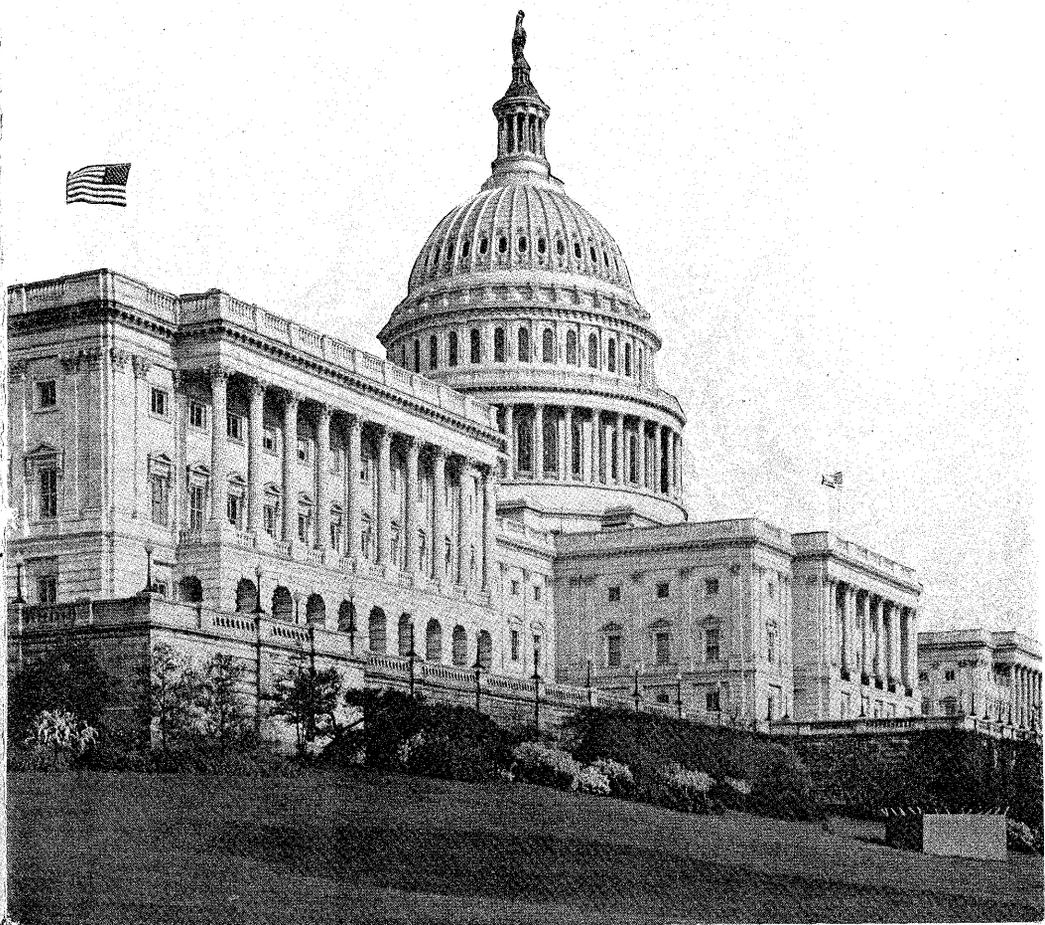


What about the Separation of Church and State?

Ray Brubaker



WHAT ABOUT . . . THE SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE?

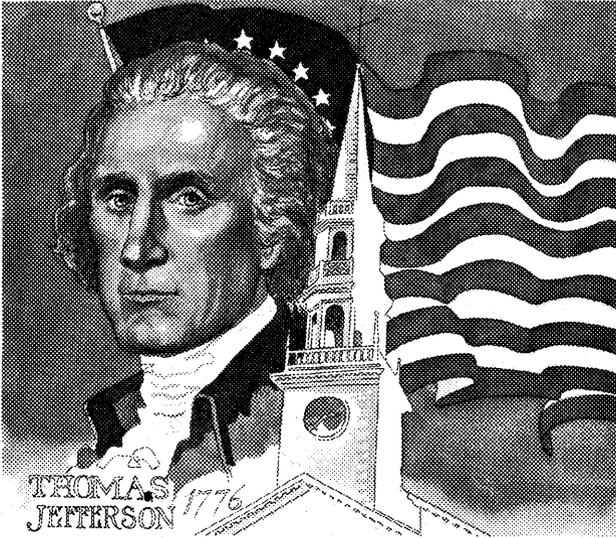


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Prayer for our President



Whatever might be said about the bombing of the U. S. Embassy Annex in Beirut, Lebanon, it is becoming more and more dangerous for public officials to be seen in public as a result of that disastrous episode.

While the President has been accused of isolating himself from the people, the threat of danger increases the tensions and heightens the demand that Mr. Reagan cancel appearances where he could again become a target of an assassin's bullet or an alien's bomb.

Preceding the bombing of the U.S. Embassy Annex in Beirut, Lebanon, in the latest recorded incident was a telephone call that an attack on "one of the vital American installations in the Middle East" was imminent.

There followed an explosion when two men in a white Dodge van planned a suicide raid on the embassy, the third attack in the past year and a half.

The Islamic Jihad, a pro-Iranian terrorist group, is blamed for the attack.

The caller said Islamic Jihad was prepared to strike at major American cities and at U.S. facilities in Latin America and Europe.

Of greatest concern was a reference to the President. The caller added, "You, governor of the White House, await a painful blow before your re-election, more painful than our blows against your embassy and your military headquarters in Beirut."

What this latest threat could mean, neither the Secret Service nor the State Department would speculate, but it does add to the concern for all of the President's speaking engagements.

"Terrorism is turning the world into a new feudal system," says Yonah Alexander of Georgetown University's Center for Strategic and International Studies. "When governments can't protect their people, you find bodyguards and private armies. We are beginning to see an age of vigilantes, with death squads on the right and the left. This is a great threat to democracy."

Personally, we feel the threat so great as to urge a call to prayer on behalf of our nation's leadership. This, too, is in keeping with Scripture.

The Great Commission Prayer League, with offices in Chicago, emphasizes: "The first names on a Christian's prayer list should be the President and his executives in government, together with officials in the judicial and legislative departments of government. "These men should be first," says the Commission, "because God's Word explicitly declares they should be."

In 1 Tim. 2:1-4 we read: "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

A Harvard professor was sharply critical of a letter sent to the Texas clergy by Sen. Paul Laxalt prior to the Republican National Convention in Dallas. In his letter he referred to political office holders as leaders "appointed under God's authority."

Anyone acquainted with the Bible knows that this is what the Word of God teaches. In Rom. 13:1 we read, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God."

In Psalms 75:7 we read, "For God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another."

Daniel, blessing the name of God for ever and ever, declares, "He removeth kings, and setteth up kings."

The times and seasons, too, are in the hand of the Almighty. As Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, in their commentary, state, "The vicissitudes of states, with their times and seasons, are not regulated by chance or fate, as the heathen thought, but by God."

With the life of the President threatened by those who claim responsibility for the bombing of the Beirut embassy, the crying need is for intercessory prayer, prayer with fasting.

As we approach the coming of our Lord, we can expect violence to

increase and iniquity to abound. Sinister forces are at work, revealing these are the latter days. Satan, knowing his time is short, seems to have been loosed to work havoc in all the earth. Christians are becoming lulled into indifference when they should be quickened with renewed zeal and anticipation for the coming Bridegroom.

Joel, more than any other prophet, seems to be aware of conditions that will precede the coming of the Lord.

It is Joel who writes of the "northern army" and speaks of all nations eventually being drawn into battle in the valley of Jehoshaphat. (Joel 3:2)

U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT points out, "The Soviet Union has long been suspected of funding and arming terrorists, if not actually organizing their attacks."

