted by the Baylor Institute for Studies of Religion.

The poll's results paint a more conservative picture of American religion than might be expected. About 47% of respondents said they are "Bible believers" and 28.5% apply the born-again label to themselves. Over 45% say the federal government should "advocate Christian values," with nearly 75% of believers in an authoritarian God agreeing with that statement.

Other conservative labels draw lower support – only 17.6% are "theologically conservative" and 14.9% are "evangelicals." Only 8.3% support the Religious Right, 7.7% are fundamentalists, 7.3% are

charismatics and 5.8% are Pentecostals. "Mainline Christians" are chosen by 26.1% while 13.8% call themselves "theological liberals." Some labels overlap and some respondents chose multiple categories to define themselves.

The authoritarian conception of God is strongest in the South, where 43% of residents choose this definition. They support federal funding for faith-based social services and prayer in the schools. The benevolent God idea is strongest in the Midwest, and among Catholics, Jews and mainline Protestants. The "distant God" concept is strongest in the West and among liberal Christians and Jews.

The demography of the Baylor Survey is somewhat puzzling. It shows a third of Americans are evangelicals (33.6%), while no other comparable survey has the evangelical segment at more than a fourth of the population. The Catholic percentage is 21.2%, the lowest of any surveys, which consistently show the Catholic share at 25% or higher (28% to 29% of active voters). Mainline Protestants (22.1%) and African American Protestants (5%) are about comparable, but the overall Protestant figure of slightly above 60% compared to the low 50s in other surveys is striking. The percentage claiming no religion is 10.8%, rather lower than 14% shown in several other surveys.

Another puzzling finding is that only 10% of adults ages 18-30 are Catholics, while 39% of this age group is evangelical Protestant. Almost 19% of the youngest age cohort say they are unaffiliated. ■

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## Faith-Based Enterprises Experience a Windfall

In a major four-part investigative report published in October, *The New York Times* found that faith-based groups "enjoy an abundance of exemptions from regulations and taxes. And the number is multiplying rapidly." This includes everything from church-run day care centers, which are exempt from any regulation in a dozen states, to homeless shelters, broadcasting networks, and church retirement plans. "Since 1989, more than 200 provisions granting accommodations or protections specifically to religious groups, their employees and their members have been woven into laws passed by Congress, on topics from taxes to immigration to education, a computer analysis by *The New York Times* finds."

There are income tax breaks for retired ministers who receive pensions from church retirement plans, as well as deductions for clergy members and other religious workers. In 1990 Congress created a program that set aside visas exclusively for clergy and other foreign religious workers. In 1999 Congress adopted exemptions for faith-based health care practices, including provisions allowing plans to opt out of contraceptive services. The same Congress approved tax breaks for religious schools, including an exemption for colleges with a history of religious

pacifism. Land use and property laws also have been redesigned to accommodate religious enterprises.

This special treatment for religious entities encompasses the entire legal system. "Legislators and regulators are not the only people in government who have drafted special rules for religious organizations. Judges, too, have carved out or preserved safe havens that shield religious employers of all faiths from most employee lawsuits, from laws protecting pensions and providing unemployment benefits, and from laws that give employees the right to form unions to negotiate with their employers."

*Times* reporter Diana B. Henriques, author of the series, added, "The most sweeping of these judicial protections is called the ministerial exception," which is derived from a 100-year-old concept called "the church autonomy doctrine [which applies] to religious employment disputes." This concept has been widened to faith-based activities that are held to be "a core expression of religious belief."

Employee rights have been diminished under these rulings. "But judges also have applied the exception to dismiss cases filed by the press secretary at a Roman Catholic church, a writer for *The Christian Science Monitor*, administrators at religious colleges, the disgruntled beneficiaries of a Lutheran pension fund, the overseer of the kosher kitchen at a Jewish nursing home and a co-founder of Focus on the Family, run by the conservative religious leader James C. Dobson. Court files show that some of these people were surprised to learn that their work had been considered a 'core expression of religious belief' by their employer"

Tax breaks for church-owned facilities have expanded in recent years. "The property tax exemption is one of the oldest tax breaks granted to religious organizations, but it is not the only one. Lawmakers and judges have also approved what amounts to special tax treatment for religious

*continued on page 12*

### Sample Copy

We will be happy to send a sample issue of this newsletter to people you consider likely subscribers. Please send names and addresses to Americans for Religious Liberty, PO Box 6656, Silver Spring, MD 20916, or email to [arlinc@verizon.net](mailto:arlinc@verizon.net). They can obtain a subscription form at [www.arlinc.org](http://www.arlinc.org).

## Election 2006

# Poll Shows Strong Religion/Politics Connections

The *Rasmussen Reports* survey found that 54% of “likely voters” believe the Bible is “literally true.” Republicans and conservatives were much more likely to express this belief than Democrats. This is also a much higher percentage than Gallup Polls have found using similar questions. Among Evangelical Protestants, 85% believe in the literal truth of the Bible, compared to 55% of mainline Protestants and 53% of Catholics. Alabama and Arkansas had the highest percentage (75%) agreeing with this view, followed by West Virginia and Tennessee. Only 22% held this view in Vermont and Massachusetts. Rasmussen reported on August 26, “As expected, strong connections exist in most of the states surveyed between the percentage of those who answered affirmatively on the Bible question and their positions on abortion and same-sex marriage.” ■

## Voter Guides Proliferate in 2006

Voting guides aimed at moderate and liberal religious voters made appearances on the stage of the 2006 elections. Conservative religious groups have published and distributed such guides, including detailed ratings of the voting records of members of Congress, since the 1980s. (Secular conservative and liberal political groups, such as Americans for Democratic Action, the American Conservative Union, and the AFL-CIO, have also done so for decades.)

During the congressional elections of 2006, Red Letter Christians, associated with Jim Wallis and the Sojourners group, appeared, as did Faithful Democrats.com, a kind of religious caucus within the Democratic camp. Sojourners and the anti-poverty group Call to Renewal produced a brochure called “Voting God’s Politics,” which covers a broad range of issues from a liberal evangelical perspective. Sojourners had distributed 50,000 of its guides by the end of September, and planned on 150,000 more during the campaign’s closing weeks. The Sojourners publication discussed issues, not candidates, unlike the Christian Coalition, which continued to rate members of Congress on their adherence to “Christian values” (as defined by conservative evangelicals).

A new group called Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good issued “Voting for the Common Good: A Practical Guide for Conscientious Catholics” in September. The 12-page booklet was expected to reach a million voters, according to its executive director, Alexia Kelley. The publication represented an effort by moderate Catholics to challenge the pronouncements of conservative groups like Catholic Answers, which claimed to have distributed 10 million copies in 2004 of a guide urging Catholic voters to base their vote solely on abortion, embryonic cell research, and gay marriage. “Voting for the Common Good” urged Catholics to give close attention to issues of war and peace, immigration, poverty, social justice, and the environment as well as abortion and homosexuality. Nuclear disarmament, health care and workers’ rights to safety and a fair wage are also considered in light of Catholic social doctrine. The “Common Good” pamphlet also urged voters to reject crass appeals to materialism and support candidates who



## Visit ARL's Web Site

You can now visit Americans for Religious Liberty's internet website: [arlinec.org](http://arlinec.org). The site contains information about the organization, books available on church-state issues, and reprints of important articles. New material will be added as available.

“put the common good ahead of special interests, power and personal profits.”

This group was brutally frank. “There is no Catholic voting formula, and there is rarely, if ever, a perfect candidate for Catholic voters. Seldom does a single candidate or party offer a consistently Catholic set of positions.” The Common Good approach stressed “prudence” and an “informed conscience” in arriving at voting decisions. They were immediately denounced by arch-conservative Catholics who claimed that abortion and related issues were “nonnegotiable.” The Common Good brochure did not mention specific candidates, something that political activists consider a drawback to challenging right-wing groups, which stop just short of endorsements with their detailed voting record compilations.

Even Muslims got into the act. The Muslim American Society (MAS) set up a campaign to register new Muslim voters in mosques and Islamic student centers. The society's Center for Electoral Empowerment announced a campaign to get the nation's estimated 2.2 million registered Muslims to the polls and created a web site that stressed “the erosion of civil liberties, fair immigration reform and foreign policy,” according to MAS president Mukit Hossain. MAS said 84% of Muslims voted in 2004, the vast majority of them supporting John Kerry. ■

## IRS Focuses on Improper Political Activities by Churches

The IRS has announced plans to step up its investigative activities regarding partisan politics by church groups. Lois Lerna, director for exempt organizations at the IRS, told *The New York Times* religion reporter Laurie Goodstein, “We became concerned in the 2004 election cycle that we were seeing more political activity among charities, including churches. In fact, of the organizations we looked at, we saw a very high percentage of some improper political activity, and that is really why we have ramped up the program in 2006.”

Nearly half of tax exempt organizations cited for improper political activity in 2004 were church-related. The offending churches were given warnings or excise tax penalties but did not lose their tax exemption.

Despite evidence that evangelical and conservative churches are the most likely to engage in political activities, the IRS appears to have singled out a liberal Episcopal parish, All Saints Church in Pasadena, California, for allowing its then-rector George F. Regas to deliver an anti-war message on the Sunday before the 2004 presidential election. On September 15 the IRS ordered the church to turn over all documents related to the sermon and even asked the church to produce utility bills that might have been related to Regas's sermon. The present rector, Rev. Ed Bacon, told the *Los Angeles Times* that he planned to seek his congregation's advice on whether to comply with the IRS directive. “There is a lot at

*continued on page 12*

# House Bars Fees in Religion Suits

On September 26 the U.S. House of Representatives passed a top priority Religious Right goal – a bill (H.R. 2679) that would forbid judges from awarding legal fees to groups that sue governments for Establishment Clause violations. The vote was 244-173, with the vast majority of Republicans in favor and Democrats opposed.

The so-called “Public Expression of Religion Protection Act” was sponsored by Rep. John Hostettler (R-Ind), who lost a tight race for reelection. The Hoosier congressman accused the ACLU and other civil liberties groups of “profiteering” as well as seeking “to remove every vestige of our religious heritage from public places.” The American Legion, the Southern Baptist Convention, Focus on the Family, and the Family Research Council backed the measure, while a number of interfaith groups opposed it. The Baptist Joint Committee said the bill “threatens access to courts for those seeking to enforce the Establishment Clause.” The bill is “an attack on religious freedom,” said the group’s legal counsel, K. Hollyn Hollman. “This bill would make it harder to keep government from interfering in religion,” she added.

The bill did not pass the Senate. It was seen by many as an attempt to bolster GOP fortunes in the Congressional elections.

The House vote indicated the usual partisan regional and religious differences that affect votes on church-state issues. Republicans voted 218-6 (97.3%) in favor, while only 13.5% of Democrats backed the measure. (Independent member Bernie Sanders of Vermont also voted No.)

Support was highest in the Rocky Mountain States (79.3%) and the South (77%), followed by 60% support in the Border States and the Midwest. Opposition was greatest in New England, the Pacific Coast region and the Mid Atlantic States.

Of the 26 Democratic supporters, 16 (62%) were from the South. A majority of Democrats in Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Oklahoma, South Dakota and Utah backed the measure. None of the six Republicans who opposed H.R. 2679 hailed from these regions. The 26 Demo-

cratic defectors were mostly Catholics or Methodists. Protestants were much more supportive than Catholics, while Jews and nonaffiliated members were overwhelmingly opposed. Mormon support was nearly unanimous. Six Hispanic Democrats (from California, Colorado and Texas) also supported the measure, one of the few times a conservative proposal has received this much support from this group, (though the majority of all Hispanics voted no). African American Baptists were opposed, while white Southern Baptists were supportive.

