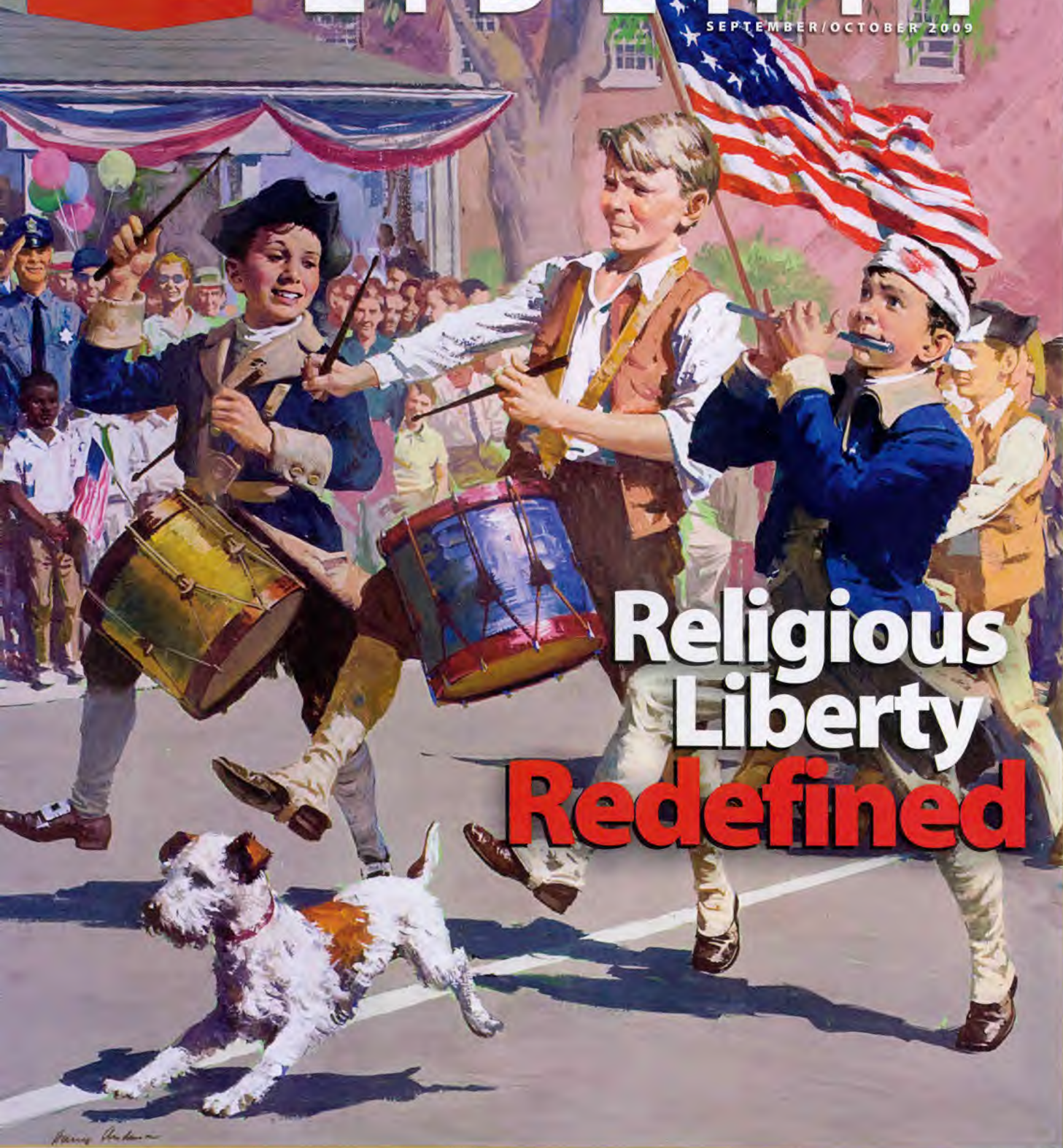


A MAGAZINE OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

THE KILLING TIME | OH, COLUMBUS! | THE POWER TO CHANGE

LIBERTY

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2009



**Religious
Liberty
Redefined**

Harry Anderson

A MATTER OF HISTORY

*"Give us a fair field
and no favor,
and our faith has
no cause to fear."*



I am writing this editorial while on vacation in France. More specifically it was written in the guest room of the chateau my wife discovered on the Internet. The pictures posted there did not do it half the justice that reality confers. I am sitting under a high arched ceiling and looking out over computer keyboard, through the high windows with the inward facing shutters, and out over the moat, with its lily pond surface to the deep woods that encroach on two sides of the castle.

We are staying two nights here in this time warp only a few minutes south of Dijon in Burgundy. Yesterday, after we arrived and met the count whose family has owned the property since the 1200s, a friend of his who is a history professor took us on a tour of the many rooms. It is still elegant and full of art and furniture from centuries past. There are countless little oddities like the apparent wooden confessional boxes in the first and second floor chambers of the master and mistress of the house that were in reality connecting staircases so they could visit unobserved by staff, and the clever arrangement of the eldest son's bedroom at the end of the hall after the fathers room, so that he could not pass easily unobserved in the night.

Of course time has never stood still here or anywhere else. The history teacher told us how the drawbridge had been replaced by a fixed bridge hundreds of years ago on the orders of the King of France who feared the nobles' ability to resist his power. She told how during the French Revolution sympathetic pheasants helped hide the castle's furniture from the revolu-

tionaries. Then during War II the castle became the regional headquarters for the occupying Germans. When they were expelled the Americans also made it their headquarters. All are gone now and little but the rutted stone flooring reminds of those times of trial.

At breakfast we shared an interesting discussion with a group of Anglican priests also staying in the castle. As we went over the history of the castle and came again to the story of its passage through the French Revolution the elder priest remarked on how it was unusual for the original furniture to have survived those times. "There are two reasons given," he said. "The first is that the count was a benevolent landlord and his pheasants remained loyal. The second and more probable is that he was a mason and had protection." An interesting observation from a churchman, who of course knew his history. In revolutionary France there was hatred against the overbearing aristocracy and the church, which the peasantry had come to associate with their abuses; because church and state/aristocracy functioned as an intertwined power elite. For the revolutionaries it was enough that the church hated and persecuted the masons—therefore they must be acceptable. I have always thought that the same simple logic accounts for much of the pervasive masonry in early Protestant America—that is, if the Catholic Church was so opposed to masonry, it must be acceptable.

In many ways the old world is not really that different from the new world—only older. In fact as the new world rose to prominence it did so with many of the ideas brought from the old world—albeit ideas that

were the ongoing dynamic of that old world. After all the ideas that created the United States were the same ones that led to the French revolution. It was not really so odd that Jefferson had an enduring sympathy for the French Revolution, even after it turned on itself.

There is an aspect of this dual and parallel tracking that is often unremarked, even by my fellow Seventh-day Adventists, who founded this magazine as a direct consequence of radical moves toward religious legislation in the first few years of the twentieth century. The reality is that the same pressures were creating fissures in the public life in the Old Country—England, the Mother Country, that as late as 1812 had still not accepted that her American child had left home.

The wonderful work of William Wilberforce in outlawing slavery in the British Empire was of course just one outgrowth of morals-based legislation from an increasingly empowered religious faction, which had high aims for spiritually renewing old England. Well, as we know today, it is an easy step from that to using the power of the state to require revival.

One of the most dynamic preachers in England a century ago was Charles Haddon Spurgeon; known as "the prince of preachers" for his amazing rhetoric and ability to draw huge crowds. I recently read a statement of his that relates all too well to the United States then—and now—as well as to the England of his day.