It is noted, "Investigators have turned up evidence that Moscow's most loyal Eastern European satellite, Bulgaria, was behind the attempted assassination of Pope Paul II, and they suspect the Bulgarians may have been acting for the Soviets."

Think of it!

One official says, "We are now seeing bombings and assassinations in which you don't have a drawn-out drama. This puts a much heavier burden on intelligence. You have to know about the event in advance and get out in front of it."

Witnessing a van loaded with some 300 pounds of dynamite pulling into our embassy headquarters makes us wonder what would prevent this from happening at the United Nations building or at the White House. Although fortifications have been made, there are always ways terrorists can bring about mass destruction.

So serious is the "epidemic" of world terrorism that Secretary of State George Shultz believes the U.S. should consider "preventative or pre-emptive actions against terrorist groups before they strike." Among the nations to be concerned about is Syria, Libya or Iran, which Shultz calls the "League of Terror."

The fact remains that there isn't yet a law on the books making terrorism a crime. The basic problem is that officials don't know how to define terrorism. Agencies such as the FBI don't know how to evaluate terrorism.

As Joel Lisker, staff director of the Senate Subcommittee on Terrorism, says, "We had to beat the FBI over the head to get them to make terrorism a priority."

In fact, a study made by the General Accounting Office on antiterrorist defenses concluded that our lack of preparedness for such events is "horrifying." So many places are vulnerable to attack that the report was kept secret.

Perhaps Joel has a solution to our dilemma. He writes, "Gird yourselves, and lament, ye priests; Howl ye ministers of the altar; Come, lie all night in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God. Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the Lord your God, and cry unto the Lord."

How needful to cry and pray and fast at such a crucial time in our nation's history!

Dr. William Ward Ayer, in MARCHING TRUTH (Sept.-Oct., 1984), writes: "We are facing a national election of a President for the next four years of our besieged, befuddled and deeply immoral nation." Says Dr. Ayer, "We should be bowed in God's presence, melted in repentance and godly fear."

Perhaps we should ask ourselves if we know what repentance really is.

H.A. Ironsides, Bible expositor who pastored the famous Moody Memorial Church in Chicago, writes: "God commands all men to repent and believe the gospel. Repentance is a change of mind, a complete turning about-face, an entirely changed attitude towards God, and sin, and self."

Dr. Claude A. Ries, in a tract, "How To Become a Christian," says, "The call to repent is sounded out in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. Seventy times the urgency of repentance is given in the New Testament, emphasizing the words of Jesus, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

(Luke 13:3)

What is repentance? Isaiah 55:7 clearly answers the question. "Let the wicked forsake his way, the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

The great evangelist, Gipsy Smith, had an encounter with this verse. In Glasgow, a certain man frequented the meeting. One night the evangelist asked him, "Are you not concerned about your soul?" The man answered, "I am." Then Gipsy Smith asked him if he knew what to do about it. The man replied that he did.

Another man with his Bible open was standing nearby, listening. He asked permission to speak. He said, "I have heard part of the conversation and want you to read John 3:16. Do you believe that?" "Yes, of course," he replied.

"Now read Romans 10:9, 'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.' Do you believe that?"

"Of course I believe that," the man answered.

"Next, read 1 John 1:9, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins...' Do you believe that?"

"Then you are a Christian," said the man.

The troubled man straightened up and, looking his informant in the face, said, "You are wrong, my friend." And then he read this verse in Isaiah 55:7, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him return unto the Lord..."

"I am the wicked man; I am the unrighteous man and I have to forsake my sin and my wicked thoughts. I must come back from my own way to God's way. In my heart is a sin. My own common sense tells me I cannot be saved until I surrender."

Said Gipsy Smith, "That is the best sermon I ever heard on repentance in my life."

Declares Dr. Ries, "Repentance is 'an affrighted halt before God.' It is a right-about-face. It is a turning to. It is a turning from sin, self, and

Satan to God, righteousness and truth. Repentance is a wholehearted surrender to God."

According to the Greek, to repent means a "change of mind." The sinner needs a change of mind about sin. He must come to hate it, acknowledge it and turn wholeheartedly from deliberate sin.

Testifies Dr. Ries, "To repent means a right attitude toward God. He turns to God and begins to seek Him. To repent means a right attitude toward self. He humbles it, the last thing self wants to do! To repent means a right attitude toward others. He begins to practice the Golden Rule. He endeavors to come clean with man as well as God."

Then he brings forth "fruits of repentance." Says Ries, "Now suppose I owed a large grocery bill and would go to the grocer and tell him I was sorry I had such a huge bill, but from now on I was turning a new leaf, and would begin to pay for all I bought. Does that cancel the bill? Never! Not until the bill is paid, is the bill settled."

The illustration is given of Jim Vaus, the converted gangster. He had nine typed-up pages of wrongs to personally make right. It cost him thousands of dollars, the loss of his home, car, furnishings and all he could save for a couple of years. But he cleared the record with God and man.

Concludes Dr. Ries, "While repentance does not secure salvation, yet there is no salvation without repentance."

How does one become a Christian? Jesus said, "Repent and believe in the Gospel."

Only those who repent of their sins and believe, know experientially the joys of salvation and the blessedness of God's Spirit witnessing with their spirit that they are the children of God." (Rom. 8:16)

In closing, may we suggest again that we repent before God and intercede on behalf of the election and for those whom God has ordained to be elected into public office.

Remember, Jesus said, "The thief cometh but for to kill and to destroy." Satan has his henchmen who would like to halt our religious freedom and hang those who advocate true freedom.

On the other hand, "Righteousness exalteth a nation." So until Jesus comes, let us watch and pray and work for such righteousness that will keep this nation free.

To that purpose may we fast and pray. And, "Be ye therefore ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

Separation of Church and State



One of the great triumphs in Washington that we have not been able to report on has been the Equal Access Legislation which will permit student-initiated, student-controlled religious groups to meet in public high schools if non-religious groups are able to do so.

Robert Dugan, director of NAE's Washington office, had pointed out, "Opponents of Equal Access maintain that it violates familiar precepts of church-state separation." He notes, "They conveniently ignore the many safeguards in the equal access as passed by the Senate."

Equal Access Legislation was initiated by Senators Mark Hatfield and Jeremiah Denton and Representative Don Bonker. Then when it was considered a dead issue, Rep. Carl Perkins, Democrat of Kentucky, Chairman of the House Committee on Education and Labor, brought up the bill and it passed the House, with 337 votes for and 77 opposed. On August 1, 1984, Carl Perkins died. Equal Access stands as a memorial to this dedicated man who did not allow party politics to interfere with justice.

Under Equal Access, if the tennis club is allowed to use facilities, it must allow the Fellowship of Christian Athletes to meet there. However, there's a drawback: If a school district wishes, perhaps for budget reasons, it could ban all such student groups meeting in its facilities.

An issue we think you should know about is the role of the Supreme Court in an upcoming development to decide on the constitutionality of having a moment of silent prayer in the classroom.

Some insist that whatever prayers are prayed in schools are bound to be "vain repetitions of men," which our Lord condemned. Others insist that prayer is an acknowledgment of God's presence in the classroom activity which is needed if students are going to be instructed in the ways of reverence and acknowledgment of a supreme authority.

After all, the Scriptures remind us, in Prov. 3:5-6, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

While some would argue that you can pray silently anytime you wish, it is this recognition of the importance of such acknowledgment that makes the issue a vital one. And, if the Supreme Court were to strike down such an observance, it would seem to be the last straw in allowing any kind of recognition of Almighty God in the classroom.

During past Supreme Court decisions relating to prayer in public schools, we have, for example, William J. Butler, the lawyer who argued the case against it, saying: "In this country, with its many different

faiths, religion has flourished because we have steadfastly adhered to the principle of separation of church and state."



Just before the Supreme Court handed down its decision banning prayer and Bible reading in the schools, we heard the Hon. Earl Warren, Chief Justice of the highest court, declare that the separation of church and state is a "guarantee of freedom." By keeping church and state separate, observed Warren, the country insures that its people will remain free to worship as they choose!