Broader regional definitions are also showing up in recent church-state votes. The “Greater South” representatives were 73.7% in favor of H.R. 2679, as were 65.2% of those from the “Interior West.” But the “Coastal” regions (The Pacific Coast and the Atlantic Coast from Pennsylvania north to Maine) gave only 37.6% support. Bicoastal America is increasingly the liberal bastion while Middle America is conservative. (Note that 88.4% of Democratic defectors on this vote were from the South and Interior West.) ■

## House Vote on H.R. 2679

Party	% Yes	Region	% Yes
Republicans	97.3	Rocky Mountain	79.3
Democrats	13.5	South	77.0
All	58.5	Midwest	60.2
		Border South	60.0
		Mid Atlantic	43.3
		Pacific Coast	38.2
		New England	19.0
Religion*	% Yes		
Mormon	88.9		
Protestant	67.7		
Roman Catholic	51.6		
Jewish	3.8		
None	0		

\*One Greek Orthodox Republican voted yes.

## Windfall, *continued from page 10*

organizations and some of their employees, including exemptions on personal-income and payroll taxes, and have made it easier for them to get tax-exempt construction loans for purely religious projects.”

Consequently, some communities can barely provide basic services to citizens because of diminished tax resources.

In Alaska the Republican-controlled legislature passed, and a Republican governor signed, a bill that extends the parsonage exemption to church-owned residential property set aside for teachers at faith-based schools. (ACLU has challenged these exemptions, because they do not apply to teachers in public schools.)

Then there is the question of tax-exempt bonds. The *Times* report says, “A search of the Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board’s database shows that more than \$20 billion in tax-exempt bonds have been sold since the late 1980s on behalf of religious institutions or their affiliates, including deals benefiting a Jewish vocational workshop in Michigan, a Baptist retirement home in Arizona, a Presbyterian housing project in Missouri, Lutheran nursing homes and day care centers in Minnesota and Catholic schools in Rhode Island.” ■

### Moving?

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

## IRS, *continued from page 11*

stake here. If the IRS prevails, it will have a chilling effect on the practice of religion in America,” Bacon told the L.A. daily. If the church refuses, it could result in summons before the U.S. District Court, according to All Saints’ attorney Marcus Owens. All Saints is one of the largest U.S. Episcopal churches, numbering 3,500 in its membership. All Saints is perturbed because its rector did not endorse any presidential candidate, nor engage in overtly partisan electioneering.

On September 21, the vestry (governing board) of All Saints voted 26-0 to deny the IRS request. “We came to this decision because we believe that these summonses intolerably infringe upon our constitutional rights,” said Bob Long, a church leader. Its pastor, Rev. Ed Bacon, added, “We are also here not for ourselves alone but to defend the freedom of pulpits in faith communities throughout our land.”

Meanwhile, conservative groups like Focus on the Family prepared a massive nationwide distribution of Voter Guides to be distributed in evangelical churches before November. Two moderate to liberal groups, the evangelical Sojourners and Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good announced that they, too, have compiled candidate evaluations.

The IRS has a new unit, the Political Activity Compliance Initiative, which will enforce laws against partisan politics by nonprofit groups. ■



# Church and State in the Courts

## Supreme Court Hears Abortion Case

On the day after the mid-term elections, the U.S. Supreme Court once again took up the contentious issue of abortion. Just six years after a 5-4 majority concluded that a Nebraska law outlawing a late-term abortion procedure was unconstitutional because it lacked an exception for the health of the pregnant woman, the Roberts court is revisiting the issue. This time they framed it in terms of federalism, since Congress passed, and President Bush signed, a law banning so-called partial-birth abortions in an effort to circumvent the 2000 ruling. Oral arguments suggested that some justices may be torn by different issues at stake.

Solicitor General Paul Clement, representing the Bush Administration, urged the Court to defer to the congressional majority that held the procedure is “never medically necessary.” Attorney Priscilla Smith of the Center for Reproductive Rights countered that the “never necessary” argument is “simply unreasonable” and is contradicted by medical experts.

Justice Anthony Kennedy may have replaced Sandra Day O’Connor as the swing vote. While he was in the minority in the Nebraska case six years ago, his questions indicated that he was undecided. Linda Greenhouse, the legal affairs correspondent for *The New York Times* wrote, “Justice Kennedy’s questioning suggested that he had not made up his mind, despite his strongly worded dissenting opinion when the court struck down Nebraska’s version of the federal law six years ago, and despite his obvious distaste for the procedure at issue. Instead, his questions suggested that he remained open to persuasion that the law placed doctors in legal jeopardy and imposed an unconstitutional burden on their patients’ right to terminate their pregnancies.”

A ruling is expected before next July. The two cases heard together were *Gonzales v. Carhart*, No. 05-380 and *Gonzales v. Planned Parenthood*, No. 05-1382. Americans for Religious Liberty signed an amicus brief, urging the upholding of the Eighth Circuit decision that the congressional act is unconstitutional (see ARL in Action).

## In other legal developments:

In November a federal judge dismissed a lawsuit which claimed that the city of Las Cruces, New Mexico, should not be allowed to use three crosses on its logo. Three plaintiffs contended that the Christian symbols violated the First Amendment by endorsing a particular religion. Las Cruces means “the crosses” in Spanish. U.S. District Judge Robert Brack wrote, “When there is no evidence of the original purpose for adopting a practice, the government may propose possible secular justifications for the challenged practice.”



On October 30, a federal appeals court blocked enforcement of a South Dakota law that would have required physicians to tell women seeking abortions that such procedures “terminate the life of a living human being.” The 2-1 decision by a panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit upheld a 2005 federal district court ruling in Rapid City, South Dakota, that issued a preliminary injunction blocking enforcement of a law passed by the ardently anti-abortion state legislature. The court majority held that the law replaced factual scientific information with value judgments held by a majority of state legislators. Judge Diana Murphy, in her majority ruling, also held that requiring doctors to convey information to patients that they believe is factually incorrect violates their First Amendment rights. “Governmentally compelled expression is particularly problematic when a speaker is required by the state to impart a political or ideological message contrary to the individual’s own views.”

South Dakota Attorney General Larry Long had not decided at press time whether to appeal the ruling to the entire (en banc) Eighth Circuit.



On October 27 a federal judge in New Mexico dismissed a lawsuit against the U.S. Air Force Academy by alumnus Mikey Weinstein and several other graduates who contended that the academy had violated their religious freedom by allowing evangelical chaplains free rein to proselytize students of other faith traditions. Judge James Parker of the U.S. District Court in Albuquerque said Weinstein and other plaintiffs did not show personal harm because they no longer attended the academy. Weinstein told the Associated Press, “Our fight is far from over.” An appeal is expected.



Religious organizations in New York State must provide birth control coverage if they offer health insurance, according to a unanimous decision of the New York Court of Appeals on October 19. The Empire State’s highest court agreed with lower courts that a 2003 state law mandating contraceptive coverage is constitutional.

The decision applies to faith-based charities, hospitals and schools. The law makes an exception for “religious employers” but that excep-

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## In the Courts, *continued from page 13*

tion does not apply, the court held, to schools, hospitals and social service providers. Observed Claire Hughes, correspondent for the Roundtable on Religion and Social Welfare Policy, "The court acknowledged that the law impedes the organization's constitutionally protected right to practice their religion. But it determined that even with the law in place, the social service providers could avoid paying for contraception if they didn't pay for other prescription drugs. And the judges concluded that such a burden on the religious charities was outweighed by the state's interest in providing women with access to health care equal to that afforded to men, which was the stated aim of the law."

The Women's Health and Wellness ACT (WHWA) had been challenged by ten Baptist and Catholic organizations active in the social welfare field.

Judge Robert S. Smith, who wrote the decision, concluded, "The burden the WHWA places on plaintiffs' religious practices is a serious one, but the WHWA does not literally compel them to purchase contraceptive coverage for their employees, in violation of their religious beliefs; it only requires that policies that provide prescription drug coverage include coverage for contraceptives."

The decision may be appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. The New York decision is similar to a 2004 ruling by the California Supreme Court, which upheld that state's Women's Contraceptive Equity Act. New York lawmakers modeled WHWA after the California law.



The Ohio Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of publicly funded, privately operated charter schools on October 25 by a 4-3 vote. School boards, education associations, the PTA and teacher's unions had charged that charter schools violate the Ohio Constitution. The majority opinion held, "As the statewide body, the General Assembly has the legislative authority and latitude to set the standards and requirements for common schools, including different standards for community schools," Justice Judith Lanzinger wrote for the majority.

But in a dissent, Justice Alice Robie Resnick argued that the Ohio Community Schools Act violates the Ohio Constitution because it "produces a hodgepodge of uncommon schools financed by the state."

Ohio has 250 charter schools. A case pending in a lower court involves specific allegations of violations of state law by some charter school operators. Ohio Federation of Teachers president Tom Mooney said, "Constitutional or not, this thing is clearly out of control. The taxpayers have lost control of over half a billion of their tax dollars."



The Oregon Supreme Court ruled in September that Portland Public Schools did not discriminate against atheist students by allowing the Boy Scouts to recruit during school hours. Even though the Boy Scouts require a belief in God to become a member, the court held that no discrimination took place at school because neither the recruiter nor the Scout material distributed during lunchtime to elementary school boys mentioned religion. "It is in the later enrollment in the organization that the Boy Scouts differentiate among those who do not profess a belief in a deity and those who do," Justice W. Michael Gillette wrote in an opinion issued September 8. "That enrollment, however, is not done by the school district."

The 6-1 decision reversed the Oregon Court of Appeals, which, in 2005, held that the school district had contributed to discrimination

by allowing the Boy Scouts to recruit during school hours in 1996 at Harvey Scott Elementary School.

The mother of a first-grader, Remington Powell, sued because the Scouts do not allow atheists to join. The state's highest court, however, said the school district is not responsible for that policy.

"By its conduct in this case, the school district has done nothing more than permit a community group to provide nondiscriminatory information to parents and students, who may then voluntarily decide the extent of their involvement, or noninvolvement, in such activities," Gillette wrote.

Justice Rives Kistler dissented, arguing that the recruitment effort "divided the elementary school children into two groups: those whose religious views agreed with the Scouts' views and those whose views did not."



Judge Robert E. Littlefield Jr. of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of New York has ruled that charitable or religious contributions are no longer considered a necessary living expense for those filing Chapter 13 bankruptcy.

"This change effectively closes the door for debtors who are above the median income from deducting charitable contributions as an expense," Littlefield wrote in his August 28 opinion.

The judge based his ruling on a law that went into effect last October which deems "tithing" acceptable only in very limited circumstances, such as for ministers who must donate as part of their contract.

Littlefield said the 2005 law trumps the Religious Liberty and Charitable Donation Protection Act, signed in 1998 by President Clinton, which allowed tithing under the bankruptcy code.

More than two million Americans filed for bankruptcy protection in 2005 according to the National Association of Consumer Bankruptcy Attorneys. Henry Sommer, president of the group, said the legislation favors the credit industry at the expense of religious liberty.

"Some people who need bankruptcy protection may hesitate to file if they are not allowed to tithe and would then be denied the relief they might need," Sommer said. "It makes you choose between spiritual necessity and physical necessity,"

The opinion was handed down in the case of Frank and Patricia Diagostino of Massena, N.Y., who filed chapter 13 bankruptcy in March. When reporting monthly expenses, they included \$100 for "continued charitable contributions." The amount was rejected by the bankruptcy trustee, who said the Diagostinos made more than the state's median income level, thus prohibiting them from making charitable contributions.

Judge Littlefield criticized the legislation, but said the "court's hands are tied" until Congress revisits the issue at some future time.