"I am ashamed of some Christians," preached Spurgeon, "because they have so much dependence on parliament and the law of the land. Much



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good may Parliament ever do to true religion except by mistake. As to getting the law of the land to touch our religion, we earnestly cry, "Hands off! Leave us alone." Your Sunday bills and all other forms of the act-of-Parliament religion seem to me to be all wrong. Give us a fair field and no favor, and our faith has no cause to fear. Christ wants no help from Caesar."

As you will read in a series beginning in this issue of Liberty, a national Sunday bill and Christian nation assumptions had everything to do with the founding of our magazine. We agree with Spurgeon that such have no place in a country that truly honors religious freedom.

In a very real way that sense of true religious independence of separation of church and state speaks even to the more contentious of church state issues today—the gay marriage

debate and the church response to the newfound rights of the gay community. This issue of Liberty speaks to that in an opinion piece. No matter how doctrinally or morally offensive the church may find society to have become it is entering perilous ground in attempting to address it by legislation. And yet at the same time the church is within its compass to press the state to honor its faith profession and ability to speak to others of moral absolutes. May we keep this dynamic alive and well and avoid the mistakes of the old world—mistakes that led not just to reformation but revolution. Because the unholy union of church and state ultimately is bad for both.

After quoting from an English Baptist preacher, I had better end on a more American note. What better

than to quote from James Madison, a founding father of the American Republic, author of the Bill of Rights which include the First Amendment freedom of religion and restraint on state sponsorship, and the nation's fourth president. "Who does not see," he wrote, "that the same authority which can establish Christianity, in exclusion of all other religions, may establish with the same ease any particular sect of Christians, in exclusion of all other sects?"

How revolutionary!

Lincoln E. Steed, Editor
Liberty Magazine

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DECLARATION of Principles

The God-given right of religious liberty is best exercised when church and state are separate.

Government is God's agency to protect individual rights and to conduct civil affairs; in exercising these responsibilities, officials are entitled to respect and cooperation.

Religious liberty entails freedom of conscience: to worship or not to worship; to profess, practice, and promulgate religious beliefs, or to change them. In exercising these rights, however, one must respect the equivalent rights of all others.

Attempts to unite church and state are opposed to the interests of each, subversive of human rights, and potentially persecuting in character; to oppose union, lawfully and honorably, is not only the citizen's duty but the essence of the golden rule—to treat others as one wishes to be treated.

HOW IT WAS IN 1941. . .

Religious Liberty {Redefined}

BY GIDEON D. HAGSTOTZ
ILLUSTRATION BY HARRY ANDERSON

What is liberty? It is freedom from undue restraint; it is the sum of the rights and immunities of all the citizens of an organized civil community, with provision for guaranteed protection against interference with their civil, political, personal, and religious activities.

What pictures the word “liberty” conjures up! It brings to mind opened prisons, removed shackles, restored privileges, granted pardons, reunited families, and reestablished respect.

One marvels at the devotion of those who have given their lives for the principles of liberty. The pages of secular and ecclesiastical history contain many names of those crusaders who, like the apostle Paul, could say, “Neither count I my life dear unto myself,” and who offered themselves with a ceaseless devotion, that the way of others might be more secure.

Liberty and Conscience

There is a saying that liberty in itself is of little value. That is doubtless true, but one must also remember that all else without liberty is of no profit. When Patrick Henry voiced the words “Give me liberty, or give me death,” he meant

that life without liberty is worse than death. But he was speaking merely of civil liberty. It must be remembered that religious liberty means even more than civil liberty. Moreover, religious liberty is not synonymous with freedom of conscience. One’s conscience is always free—it is unfettered regardless of external conditions.

Liberty implies a state of affairs in which a member of a state or society is permitted to follow without interference the dictates of his conscience in the profession of any religious creed or the exercise of any mode of worship. But when one’s conscience points the way to overt acts contrary to certain accepted ideas, then one is faced squarely with the problem of religious liberty, and not freedom of conscience.

The Question of Toleration

Nor is it fair to compare the question of religious liberty with the question of toleration. Religious liberty affirms the existence of a state of equality for all, whereas toleration implies that men are not all equal. Many times one hears the plea for tolerance, which, as has been stated before, implies inequality. What one should strive for is the development of a sense of fair play for all. Religious liberty is more than a circumscribed opinion born in the minds of the leaders of lesser groups as against entrenched or vested interests of any ecclesiastical organizations. Religious liberty

is an inherent right and privilege of citizenship entirely divorced from any given church affiliation.

The core of religious liberty must be sought for in two specifications, said Sanford H. Cobb, in his *Rise of Religious Liberty in America*, page 9, "in its origination in the will of God as Maker of the human soul, and in its relation to the civil law." Thomas Paine, who is cited so often as an avowed enemy of those who believe in God, and even of God Himself, said, back in 1776 in an open letter to the Quakers, "As to religion, I hold it to be the indispensable duty of all governments to protect all conscientious professors thereof, and I know of no other business which governments hath to do therewith."—Quoted by Luigi Luzzatti, in *God in Freedom*, p. 686.

All true advocates of liberty as a principle, and of religious liberty in particular, will agree with this assumption. The adherence to the postulate expressed by Thomas Paine assures all adherents to a given creed or creeds protection in religious activities on the same basis as that accorded to all citizens in the pursuit of their secular activities.

Dangerous Trends Threatening Liberties

The words "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof" have often fallen glibly from the lips of American citizens. This statement has also been cited repeatedly in various settings until it has become commonplace. With the credulity of

children, or the uninformed, many have accepted the idea that liberty, taken in the abstract or in direct relation to rights of citizenship, is a fixed reality. What is often forgotten, or possibly not even known, is that America, though still doubtless the home of the brave, is not necessarily the land of the free; and that the liberty we all claim to prize so highly has, in many instances and in various localities, been, in part at least, removed from the land.

During the 150 years which measure the



Fifty Jewish refugee children, between ages 5 and 16, arrive in New York from Hamburg, Germany, on the liner *President Harding* on June 3, 1939.

(AP Photo)



existence of constitutional America, repeated efforts have been made to favor certain groups as against others until it is a matter well understood by many that there has developed a state of pronounced retrogression in the matter of religious independence. This degeneracy of religious liberty has reached such proportions that there is hardly a state left in the Federal Union which has not been attacked with religious bills purporting to promote the welfare of the commonwealth.

There is always a danger of considering the problem of religious liberty too much from the angle of one church, and that the church to which we happen to belong. Let us not forget that the subject of religious liberty must be placed squarely on the proposition that the curtailment or regulation of anyone's innermost beliefs—be he Catholic or Protestant, Jew or Gentile, atheist or Seventh-day Adventist—with their resultant acts, is a direct attack upon part of the American system of government. And as we grant that the principle of religious liberty assumes that all people

have certain rights and privileges, we should likewise be willing to uphold these privileges and rights as citizens as well as Christians.

In substantiation of this assertion the words of Thomas Francis Bayard, secretary of state during President Cleveland's first administration, as found in Volume IV of the *International Law Digest*, are herewith quoted: "Religious liberty is the chief cornerstone of the American system of government, and provisions for its security are embedded in the written charter and interwoven in the moral fabrics of its laws. Anything that tends to invade a right so essential and sacred must be carefully guarded against, and I am satisfied that my countrymen, ever mindful of the sufferings and sacrifices necessary to obtain it, will never consent to its impairment for any reason or under any pretext whatsoever."—Quoted by Luzzatti, in *God in Freedom*, p. 674.