Now, many honorable groups, including church denominations, have parroted those same philosophies without thinking where acceptance of such a doctrine will lead us.

The late Francis A. Schaeffer, in his **CHRISTIAN MANIFESTO**, says: "Today the separation of church and state in America is used to silence the church. When Christians speak out on issues, the hue and cry from the humanist state and media is that Christians, and all religions, are prohibited from speaking since there is a separation of church and state."

Notes Schaffer, "The way the concept is used today is totally reversed from the original intent. It is not rooted in history. The modern concept of separation is an argument for a total separation of religion

from the state."

During the political debates President Reagan has sought to make clear the position of our Constitution on this issue. Actually the Constitution says absolutely nothing about the separation of church and state.

However, in the Soviet Constitution (Article 124) we read, "In the Soviet Union the Church is separate from the State . . ."

Is this what we want in America?

What has happened in Nazi Germany is happening here. Repeat a thing long enough and everyone will believe it. So we have men linked from the highest position in the land speaking as though our Constitution guarantees the separation of church and state, which it does not. Carried to its extreme, you will have what they have in Russia, mainly a state separate from the church.

Billy Graham, returning from a 12-day tour in the Soviet Union, declared, "The door is not wide open" to religion there. He might as well have said that it almost stands closed. He did say, "It is just ajar."

Now we ask, Is this what we want?

President Reagan, addressing the Bnai B'rith International Conference, did say, "The unique thing about America is a wall in our Constitution separating church and state." He quickly went on to point out, "It guarantees there will never be a state religion in this land."

Walter Mondale accused the president of attacking those "who are trying to preserve the separation of church and state." He illustrated the President's opposition to those who do not accept his constitutional amendment on school prayer as representing his failure to hold to such separation.

In Dallas, Mondale tossed aside his prepared speech to give a passionate discourse on religion and liberty. "The founding fathers spelled it out in great detail," he said. "What they spelled out is the separation of church and state."

The audience applauded, standing to their feet.

The question remains—how do you evaluate this issue?

Are you for separation of church and state? As suggested today, the fear is expressed by many that church-state separation, as is now being taught and practiced, will bring us to the place where we are no better than those who live in Russia.

In fact, MOODY MONTHLY magazine once observed, "American state-supported schools are as officially secular and materialistic as are our counterparts in Communist countries." And then the question is asked, "Are we awakening?"

In Ohio, students came to a rally where we were discussing these issues. They came from the college where Madalyn Murray O'Hair was once a student but was expelled. And when they heard this explanation of what we told you today, one of the students stood up to urge, "You should get this message across America."

In our schools and in other public places it has come to be recognized that the "separation of church and state" means God cannot be mentioned in the classroom.

According to the Scriptures this is the spirit of antichrist seen arising in the last days.

John, in writing his epistle, says: "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time."

Did you hear it?

Beloved, we are living in the endtime preceding the coming of Jesus.

Now, who is an antichrist?

We read in 1 John 2:22, "He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father; but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also."

We recall a time when pastors offering a prayer at a high school function were told not to pray in Jesus' name, for that might prove offensive to some who were present. Now it is often the case that the name of God cannot be mentioned at these functions.

How sad!

If you are ever going to become a Christian, you must receive Christ as your Saviour.

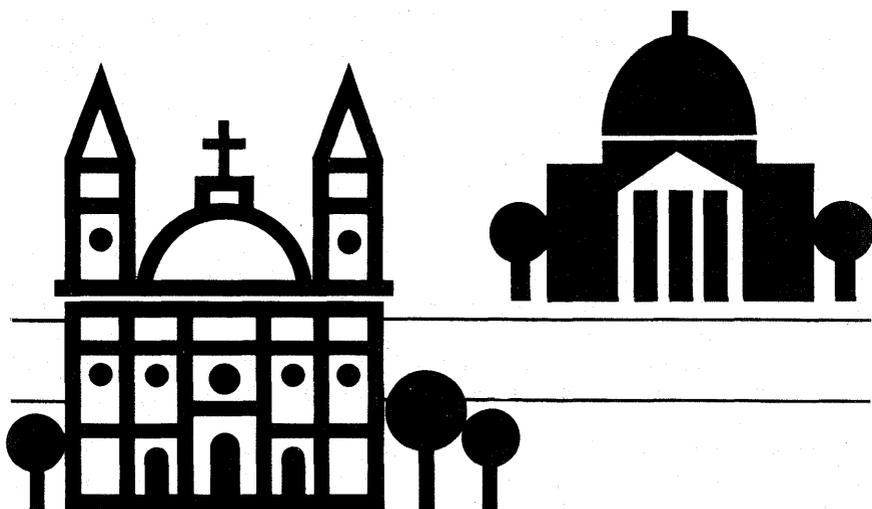


Make that decision now. Pray this prayer: "Heavenly Father, I come to you and acknowledge that you exist, and that you gave your Son, Jesus Christ, for the redemption of the world. However, only as I repent of my sins and receive your forgiveness can I be saved. I do here and now believe that when Jesus died on the cross, He died for me, and that when He rose again, you proved to the whole world that He was your Son and our only Saviour. I now believe He is coming again and I want to be ready when He comes."

Pray that prayer and mean it. Read your Bible every day and ask God's guidance daily in all that you do.

And be ye therefore ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.

Should Church and State be Separate?



Former President Gerald Ford, appearing at a news conference, declared, "It's the proper role of a religious leader to comment on a specific issue. That's an obligation. People who are leaders in their community, including the church, have an obligation."

Lutheran theologian, Richard John Neuhaus, sees religion as playing an established role in politics. In *THE NAKED PUBLIC SQUARE: RELIGION AND DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA*, Neuhaus sees the state taking over where religion is banned from public life in the public square. The "new Christian right," though it demands conformity to certain biblical beliefs, may help restore democracy to public life.

This may not be true in all other lands. But in America, in 1892, Justice David Brewer wrote in *CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY v. UNITED STATES*. . . "we are a Christian people . . . this is a Christian

nation."

That ruling greatly aggravated Justice William Brennan of our modern-day court who sees it as part of the "dark ages" of American history.

However, Justice Brennan, in a concurring opinion in *McDANIEL v. PATY*, stated: "In short, government may not as a goal promote 'safe-thinking' with respect to religion and fence out from political participation those, such as ministers, whom it regards as overinvolved in religion."

He added, "Religionists no less than members of any other group enjoy the full measure of protection afforded speech, association, and political activity generally . . ."

In a footnote, Justice Brennan says: "In much the same spirit, American courts have not thought the separation of church and state to require that religion be totally oblivious to government or politics: church and religious groups in the United States have long exerted powerful political pressures on state and national legislatures, on subjects as diverse as slavery, war, gambling, drinking, prostitution, marriage and education."

Says Brennan, "To view such religious activity as suspect, or to regard its political results as automatically tainted, might be inconsistent with First Amendment freedoms of religious and political expression—and might not even succeed in keeping religious controversy out of public life, given the political ruptures caused by the alienation of segments of the religious community."

Dean M. Kelley, director of Religious and Civil Liberty for the NCC, says, "The Court has never held that it is improper for religious leaders (or followers) to preach, teach, persuade, organize, or mobilize citizen support, not only for (or against) certain policies but for (or against) certain candidates." He notes, however, "There are restrictions in the Internal Revenue Code against such activities on the part of certain exempt organizations, including churches, but these restrictions have never been reviewed by the U.S. Supreme Court, and may indeed be unconstitutional."

Kelley points out: "The phrase 'separation of church and state' does not appear in the Constitution." He admits, however, "Courts have used it, with greater or lesser enthusiasm, to interpret what the First Amendment's no establishment clause requires."

Former President Ford, while favoring comment on political issues by the clergy, also says, "I am a strong believer in separation between church and state."