The federal government filed a lawsuit alleging religious discrimination against Suffern, New York, a Rockland County town that denied a zoning variance to a residence where Orthodox Jews stay on the Sabbath while visiting patients in Good Samaritan Hospital.

The facility, Bikur Cholim, is located across the street from the hospital and offers food and lodging to Orthodox Jews, who are not permitted to drive or cook on the Sabbath or religious holidays.

The U.S. Justice Department in September alleged that when the village denied a zoning variance to the facility, known as a "shabbos house," it violated the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000.

“This lawsuit enforces Congress’ determination that local zoning regulations must give way when they unlawfully burden religious exercise,” said U.S. Attorney Michael Garcia.



Three Wiccan families and two Wiccan churches filed suit on September 29 against the Department of Veterans Affairs for its nine-year refusal to include the Wiccan symbol on graves of veterans of that faith tradition. The nature-based religion, recognized by the Internal Revenue Service and the military chaplaincies as a legitimate religion, has been unsuccessful in its request to have its pentacle (a five-pointed star inside a circle) added to the list of approved emblems for U.S. military cemeteries. The ACLU brought suit on behalf of the plaintiffs before the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims in Washington, D.C.



A family whose 12-year-old daughter was forbidden to read the Bible on her lunch hour at a Maryland school filed suit on October 2 in federal court, alleging that the school’s action violated the girl’s civil and religious rights. On September 14, a vice principal at Dwight D. Eisenhower Middle School in Laurel, Maryland, ordered Amber Mangum to cease reading the Bible or face disciplinary action. The school’s decision apparently violated Prince George’s County school policies regarding religion, which says that students “may read their Bibles or other scriptures, say grace before meals, and pray before tests to the same extent they may engage in comparable, non-disruptive activities.”



A federal judge ruled on September 8 that Cobb County, Georgia, commissioners can invoke the name of Jesus at public meetings. Judge Richard Story held that clergy could “identify the deity to whom they direct their prayer” but he also criticized the way clergy were selected

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## *ARL in Action*

### **ARL Joins Abortion Case Amicus**

Americans for Religious Liberty signed on to the *amici curiae* brief filed by the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC) in *Gonzales v. Planned Parenthood Federation of America*, and *Gonzales v. Carhart*, two consolidated cases heard by the Supreme Court on November 8.

Several Jewish and mainline Protestant organizations joined in the brief with ARL as did a number of individual clergy and theologians, including seven Episcopal bishops, the president of Union Theological Seminary and several professors of religious studies. All the participants are “dedicated to preserving religious freedom for all persons and, within this context, to ensuring that abortion laws protect a woman’s right to act according to her religious beliefs and conscience in this most private, personal decision.”

At least five principles are enunciated in the RCRC brief. They are: First, “Historically, there has been no consensus among American religious organizations concerning reproductive freedom.” Second, “There is no consensus today among religious communities that abortion regulations should not protect the health of the woman.” Third, “Many religions support a woman’s right to make reproductive decisions without government interference.” Fourth, “Many religions support abortion where necessary to protect the life or health of the woman.” And fifth, “Many religious organizations and individuals have fought against legislation that risks women’s health.”

Finally, the brief invokes the experience of other nations, since recent Supreme Court decisions have cited international law as influencing U.S. notions of justice, particularly *Roger v. Simmons* and *Lawrence v. Texas*. Citing a United Nations study, many Protestant, Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Jewish and Islamic nations “permit abortions to protect the life or health of the pregnant woman.” The brief says, “These countries represent a diversity of political and religious positions, but they share an ability to integrate principles of faith with a state interest in regulating abortion in such a way as to protect both the health and the life of a pregnant woman.”

### **Publications**

Al Menendez’ and Edd Doerr’s article “The First Amendment Intends the Separation of Church and State” has been published in the anthology *Civil Liberties* (Greenhaven Press, 2006, 154pp). The article, originally titled “That Wall” was published earlier in the September/October 1999 issue of *Liberty*. Print copies of the article are available from ARL for \$1.00, to cover postage and handling.

Edd Doerr’s 2003 article “The Catholic Church Routinely Ignores Child Sexual Abuse by Clergy” (originally titled “A Culture of Clergy Sexual Abuse”) has been reprinted in the book *Child Abuse*, edited by Lucinda Almond (Greenhaven Press, 2006, 183 pp.) Copies of the article are available from ARL for \$1.00, to cover postage and handling.

### **Declaration in Defense of Science and Secularism**

ARL’s Edd Doerr is a signatory of the “Declaration in Defense of Science and Secularism,” released at a press conference in Washington on November 14. The Declaration expresses concern “with the resurgence of fundamentalist religions across the nation, and their alliance with political-ideological movements to block science.” The statement, signed also by numerous philosophers and scientists, including three Nobel Laureates, deplores the “intelligent design” creationist movement that is bent on undermining evolution in science classes, opposition to embryonic stem cell research, ill-advised “abstinence only” sexuality education, and dismissal of scientists’ warning about global warming. Finally, the Declaration calls on politicians of all parties to base policies on scientific rather than religious principles. The entire statement may be found on the web at [www.cfide.org](http://www.cfide.org).

The Declaration is the “brainchild” of philosopher Paul Kurtz, a member of ARL’s National Advisory Board and founder of the Center for Inquiry-Transnational.

## In the Courts, *continued from page 15*

because certain faiths “were categorically excluded from the list.” The case was filed in August 2005 by the Georgia Chapter of the ACLU on behalf of seven taxpayers and residents who argued that references to Jesus constituted unconstitutional government endorsement of a particular religious faith.



A federal lawsuit filed in Washington State on September 12 could cause problems for the Bush administration’s faith-based social service program. Americans United charged that the Northwest Marriage Institute, recipient of \$97,750 in federal grants last year, improperly used federal money to promote a particular brand of Christianity. The Marriage Institute has only two employees, one of whom, Bob Whidden, Jr., is a former Church of Christ pastor who admits, “We are a faith-based organization and we do provide faith-based counseling based on the Bible as my counseling manual.” The Institute, based in Vancouver, Washington, purchased computers and other office equipment with the grants and hired a consultant to help obtain additional federal funding. Also named as defendants are the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Institute for Youth Development, which was a conduit for the funds.



Federal Judge John Shabaz ruled on September 5 that a lawsuit challenging “spirituality” programs in the Veterans Affairs health care programs may proceed.

The federal government had asked the court to dismiss the April challenge filed by the Freedom From Religion Foundation. The VA claimed there was no Establishment Clause violation, calling its care program a “benevolent accommodation” of religion. Judge Shabaz, however, held that the lawsuit challenged both direct and indirect government advancement of and entanglement with religion, necessitating a full legal inquiry.



A federal judge struck down an Ohio law restricting use of the RU-486 abortion pill, saying the law was unclear and contained no exceptions in cases where a woman’s health was at risk. The September 27 ruling by U.S. District Judge Susan Dlott invalidated a 2004 law which barred doctors from prescribing RU-486 after the seventh week of pregnancy. In September 2004 Judge Dlott had issued a temporary injunction barring enforcement of the law. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists joined the suit filed by women’s rights and health groups.



A federal judge in St. Louis ordered a southeastern Missouri school district to cease school-initiated prayer and religious assemblies. Suit was filed in July by ACLU on behalf of a woman and her two children who objected to mandatory school assemblies that began with teacher-led prayer. U.S. District Judge Henry Autrey ruled on August 30 that the Doniphan R-1 school district cease from espousing any religious faith but also said his ruling does not forbid “any student at his or her own

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initiative from voluntarily praying in a non-disruptive, non-coercive fashion during non-instructional time.”



The Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled 5-1 in September that a divorced man may tell his 13-year old daughter about his belief in polygamy despite his ex-wife’s objections. The state’s highest court held that the man, Stanley Shepp, had a constitutional right to express his beliefs about plural marriage even though bigamy is illegal.



A superior court judge in California rejected Hindu claims that state-approved middle school textbooks portray Hinduism negatively and inaccurately. Judge Patrick Marlette, in a September 6 opinion, rejected the claims filed in a lawsuit in March by the Hindu American Foundation and the Veda Foundation, which asked for more than 500 revisions to the textbooks. Marlette ruled that the plaintiffs’ arguments were “unpersuasive” and that the texts were “dispassionate and neutral” in their presentations of Hindu religious history. He did, however, ask the state board of education to rewrite textbook adoption procedures and regulations.



A Wisconsin state program allowing employees to donate some of their salaries to charities may not exclude religious groups, a federal judge ruled on September 29. U.S. District Judge John Shabaz wrote, “Excluding a religious charitable organization from participation in the Wisconsin State Employees Combined Campaign solely because that organization discriminates on the basis of religion or creed in choosing its governing board and employees is constitutionally impermissible.”

The state had argued that excluding religious charitable groups was in line with state policy forbidding religious discrimination. Some religious groups use religion as a basis for employment or membership on their governing boards. But Judge Shabaz said that the state cannot deny applications from qualified faith-based charities on the basis of how religious affiliation is used to select board members or employees.

The Association of Faith-Based Organizations, based in Springfield, Virginia, filed the lawsuit against the state last spring. The State Department of Administration initiated the ban on religious group participation in the State Employees Combined Campaign, which began in the 1970s, and donated \$2.8 million to various charities in the year 2005. ■



# Updates

## State Department Issues Annual Religious Freedom Review

The U.S. State Department released its annual report on religious freedom on September 15. The report was immediately criticized for removing criticisms of Saudi Arabia that had appeared previously.

This year the State Department omitted the statement: "Religious freedom does not exist in Saudi Arabia," which had been included in the previous eight years' reports. The annual analysis did not indicate substantial changes in the Kingdom's religious policies. It did include this comment: "The Saudi government enforces a strictly conservative interpretation of Sunni Islam and Muslims who do not adhere to it can face significant society discrimination and serious repercussions at the hands of the ... religious police." But Saudi Arabia has taken steps, such as revising school textbooks "to weed out disparaging remarks towards religious groups" and curbing "harassment of religious practice."

Israel was criticized for constructing a wall that "limited access to sacred sites and seriously impeded the work of religious organizations that provide humanitarian relief and social services to Palestinians." Seven nations were singled out for "particular concern." They are:

- Burma, where the government infiltrates and monitors the "activities of virtually all organizations."
- China, where "the government's respect for freedom of religion and freedom of conscience remained poor."
- Eritrea, in which civil authorities "continued to harass, arrest and detain members of independent Evangelical groups."
- Iran, where "there was further deterioration of the extremely poor status of respect for religious freedom."
- North Korea, where critics "allege that they witnessed the arrests and execution of members of underground Christian churches."
- Sudan, where the government has repressed Christians in the northern provinces.
- Vietnam, where clergy and religious groups "at variance with state laws and policies" are restricted by the governing authorities.

## Military Chaplain Issue Unresolved

The Defense Authorization Act, which sets the spending levels of the Pentagon, is being held up by a dispute over whether chaplains can offer sectarian prayers at nondenominational military events. Senator John Warner (R-VA), chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, is opposed to a provision included in the House bill (and pushed by conservative Republicans) that would allow chaplains to offer specifically denominational prayers, even in mandatory settings that include people of many faith traditions. The Defense Department, the official military chaplains association, and numerous ecumenical religious groups oppose the House measure, saying it would create unnecessary religious divisions in the military and would undermine the role of the chaplaincy itself, which is supposed to serve all military personnel. The National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces opposes the House version, while a group of nine evangelical denominations supports it.

The Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty and 14 religious and civil liberties groups called the provision "unnecessary and unwise" in a September 19 letter to Congress. BJC general counsel K. Hollyn Hollman said, "Chaplains recognize that ministry in the military takes place in a pluralistic setting and that the focus should be on the armed

## Philip Paulson

Philip Kevin Paulson, who waged a sometimes lonely 17-year legal battle to remove the Mount Soledad cross from public property, died of liver cancer on October 25 in San Diego. He was 59. The Wisconsin native, whose grandfather was a Lutheran pastor, was a Vietnam veteran and a passionate defender of the First Amendment. Something of a vagabond, Paulson dabbled in many professions, from journalism to working in shipyards, oil fields and apple orchards. He taught computer and business classes at National University in San Diego in recent years. While a self-professed atheist, Paulson said he held no animus toward Christianity or any other religion. He felt that the government should not honor one religion over others, particularly in a memorial commemorating Korean War veterans. In a recent interview with *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, Paulson said, "The real message is equal treatment under the law, and religious neutrality. That's the purpose of why I did it. It has nothing to do with me being an atheist. The fact is, the Constitution calls for no preference and that's why every judge ruled for me. ... I don't harbor those kind of feelings," he said. "My mother's a Christian. I was raised a devout Christian. I'm not anti-Christian. The reason I did it is because it's not fair to the other religions. America is not just the Christian religion."

Many of those who support the presence of the cross on public land praised Paulson's sincerity, including Mayor Jerry Sanders and Phil Thalheimer, chairman of the group lobbying for the cross's retention.

service members and the soldiers' freedom to freely express their faith. This issue is best left up to chaplains, the Department of Defense and religious endorsing agents, not lawmakers on Capitol Hill."

The *Washington Post* editorialized on September 21, calling the House provision "unnecessary and divisive." It said, in part, "We respect the chaplains' convictions about the demands of their faith. But we are also concerned about having such sectarian prayers at events that military personnel of other faiths, or no faith at all, are compelled to attend. No one disputes that chaplains are free to pray as they wish, and as their religion demands, at private, voluntary services. The argument is about what rules should govern religious speech at public, nonreligious events. ... Mr. Warner deserves credit for his efforts to get the amendment out of the authorization bill. But the better resolution of this complicated and divisive issue would be for Congress to stay out of it and leave the matter in the hands of the military services. In the long run, the best resolution would be not to drain prayer at public ceremonies of specific religious content but to discourage prayer at such events as inherently and unnecessarily divisive."

## Evangelical Influence on U.S. Foreign Policy Grows

In a major article in *Foreign Affairs* (September/October 2006), Walter Russell Mead traces an expanding influence on U.S. foreign policy by American evangelicals, though he doesn't say precisely how this is happening. "The growing influence on evangelicals has affected U.S. foreign policy in several ways; two issues in particular illustrate the result-

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## Update, continued from page 17

ant changes. On the question of humanitarian and human rights policies, evangelical leadership is altering priorities and methods while increasing overall support for both foreign aid and the defense of human rights. And on the question of Israel, rising evangelical power has deepened U.S. support for the Jewish state, even as the liberal Christian establishment has distanced itself from Jerusalem.”

Mead suggests that evangelicals “have made religious freedom – including the freedom to proselytize and to convert – a central focus of their efforts.” He also argues that “the current evangelical movement in the United States has not yet run its course” and says that “fostering Muslim-evangelical dialogue may be one of the best ways to forestall the threat of civilizational warfare.”

Mead skirts the question of why evangelicals tend to support uncritically U.S. wars abroad, especially if initiated by Republican presidents, and sees the rising evangelical influence as benign.

## Evolution Education Wins in Michigan

The Michigan State Board of Education voted unanimously to approve science guidelines which include evolution. “Content expectations for high school graduation requirements in science” must include appropriate instruction in evolution, after a vote on October 10. The Michigan Department of Education could not have been clearer. “In approving the Science content expectations, the State Board also solidified its strong support for Evolution.”

Glenn Branch, of the National Committee for Science Education, noted: “Members of the board of education were outspoken about their support for the integrity of evolution education.”

## Dobson Calls the Shots

James Dobson and other Religious Right allies have increasingly influenced the distribution of U.S. funds for health and humanitarian efforts abroad, the *Boston Globe* reported on October 9. The situation has become so bad that even the revered CARE program, known for its efforts to prevent starvation in postwar Europe, has lost government support, while faith-based groups reap the bounty of government lar-

gess. CARE has lost its aid, thanks to attacks from Pennsylvania Republican Senator Rick Santorum, who called the group “anti-American” last year. The mechanism that delivers U.S. assistance, the Agency for International Development (USAID), was called a “liberal cancer” by James Dobson, head of the powerful Religious Right lobby, Focus on the Family.

The *Boston Globe’s* Michael Kranish wrote, “The complaining paid off. CARE’s \$50 million contract is being phased out this year; it has been replaced with a \$200 million program of grants that is targeted at faith-based providers, and overseen by USAID itself. The pressure on CARE is emblematic of that facing many other secular groups. President Bush’s faith-based initiative has not only increased funding for church groups, but also raised the expectations of the religious right, which has asserted a stronger role in setting policy.” In 2001 CARE had received \$138 million.

The *Globe* also reported bitter infighting within USAID, when Bush operatives tried to install officials with ties to faith-based groups in major positions. Even when they were successful, sniping continued, forcing several religious conservatives to resign, mainly because they sought to preserve a balance between secular and religious priorities, particularly in the conflict between condom distribution and abstinence programs in overseas programs to fight HIV/AIDS.

Discrimination in favor of Christian, primarily evangelical, organizations was also uncovered by the Boston paper. “The *Globe* survey of prime contractors and grantees indicated that 98.3 percent of funds to faith-based groups went to Christian-led organizations. Eugene Lin, a former employee of the office of faith-based programs at USAID, said the office catered mostly to evangelical Christians. He calculated that of 167 organizations invited to discuss potential grants during a 15-month period ending in September 2004, only five were non-Christian.”

Lin was fired for complaining about innate religious bias in program administration. He has filed a religious discrimination complaint alleging that his Jewish faith was a factor in his dismissal. Though he lost his case before a USAID panel in July, Lin has filed an appeal. Charges of government discrimination based on the religious affiliation of grantees have resulted in several court cases. Courts have ruled that two secular groups involved in AIDS relief, DKT International and Pathfinder International, were victims of First Amendment violations. The American Jewish World Service, which received a small grant for AIDS work in Kenya, has no longer sought funds “because of the politics involved,” U.S. international aid director Julia Greenberg told the *Globe*.

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## Red Mass Stresses Religion, Government Ties

The 53<sup>rd</sup> annual Red Mass at Washington’s Roman Catholic Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle on October 1 stressed the alleged links between religion and public policy. Archbishop Donald Wuerl, in his first appearance as the capital city’s Catholic religious leader, argued that “morality and ethics cannot be divorced from their religious antecedents” and that religious faith is a “cornerstone” of U.S. law. A relatively low-key address that did not exacerbate conservative-liberal differences, the Wuerl homily took a fairly broad, even innocuous, view of history, though he stressed that religion and morality should undergird public policy. Four of the five Catholic Supreme Court justices were in attendance, as were five members of President Bush’s cabinet. Also attending were ambassadors from Argentina, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Malta, Norway, Portugal and Venezuela.

The event is sponsored by the John Carroll Society, a Washington-based organization for Catholic professionals, and has been held at the neo-Byzantine Cathedral since 1953. Critics have often charged that the Red Mass gives one religion a unique access to government officials and tends toward informal establishment. The Red Mass originated in

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medieval Europe among lawyers and judges and has been held in New York City since 1928. The term comes from the red vestments worn by the clergy, as in all Masses of the Holy Spirit, whose symbol is red from the “tongues of fire” reported in the New Testament event of Pentecost. In Washington it is timed to coincide with the beginning of the Supreme Court’s fall term.

## Both Parties Slip in Public Esteem

A Gallup Poll released on October 26 suggested that neither Democrats nor Republicans are seen as favorably as one year ago. Only 41% of Americans say the Republican Party shares their views on “religion in politics,” compared to 53% a year ago. The Democrats are seen by 48% as being in agreement in their views on religion in politics compared to 53% in 2005. Only 51% of Republicans “represent their values” – a drop of 6% – and 56% say the Democrats do so, down from 58% a year ago.

A Pew Poll released in August shows a sharp decline in voters who believe that either party is “friendly” toward religion, though Republicans generally receive higher ratings on this question.

## Anti-Choice Group Loses Tax Exemption

The Internal Revenue Service revoked the tax exemption of the anti-abortion group Operation Rescue West, which openly opposed Sen. John Kerry’s bid for the White House in 2004. Catholics For a Free Choice filed a complaint against Operation Rescue West that year, accusing the anti-abortion group of partisan political activity.

During the Democratic Party’s convention in 2004, Operation Rescue West placed an ad in *The Wanderer*, a conservative Catholic weekly, that asked readers to offer tax deductible donations to help “defeat (John Kerry) in November and enable President Bush to appoint a pro-life Supreme Court Justice.” Operation Rescue West was also known as Youth Ministries Inc.

Frances Kissling, president of Catholics For a Free Choice, said she hopes “the revocation of Operation West’s tax-exempt status will send a clear message to tax-exempt groups that think they are above the law.”

## Nevada Allows Wiccan Cemetery Symbols

A memorial plaque for an American soldier will be displayed with a symbol for his Wiccan faith, despite the federal government’s refusal to display the marker.

Sgt. Patrick Stewart, the posthumous recipient of the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart, was killed in Afghanistan in September 2005. Stewart’s spot on the memorial wall at the Northern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Fernley, Nevada, has stayed empty, because his widow, Roberta Stewart, was not allowed to include a Wiccan symbol on the plaque. The Wiccan faith is not on the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs’ list of 38 approved religions.

However, the Nevada attorney general informed the state Office of Veterans Services in September that the state will erect a marker in the state-managed cemetery.

The Nevada agency will pay for the bronze plaque and put it on the memorial wall. The plaque will feature the Wiccan pentacle: a five-pointed star contained in a circle, representing earth, wind, fire, water and spirit.

“I’m honored and ecstatic,” Roberta Stewart told the Associated Press. “I’ve been waiting a year for this.”

Tim Tetz, executive director of the Nevada Office of Veterans Services, said, “I am pleased we are able to recognize Sgt. Stewart’s sacrifice and the ideals for which he stood.” (See VOR 96 for additional background information.)

## Schools Renounce Religious Paintings

The school board in Harrison County, West Virginia, voted 4 to 1 on October 6 to cease displays of religious paintings or devotional art at Bridgeport High School. The decision effectively ends the *Sklar v. Harrison County Board of Education* suit that was filed by the American Civil Liberties Union Foundation of West Virginia and Americans United, challenging the constitutionality of a display of Warner Sallman’s “Head of Christ” at the high school. The portrait has been stolen from the school and not recovered, but the board action forestalls the possibility of a replacement. The board said it will not allow displays or “any items with religious content” in a nonacademic context or setting.

## Pentecostals are Surprisingly Political, Says Pew

A survey in ten countries by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life reveals that Pentecostal Christianity is not only on the rise in Africa, Asia, and the Americas, but is becoming a powerful political force. Pentecostalism was founded in Los Angeles a century ago, and has become the Christian religion of choice for disadvantaged and disaffected masses in many countries. Its impact, through the allied Charismatic movement, has been felt in the old-line Protestant and Catholic churches. In the past, Pentecostals were known for separatism and disinterest in politics and public life. But that has changed, as the groups see the world as an increasingly hostile place, where government and education are viewed as adversaries. Pentecostals lean to the political Right or far-Right, particularly in Guatemala, Chile and the United States. “This is a group much more interested in politics and public affairs than we anticipated,” observed John C. Green, a senior fellow in religion and politics at the Pew Forum. Pentecostals and their allies constitute a majority of the population in Guatemala and Kenya, and are over 40% in Brazil and the Philippines, traditional Roman Catholic countries.