Mr. Bayard's statement constitutes a challenge which all church members ought to be willing to face and meet courageously. Do we think that because we have walked a compara-

tively serene path, it will be always so? Are we willing to give a ready ear and effective aid to the cause of religious liberty, or do we feel as did Hezekiah when he selfishly remarked, "Is it not good, if peace and truth be in my days?"

Some, in their zeal to promote unrestricted religious freedom, have advocated full separation of religious and political life. This should not be; for, in many instances, it has been the religious influences working through public officials which have brought amelioration to existing deplorable conditions. Such alleviation has been noted in the much-needed social legislation of the present and the previous century. It is the spiritual element of the churches which led to the progressive work in this field. Through the centuries the churches have been morally active in local, state, and national affairs. When one makes the oft-repeated statement that politics are not clean, it is to be remembered that without the ever-leavening influence of Christian men and women the condition in the field of politics would be infinitely more deplorable. The danger to religious liberty does not lie in Christian influences affecting the lives of officials in public positions; the danger point is reached when the state, or a church, or a group of individuals, tries to bring political pressure to aid in the propagation of religious creeds.

Danger Ahead?

Probably Americans generally believe there is no real danger of religious bigotry and persecution's ever finding root in our soil. Doubtless many would subscribe to the idea once expressed by Lord Bryce in a moment of wishful thinking, who, in speaking of America, said, "In no imaginable future is there likely to be any attempt to repress either by law or opinion the free exercise of speculative thought on morals, on religion, and, indeed, in every matter not within the immediate range of politics."—Quoted by Dieffenbach, in *Religious Liberty*, p. 138.

It is seldom that one finds Lord Bryce so far afield from actuality. When he remains within the province of historical writing there is no one more worthy than he to be called an authority; but when he leaves the historical field to explore future conditions or possibilities, he misses his calling. During the approximately five decades since Lord Bryce voiced this conjecture, the situation has greatly changed: rights of religionists in many states have been ignored, local legislation or ordinances have come into existence, and efforts have repeatedly been made to formulate and enact legislation of a religious nature on a national and even an international scale.

Too few of our citizens fully appreciate the accomplishment achieved by our forebears in establishing in America the principle of religious liberty. Too few remember that it was on this continent that "the doctrine of the liberty of conscience, the equality of opinions before the law," met its first full fruition. Too few recognize how much religious liberty has contributed to the sum of human endeavor. Said David Dudley Field (1805-1894), eminent jurist and authority in international law in the *American Law Review*, volume 27, page 645: "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 claim with justice that first among 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 had no right to intrude."—Quoted by Luzzatti, in *God in Freedom*, pp. 673, 674.

This quotation does not mean to imply that the principle of religious liberty was created by the legislative minds of America, but it does affirm, as Mr. Cobb, who has been quoted previously, said, that "the spirit that guided the work of the founders of our government was not one that was crushed and screwed into sectarian molds by the decrees of intolerant councils, and by the subtleties of ingenious priests; it recognizes the value of every creed, but rises above them all. The grand and noble purpose was to establish justice, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity. This is the lesson of the development of civil as well as religious liberty in the United States."—*Rise of Religious Liberty in America*, p. 270.

Many of those who were pioneers for the cause of religious liberty in America doubtless worked without fully recognizing the significance of their task. But whether they understood and appreciated the full significance of all they were doing, we who can look back upon the blessings of a century and a half of liberty must acknowledge that more than human wisdom must have been vouchsafed to those who sat in the Constitutional Convention as they formulated the charter which was to guide the destinies of the infant nation.

With liberties, especially religious liberty, being taken from men the world around, Americans should reverently pledge anew wholehearted loyalty to the principles that have made this nation great.

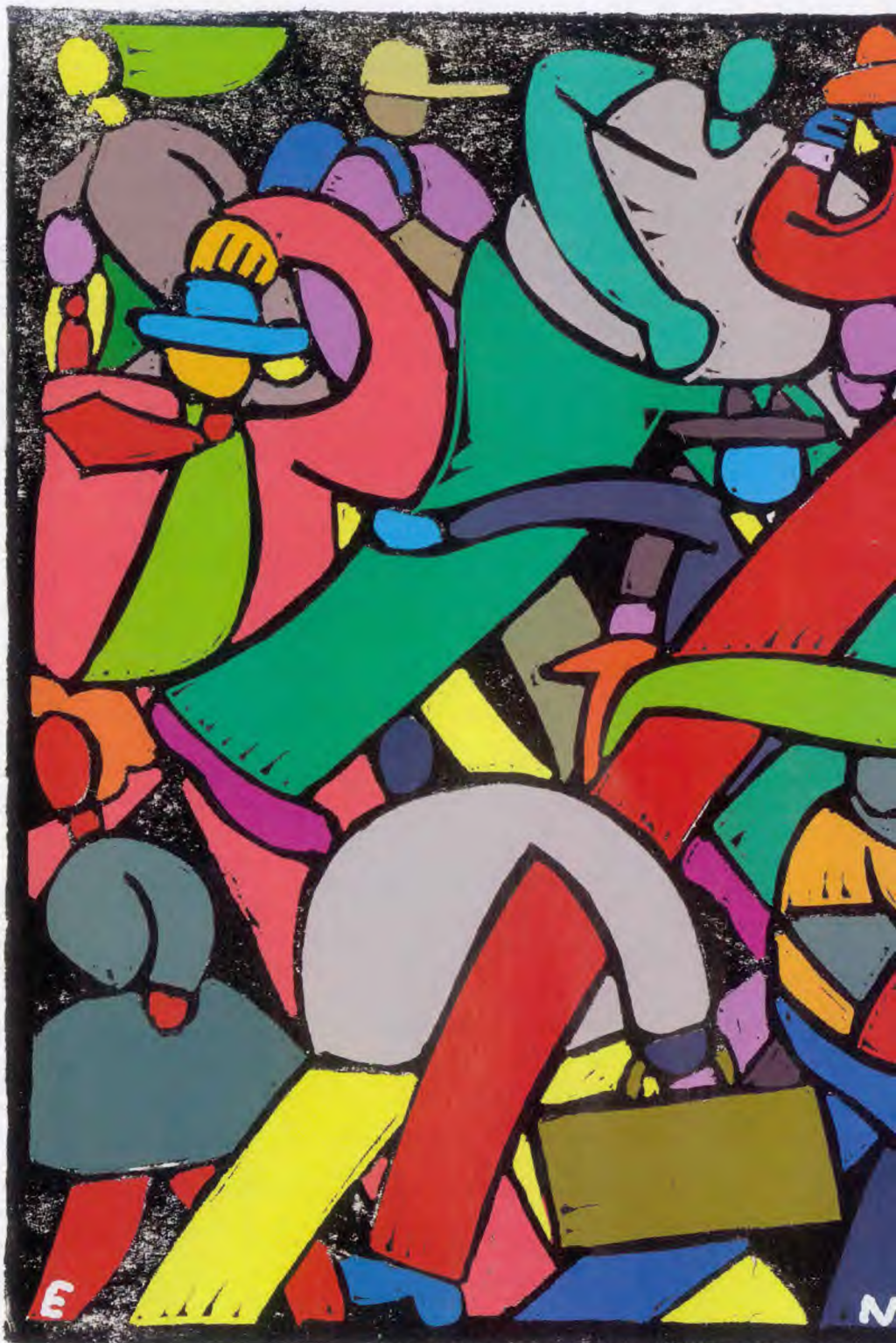
Taken from an article published in *Liberty* magazine, January 1941. It was a time of great stress, and significant that *Liberty* should so restate its fundamental principles. Gideon D. Hagstotz was a professor of history at Union College, Nebraska.