Henry Steele Commager, emeritus professor of history at Amherst College and author of *THE EMPIRE OF REASON*, among other books, says: "We tend to forget that separation of church and state and rejection of religious establishments were, in the 18th century, the most revolutionary experiment on which the new United States embarked."

He adds: "The Founding Fathers were, most of them, deeply versed in history.

They were familiar with the tragic, century-long religious wars that

tore the peoples of Britain, Germany and France apart. They were descendants of Pilgrims and Puritans who found refuge from religious persecutions . . ."

Charles Pinckney has a solution to church-state issues. He suggests: "The legislature shall pass no law on the subject of religion."

For fear of domination by Rome, there were those in our past history who embarked on the road marked "separation of church and state."

Although it is to be admitted that there is need for a well-defined program, an ultra position as emphasized by some could bring us to the place in America of having a state with no church.

On the other hand, during the Ecumenical Council, reference was made to what was called the "unfortunate separation" of church and state. For Roman Catholics say that religion and government are so closely related as to find it impossible to draw a fine line of demarcation.

As Dean Robert F. Drinan, S. J. of Boston College, a Catholic school, points out: "Americans have not yet found a way of communicating with each other concerning the place where religion should be granted in the public life."

This poses great problems, for instance, as seen in the Court's approval of Sunday blue-laws but outlawing required religious observances, both in the name of separation of church and state....

For those who strongly advocate the doctrine of separation of church and state, it should be pointed out that nowhere are these words to be found in our Constitution, although you will find them in the Russian Constitution, article 124, which declares: "In the Soviet Union the church is separate from the state . . ."

To carry this idea of separation of church and state to its extreme, as is now being done, will ultimately bring us to the place where, like in Russia, the emphasis will be on all state and no church! Those loudly advocating separation of church and state must stop and think where this road will take us. For one day in America there may come those who will say, "Alright, you want separation of church and state—we'll have just that! We will keep them separate. We'll have all state and no church!"

As the late Justice Robert H. Jackson once said: "It is idle to pretend that this task is one for which we can find in the Constitution one word to help us as judges decide where the secular ends and the sectarian begins."

In the first of the religious cases involving state-approved school prayers, the attorney, William J. Butler, argued his case on this theory of separation of church and state. Declared Butler, "In this country, with its many different faiths, religion has flourished because we have steadfastly adhered to the principle of separation of church and state."

Similarly, David Dudley Field once stated: "The greatest achievement ever made in the cause of human progress is the total and final separation of church and state. If we had nothing else to boast of, we could lay claim with justice that first among the nations we of this country made it an article of organic law that the relations between man and his Maker were a private concern, into which other men have

In other words, what we have had in America is what I like to call a doctrine of "acceptance" or "recognition" of Almighty God in the life of our nation as expressed in so many ways, and not "neutrality."

As prayer and Bible reading were declared to be unconstitutional, and this action based on the "neutrality" position inherent in the doctrine of the separation of church and state, even so we are hearing of other suits being filed which may suffer similar fate unless the high Court gives recognition to the part that religion plays in government.

All of these threats, we repeat, are more serious as a result of an abnormal emphasis of the "separation of church and state."

According to Bible prophecy, the end result of rulings which would continue to ban established religious practices may very well result in a mass reaction that would find the people rising up in protest, resulting in a reversal of the trend even leading to a church-dominated society. This is partly evidenced in the attitude of church leaders who are more and more getting into politics instead of preaching the Gospel. Thus, mystery Babylon of the Revelation may be forced upon us as a result of attempts to repair the crumbling religious foundations resulting from court decisions seen destroying religious freedom. For unless the Court clarifies its "separation of church and state" doctrine to include recognition of religion in government, we will find our nation eventually backed up into a corner where God Himself will be outlawed.

As late as 1951, in the case of *Zorach V. Clauson*, the U. S. Supreme Court declared, "We are a religious people whose Constitution presupposes a Supreme Being." Should the High Court adopt an "acceptance" or "recognition" position, then hope for America being saved from catastrophe resulting from a "neutrality" position remains a possibility.

The importance of the "separation of church and state" is not minimized in our approach to problems facing our great nation, and it should be emphasized that we are not in any way seeking to belittle the importance of such recognition. Nevertheless, we cannot believe that this principle requires a completely secular approach to every sphere of governmental contact to the exclusion of reference to God in our national life.

We might reflect on a joint resolution by the Congress of the United States calling upon the President to recommend a day of "public thanksgiving and prayer, to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts, the many and signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a Constitution of Government for their safety and happiness."

This resolution, passed Sept. 25, 1789, was adopted on the very day that the first ten amendments to the Constitution were passed by Congress.

Certainly, the "separation of church and state" has its place among the noble and inspiring doctrines of government, but not to the exclusion of God as evidenced in the narrowly-drawn neutrality position which would ban prayer and Bible reading even on a voluntary basis, and similarly rule out many other of our established traditional practices.

Long ago a prophet by the name of Jeremiah told God's ancient people the secret for a successful state. Israel became a backslidden people and needed to hear his words.

Speaking as God's representative, he urged, "Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, wherein is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." (Jer. 6:16)

Isn't it time we return to the old paths of acknowledging our dependence upon the Almighty in our schools as well as in our churches, in our courts and in the Congress?

We should accept Proverbs 3:5-6 as our standard which urges us, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart' and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

Incidentally, these are the favorite verses of former president Ford.

Separation of church and state has not meant a departure from the living God and ideals which He has prescribed in His Word.

George Washington acknowledged his dependence upon God. In his First Inaugural he prayed, "Almighty God, we make our earnest prayer that thou wilt keep the United States in thy holy protection."



Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas in 1952 affirmed that "we are a religious people and our institutions presuppose a Supreme Being."

Today let us return to the faith of our fathers. Let us acknowledge individually our need of God and the salvation freely offered through His Son, our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And, receiving Him as our Lord and Saviour, let us accept His words, "Be ye therefore ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

ROLE OF RELIGION IN POLITICS



TIME magazine has noted, "Religion has become a principal theme of the presidential campaign (and) may be greater than in any previous election. (9/10/84)

The magazine has called attention to the role religion has played in the political life of this nation. Declares this journal: "Religion and government are two mighty forces that the founders of the American Republic decided must be kept separate for the sake of a free society." (TIME, Mar. 19, '84)

One senator denounced those whom he said use the "muscle of religion toward political ends." (Sen. Barry Goldwater, R-Ariz.)

Said this senator in a statement to the press, "I'm frankly sick and tired of the political preachers across this country telling me as a citizen that if I want to be a moral person, I must believe in "A," "B," "C," and "D."

He asks, "Just who do they think they are? And from where do they presume to claim the right to dictate their moral beliefs to me?"

Well, ministers who do preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ declare without hesitancy as did the Apostle Paul, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

Now we realize there are some religious groups that do not believe nor will they accept that view. Nevertheless, for anyone to believe the Bible, he must also believe that apart from Jesus Christ there is no salvation. Naturally, that eliminates Buddhists, Mohammedans, Confucionists and every other group that does not accept Jesus Christ as God's Son, Saviour and only Lord.

And when it comes to the ABC's of morality, there are what we call the ABC's of salvation that all who claim to be born-again Christians agree with and accept.

Every believer in Jesus Christ will acknowledge and accept Romans 3:23, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." You can't be saved without admitting that you are a sinner: otherwise, you might

think your good works can save you. But the Bible says, "...by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." (Eph. 2:8-9)

Well, there you have "A" and "B". For "C" refer to Rom. 10:9. Confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, and thou shalt be saved.

There you have your ABC's, not of morality but of salvation.

Charles Bergstrom, an officer in the Lutheran Council in the U.S.A., says, "Even Scripture admits the morality of nonbelievers." Likewise, Forest Montgomery, of the National Association of Evangelicals, testified, "There are some very fine atheists."