## Chaplaincy Guidelines Modified

At the last minute of the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress, a provision that would have permitted military chaplains to offer sectarian prayers at mandatory events was dropped from the military spending bill, the National Defense Authorization Act. This pleased an interfaith coalition. But lawmakers also decided to rescind guidelines issued last year by the Air Force and Navy in an attempt to limit religious coercion and proselytizing. New York Democrat Steve Israel called the move “a full step forward and a half step back.” Israel, a member of the House Armed Services Committee, added, “We removed dangerous language undermining religious freedom and military effectiveness, but I am distressed that instead of moving forward with unequivocal religious tolerance in the military, we are reopening old loopholes that permitted some acts of coercion and proselytizing.”

The issue thus remains unresolved until the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress convenes next year.

*continued on page 20*

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Update, continued from page 19

## Congress Dabbled in Religion at the Home Stretch

Religious Right conservatives moved to appease their base voters by hastily passing religious-inspired legislation during the frantic closing days of the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress. The House repassed a bill barring interstate travel for abortions, but the Senate failed to amass the required 60 votes to bring it to a full vote. The so-called Public Expression of Religion Act sailed through the House but was not considered in the Senate. Internet gambling was banned on October 1. Jim Leach (R-Iowa) “piloted the measure through Congress” (said *Guardian Unlimited* business reporter Andrew Clark). The ban was attached at the last minute to a bill strengthening security at U.S. ports. An odd coalition of religious and sporting groups supported the ban, which passed on a 409-2 vote in the House and by voice vote in the Senate.

Clark wrote, “Religious organizations are the main opponents of internet betting. But their stance is backed by more secular interests, such as America’s horseracing authorities, which want an effective monopoly on racetrack betting, and sports bodies such as the National Football League and the National Basketball Association, which fear that bribery and corruption could become endemic if their contests are the subject of multimillion dollar wagers.”

Enforcing the legislation may not be so easy since financial institutions are supposed to track down and cancel online betting transactions.

## Most Texas Bible Courses Fail the Constitution Test

The vast majority of Texas public school Bible courses are inadequate and probably unconstitutional, according to a report released on September 13 by the Texas Freedom Network. The principal author of “Reading Writing and Religion: Teaching the Bible in Texas Public Schools,” Mark Chancey, concluded, “[M]ost public-school Bible classes inappropriately and unconstitutionally present sectarian views as fact and adopt an overall approach that explicitly or implicitly encourages adoption of religious beliefs, typically those held within certain branches of Protestant Christianity. Further, by explicitly or implicitly encouraging commitment to those particular beliefs, these classes can be construed as disparaging other religious views.”

Chancey is a professor of religion at Southern Methodist University. His study analyzed the 25 districts out of 1,031 statewide that offered elective classes on the Bible during the 2005-2006 academic year. Last year, he wrote a scathing review of the course study prepared by the National Council on Bible Curriculum in Public Schools, which, he said, “betrays an obvious bias toward a view of the Bible held by fundamentalist Protestants.”

Most of the courses were explicitly devotional and sectarian and were taught by teachers with no academic training in Biblical, religious or theological studies. Many were openly hostile to separation of church and state, religious tolerance, religious freedom and pluralism. The courses were not taught in a historical or literary context and were closer in content to a Sunday school class than to a serious academic course. Many courses use supplementary materials from right-wing special interest groups that have questionable academic value. Most of the class offerings “reflect an almost exclusively Christian perspective of the Bible and assume that students are Christians, that Christian theological claims are true, and that the Bible itself is divinely inspired.”

The report praised only three districts, the North East Independent School District in San Antonio and the Leander and Whiteface Independent School Districts. They showed “that it is possible to teach Bible courses in an objective and nonsectarian manner appropriate to

public school classrooms.”

TFN President Kathy Miller said, “We stand with parents who believe that the Bible is a great way to teach students about the importance of religion in history and literature. But we think pressure groups have hijacked a good idea and the end result is that these courses can betray families’ faith in our public schools by teaching courses with a narrow religious perspective above all others.”

## Black Churches Shortchanged by Bush Program

While President Bush loves to be seen schmoozing with African-American preachers, his administration has done little to ensure that their churches participate in his multi-billion dollar faith-based initiative. A survey released on September 19 by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies found that less than 3% of the predominantly black churches surveyed have participated in Bush’s signal domestic program. A few conservative churches that participated were celebrated in the media and by Republican officials but the majority of black church participants were in the Northeast and were those with “self-identified progressive congregations and liberal theologies,” according to the report.

## Naval Chaplain Reprimanded

At a special court-martial in Norfolk, Virginia, in September, Lt. Gordon James Klingenschmitt, a chaplain from the tiny Evangelical Episcopal Church, was convicted of disobeying orders. He may receive fines or be removed from the Navy Chaplancy Corps. Klingenschmitt has engaged in sectarian activities, even in public settings where his superiors insisted on a more appropriate nondenominational demeanor.

Klingenschmitt’s case arose after the Navy issued new rules in February saying chaplains may conduct worship “according to the manner and forms” of their religious organizations, but are encouraged to use inclusive prayers outside worship settings.

Klingenschmitt opposed this ruling and protested outside of the White House on March 30 in his uniform, despite being told by his superiors that this is contrary to military policy.

The conviction was endorsed by Michael Weinstein, an Air Force veteran and former Reagan White House legal counsel. “The ruling has brought us one step closer to ensuring that the constitutional guarantee of the separation of church and state is upheld within our nation’s armed forces,” said Weinstein, founder of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation.

## Church and State Unite to Defeat Feds

In an unusual church-state confrontation, the local government of Sunland Park, New Mexico, and the Roman Catholic diocese of Las Cruces, co-owners of Mount Cristo Rey, rejected a National Guard offer to “patrol” the mountain in order to catch illegal immigrants. On July 18 the City Council voted 4-2 to deny a right-of-entry permit to the National Guard.

A statue of Jesus atop the mountain was dedicated in 1940. On the last Sunday in October, a pilgrimage to the site draws visitors from both Mexico and the U.S. But the U.S. Border Patrol tightened security on September 11 and no longer permits access from the U.S. side. The mountaintop offers views of Texas, New Mexico, and Mexico, and is located in the extreme southeastern corner of New Mexico. So far, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has accepted the City Council’s decision. A local Catholic pastor, Rev. Ed Herrera Chavez, told the

*Arizona Daily Star*, "If you come to church and the National Guard is there around the border of the church, where is the separation of church and state?"

## Catholic Culture Damaged by Bishops' Mistakes

Joseph Bottum, editor of the conservative journal *First Things* (October issue), argues in a provocative article, "When the Swallows Come Back to Capistrano," that U.S. Catholic bishops are largely responsible for the declining fortunes of their church. "There's a tone of contempt for the nation's bishops you hear widely from Catholics in the United States: left or right, active or inactive, orthodox or heterodox. Even when particular bishops are praised, they are usually cast as exceptions - which is surely a sign of the general crisis of authority that afflicts American Catholicism. The Church lost something from the battles of the 1970s to the revelations of the priest scandals in 2002, and though Catholic culture in America may have begun its return, the institutional Church has yet to reclaim much of what it lost."

The failure to confront the priest sex abuse scandal has weakened the hierarchy's ability to address other political, moral and social issues. "As the situation grew more and more ungovernable, many bishops seemed to retreat to their role as businessmen in charge of major financial institutions and concerned primarily with public relations and legal liabilities. Ecclesially and theologically, that was a horrendous decision, and its huge costs - more than a billion dollars since 2002 in judgments and settlements for priestly abuse - prove it an equally bad financial decision. It is not even good business to concentrate solely on business."

## Wisconsin University Dumps Catholic Group

The University of Wisconsin at Madison announced on September 22 that it will no longer fund the University of Wisconsin Roman Catholic Foundation because only three of its 12 board members were students. School rules require that groups "be controlled and directed by the UW students," according to Yvonne Fangmeyer, director of the student organization office. A staff member of the Catholic group filed a complaint of religious discrimination with the civil rights division of the U.S. Department of Justice. Chancellor John Wiley's office told the *La Crosse Tribune* that the group would be reinstated if it restructured its board, opened its programs to all students and did not violate church-state separation. The Catholic group began a campus ministry in 1883 and opened St. Paul's Catholic Center in 1909, the first Catholic chapel at a secular university in the U.S. Tim Kruse, its spokesperson, said, "To us, this is just the latest in a series of disingenuous attempts by the university to hide under policy and procedures that were only intended so that they could discriminate against a religious viewpoint."

UWRCF had received \$145,000 in student fees. A Knights of Columbus affiliate, on campus for 30 years, was also "de-recognized" this summer.

## Prisons to Downplay Religion

On October 26 the Federal Bureau of Prisons canceled its plan to add "single-faith programs" to its existing multi-faith programs in the federal prison system. The decision may be related to a lawsuit filed in federal court in Wisconsin in May by the Freedom From Religion Foundation, which contended that the Life Connections Program, which stresses religion as an element of prisoner rehabilitation, is unconstitutional. A bureau spokesperson, Traci Billingsley, said the program was "undergoing major revisions."

## Safeguarding the Future

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

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

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## International

**Athens:** The officially established Greek Orthodox Church denounced the government (a conservative one, no less) in September for barring priests from hearing student confessions on public school premises. The Holy Synod protested the new regulations, which sharply limit the use of schools to carry out sacramental rites. The new policies were introduced to recognize Greece's emerging multicultural society. Nearly a million immigrants, mostly from Muslim countries, now reside in Greece.

**Baghdad:** While sectarian killings in Iraq have generally pitted Sunni Muslims against Shiite Muslims, the tiny but ancient Christian community has come under increasing oppression. Two worshippers were killed after Sunday Mass at the Chaldean Catholic Church of the Virgin Mary in Baghdad in October. A priest of the Syrian Orthodox Church was kidnapped in Mosul in October, and his beheaded body was found on October 11. Many churches have cancelled services after extremist Muslim groups threatened to kill all Christians. (Numerous Muslim clerics denounced these threats as a betrayal of Islam.) Many Christian families have relocated to safer neighborhoods. Attendance at a main Baghdad church has declined from 500 to 48. The last Iraqi census in 1987 counted 1.4 million Christians, but that number has declined to between 600,000 and 800,000, according to estimates from Catholic News Service.

Since the U.S. invasion, at least 100,000 Christians have applied for visas for Syria, Jordan and Turkey, according to Michael Luo in *The New York Times* (October 17, 2006). Members of the Chaldean Catholic Church and the Assyrian Christians, who still use Aramaic, the language of Jesus, in their worship services, have been hard hit by the turmoil and interfaith violence. Christians are fleeing Mosul, Basra and southern Baghdad in large numbers.

**Bangkok:** Prime Minister Surayud Chulanunt, who was installed by a military coup in September, told a group of foreign correspondents on November 7 that Islamic law, or Shariah, should be allowed in predominantly Muslim areas of Thailand. These areas have been in virtual revolt against previous Thai governments, resulting in 1,700 deaths in the far south region. The prime minister was once army chief of staff for the mostly Buddhist nation.

**Canterbury:** "The Church of England has launched an astonishing attack on the Government's drive to turn Britain into a multi-faith

*continued on page 22*

society," *The Sunday Telegraph* reported on October 8. Guy Wilkinson, the chief interfaith adviser to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, charged that England's Established Church had been marginalized and that Muslims had been accorded "preferential" treatment. The report claims that the Blair government has moved to appease the Muslim community after the July 2005 London bombings. Citing numerous legislative changes that allegedly favor Muslims over the 72% of Britons who called themselves Christians at the 2001 census, the Church of England said recent events had "undermined its interfaith agenda and produced no noticeable positive impact on community cohesion." The report, not yet released, says, "Indeed, one might argue that disaffection and separation is now greater than ever, with Muslim communities withdrawing further into a sense of victimhood, and other faith communities seriously concerned that the Government has given signals that appear to encourage the notion of a privileged relationship with sections of the Muslim community."