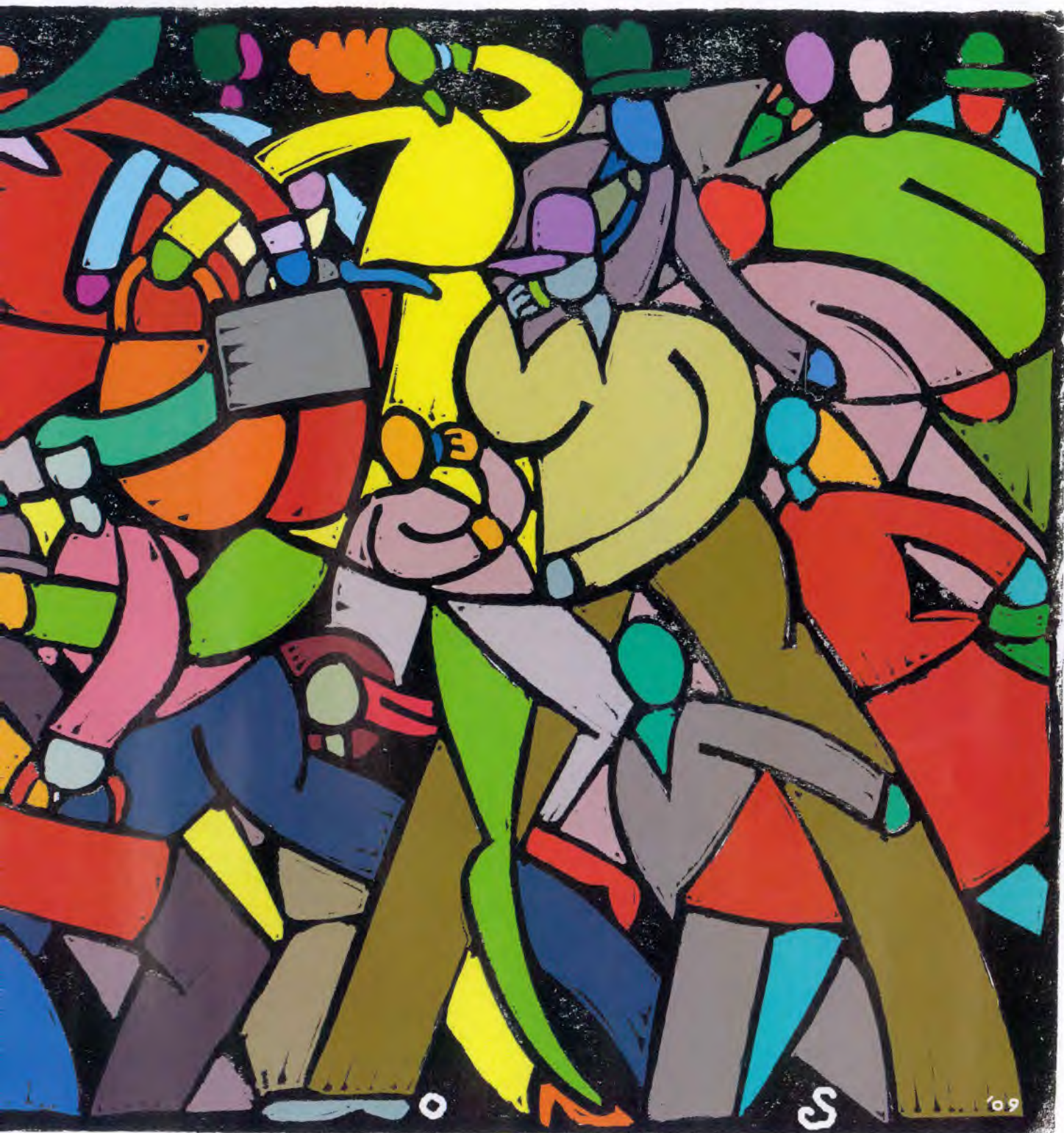
PUBLIC MORALITY

In a pluralistic society a fundamental assumption of public policy is the recognition that everything immoral need not be declared illegal. The public morality that is expressed in law reflects a consensus derived from public debate. . . . Social realities as well as religious principles must be taken into account in judging the wisdom of any legislation. Citizens who come to different conclusions are not necessarily immoral or unchristian. The tendency to so brand one's political opponents suggests a kind of moral fascism.

—An editorial, September 13, 1980, in *America*.

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the killing time

BY CÉLESTE PERRINO-WALKER

ILLUSTRATION BY KINUKO Y. CRAFT



Sometimes it's an indignant murmur, sometimes it's an angry tirade, but lately you hear it louder and louder. "America is taking God out of everything, and we wonder why our nation is experiencing so many problems,"¹ posted someone identified as "T" to the *Amboy Times* in response to a blurb about the removal of "In God We Trust" from coins. Brenda Pena concurred. "I would rather have In God We Trust on our coins than any President's portrait. We have already taken God out of too many things in this country!"² But the issue could just as easily be government-sponsored prayer in schools,

displaying the Ten Commandments on government institutions, or even swearing on the Bible in court or dispute over the phrase “under God” in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Regardless, at the heart of all such disagreements is the issue of separation of church and state, an issue that some do not seem to fully grasp and some do not agree with. But the most obvious question, surely, is Why do we want the government’s fingers in our religious pie? And the answer, quite simply, is that we are far enough removed to forget what the government does to religious pie. We have forgotten the terrible sacrifices many people have made in the name of religious freedom.

And we would do well to remember.

One of Two Margarets

What, for example, would Margaret Wilson of Wigton, Scotland, tell us about government-mandated religion? Margaret, 18, was the eldest of three children (Thomas, 16, and Agnes, 13) and the daughter of Gilbert Wilson, a farmer in the seventeenth century during a time when the king (in this case Charles II) believed himself to be the supreme ruler of the church *and* the state by divine right “by virtue of his royal prerogative and supremacy in causes ecclesiastical.”³ While Wilson and his wife gave the government no

could be spiritual head of a Christian church. This was the nub of the entire Covenanting struggle.”⁴

And struggle it became. A struggle so bloody that 25 years of it were known as “The Killing Time,” a time during which men, women, and children could be shot on the spot for refusing to say “God save the king.”

Church Is State

Ithough Wilson and his wife were obedient to the state in matters of religion, the beliefs of their children condemned them in the eyes of the king and they were forbidden to have anything to do with their own children, who were forced to flee to the “mosses, mountains, and caves of Carrick, Nithsdale, and Galloway”⁵ for their own safety, though even their absence did not protect their parents. Despite their compliance they were fined for the nonconformity of their children and were reduced from comparative prosperity to destitution.

Following the death of Charles II the persecution let up for a short time and the girls decided to risk a secretive visit to Wigton to visit some like-minded sufferers in the cause, particularly their elderly friend Margaret McLauchlan. They were promptly betrayed by a man named Patrick Stuart, who requested that they drink the king’s health. The girls politely declined and he turned

as a Christian I would personally love to build buildings, “In God We Trust” on our coins, prayer in school every day, and whatever I “gained” in that area I’d “lose” in religious freedom, and

cause for concern, being conformists to the state-mandated religion (Episcopacy), their children were another story. Young Margaret became attracted to the teachings of the Covenanters and her brother and sister followed her.