Morality, cherished for its religious-like character, may be desirable in the political arena. That's why there are organizations such as the Moral Majority that oppose abortion, homosexuality, humanism, evolution taught in public schools, not only because they are moral issues but they are biblical issues. Morality, or being "moral" will not save anyone. We are saved only by accepting the atoning death of Jesus Christ for our sins as well as His resurrection from the dead, exalted in the heavens from whence He shall come again as "Kings of kings" and "Lord of lords."

Naturally, our concern on this program is that you know this One as your Saviour and Lord. Christ came, not to provide a moral basis for believing. Rather, He came to "Seek and to save that which is lost." And, since "All have sinned," and need saving, He came to save you.

What have you done about it?

When it comes to "separation of church and state," there are those who espouse a doctrine of "neutrality." But there cannot be neutrality when it comes to Jesus Christ. In Matt. 12:30 we have our Lord saying, "He that is not with me is against me."

Of the political candidates most people have their minds made up. They are for or against.



We're asking you to be for Jesus Christ.

Candidates are mere men. Jesus is the Son of God. God proved to the whole world that Jesus is the only Saviour when He raised Him from the dead. And the modern calendar is based upon His birth, for this is the year of our Lord, 1984.

And He is coming again. The day and hour are unknown, but signs all around us would indicate the day is very near. It could be today. Those who are ready will be caught up to meet Him in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

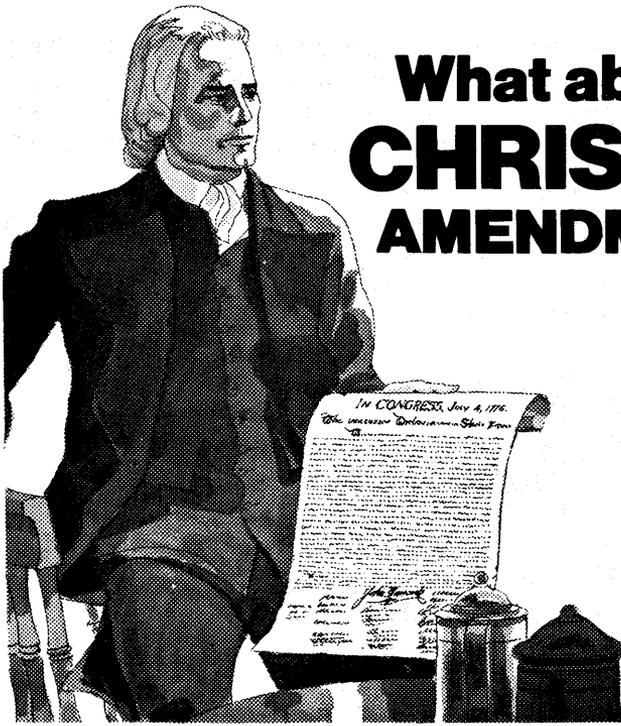
Are you ready to meet Him were He to come yet today? Have you repented of your sins and definitely received Christ as your Saviour and Lord? Are you living for Him by walking in obedience to His Word in a life of purity and holiness?

The decision is yours to make.

Pray this prayer: "Lord Jesus, come into my heart. Forgive me of all my sins. Make me yours to do your will and keep me ready for your coming. I pray. Amen."

Pray that prayer and mean it. And, "Be ye therefore ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

What about a **CHRISTIAN AMENDMENT?**



Harvey Cox, professor at the Harvard Divinity School and a Baptist minister, says, "Religion has had an influence on political life in the U.S. from its beginning."

As a result of our rich heritage which found our government exalting Jesus Christ and honoring God as supreme in the life of our nation, there have been those in the Congress who have proposed the adoption of a Christian Amendment.

In fact, since 1947 such an amendment to the Constitution has been regularly introduced in the Congress. The amendment simply states, "This Nation devoutly recognizes the authority and law of Jesus Christ, Saviour and Ruler of Nations, through whom are bestowed the blessings of Almighty God."

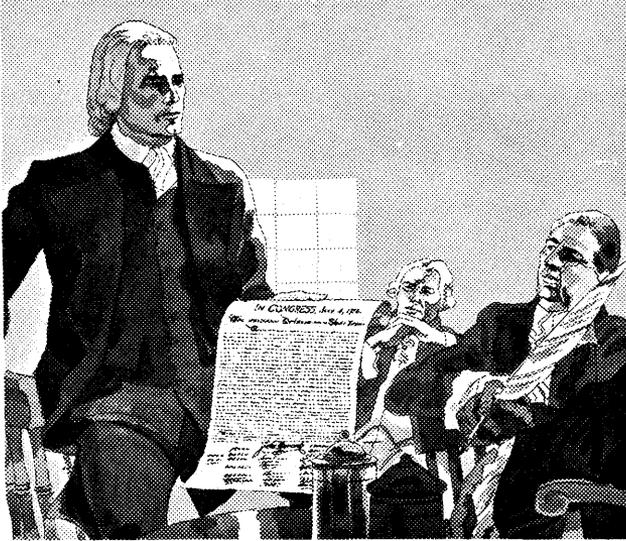
Seymour Martin Lipset, professor of political science and sociology at Stanford University, states, "The U.S. is the most religious country in the world. Some 95% to 98% of Americans say they believe in God."

He explains, "In most European countries it is less than half that. One of the explanations is precisely the separation of church and state."

He adds, "All of this has never meant that religious people do not take part in politics . . . We have issues dealing with civil rights, war and peace, abortion, homosexuality, crime. All of these are seen by some religious people as reflecting religious beliefs."

Seeing many cherished practices and traditions threatened makes it imperative that we have a Christian Amendment, for it would evermore keep in a preferred position future decisions of the Courts and the Congress whereby Christ will be exalted and God will be honored.

Those who favor a Christian Amendment to the Constitution emphasize: "Church and state must be kept separate so far as government and organization are concerned. The church should never interfere with the state in political affairs . . . Neither should the state ever interfere with the church unless, through its practices, it is interfering with public morals!"



Now, if the church is to be totally separate, then it should not become mixed up with politics, promoting legislation no matter how good it may be! But, we believe it is the church's duty to uphold standards of righteousness. For that reason we loudly join our voices with those favoring acknowledgments of God in the classroom and in public life!

As the Apostle Paul points out in Romans 13:1 in referring to the state's relation to God: "The powers that be are ordained of God!" Here Paul is saying that governments get their authority from God! So you can't separate God from the state! The state was never meant to be a secular institution.

It may surprise some of you to learn that 45 of our 50 states now have religious acknowledgments in their constitutions. But that does not unite any church with the state!

The CONGRESSIONAL RECORD quotes Bishop John J. Russell, who said in Washington: "Thank God, our Constitution forbids the state setting up or favoring any particular form of religion. But that separation of church and state (which we all cherish in our country) never meant the divorce of government from religion or the separation of law from morality."

When we testified in Washington, we felt led to propose an amendment that would clearly define the position of this nation in contrast to those nations which have gone on record as opposing God. For instance, the communist salute is a raised fist toward God! Why couldn't we in America affirm our faith in Almighty God? So we

proposed the following—that “acknowledgment of Almighty God shall ever be held in a preferred position in our public and national life!” Thus, in future cases seen coming before the Supreme Court, the decisions would favor preference for God and not the atheists seen trying to take God out of our public and national life.

The Rev. Samuel E. Boyle, D.D., asks, “How much better are we in America since the U.S. Supreme Court banned Bible reading and prayer from our schools than are the Christian citizens in Communist China or Russia?” Says Dr. Boyle: “It is only a matter of time. The same power which forbids the Word of God in our public schools can eventually demand that all children take public school education. Christian schools, Protestant or Catholic, can and will be ruled illegal by a State which dares to rule out the Bible and prayer from its own corporate life and the preparatory schools of its citizens.”