The document also adds, "The contribution of the Church of England in particular and of Christianity in general to the underlying culture remains very substantial."

**Jerusalem:** The Vatican's envoy to the Holy Land, Michel Sabbah, joined the bishops of the Episcopal, Evangelical Lutheran and Syrian Orthodox Churches in denouncing the Christian Zionist movement. The four bishops, whose churches have a strong following in the region, criticized a movement originating among U.S. evangelicals and fundamentalists who support Israel because of their theology of the End Times and Armageddon. In a statement reported by Reuters on August 31, the bishops declared, "The Christian Zionist programme provides a world view where the Gospel is identified with the ideology of empire, colonialism and militarism," and accused Christian Zionists of hurting hopes for Middle East peace.

"We reject the teachings of Christian Zionism that facilitate and support these policies as they advance racial exclusivity and perpetual war," the declaration added.

**London:** A parliamentary report issued on September 7 concluded that there is "a rising tide of prejudice" against Jews in Britain, including

530 attacks on Jewish-owned property in 2004. Anti-Semitism, lawmakers suggested, had become part of "mainstream society" and was widespread even on university campuses. The All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Anti-Semitism urged police to record anti-Semitic incidents and urged schools to teach religious tolerance. "Anti-Semitism is no longer the sole preserve of the political far-right, but occurs across the political spectrum, including the left," the report said.

**London:** Aishah Azmi, a Muslim teaching assistant at a Church of England school in Yorkshire, received \$2,000 on October 19 for "damages" in connection with a religious discrimination claim she filed last year. The government's Employment Tribunal rejected her claim of religious discrimination and harassment after being dismissed for refusing to remove a full-face veil called a *niqab*. Education officials in Dewsbury, Yorkshire, suspended her in November 2005 and held that religious separation was unacceptable. Prime Minister Tony Blair supported the school in a monthly press briefing at 10 Downing Street on October 17, calling the full veil, which covers all of a woman's face except her eyes, a "mark of separation" which makes non-Muslims "uncomfortable." Blair's comments were echoed by several Labour Cabinet members and Parliamentarians. Culture Secretary Tessa Jowell called veils "a symbol of women's subjugation to men." British Muslims rallied to Azmi's defense, denying that wearing the veil was a form of separation that limited communication with students and parents. Azmi said she would be willing to remove the veil in front of students and women teachers, but indicated that she was considering an appeal of the tribunal's decision to dismiss her broader claims of religious discrimination.

**London:** Queen Elizabeth II has given permission for an office at Windsor Castle to be set aside as a prayer room for Muslim employees. A similar policy has been in effect for several years at Buckingham Palace.

**Madrid:** The Spanish government is ending direct subsidies to the Catholic Church. Taxpayers would still be able to earmark a certain very small percentage of their tax money to the church (something offered to but rejected by other religions), but the government will no longer add to the amount designated by these taxpayers who choose to support the church in this way. The government provides the Catholic Church \$170 million annually, with \$35 million in direct subsidies, according to a September 23 report in *The New York Times*.

**Managua:** Nicaragua's legislature voted on October 26 to ban all abortions, including those necessary to save a woman's life. Signed into law by President Enrique Bolanos, the measure would eliminate a century-old exemption that permitted the procedure if three physicians certified that a woman's life was in the balance. The European Union and United Nations' representatives were critical of the decision, as were some members of the national medical association. The Women's Autonomous Movement and other women's rights groups may seek a court injunction against implementation of the new law. El Salvador and Chile also maintain a total ban on all abortions.

**Nairobi:** Evangelical Christians in Kenya are demanding that an internationally-renowned exhibit in Nairobi's National Museum edit out references to human evolution. "We are objecting to the message that the fossil exhibits represent the scientific evidence of human evolution" said Bishop Boniface Adoyo, chairman of the Evangelical Alliance of Kenya, which claims to represent churches of 35 denominations with 9 million members. "They do not. Human evolution is still a theory and this cannot be called as evidence."

Adoyo's remarks were made on September 18 and reported by Wired

## **The Case Against Charitable Choice:**

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News.com. The Nairobi exhibit includes the Turkana Boy, unearthed by Richard Leakey's team of paleontologists in 1984 and said to be about 1.6 million years old. The museum is presently closed for renovations and will reopen in 2007.

**Quebec City:** The Quebec ministry of education told "unlicensed" Christian evangelical schools that they must follow provincial education guidelines on teaching evolution and sex education or they will be shut down. The October decision followed complaints to a school board in Outaouais. Quebec law gives school boards authority to regulate education in all schools. An evangelical school spokesman, Alan Buchanan, told *The Ottawa Citizen* that their schools teach creationism and intelligent design as preferable to Darwinian evolution and emphasize abstinence in biology classes. There are about 30 unlicensed faith-based schools in Quebec, including Hasidic and evangelical ones. Dave Rogers wrote in *The Ottawa Citizen*, "The Quebec government has known about unaccredited religion-based schools for years, but has tolerated them, for fear of offending the denominations sponsoring them."

A possible compromise might allow some of these schools to con-

tinue their curricula by becoming "licensed" and by modifying their programs. *The Ottawa Citizen* noted that schools in Ontario are not required to teach evolution or sex education. Ontario has 900 "Independent Schools," which educate 120,000 students. Each Canadian province has its own rules regarding educational financing, standards and curriculum.

**Vatican City:** Pope Benedict XVI told seven visiting Ontario bishops that Canadian Catholic politicians are ignoring their religion and yielding to "ephemeral social trends and the spurious demands of public opinion polls."

"In the name of tolerance your country has had to endure the folly of the redefinition of spouse, and in the name of freedom of choice it is confronted with the daily destruction of unborn children," the Pope said.

Benedict continues to stress the gay marriage issue. In May he met with bishops from Atlantic Canada and told them Canada was "suffering from the pervasive effects of secularism" and pointedly referred to "the plummeting birth rate."

## Books and Culture

### Book Talk

Books exploring religion and politics and aimed primarily at evangelical readers continue to pour off the presses (at an alarming rate!). Among them are these three:

Gregory A. Boyd's *The Myth of a Christian Nation: How the Quest for Political Power is Destroying the Church* (Zondervan, 208 pp., \$19.99), argues that evangelicals are giving up their principles in a fight for political power. Pastor of a megachurch in the Twin Cities area, Boyd lost one-fifth of his members when he criticized the Republican Party. George G. Hunter III, in *Christian, Evangelical & ... Democrat?* (Abingdon, 120 pp., \$12), argues that conservative Christians should be involved in both parties and not uncritically support the GOP. Richard Kyle's *Evangelicalism: An Americanized Christianity* (Transaction, 353 pp. \$34.95) argues that "few religious bodies have Americanized the Christian faith as have conservative Protestants."

*Not in Our Classrooms: Why Intelligent Design is Wrong for our Schools*, edited by Eugenie C. Scott and Glenn Branch. Beacon Press, 171 pp., \$14.00.

It is more than a little disturbing that the U.S. brings up last in the whole industrial world in acceptance of evolution. This is due to the growing strength of U.S. fundamentalism and the weakness of school science education. A strong, fanatical anti-evolution movement is pitted against relatively scattered and unprepared opposition, a situation not duplicated in any other advanced country.

Fortunately, in *Not in Our Classrooms* Beacon Press has provided the indispensable tool for combating this grave threat to science and science education. In this concise, lucid, compact book the authors explain what "intelligent design" (ID) creationism is all about, what is wrong with it, who is behind it, and how they operate. The authors present the scientific, theological, and legal objections to ID creationism, plus a superb chapter on precisely how to combat this threat to education.

This important book cannot be recommended too highly.

Among the juicy tidbits in the book: Sen. Rick Santorum tried unsuccessfully to insert pro-creationism language in federal legislation, provided by ID legal theorist Philip Johnson; on November 7 Santorum

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

Edited by Eugenie C. Scott and Glenn Branch

"The indispensable guide to the threat of 'intelligent design' creationism in our public schools." —Edd Doerr

\$14 from ARL, plus \$2 for postage and handling.

was thrown out of the Senate by a landslide. In a creationist article an author asks "Would God have known that man would eventually try to explain life in evolutionary terms?"; so much for divine omniscience! Huston Smith, author of a popular college text on world religions, supports teaching ID in public schools; what can one expect from an "expert" whose textbook fails to differentiate between the liberal United Church of Christ and the conservative Church of Christ?

*Not in Our Classroom* may be ordered from Americans for Religious Liberty, Box 6656, Silver Spring, MD 20916. Cost is \$14.00 plus \$2.00 for postage and handling.

—Edd Doerr

*Faith and Politics: How the "Moral Values" Debate Divides America and How to Move Forward Together*, by Senator John Danforth. Viking, 238 pp., \$24.95.

John Danforth's book made waves during the last quarter of 2006. He is, after all, a blueblood Republican, heir to one of America's wealthiest families and an Episcopal priest. His Republican pedigrees could not be more authentic. Consequently, this plaintive critique of his party's capture by the Religious Right is compelling.

Danforth is not so much angry as sad. He is too much the gentleman to be strident, as so many other Religious Right critics have been. His

*continued on page 24*

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## Books and Culture, *continued from page 23*

call for civility and moderation may not be heard over the din of competing ideologies, but his lament for a lost Republican tradition deserves a hearing.

Danforth argues that his party is so completely dominated by the Christian Right that its fundamental character has changed. "In recent years, the wisdom of our founding fathers has been challenged as the Republican Party has identified itself with the political agenda of Christian conservatives." The Terri Schiavo case symbolized this surrender. "Republican leaders gladly abandoned principles that for decades had bound their party together in order to meet the demands of Christian conservatives. . . . That is the significance of the Terri Schiavo case. It was the total victory of Christian conservative activism over broadly shared Republican principles, a victory won with no resistance from traditional Republicans."

Danforth believes that Christians should be reconcilers, not dividers, in national politics, and should recognize that there is no single Christian position on most issues. "The problem is not that Christians are conservative or liberal, but that some are so confident that their position is God's position that they become dismissive and intolerant toward others and divisive forces in our national life."

Unfortunately, the Christian Right's use of wedge issues has proven to be successful, at least temporarily. "The Christian Right has championed a set of divisive issues that test the fealty of politicians. Often called wedge issues, their purpose is to split the country apart. . . . The Christian Right's strategy of splitting apart the American people has worked."

Danforth campaigned for approval of stem cell research in his home state of Missouri. He clashed with Religious Right zealots, whom he accuses of violating basic U.S. principles. "The notion that people with different religious views could co-opt politicians to the point of enacting their beliefs into law is more than offensive. It is a misuse of government to advance religion. It is a clear breach in the separation of church and state."

The author primarily aims his book at moderate Christians, rather than at a broader audience. He is convinced that they can turn the tide against the Christian Right. "Christianity does not give us an agenda for American politics. It does not provide policy positions that we can identify with certainty as being Christian. What it does offer is an approach, a way of thinking about and engaging in politics, that while not issue specific, is highly relevant to our ability to live together as one nation, despite our strongly held differences."

—Al Menendez

***Middle Church: Reclaiming the Moral Values of the Faithful Majority from the Religious Right***, by Bob Edgar. Simon & Schuster, 258 pp., \$25.00.

Edgar is a United Methodist minister, a former six-term (1975-1987) Democratic member of Congress from a staunchly Republican suburb of Philadelphia, and present general secretary of the National Council of Churches. He, thus, brings a wealth of experience to a discussion of religion's impact on politics.