“Simply stated, the Covenanters were those people in Scotland who signed the National Covenant in 1638. They signed this covenant to confirm their opposition to the interference by the Stuart kings in the affairs of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

“The Stuart kings harboured the belief of the Divine Right of the Monarch. Not only did they believe that God wished them to be the infallible rulers of their kingdom—they also believed that they were the spiritual heads of the Church of Scotland. This latter belief could not be accepted by the Scots. No man, not even a king, could be spiritual head of their church. Only Jesus Christ

them in, either for satisfaction or monetary gain. Both Margaret and Agnes were thrown into prison where, after a mockery of a trial, they were condemned to die. While they were not guilty of any of the trumped-up charges against them they were guilty of refusing to swear the abjuration oath. “Many who could not be charged with the breach of any law were asked if they owned the king’s authority. If they disowned it, they stood self-condemned; if they qualified their submission by distinguishing between church and state, or if they declined to give their opinion, they were deemed equally guilty of treason.”⁶

Gilbert Wilson, upon hearing his daughters were condemned to die, sold and borrowed what he could, managing to raise 100 pounds. He rode to Edinburgh hoping to purchase his daughters’ freedom. He was allowed to save only one, and he chose Agnes, the youngest. In the meantime,

Margaret Wilson's friends did everything in their power to save her by trying to cajole her into swearing the abjuration oath or making a promise to start attending the government-sponsored church, but she refused to alter her course through compromise no matter what the cost.

The Solway Martyrs

In May 11, 1685, though reprieve had been requested for His Majesty's pardon and was expected to come in some form—if not a pardon perhaps a lighter sentence—the two Margarets were led from their prison by Major Windram and a company of soldiers to where the Blade River meets the sea (an arm of the Solway Firth) and led out to the wide sands that are covered twice a day by the tide. There they were tied to stakes in the sand to await drowning by the tide. The elder Margaret was tied farther out so her young companion might watch her slow death and—they hoped—be frightened into a change of conscience. But Margaret refused to be moved. While her friend struggled, drowning, a heartless bystander asked her what she thought of the sight.

"What do I see," she answered, "but Christ, in one of His members, wrestling there? Think you that we are the sufferers? No, it is Christ in us; for He sends none a warfare upon their own charges."⁷ As the water rose around her, Margaret calmly

"Readers of the tragic story may thus be assured that the refusal of firm Covenanters to say 'God save the king' was not the result of any lack of true civil loyalty to 'the powers that be that are ordained of God,' but solely the result of an enlightened conscience which refused to give to man, no matter how highly exalted in office he might be, the honor due to the Lord's Anointed. When such persons as the Solway martyrs ['the two Margarets'] refused to say 'God save the king,' it was because of the meaning given to the expression by men in authority. Its use was tantamount to confessing that the king was supreme earthly ruler in the Church of God. The Covenanters chose death rather than life when impaled on the horns of the dreadful dilemma."¹²

Full Circle

As a Christian I would personally love to see the Ten Commandments on our government buildings, "In God We Trust" on our coins, prayer in school every morning. I'd love to know that public school teachers could openly share their faith as part of their job. The trouble is that I know whatever I "gained" in that area I'd "lose" in religious freedom, and religious freedom is what this country is all about.

What I *can* do, as a Christian, is to accept that spreading the gospel is not the government's job.

see the Ten Commandments on our government morning. . . . The trouble is that I know religious freedom is what this country is all about.

recited Scripture until the water began to creep over her face and she began to drown. Rather than let her go, the soldiers loosened her cords and lifted her out of the water to revive her. Major Windram ordered that as soon as she recovered enough to speak she be asked to pray for the king. Margaret replied, "I wish the salvation of all men, and the damnation of none."⁸ With her friends imploring her to save her life and "say, God save the king! say, God save the king!"⁹ she responded, "God save him, if He will, for it is his salvation I desire."¹⁰

But this response didn't satisfy the soldiers who demanded again that she swear the abjuration oath. Having just been brought back from nearly drowning and knowing where her answer would lead, Margaret responded, "I will not; I am one of Christ's children; let me go."¹¹ At Windram's orders she was put back into the water, and she drowned.

It's mine. And I, as a private citizen and not a government employee or institution, have the right and the responsibility to share my faith in endless ways. Because of people like Margaret Wilson who braced their backs against the wall of separation of church and state I can be grateful that the government has no say in religion and I can do whatever is in my power to keep it that way.

Celeste Perrino-Walker writes from Rutland, Vermont.



¹ http://amboytimes.typepad.com/the_amboy_times/2006/11/in_god_we_trust.html

² *Ibid.*

³ www.ianpaisley.org/article.asp?cov_intro.htm

⁴ www.covenanter.org.uk/WhoWere/

⁵ www.applesofgold.co.uk/the_two_margarets.htm

⁶ www.ianpaisley.org/article.asp?cov_intro.htm

⁷ www.applesofgold.co.uk/the_two_margarets.htm

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² www.ianpaisley.org/article.asp?cov_intro.htm



The AMERICAN SENTINEL AND THE CRUSADE TO NATIONALIZE CHRISTIANITY

By Douglas Morgan

Illustration by Dugald Stermer

The trouble with the *American Sentinel*, wrote Rev. W. T. McConnell in 1887, was that it seemed “determined to oppose the progress of this nation in fulfilling its vocation as an instrument in the divine work of regenerating human society.”¹ The rebuke to *Liberty* magazine’s predecessor from the Youngstown, Ohio, preacher was on target. Then in its second year of publication, the *Sentinel*’s preoccupation from the beginning had indeed been resisting the project of the organization in which McConnell held office—the National Reform Association—for realization of America’s divine destiny. More specifically, that project was to formalize, with a constitutional amendment, the United States’ identity as a “Christian nation.” And, at the heart of what motivated the small Seventh-day Adventist denomination to extraordinary lengths in a campaign of resistance was a theo-

logical conviction that the endeavor to make the American Republic an agency of divine redemption would ultimately bring disaster instead.

With only about 26,000 members, and in a hurry to take to the world its message of a faith radically reformed for the latter days, the church demonstrated the strength of that conviction about the dangers of the “Christian amendment” movement by launching, in 1886, a monthly periodical, the *American Sentinel*, to spread the warning message. Its editor, Joseph H. Waggoner, and his associates Ellet J. Waggoner and Alonzo T. Jones were based in Oakland, California, at the denomination’s Pacific Press Publishing Association.²

Zeal for nothing less than bringing in the reign of Christ drove both the Adventists and the “Christian nation” reformers. The movement for a constitutional amendment acknowledging the sovereignty of Christ over the nation originated



A M E R I C A N
J E N T I N A L

...devoted to the defense of American
institutions, the preservation of the
United States Constitution as it is...

...Joseph H. Waggoner

J. H. WAGGONER



Joseph H. Waggoner joined the fledgling Adventist movement. It was not till 1863 that Seventh-day Adventists became organized officially as a religious denomination.