Dr. Boyle makes this pointed observation: “Long before the Communists gained control of China, the secular forces of the national government passed a law that no Chinese school registered with the Government could teach any religion. Today in Red China no schools that teach religion are permitted to exist!”

Dr. Boyle, in steadfastly supporting an amendment to the Constitution, says, “We defy any critic to show how our proposal in any way violates the principle of separation of church and state!”

THE CHRISTIAN AMENDMENT is enthusiastically supported by such representative groups and individuals as the National Association of Evangelicals, the moderators of four Presbyterian assemblies, the General Secretary of the Assembly of God, editors and educators in the Baptist, Methodist, Christian, Nazarene, Mennonite, and other church denominations.

Dr. Peter Marshall, while chaplain of the U.S. Senate, urged the adoption of such an amendment. In his Washington church, which happened to be the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, Dr. Marshall declared, “It is strange, and I believe tragic, that the Constitution makes no reference to God...” Said Dr. Marshall: “Many efforts have been made at different times to introduce such an amendment, but there has been opposition and indifference, so to this good day the Constitution of our country ignores the principles upon which our country was founded!”

However, one cannot truly honor God until he accepts the salvation He freely offers through Jesus Christ.

So why not receive Him as your Saviour today?

In Acts 16:31 we are encouraged to “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”

Why not believe on Him now if you have never done so?

Pray this prayer: “Lord Jesus, I do here and now receive you as my Saviour and Lord. Forgive me of all my sins. Cleanse me from all unrighteousness. Make me yours to do your will and keep me ready for whenever you will come.”

Friend, pray that prayer and mean it.

And, “Be ye therefore ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.”

Christians



in Politics

A current news magazine observes: "Once upon a time, most churchmen stayed discreetly on the sidelines during a presidential campaign. No more," observes this periodical. "This year, as never before, religious journals, church groups and individual clergymen are deeply, openly involved in the election." (TIME 10/9/64)

Today we might ask, should Christians stay out of politics?

R.W. Neighbor, in the GOSPEL HERALD, replies, "Did not Christ Jesus liken the believer to a preserving salt? How can Christians influence and preserve this decaying world if religion is left out of their political life? Our faith must affect our vote..." "Someone will argue," says Dr. Neighbor, "our citizenship is in heaven, therefore we should not enter into political issues of our nation. True, our citizenship is in heaven, but our citizenship is also in the United States. Our lives and very existence are affected by our government. Our religious liberty is affected by our government."

Americans enjoy one of the greatest of human freedoms, the power to choose the man they want for their leader. Whereas under communism there is only one candidate to accept or reject, under the American system a choice of candidates is offered to the people.

This freedom of choice is a God-given right which must be preserved and protected at all costs. That our freedoms are under attack cannot be denied, evidenced in the banning of prayer and Bible reading in our public schools.

In view of recent decisions of our highest court which failed to ban obscenity and which ruled against school devotions, prominent clergymen of all faiths met and issued a statement, accusing the Court of "virtually promulgating degeneracy as the standard way of American life." Indeed, this is an hour when Christians and all God-fearing Americans must rise to the defense of righteousness and freedom.

Our Lord said to His own disciples, "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savor... it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be trodden under foot of men."

Salt symbolizes purity and speaks of preservation. When have we needed the influence of Christian witness in our communities more than in our day when moral standards have reached a new low? The invasion of pornographic literature on newsstands, in drug stores, and neighborhood groceries within easy reach of our children should cause concerned parents to rise up to protest this filth. If we fail to do this, we fail God, our nation, and our youth!

So concerned are many in this nation over deteriorating standards of morality that it is time we as Christians let our influence for Christ be felt in our community and do something about this lewd literature. It's time we express opposition to the sale of alcoholic beverages in corner grocery stores, and tactfully call for the closing of stores and businesses on the Lord's Day. It's time we oppose this trend toward nudity that is fast making our nation heathen. And what about legalized gambling?

Crime in America is increasing alarmingly—another 15% during the first half of this year, so our leaders are expressing grave concern for this nation. Particularly are they alarmed over the fact that half of those arrested are youngsters 18 years of age or under.

Our Lord told us that not only are we the "salt of the earth" to exert our influence for good, but we are "the light of the world."

I learned only recently that in the early days of the founding of this nation, there were those who operated the lighthouses on our shores to guide the ships as they were coming to America. There was one lighthouse, in particular, where during a storm the light was turned off so that purposely ships were allowed to wreck on the reefs. Then those who lived near the lighthouse would descend upon these vessels and confiscate whatever goods they could find.

This true incident from history reminds me of those of us who fail to let our lights shine, and because we fail to act, precious lives are lost.

Salt that has lost its savor is good for nothing, said Jesus. Can this be said of Christians who fail to exert a witness for truth and righteousness? Are we good for nothing? Or, are we good for something?

As one commentator observes the coming election, he declares: "In both parties there are two distinct camps—those who favor the Super State and those who oppose it. It is not confined to the U.S.A. It is a world-wide political and philosophical battle."

Most of us who have studied history no doubt remember Pericles. Pericles was elected 15 times to a position similar to the President of the United States. Finally, along came a citizen by the name of Cleon who desired the position held by Pericles. He decided the surest way to secure it was to out-promise Pericles. This he did—promising shorter hours with increased pay, and more government control.

So Pericles lost out, and Cleon took over. But fulfilling and making good his promises eventually led to the downfall of Greece. Increased government control demanded more money from somewhere. Taxation became almost equivalent to confiscation. The rise of a huge centralized government brought about the loss of freedom.

Will we repeat the mistakes of history, or profit by them?

When this nation was born, and a constitution framed, Ben Franklin was walking down the streets of Philadelphia when someone asked him, "What do we have, a republic or a monarchy?" Replied Franklin tersely, "A republic...if we can keep it!"

Yes, that is the duty of every citizen—to keep America free—a nation under God. And Christians of both political persuasions have a responsibility both to God and country to uphold the cause of liberty and that righteousness which exalteth a nation.

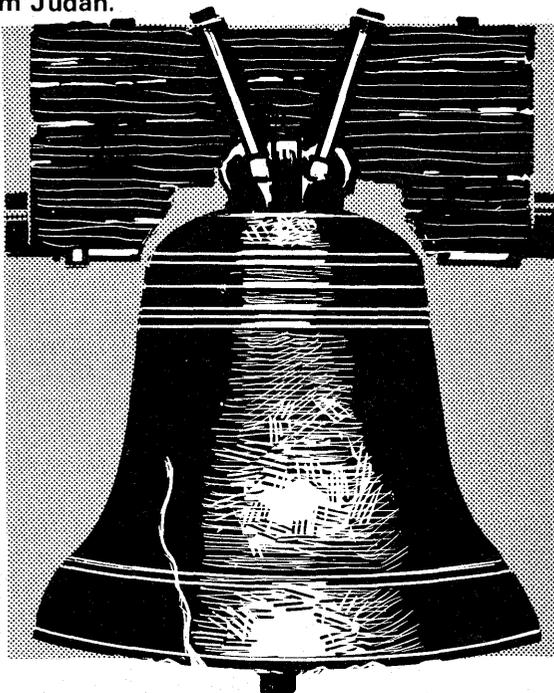
That men of God—men of the clergy—should be called upon to help protect and preserve our nation is emphasized by George Peck, the Honorary Chairman of the Layman's National Committee, who says: "Yes, the minister should engage in politics, for the surest way to combat the growing trend toward paganism is to strengthen religious faith in the individual citizen. No one can do that necessary job more effectively than our clergy."

Jenkin Lloyd Jones, editor of the TULSA TRIBUNE, who considers America "still a great powerful, vibrant, able, optimistic nation," in calling attention to our deteriorating morals, says, "We can learn a lesson from history. Twice before, our British cousins appeared heading into a collapse of principle, and twice they drew back. The British Court reached an advanced stage of corruption under the Stuarts, but the people rebelled. And in the old days of George IV and William IV, it looked as though Britain were rotting out again. But the people banged through reform laws, and under Victoria went on to the peak of their power. In this hour of fear, confusion and self-doubt, let this be the story of America." Observes this editor, "Unless I misread the signs, a great number of our people are ready. Let there be a fresh breeze of new honesty, new idealism, new integrity."