Edgar coins a new term, "Middle Church," to refer to "mainstream people of all faiths" who seek to be "a force for justice, peace, the poor, and for the health of our fragile planet." He argues that truly religious people, including the "Middle Synagogue and the Middle Mosque," should support "ending poverty, and seeking nonviolent and peaceful solutions to the world's global conflicts."

The Religious Right, he says, has co-opted the voice of religious people and has distorted historic religious values. "It condones poverty, condemns peace and contributes to the despoiling of God's creation." He reminds readers, "The Bible mentions abortion not once, homo-

sexuality only twice, and poverty or peace more than two thousand times." Blasting the Right's control of government and the media, he writes, "Fear, fundamentalism and the Fox Broadcasting Company must not be allowed to set the agenda for our nation."

Edgar discusses peacekeeping options in an age of terrorism, civil liberties, a living wage, poverty, AIDS and other issues that should engage the priorities of people of good will. He conveys a sense of decency, common sense, compassion and humility. Former President Jimmy Carter says the book is "a stirring call to American believers who resent their spiritual beliefs being co-opted for a political agenda contrary to their faith."

—Al Menendez

***Whistling Past Dixie: How Democrats Can Win Without the South***, by Thomas F. Schaller. Simon & Schuster, 336 pp., \$26.00.

Conventional wisdom has it that the Democrats cannot win the presidency without the South. This is hogwash. In fact, Southern electoral votes only elected four presidents in the last 27 elections: Woodrow Wilson in 1916, Jimmy Carter in 1976, and George W. Bush in 2000 and 2004. All other winners, of either party, had enough electoral votes without relying on the South to put them over the top. (The South did contribute to the election of Truman in 1948, Kennedy in 1960, and Nixon in 1968, but all three also outpolled their opponents in the rest of the country.) Even Bill Clinton, who is often cited as proving the hypothesis, won only 4 of the 11 Southern states in his two campaigns. The South was the only major region that he lost. Being a Southerner does not guarantee a victory for a Democrat in Dixie. LBJ won his lowest support level in his native region in 1964. Jimmy Carter carried only one Southern state (his home state of Georgia) in 1980, and Al Gore lost the entire region, including Tennessee, in 2000.

As political scientist Schaller argues in a book brimming with charts, tables and statistics, a combination of racial and religious animosities and strongly held convictions has caused a near-permanent defection of white Southerners (71% of the region's vote) from the Democratic party. Racial issues hurt the party in the 1950s and 1960s, while cultural and foreign policy concerns damaged it further in the 1970s. Since the 1980s a resurgence of religious fundamentalism has catapulted the white South to the Republicans. In the seven elections from 1980 to 2004, Republican presidential nominees carried 68 Southern states while Democrats won nine. This is a complete reversal of the pattern that prevailed from 1880 to 1944, when Democrats carried 181 states and Republicans just six in the Old Confederacy.

Schaller says the Democratic future lies in a pan-western polygon formed by connecting Ohio, Montana, Nevada and New Mexico. The five states that will be crucial to a future Democratic majority are Arizona, Colorado, Montana, Ohio and Wisconsin."

The South does not represent America's future. "Bush's southern disposition swept into the Oval Office an elite-oriented, pious, secretive, culturally self-righteous form of corporate governance... Bush's presidency stands as the crowning moment in the South's slow rise to national prominence. Provincial and pious, evangelical and exclusive, and decidedly dismissive of dissent, the Bush administration has finally elevated to the Oval Office all of the worst aspects of the old, one-party style of southern rule."

Religion lies at the heart of the Democrats' problem in the South. The Republicans have surrendered to religious conservatives: "... only religion rivals race in terms of impact on the political identity and partisan behavior of southerners." Religious fundamentalists "have become the Republican Party's crucial base of support in the region." Even the once non-partisan clergy have become openly political. "Southern clergy have become to the Republican Party what labor leaders are to the Democrats: opinion leaders, political gatekeepers, and supervisors of formidable retail voter and volunteer delivery machines." This



new voter bloc affects more than just voting: "...the truth is that modern Republican Party is fueled by the ideas as well as the votes of its fundamentalist wing. ...By encouraging religious conservatives to disregard their historical aversions to political activity, the GOP set into motion the capture of its party by its southern wing. The South's religious conservatives now make demands of their party and the federal government, make them publicly, and quickly grow impatient when their demands are unmet."

However, this religious alliance may harm the party's long-term prospects. "Though policies like immigration have the potential to split apart the Republicans' pulpits-plus-profits coalition, the evangelical-inspired Republican obsession with "body issues" like abortion, stems cells, homosexuality, and end-of-life decision making threatens to undo the GOP's tenuous majority."

Schaller is not saying that Democrats should not be competitive in the South but that they should recognize that present day realities limit their probability of success. They should concentrate on those regions, from Ohio to Arizona, where demographic economic and cultural conditions make election victories more likely.

This is an intriguing, challenging and thoughtful analysis of today's politics.

—Al Menendez

*The Holy Vote: The Politics of Faith in America*, by Ray Suarez. Harper Collins, 326 pp., \$24.95.

Suarez is a PBS reporter, now with Jim Lehrer's NewsHour and formerly with National Public Radio. *The Holy Vote* examines the intersections between religion and politics and how the increasing polarization along religious lines is affecting many areas of national life. Separate chapters look at gay marriage, the Ten Commandments, creationism, religious conflict in public schools, abortion, the historic concept of church-state separation and the unique views of church and politics held by African Americans and Latinos.

Suarez makes an interesting point about "God-talk" in presidential rhetoric. "One important difference between the way God is invoked by the president today versus how it was done in other eras in American history is that then 'God talk' provided a rhetorical flourish, a flourish of trumpets at the close of an address. In the Bush era, 'God' also provides a lot of the thrust of the argument. While defenders may point out all the times God appears in the words of Lincoln, Wilson, both Roosevelts, Eisenhower, Carter, and others, the Almighty has now moved from the wings to the center of the speech, and this is something new in presidential rhetoric."

War-peace issues and the question of religious activities in the military are also covered in this far-ranging book. Another chapter on Catholics in American politics from Al Smith to John Kerry serves as a useful reminder of how a once despised minority became a mainstream faith that exercised considerable political clout. While Catholics voted heavily for Governor Al Smith in 1928 and Senator John F. Kennedy in 1960, they failed to give Senator John Kerry even a majority in 2004. The reasons lay in economics and status. "For someone with Kerry's apparently real distaste for too much public airing of private religious concerns, running against George W. Bush presented a daunting challenge."

Suarez's conclusion is worth noting: "Religion has turned out to be a potent tool in rousing people and driving them to join winning electoral alliances. Religion has been less successful in helping us create the blessed community, the one people on all sides of the hottest debates in our common life hope... and pray for."

The book is based largely on interviews with participants and a few scholars in the field. It is an acceptable overview for those who know little about the subject, but will not particularly appeal to specialists.

—Al Menendez

Curiously, and inexplicably, Suarez leaves out any discussion of one of the hottest church-state issues, the endless, high-intensity campaign to get tax support for faith-based schools. This is especially odd because on his old NPR "Talk of the Nation" show he had me as a guest for an hour debating school vouchers with Stanford political science professor and voucher advocate Terry Moe. This lacuna is disappointing.

—Edd Doerr

*The Values Campaign?: The Christian Right and the 2004 Elections*, by John C. Green, Mark J. Rozell, and Clyde Wilcox, editors. Georgetown University Press, 273 pp., \$26.95 paper, \$44.95 cloth.

Three of America's leading scholars of religious voting patterns have edited a first-rate anthology of articles about the vigorous involvement of the Christian Right in the 2004 elections. Several essays deal with the manipulation of "values" as primary components in voting decisions, while one essay ("Saving Marriage by Banning Marriage") surveys successful campaigns in thirteen states to ban same-sex marriages.

The conclusions drawn are important and serve as a corrective to the simplistic interpretations of Bush's reelection. "First, the 2004 election does not represent a sea change in U.S. politics that demonstrates the triumph of moral issues. ...Second, moral values were a key component of the campaign, but one-dimensional interpretations of the GOP triumphs do not adequately explain the election outcome."

It is true that the moral values vote "contributed to the increase of Bush's popular vote total over 2000." But other issues, such as security, aided his effort. And it was in "swing states," where evangelicals are minorities, that these votes may have been most determinative. "In all of the swing states combined, moral values voters supported Bush over Kerry by 84% - 15%, even larger than the national average." Bush also gained a few points among Catholic and Jewish voters, and even among secular, nonaffiliated voters in some states, so the Christian Right alone was not responsible for his victory.

The same-sex marriage ban helped Bush in Ohio but may not have been that significant nationally. "Bush increased his national vote share over his showing in the 2000 election, and that increase was greater in states that did not vote on marriage referenda than in those that did."

Party affiliation is nearly as important as religious affiliation in voting on the marriage issue. In Ohio, for example, 80% of Republicans, 55% of Independents and 43% of Democrats voted for the ban. Evangelicals and weekly churchgoers of all kinds were the most supportive.

Two predictions about the future are worth noting: "At least some of the churches that participated in the 2004 referenda campaigns are likely to become more politically involved in future elections," and "the growing cultural divide between young, devout Catholics and their older counterparts suggests the possibility of future gains [for the Religious Right] among Catholics."

This excellent book also includes nine case studies of the 2004 election: Ohio, Michigan, Iowa, Minnesota, Florida, Colorado, Oklahoma, California and South Carolina. These valuable state surveys show that religious voting varies widely because of each state's unique political culture. Evangelicals, for example, gave Bush 91% support in Minnesota and 68% in Iowa. Catholics were 70% for Bush in South Carolina and 47% for Bush in Iowa. Secular voters ranged from 43% for Bush in Oklahoma to 22% in South Carolina and 19% in Minnesota.

—Al Menendez

*continued on page 26*

*Welcome to The Homeland: A Journey to the Rural Heart of America's Conservative Revolution*, by Brian Mann. Steerforth Press, 288 pp., \$24.95.

National Public Radio reporter Brian Mann, a proud resident of Rural America and “a dyed-in-the-wool moderate,” coins the term “homelanders” to define the new conservative voting bloc that is rooted in rural, small-town and exurban America. He says there is now “a clear political and cultural divide in America, delineated not by state or region but by the boundary between our progressive cities and inner suburbs and the conservative rural culture that sprawls beyond the urban beltway.”

This book, he says, is “the story of America’s most powerful minority, the white rural conservatives who make up the base and the ideological anchor of the Republican Party. These fifty million homelanders aren’t just huddled in the South or the Bible Belt. They’re scattered in small towns and exurbs across the country, from the farm counties of California to the old mining towns of Pennsylvania.”

The author emphasizes that homelanders are “not a group of crazy, Bible-thumping zealots but smart, aggressive political activists with a coherent agenda.”

To flesh out his report, he takes readers on a tour of Ochiltree County, Texas, the nation’s most Republican county, where 92% of voters chose George Bush in the last election. (In the tiny border town of Perryton, Bush got 95%.) It exemplified his conclusion that “in much of rural and exurban America, Democrats are pariahs.”

Whether this GOP/rural tilt will ever change is problematic and uncertain at this point in history. Mann notes that the Electoral College and the U.S. Senate are partially responsible for the GOP stranglehold on government, something that did not exist when rural areas were split between the parties, as they were for more than a century. But the cultural and religious backlash since the 1960s has skewed the political dynamic. Reapportionment, engineered by compliant legislatures, was “a cunning use of the party’s rural and exurban” base, even more a factor than “America’s rightward cultural shift.” Still, “The rural insurgency represents one of the most remarkable political comebacks in American history.”