1852



during the Civil War among Presbyterians drawing on the Scottish Covenanter heritage. The nation, just as the individual Christian, owed allegiance to Christ as “King of kings,” according to Covenanter theology. However, the National Reform Association also included prominent clergy of many leading denominations. And, it found allies in several other reform organizations dedicated to extending Christ’s rulership over a nation whose moral order was under siege.³ Among the most prominent of these was the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, whose leader, Frances Willard, declared in 1887 the organization’s “one all-absorbing purpose” to be “that *Christ shall be this world’s king*.”⁴

The general ethos shared by the leading Protestant denominations remained the dominant moral influence in late nineteenth-century America. But manifold and rapidly accelerating dangers threatened that dominance—the crime, vice, and poverty rampant in overcrowded cities, the huge influx of immigrants boosting the power base of Roman Catholicism, the influence of secular values in the universities and the large corporations that held sway over the new industrial economy.⁵ In response, the “Christian nation” advocates, or the “Christian lobby,” to borrow a label from historian Gaines Foster, sought to advance the reign of Christ over the nation by means of legislation—more precisely, *federal* legislation. While a constitutional amendment remained central to their program, the Christian lobbyists did not wait for its passage to push for other legislation on behalf of numerous aspects of moral behavior, most notably sobriety and Sabbath observance.⁶

Likewise finding their “all-absorbing purpose” in preparing the way for the coming kingdom of Christ, the Adventists believed that the Lord Himself was soon to bring it about with a cataclysmic destruction of the present order of things and establishment of a new heavens and new earth free of suffering, sin, and death. In the meantime, they wanted church and state to be

kept as separate as possible, leaving them with maximum freedom to make their minority voice heard. Not only that, they believed enlistment of state coercion in the cause of the church to be the fundamental failing of Christian history, one that would lead to the final rebellion in human history against God’s noncoercive government.⁷ Accordingly, as the Christian lobby gained momentum in the mid-1880s, the Adventists launched the *American Sentinel* as an eight-page monthly “devoted to the defense of American institutions, the preservation of the United States Constitution as it is, so far as regards religion or religious tests, and the maintenance of human rights, both civil and religious.”⁸

The editors and their Adventist colleagues became relentless watchdogs against the National Reform Association and its allies—not only writing and publishing but countering the organization’s every move by traveling to, holding meetings, and distributing literature wherever the organization held major gatherings or introduced legislation. Since the endeavor to enlist the aid of federal government was the stand-out objective of the Christian lobby, the Adventist challenge would lead to a major conflict in the halls of Congress during 1888 and 1889. But before telling that story, we must step back and take a closer look at these Adventist progenitors of today’s *Liberty* magazine, and what propelled them.

Joseph H. Waggoner (1820-1889), the *Sentinel*’s first editor, had been a small-town newspaper editor in Wisconsin when he cast his lot with Seventh-day Adventism in 1852.⁹ The movement was in its earliest stage—so early that a decade or so was yet to elapse before it had a formal name (1860) and became officially organized as a denomination (1863).¹⁰

The founders of the movement with which Waggoner connected had been part of the Millerite revival, which led scores of thousands to anticipate, on the basis of biblical prophecy, the second coming of Jesus to take place in 1844. When that did not occur, the eventual Seventh-day

Pacific Press® Publishing Association is established in Oakland, California. As editor of its flagship publication, *Signs of the Times*, Joseph H. Waggoner would soon become embroiled in a major conflict in California politics.

Joseph H. Waggoner and W. C. White, son of the Adventist prophet Ellen G. White, were among the 1,600 Californians arrested between March and June of 1882 for violating the Sunday law.



1874 1882

Adventists survived the “Great Disappointment” with their belief in the soon second advent of Christ intact (though not setting dates), and combined with that other distinctive beliefs such as observance of the Sabbath on the seventh day of the week (Saturday), a divinely mandated practice that they believed had been neglected or corrupted for centuries in popular Christianity.

Moreover, they believed this restoration of biblical truth to be part of the progressive unfolding of events delineated by apocalyptic prophecy in the book of Revelation. Specifically, it was the “third angel’s message,” calling out a people who “keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (Rev. 14:12). Such commandment-keeping they understood to include observing the Sabbath on Saturday, as designated by the fourth of the Ten Commandments, rather than on the Sunday of American Christendom. The giving of this message, according to the prophecy, would lead up to the second coming of Christ.

But not without conflict. And here the early Seventh-day Adventists boldly identified the United States as the last in a succession of worldly empires, symbolized by ghoulish beasts in apocalyptic prophecy, that tested the faithfulness of the people of God. Specifically, they identified the beast described in Revelation 13:11-18 as having two “lamblike” horns but speaking like a dragon with the United States. Benevolent in appearance, its stated principles of liberty making it the best government humanity ever produced—“time’s noblest offspring”—the American Republic was nonetheless prone to betrayal of those principles in practice, and would ultimately become the final oppressor of those who put loyalty to God’s commandments first.¹¹

Waggoner quickly became prominent in the movement and was one of several Adventist writers who, in the 1850s, cited slavery as evidence of the menacing reality behind America’s image as a bulwark of liberty. He had been an anti-slavery Democrat until the Compromise of 1850 prompted a switch to the short-lived Free

Soil party, but as an Adventist no longer invested faith in the nation’s political system as the guarantor of freedom. “The United States government is a great idol,” he declared in 1858, a “union of *democratic* professions and *slaveocratic* practices,” and thus “altogether unworthy of the adoration which it receives.”¹²

After the Civil War, Waggoner helped lead the Adventist cause in California, which became the denomination’s second major center of operations, paralleling the original headquarters in Battle Creek, Michigan. Though he denied being a “politician” as he once had been as a partisan editor, Waggoner, as editor of the church’s major West Coast periodical, the *Signs of the Times*, in fact became embroiled in a major conflict in California politics during the early 1880s.

The Adventist mission in California had helped provoke a crisis over the state Sunday law during the 1870s.¹³ In 1882 the Republican Party, which held the majority in the state legislature, sought to bolster its support for the upcoming election by acceding to demands from conservative Protestant leaders for more rigorous enforcement of the Sunday law passed in 1861. While saloon and theater owners and Jewish and Chinese merchants threatened to turn Sunday into a day of secular commerce and recreation, the Adventists, in their public evangelism, were aggressively attacking the Sunday law’s religious and legal foundations.

Thus, Joseph H. Waggoner and W. C. White, son of the Adventist prophet Ellen G. White, were among the 1,600 Californians arrested between March and June of 1882 for violating the Sunday law. The Pacific Press Publishing Company was shut down.

With their eye on the increasing momentum of the National Reform movement, it was just these sorts of developments unfolding in California—only much more severe and on a national scale—that Adventists believed would characterize the final crisis over God’s law just before the return of Christ. With its coercive power marshaled on

“The United States government is a great idol, a union of *democratic* professions and *slaveocratic* practices, and thus altogether unworthy of the adoration which it receives.”

J. H. Waggoner, 1858



Following a successful Democratic campaign in the general election, California's state Sunday law was repealed in 1883.

The first issue of the *American Sentinel* rolled off the press in 1886 to counter the Christian lobby led by the National Reform Association.



Though they numbered only a few hundred, California's Adventists exerted a disproportionate influence in bringing the Sunday law to the forefront of the political scene and in the law's demise.

behalf of a religious agenda, the repressive side of the American beast would overwhelm the Republic's putative principles of liberty and human rights and persecute dissenters.

Rather than passively await the unfolding of prophecy, Adventist action began running in the opposite direction in the 1880s. With the state finding it difficult to gain convictions of those charged with Sunday law violations and the Democratic platform calling for repeal of the law, Waggoner—decidedly Republican in his political sympathies—appealed to the Republican convention in Sacramento to at least include an exemption from the law for observers of a Saturday Sabbath.¹⁴

When this failed, the Adventists threw their energies into a successful Democratic campaign in the general election, which in turn led to repeal of the state Sunday law in 1883. Though they numbered only a few hundred, California's Adventists exerted a disproportionate influence in bringing the Sunday law to the forefront of the political scene and in the law's demise, which has thus far proven permanent. In the assessment of historian Sandra Sizer Frankiel, Adventists, in California's formative era, contributed to the state's rejection of "that bond with traditional Protestant culture" represented by Sunday laws, "in favor of a more open and diverse society."¹⁵

What accounts for the Adventists' religiously motivated foray into the political arena? Were they themselves now violating the separation of church and state? Would it not be more consistent for them simply to follow their own convictions and trust God to sustain them through the crisis they saw ahead and work things out in accordance with His prophetic Word? Many early Adventists, including pioneer and visionary Ellen White, thought so—or at least wondered about it.