In other words, what we need is a spiritual awakening—a return back to God and the Bible. For America and the world—it's revival for survival.

When young King Josiah, centuries ago, came to the throne of Judah, he found the kingdom in demoralization and chaos. Lawlessness and immorality continued unrebuked, and poverty was everywhere. The altars were broken down, the Temple deserted, and the legions of the enemy were thundering at the gates. "Why is it," asked Josiah, "that our land once glorious is now in such moral decay?" He ordered a diligent search to be made, and one day the high priest came to him and said, "I have found the book of the Law of the Lord." Under a pile of rubbish, where for decades it had been forgotten, was the Bible. Then Josiah knew why the glory of the Lord had departed from Judah.



"A man who does not protect his freedom does not deserve to be free."

General Douglas MacArthur

Everywhere today we are hearing the same question, why do we have increased crime and lawlessness on every hand? Why the immorality?

The answer is the same. We have forsaken the faith of our fathers. We have banned the Bible in our schools and neglected it in our homes. And it is even now being disregarded in some of our churches.

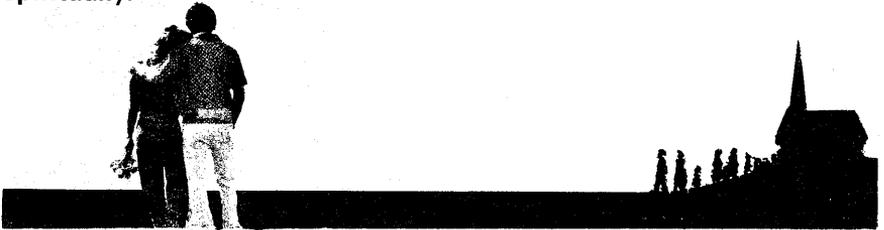
Woodrow Wilson once said: "The man whose faith is rooted in the Bible knows that reform cannot be stayed, that the finger of God that moves upon the face of the nations is against every man that plots the nation's downfall or the people's deceit; that these men are simply groping and staggering in their own ignorance to a fearful day of judgment."

William Voght, in his book, **ROAD TO SURVIVAL**, says, "The handwriting on the wall of five continents now tells us that the Judgment is at hand."

Again I'm wondering how seriously we regard these times in which we live. Are we content to bury our heads in the sand and fail to see the deteriorating moral corruption which is fast destroying our society? Shall we continue to hold to a false philosophy of life that says, "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die!" While talking of peace, are we unaware of enemy satellites passing over our heads which could be deadly and destructive? While boasting of our prosperity, do we fail to protest our immorality?

In past months, having traveled in various states holding rallies, we have discerned a definite concern for the spiritual welfare of this nation. This concern is expressed by an Associated Press writer who refers to the American people in this election as "optimistic but not unrealistic, confident but not complacent—hopeful of the future, a trifle impatient with the present," declaring, "The American dream of prosperity and happiness for all still possess them, but they are beginning to wonder where the nation is heading spiritually!"

Did you hear it? That is the basic question—where are we headed spiritually?



This question will not be wholly decided by voting Democratic or Republican, but only as each of us personally make individual choices in our lives that will bring the greatest of all victories—one that is spiritual!

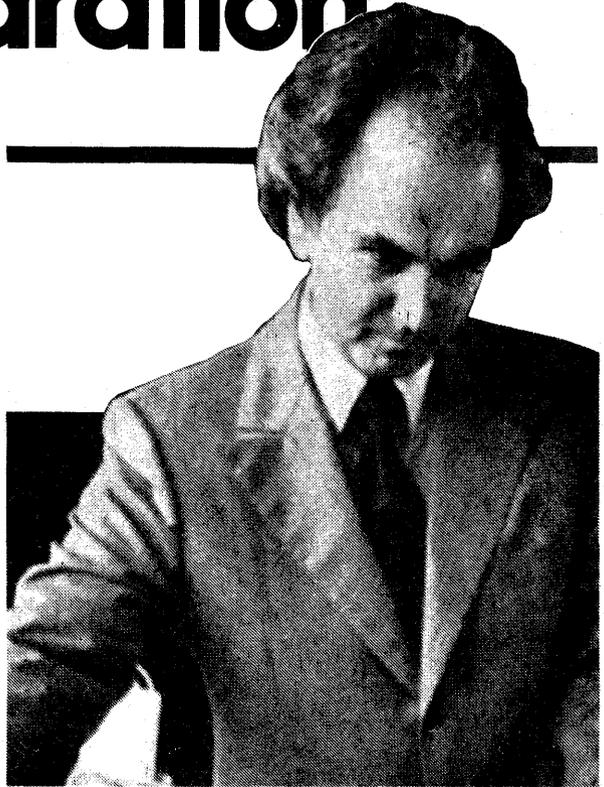
To Israel, Joshua extended this power of choice, saying, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve. As for me and my house," said Joshua, "We will serve the Lord!" O that every parent listening today would similarly make this confession!

To choose Christ is the greatest choice you can make. And you don't have to be of voting age to make this decision. I was five years of age when I knelt and prayed as my mother showed me how I could be saved. I had done something wrong—what it was, I don't remember, but she said: "Ray, do you want to do naughty things and go to the bad place, or do you want Jesus to come into your heart and save you?" As I prayed, kneeling by the bathtub in our home, something happened. And I look back to that decision as my conversion. One usually thinks of getting into the bathtub to wash the outside, but that day I was outside of the bathtub and got washed on the inside. Praise God for the blood of Jesus that cleanses from all sin!

Friend, have you made this greatest of all decisions?

Surely your vote is needed in the coming election, but the greatest of choices you can make is to turn from your sin and choose Christ as your Saviour and Lord. May God grant it. Amen.

Confusion Reigns over Church-State Separation



Another example of confusion and religious intolerance was a school board decision to suspend Key Largo Elementary School principal, Ed Caputo. Caputo was suspended for allowing students to meet for once-a-week religious classes. This is in accordance with the newly-passed equal access law, which allows student-led religious groups to meet at public schools after hours.

Students needed and received written permission from their parents to attend these classes taught by volunteers during the one-hour non-academic period.

The Key Largo Elementary controversy developed when the principal addressed a PTA meeting on what he called "this country's moral decay." Caputo is a devout Christian and is concerned over the drift to humanism and secularism.

Incidentally, when Caputo proposed offering the students an hour a week of religion, the PTA approved the suggestion 84-1.

But the School Board said, "No."

Caputo has headed the school since it opened in 1971. About 150 people turned out for the School Board meeting which found only two parents in favor of Caputo's firing. Twenty-four spoke in favor of the principal. Still the School Board voted to dismiss him for what it called "gross insubordination."

May God help us!

One wonders what's next. When principals and teachers discuss whatever freedom is left in the classroom, it leaves the whole country in confusion.

Some say President Reagan's argument for allowing voluntary prayer in schools could backfire—that the nation is tired of hearing about his insistence that God be allowed to return to the classroom.

In addressing the National Association of Evangelicals, Mr. Reagan said: "I firmly believe that the loving God who has blessed our land and made us a good and caring people should never have been expelled from America's classrooms."

Don't we agree?

In his speech to the Evangelicals, Reagan said, "Hasn't something gone haywire when this great Constitution of ours is invoked to allow Nazis and Ku Klux Klansmen to march on public property and urge the extermination of Jews and the subjugation of blacks, but it supposedly prevents our children from Bible study or the saying of a simple prayer in their schools?"