### Some Facts and Figures from *Welcome to the Homeland*

- “12 of America’s most sparsely settled states are reliably Republican, while 9 of the 15 most densely populated states are dependably Democratic.”
- “Though they comprise only one-fifth of the American population, small-town voters cast one-quarter of the total ballots in 2004.”
- “In 2004 Bush carried 16 of the 20 states most heavily subsidized by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.”
- “9 of the 10 states that gobble the most money from the federal treasury voted for George Bush while 8 of the 10 states with the biggest net loss in federal tax dollars voted for John Kerry in 2004.”
- “In 2004 John Kerry won a majority of votes in only 13% of the country’s most rural congressional districts, but homelander Democrats won House seats in those same districts 44% of the time.”
- “In spring 2006, George Bush’s approval rating in urban and suburban America had collapsed to 29%, while it remained 50% in rural America.”

Mann writes, “Homelanders helped Republicans conquer Washington, and in the process they claimed pride of place as kingmakers and gatekeepers. They won’t relinquish that power and influence without a fight. But there are growing signs of discontent within the GOP, rumblings of concern that in the long run their small town strategy may prove disastrously shortsighted.”

However, population trends since 2000 are weakening rural areas, and the number of military veterans, who favored Bush 57-41%, is declining rapidly. These trends will “diminish the power of the homelander vote. Already, the GOP faces troubling signs that it has spread its homelander base too thinly.” Before it’s all sorted out, however, “the divide between the two tribes will likely grow larger and conflicts will intensify.”

This is an intriguing and quite remarkable look at the changing nature of U.S. politics.

—Al Menendez

*Building Red America: The New Conservative Coalition and the Drive for Permanent Power*, by Thomas B. Edsall. Basic Books, 320 pp., \$26.00.

Former *Washington Post* reporter Thomas Edsall shows how Republicans are trying to perpetuate themselves in power by using superior financial resources and manipulating deeply held religious views. “The Republican Party has secured and formalized a stronger compact with corporate American than at any time since the 1920s.”

In addition, “...the GOP has bested the Democratic Party in the symbolic manipulation of controversial sociocultural issues touching upon national security, patriotism, race, sex, and religion. The Republican Party has both capitalized upon and driven political polarization, speaking to genuine cultural needs and at the same time ruthlessly deploying deeply divisive social/cultural ‘wedge issues’ so that the GOP has come to set the national agenda.”

While controlling the White House and Congress, the Republicans have appointed 362 federal judges to the Democrats’ 291 and control 28 of the 50 governorships as of 2006.

While Republicans claim to favor “small government,” they have moved in the opposite direction under Bush. “First and foremost, Republican political strategy requires the concentration of as much power as possible in the executive branch – in the hands of the president and of his closest allies and operatives.”

Then there are the religious issues. “The issue of gay rights has become the medium through which cultural conservatives take aim at the entire sexual revolution: “... gay rights are the cultural-moral issue on which Americans display the least tolerance, the social issue that is the most polarizing in today’s political debate, and the issue on which Republican and Democratic activists disagree most strongly.”

Using these “wedge-issues” is a way “to tap the anger and resentment of middle and working class white Americans” since “gay marriage is easier to attack than divorce, adultery or civil rights for blacks.” Republicans are not above using government to support their religious allies. “In addition to funding the social and Christian right, the administration has redirected some of the federal government’s legal and regulatory powers to work on behalf of religious conservatives.”

Edsall warns that the party’s extreme anti-abortion position may be counterproductive. “This position tests the loyalty of the party’s large constituency of socially moderate married women and undermines its efforts to create a permanent Republican majority.”

The Democrats have experienced more long-term structural and demographic problems than the GOP. For one thing, they have lost the white male vote since 1980. And in 2000 and 2004 they lost male and female white voters with high school degrees or less, key constituencies in the past. Income differences have reversed. Edsall notes that Kerry carried 16 of the 25 most affluent counties in 2004 and won majori-

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ties, or near-majorities, among college educated and professional voters. The Democratic elite have little in common with the party's rank and file: "...the Democratic leadership class is from a markedly different and more privileged background than many of the citizens whose votes it seeks."

The increase in "seculars" and Hispanic voters, and the declining population in rural areas could help the Democrats if they can find ways to take advantage of it (though Republican gains have been pronounced among the growing Latino evangelical Protestant community.)

Edsall believes the present one-party dominance does not bode well for American democracy. "Politics functions as a market, and the political marketplace is now significantly out of balance — it is in disequilibrium...The current circumstances of Democrats and Republicans reflect a larger failure of the country's two-party system to represent effectively the competing interests of its citizenry."

—Al Menendez

*The Truth about Conservative Christians: What They Think and What They Believe*, by Andrew Greeley and Michael Hout. The University of Chicago Press, 206 pp., \$22.50.

Andrew Greeley and fellow sociologist Michael Hout have fashioned a book based on 30 years of survey data compiled by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago. Their goal is to describe the quarter of the U.S. population they label "Conservative Christians" rather than evangelicals or fundamentalists. Their data show that 26% of Americans fit this category (much less than a recent Baylor University survey), and that that figure has remained unchanged for two decades. Catholics have remained at 25% of the population, while "Mainline Protestants" are 23% today, down from 34% in the 1970s. Those professing "no religion" comprise 14% of Americans, double the percentage in the 1970s. Afro-American Protestants are 6%, while 4% adhere to "other religions" and 2% are Jewish. The slight gains for Conservative Christians over the 1970s come solely from demography: a higher birth rate, a younger median age for members, and the ability to retain a high percentage of those born in the religion. The Conservatives have not converted large numbers of other religious groups, as is often erroneously thought.

The authors insist that Conservative Christians are only slightly more Republican and politically conservative than other Protestants, but that is because they combine whites and African Americans in the definition, which flies in the face of the realities of U.S. politics. They

admit that white religious conservatives have moved to the right, primarily because of the abortion issue. "Conservative Protestants have become slightly more politically conservative over the years, going from 38 percent conservative prior to the Reagan era to 41 percent conservative in the Reagan era, and 46 percent conservative in the current era." (But 36% are political moderates and 17% are liberals, they say.)

Interestingly, belief in the "literal" truth of the Bible makes African American Conservatives more Democratic and white Conservatives more Republican than other blacks and whites. "The political dissimilarity of religiously conservative black and white Americans calls into question the equation of biblical Christianity and conservative politics."

Their data also show that not all Conservative Christians are likely to support a dogmatic approach to politics. "They are more likely to oppose abortion than other Americans, but only 14 percent of them oppose abortion in all circumstances while 22 percent counter that with a consistently pro-choice stance." They also argue that class differences are still real, even among religious groups, "...economic interests sharply divide Conservative Christians — maybe even more than other Americans. Conservative Christians are the most economically divided of the major voting blocks in American politics." They add, "We also concluded that while religion is important in all elections and has been more important recently, so is social class more important recently too."

The Greeley-Hout book challenges conventional wisdom, sometimes unconvincingly, but their conclusions often reinforce the general consensus. They say, for example, "Religion is a robust and persistent factor in American presidential politics." No one can deny that! Also, "Values voting is not new," as many commentators thought after the 2004 election. It has always been a factor in how voters choose their leaders.

They claim that Conservative Christians are more anti-Catholic, making a Catholic-evangelical alliance unlikely. "But the lack of warm feelings and the reluctance to renounce bigotry would make any alliance problematic. The Reformation casts a long shadow, and in its darkest recesses bad feelings lurk."

Their conclusion is a striking one. "Make no mistake about it, Conservative Christians and their Afro-American partners in faith are the real dissenters in America — some, no doubt, more than others. Dissent permeates their core beliefs, their worldviews, their morality, their relationships with God, and their devotions. It is not a fashionable dissent but rather a stern, consistent, and determined dissent."

—Al Menendez

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## Books and Culture, *continued from page 27*

***One Party Country: The Republican Plan for Dominance in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century***, by Tom Hamburger and Peter Wallsten. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 262 pp., \$25.95.

Two *Los Angeles Times* reporters zero in on how the Republican Party has almost insured itself a viable future by using “structural changes, and the latest knowledge techniques and technology from marketing, advertising and demographics.” They write, “The Republican Party of the early twenty-first century may perform poorly in individual elections, but it remains firmly in the lead when it comes to the science and strategy of attaining power — and keeping it. That advantage has been constructed painstakingly over decades and then, using taxpayer dollars and unprecedented politicization of government bureaucracies, strengthened dramatically under the presidency of George W. Bush.”

“The GOP controls every part of every element of the federal government, from the White House and the executive branch through the Senate and the House of Representatives. Seven of the nine Supreme Court justices were appointed by Republican presidents, and the court is trending increasingly conservative.”

The Republican alliance with Big Business is a key factor, providing “shrewd design, mountains of money and decades of hard work and self discipline.” They add, “Big businesses supplied more than votes and money. They supplied organizational skills and manpower accustomed to the teamwork and discipline of the corporate world.”

In addition, “religious conservatives — evangelical Protestants but also tradition-minded Catholics— provided both financial support and thousands of dedicated voters. The evangelicals gave the GOP a burgeoning network of grassroots organizations and volunteers already accustomed to working together.”

The authors reveal that, “In 2004, the GOP mastered the art of niche marketing: identifying and communicating with small groups of potentially sympathetic voters, then tailoring messages to fit each microconstituency down to the level of individual precincts and households.”

In the Cleveland suburbs of Mayfield Heights and Beechwood, the GOP targeted Orthodox Jews of Russian ancestry so effectively that both towns switched from Gore in 2000 to Bush in 2004. In some other Orthodox Jewish precincts in Brooklyn’s Flatbush and Boro Park, support for Bush topped 80%. In Cleveland Orthodox schools (Yeshivas) closed on Election Day so that students could drive mothers to the polls. Rabbis did everything but endorse Bush from pulpits. Along with evangelicals, this “swing vote” may have saved Ohio for Bush.

Democrats and liberals should take notice of this book’s finding. The authors conclude, “But if Democrats are successful in 2006, there are few signs that their party will be prepared to turn those victories into a winning movement. ... The structural foundations built by the Republicans are so firmly planted that one dismal election cycle alone will not be enough to shake them loose. The tools of the one-party coalition — the business alliance, the voter database, the GOP tilt in redistricting, the money, and the control of the executive branch — will remain after the 2006 elections are over. Then, unless Democrats find a way to build firm foundations of their own, they will confront the same disadvantages that doomed them to the minority.”

—Al Menendez

***With God On Our Side: One Man’s War Against an Evangelical Coup in America’s Military***, by Michael L. Weinstein and Davin Seay. St. Martin’s Press, 258 pp., \$25.95.

Those who have been following the religious conflict at the U.S. Air Force Academy the past few years will find this book both riveting and appalling. It tells the inside story of attorney and Air Force grad Weinstein’s battle against religious discrimination and intolerance. Weinstein, a JAG for ten years and a legal counsel at the Reagan White House, was appalled at the control exercised by evangelicals at his and his son’s alma mater. Not only was anti-Jewish prejudice rife but so was intolerance toward all other expressions of Christianity other than conservative Protestantism. Not one to sit idly by, Weinstein blew the whistle on the proselytizing and was eventually forced to file legal action and to establish the Military Religious Freedom Foundation. His story is well worth reading.

Five valuable appendices show in detail “the official culture of religious intolerance and hostility toward those who do not subscribe to and practice evangelical Christianity.”

—Al Menendez

### Recommended Reading

Jeff Sharlet’s “Through a Glass Darkly: How the Christian Right is Reimagining U.S. History.” *Harper’s*, December 2006.

Kathryn Joyce’s “The Quiverfull Conviction: Christian Mothers Breed ‘Arrows for the War’.” *The Nation*, November 27, 2006.