But J. H. Waggoner had two reasons for the *Signs of the Times*' involvement in the political struggle over repeal of the Sunday law. The issue, in the first place, had to do with the basic right of religious liberty. In mandating Sunday closings,

the law disadvantaged those who observed another day or no day as Sabbath. It was "a direct infringement on our rights as citizens and Christians," against which Adventists and others affected had a right to defend themselves. Second, the Adventist mission to the world demanded public witness against laws premised on the sacrality of Sunday. Called to proclaim "the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus," they could not be silent while the fourth (Sabbath) commandment was being "assailed, despised," and made "subordinate to human policy" in the public arena through Sunday legislation.¹⁶

Thus, by the time the first issue of the *American Sentinel* rolled off the press in 1886 to counter the Christian lobby led by the National Reform Association, Adventists had already begun taking action for religious liberty and developing a rationale for doing so. And they did so now at the urging of the church's most influential voice, that of Ellen White, despite her earlier misgivings.¹⁷

In 1885, in a message entitled "The Impending Conflict,"¹⁸ she replaced the logic of passivity in view of divine prophecy with the logic of action consistent with the characteristics of the God the Adventists believed in and the new world they expected Him to bring about. Witness to the God of liberty demanded action on behalf of liberty, even though they did not expect the cause of liberty to triumph through human action.

"Let none sit in calm expectation of the evil, comforting themselves with the belief that this work [of the National Reform movement] must go on because prophecy has foretold it, and that the Lord will shelter His people," she wrote. "We are not doing the will of God if we sit in quietude, doing nothing to preserve liberty of conscience." Activism for liberty was intrinsic and central to the message of "present truth" that the Adventists were commissioned to spread throughout the world:

"Let the watchmen now lift up their voice and give the message which is present truth for

Joseph H. Waggoner died in 1889 while serving in Europe. The religious liberty cause would be taken up by his son Ellet J. Waggoner and Alonzo T. Jones.

1889



Ellet J. Waggoner



Alonzo T. Jones

this time. Let us show the people where we are in prophetic history and seek to arouse the spirit of true Protestantism, awaking the world to a sense of the value of the privileges of religious liberty so long enjoyed."

Indeed, she wrote a year later, such activism was necessary if the Adventists themselves wished, in the end, to show themselves to have been on the Lord's side in the great, nonviolent struggle against evil.

When the religion of Christ is most held in contempt, when His law is most despised, then should our zeal be the warmest and our courage the most unflinching. To stand in defense of truth and righteousness when the majority forsake us, to fight the battles of the Lord when champions are few—this will be our test."¹⁹

The emergence of the long tradition of advocacy for religious liberty now represented by *Liberty* magazine can in part be attributed to the Adventists' pragmatic defense of their own rights as a religious minority, adhering to practices that set them sharply apart from the dominant culture. But the zeal, energy, resourcefulness, and tirelessness of that advocacy cannot be satisfactorily accounted for without recognition of their deep convictions about where history was headed and their apocalyptic role in bearing witness against efforts to make the United States a juggernaut of coercive redemption.

Joseph H. Waggoner drew on extensive and varied experience in activist journalism in 1886 when, as the first editor of the *American Sentinel* magazine, he took the lead in the Adventist campaign to defend liberty against what he called a program to "nationalize Christianity"²⁰—a program to establish a legal foundation at the federal level for legislation enforcing Christian morality. A year and a half later, though, as was common in the Adventist cause during that era, he was sent to a new, and far distant, field of labor—Europe. And it was there that his labors came to a sudden end when he died of an aneurysm in 1889.²¹

It would be left to the young associate editors—

Joseph's son Ellet J. Waggoner and especially Alonzo T. Jones—to lead the Adventists in the cause of religious liberty. It was a cause that would take them to Washington, D.C., and a showdown with the Christian lobby on Capitol Hill.

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¹ Quoted in Alonzo T. Jones, *The Two Republics or Rome and the United States of America* (Oakland: Pacific Press Publishing Co., 1891), p. 785.

² *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1966), vol. 2, p. 571.

³ On the National Reform Association and the Christian amendment movement, see Robert Handy, *Undermined Establishment: Church-State Relations in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 25-27; Henry F. May, *Protestant Churches and Industrial America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), pp. 42, 43; Daniel G. Reid et al., *Dictionary of Christianity in America* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1990), p. 800; Dennis Pettibone, "Caesar's Sabbath: The Sunday-Law Controversy in the United States, 1879-1892" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Riverside, 1979); Gary Scott Smith, *The Seeds of Secularization: Calvinism, Culture, and Pluralism in America, 1870-1915* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Christian University Press, 1985), pp. 58-69.

⁴ Gaines M. Foster, *Moral Reconstruction: Christian Lobbyists and the Federal Legislation of Morality, 1865-1920* (Chapel Hill, N. C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), p. 87.

⁵ For an overview of these developments see George M. Marsden, *Religion and American Culture* (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990), pp. 96-130.

⁶ Foster, pp. 2-6.

⁷ Douglas Morgan, *Adventism and the American Republic: The Public Involvement of a Major Apocalyptic Movement* (Nashville: University of Tennessee Press, 2001), pp. 11-44.

⁸ *American Sentinel*, January 1886, p. 7.

⁹ Woodrow W. Whidden II, *E. J. Waggoner: From the Physician of Good News to Agent of Division* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2008), pp. 20, 21.

¹⁰ For an overview of the origins of Seventh-day Adventism and the movement's beliefs, see George R. Knight, *A Brief History of Seventh-day Adventists* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1999).

¹¹ Morgan, pp. 15-20.

¹² "National Degeneracy," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Aug. 12, 1858.

¹³ On Adventists and the conflict over the Sunday law in California, see Warren L. Johns, *Dateline Sunday, U.S.A.* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1967), pp. 79-94; Eric Syme, *A History of SDA Church-State Relations in the United States* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1973), pp. 26-28.

¹⁴ J. H. Waggoner, "Not a Politician," *Signs of the Times*, Sept. 14, 1882 (Supp.).

¹⁵ Sandra Sizer Frankiel, *California's Spiritual Frontiers: Religious Alternatives in Anglo-Protestantism, 1850-1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 47-55.

¹⁶ "Sunday in California," *Signs of the Times*, Oct. 5, 1882.