NEWSWEEK magazine carried an article by a teacher who writes: "As one who has taught for six years, and as one of many teachers who hold a personal faith in God, my concern is not whether we allow 60 seconds of silence, contemplation or prayer; my concern is what sort of tolerance toward religion is allowed the other six hours of the school day. My worry, and the fear held by many of us who consider God the source of life and knowledge, is whether our obedience to the separation of church and state has not, in fact, created a gulf, a rift, far greater than was ever intended."

He adds, "As a result of this pulling apart of church and state, of religion and education, teachers now feel inhibited from even thinking and talking and wondering aloud about religious concerns and Biblical ideas and God in the classroom. We must act as if such discussion is absolutely—and defiantly—none of our business."

How tragic!

Our Lord commissioned His disciples to preach the Gospel to every creature, and not to hide our message under a basket, reminding us that we are the salt of the earth. Do you suppose for one moment that He expects of us to keep silent concerning the loss of freedom to recognize God in the classroom?

Let's put it this way. We all influence someone. Teachers influence their students for good or perhaps ill. If a teacher is on drugs, he will influence his pupils for evil. If he swears and uses God's name in vain, he will probably never be reprimanded by school board officials.

However, here is a school principal who has been appreciated in his community where he headed the school since 1971 who was dismissed because he allowed after-school Bible classes on a voluntary basis.

The local Baptist pastor, Ronald Lentere, said: "Ed Caputo is a nut, but he is screwed onto the right bolt." "He is deeply loved . . . he is worth saving," said the preacher.

George Keck, Editor of the EVANGELICAL BEACON, has expressed the sentiments of many when he comments, "The First Amendment to the Constitution says: 'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.'"

States Editor Keck: "An opening prayer in our public schools, if the teacher desires to have one, in no way results in 'the establishment of religion.' Listeners may not be able to avoid hearing the prayer, but no one can make anyone join in the spirit of the prayer against that person's will."

He adds, "Preventing the teacher from offering a prayer does, however, result in 'prohibiting the free exercise' of his or her religion; abridges the teacher's freedom of speech and is a clear violation of the First Amendment."

Says Keck: "It would seem that the foes of God have been using the First Amendment to say what they want it to say and that our courts have been agreeing with them."

He points out, "Our personal rights, guaranteed by the First Amendment, are being denied by the misuse of the very amendment that is supposed to protect them." (EVANGELICAL BEACON, Oct. 15, 1974)

The teacher quoted in NEWSWEEK agrees that "The First Amendment is an essential guarantee of the separation of church and state," and to impose school prayers is wrong.

But he suggests, "Haven't we retreated too far in the other direction when as teachers we feel required to curb our instincts—which are in fact intellectually and professionally sound—to encourage our students to explore beliefs, concerns and meanings, from time to time, in the context of religious traditions, and in the light of faith in a caring and personal God?"

He asks, "Is this really what our forefathers meant by separation of church and state? Would they have wanted to see God ignored in our schools, or in classes devoted to science, history, government, literature, ethics and philosophy where young minds develop their values and their understanding of life?" (NEWSWEEK, Apr. 2, 1984)

The Supreme Court in 1962 ruled 6 to 1 that the reading of an Officially-accepted prayer acknowledging God violated the First Amend-

ment to the U. S. Constitution. Justice Potter Stewart dissented, saying: "I cannot see how an 'official religion' is established by letting those who want to say a prayer say it."

Again President Reagan has said that it is court rulings barring prayer meetings on public school premises "that are dangerous, not school prayer."

Some of the confusion stems from some of the decisions made by our highest court.

For example, in *STONE vs. GRAHAM*, the court declared that Kentucky could not post the Ten Commandments in school classrooms.

In Arizona, the House Majority Leader, Dick Adams, introduced a bill stating that "the 10 Commandments of God are hereby adopted as the law of this state." Adams told reporters, "It is my feeling that the 20 volumes of laws on our statute books are meaningless if everyone obeyed the 10 Commandments."

And to think the highest court outlawed the posting of these commandments in school classrooms.

However, when it came to the town of Pawtucket erecting a Nativity scene as part of a Christmas display, the court ruled 5-4 to allow it. Chief Justice Berger, writing for the court majority, said the Nativity scene was a "passive" symbol and its presence in the display was "no more an advancement or endorsement of religion than . . . the exhibition of literally hundreds of religious paintings in governmentally-supported museums." The real test, according to this ruling, is whether a religious practice presents "a real danger of establishment of a state church." And that is how the Constitution was meant to be interpreted.

Burger argued that far from "complete separation of church and state affirmatively mandates accommodation, not merely tolerance, of all religions, and forbids hostility toward any."

TIME magazine noted: "Religious conservatives were cheered by the role of Justice Sandra Day O'Connor who wrote a concurring opinion asserting, among other things, that the degree of 'political divisiveness' caused by a government practice aiding religion was not in itself any guide toward whether that practice fostered an 'excessive entanglement' of church and state."

Dr. Jerry Falwell, who originally was disappointed when Pres. Reagan selected O'Connor, declaring it was a "disaster," later said her selection was "the President's No. 1 contribution to religion in this country."

On the other hand, Justice William Brennan said to allow the Nativity scene was a "careless decision" that failed to apply any consistent reasoning at all.

Brennan wrote, "It seems the Court is willing to alter its analysis from Term to Term to suit its preferred results."

He asserted that by approving the Pawtucket's use of funds, however minuscule, to display a specifically Christian symbol, "the Court takes a long step backward to the days (in 1892) when Justice (David) Brewer could arrogantly declare for the Court that 'this is a Christian nation.'"

Said Brennan, "Those days, I had thought, were forever put behind us."

We might wonder how many Americans know the Supreme Court rendered such a decision.

In **CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY vs. UNITED STATES**, it was declared, "... we are a Christian people... this is a Christian nation..." In 1844 a case which came before the highest court found the declaration made, "... the Christian religion is a part of the common law of Pennsylvania." (*Vidal vs. Girard's Executors*)

What happened to the Separation of Church and State doctrine then?

The **PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL** noted, "As the Church-State pot continues to boil, several states have taken steps to follow up the Supreme Court's opinion that the Bible can be studied as any other book, although it cannot be used devotionally." It adds, "Any school adding a literature course in the New Testament... will gain more than it lost over a five-minute devotional exercise. Teach the New Testament... and it will have its own effect."

But, we ask, where and in what states is this practiced?

The ruling of the Supreme Court does allow for the teaching of the Bible as history or literature, but with all of the confusion, this is seemingly not being practiced because of the fear of reprisal as in the case of the school principal who was dismissed in Florida for allowing the Bible to be taught in an equal access program after school.

There are those like Dr. Jerry Falwell who are quick to point out, as he did in a recent interview, America is not a Christian nation. Said Falwell, "I think America is great, but not because it is a Christian nation: it is not a Christian nation, it has never been a Christian nation, it is never going to be a Christian nation." (**CHRISTIANITY TODAY**)

On the other hand, we do have freedoms which allow for recognition of God and the Bible in the classroom if only this is pointed out to the people and the majority come to the defense of decisions already made which guarantee these rights.

The school principal who was dismissed is much concerned about this nation's moral decay.

As Richard Viguerie, publisher of **CONSERVATIVE DIGEST**, notes that since 1960 there have been in America: 47 million divorces; 550,000 deaths from drunk driving; 23 million deaths from illegal drugs; 18 million babies killed by abortion; 189 million serious crimes reported; 366,000 murders.

Isn't it time we have principals who stand up for righteousness in our school classrooms where students can learn impressionable truths such as were once taught in our public schools?

If there is one lesson we need to learn, it is this: "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." (Prov. 14:34)

Lest this nation go the way of Sodom and Gomorrah, of Greece and ancient Rome, let us cry forth the message that Jesus Christ is the hope of the world. He is the only Saviour of men who died and rose again and is coming again for all who are ready to meet Him.

Indeed, He hath said, "Be ye therefore ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."