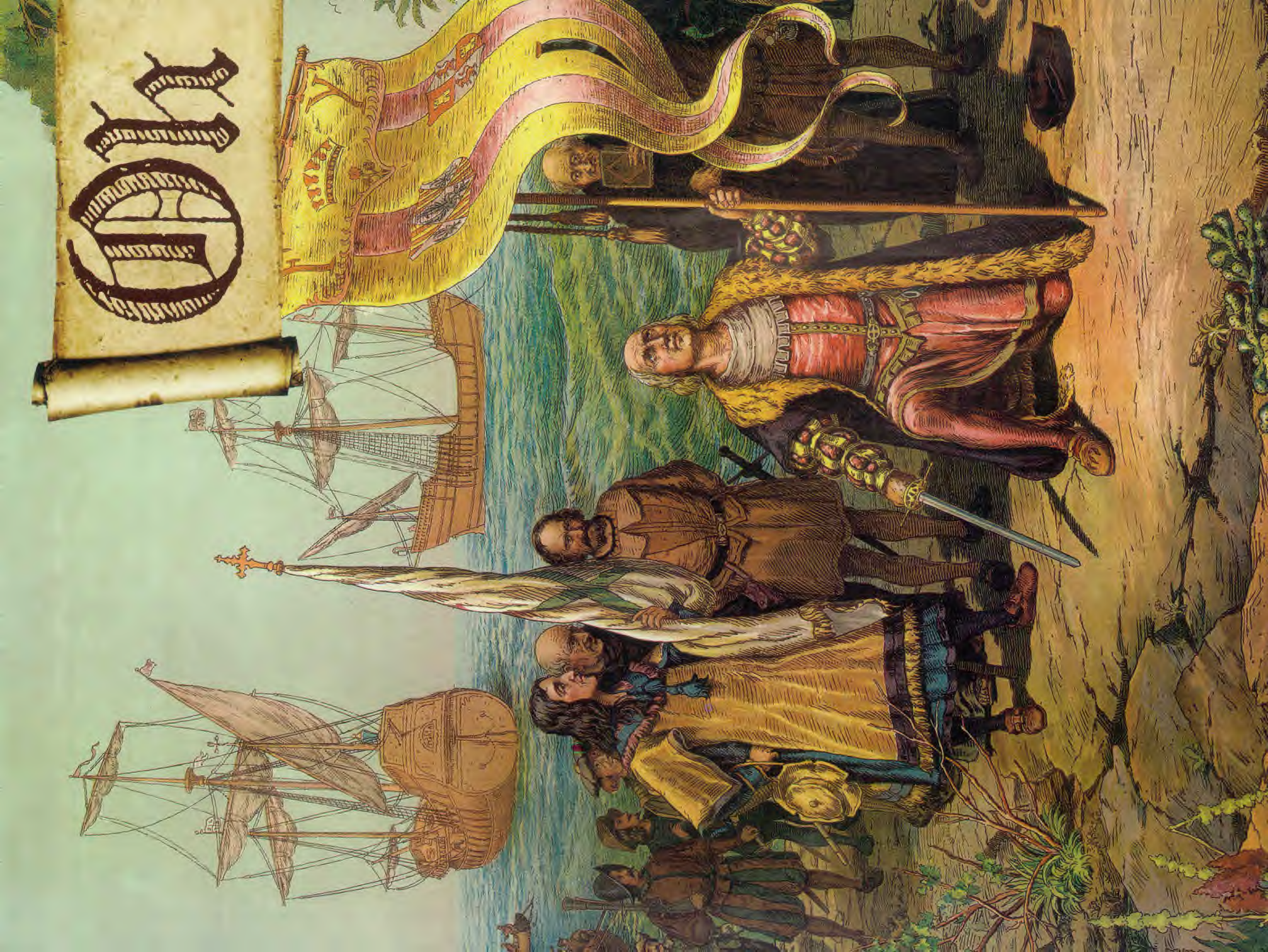
¹⁷ Letter to G. I. Butler and S. N. Haskell, published in Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 2, pp. 334, 335.

¹⁸ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 9 vols. (Oakland: Pacific Press Publishing Association [1875?]-1909), 5:711-718.

¹⁹ Ellen G. White, "Our Present Duty and the Coming Crisis," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Jan. 11, 1887.

²⁰ J. H. Waggoner, *From Eden to Eden: A Historic and Prophetic Study* (Oakland: Pacific Press Publishing Company, 1888), pp. 174, 175.

²¹ Whidden, p. 142.



Columbus!



Nothing so defines the modern capital of the Dominican Republic as the Columbus monument, which dominates a hill just above Santo Domingo. Its soaring concrete facade—which evokes a massive ship bearing down on the land—contains more than the supposed bones of Christopher Columbus. It could just as easily be bearing the memories of religious zeal that destroyed a people in the New World.

Columbus made landfall in the Bahamas, moved on to Cuba, and then established the first outpost for European power in the New World here in what is modern-day Dominica. While thoughts of gold inspired the whole expedition, they were almost equally motivated to Christianize the inhabitants. Unfortunately, their methods knew no restraint. Within 50 years of the first voyage a Carib population estimated to be as high as 10 million had declined to about 400. Disease, forced slave labor, and unimaginable cruelties—known only because the perpetrators themselves wrote of them—led to almost total extermination.

A famous chief named Hatuey led an opposition till his capture. The conquistadores put him on a stake to burn him alive. But before lighting the fire they offered him the chance to convert—and then the offer of a cleaner death by beheading. Only by accepting the Christian faith, he was told, could he hope for heaven and an eternal life of bliss. “No,” he said, declining the offer, “I don’t want to meet any more Christians.”

Now, so many centuries later, religion and religious dialogue have taken on a very different character in the



The Columbus Lighthouse, or Faro a Colon, is a controversial monument in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. It was erected as a tribute to Christopher Columbus 500 years after he reached the Americas.



Columbus strikes a heroic pose in Columbus Square, Santa Domingo.



Mobile TV equipment to cover the event in the main stadium.

Dominican Republic. At the International Religious Liberty Association Congress I attended we shared the value of religious freedom with leaders of many faiths and interacted with various political leaders. A Jesuit priest spoke eloquently about the freedom for all to determine their own faith direction. A congressman gave a very encouraging report of the in-process development of a new constitution and how it would enshrine the rights of religious faith for all. Best, it seems, to keep the bones of the past well and truly buried in the concrete of the past.

The present for the Dominican Republic was on dynamic display two days after the conference. Over 13,000 mostly young people assembled in a downtown stadium to celebrate and praise religious freedom for more than four hours. It was a highly charged program that moved along with an energy seemingly derived from the frequently cheering thousands. I will never forget the moment when, to the accompaniment of a costumed chorus and musical soloist on the stage, a “cast of hundreds” in costume enacted the freedom story of the biblical exodus.

Also on stage was Moses and Pharaoh’s court. Down on the floor a multitude of Hebrew slaves surged through the parting waters of the Red Sea (a billowing vision of cloth held by more actors). On the stage a brazier next to Pharaoh flamed up as he spoke of never letting them go. But at that moment down on the floor someone lit a huge paper-wrapped column that literally became the pillar of fire leading them to freedom. Thank God for religious liberty. And the crowd cheered!

Lincoln Steed, editor, *Liberty* magazine.



Liberty in the Land of Columbus

Religious Liberty Celebrated in Dominican Republic

BY BARRY BUSSEY

The first Inter-American IRLA (International Religious Liberty Association) Congress was held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, April 27-30, 2009. It was characterized by easy and open discussion between quite disparate groups.

Panel discussion included Rabbi Oisiki Ghit, of the Jewish Community; Rev. Francisco Javier Colino, professor at the major Jesuit seminary; Pastor Braulio Portes, president of the Christianization Church in the Dominican Republic; and Obispo Cesar Holguin Kourry, of the Episcopal Church. All noted the positive changes in understanding of religious freedom in Latin America and the Caribbean.

“The human being is the foundation

of our society with rights that nobody can destroy,” Rev. Colino, of the Roman Catholic Church, said to the delegates. “We need to allow the churches to work with liberty and freedom to share the true liberty God offers to men—to seek truth without pressure and violence. Religious institutions need to help society. Religious liberty is our human right—government cannot change its position on human rights. And if privileges are given to one religion we must have rights to everyone.”

Colino called upon everyone to work together in protecting religious liberty. However, everyone is guilty, he noted, of not doing more. “As religious leaders we need to respect the rights of everyone... We need to be united and raise voices

They desire all the freedoms—
especially religious freedom



together to every creature in every land to seek whatever religion they like. We can gather together with Jesus. Peace is the greatest thing we have. Jesus is with us and in us—He also faced difficulty when He was with us. We are here because we need to express love—first to God—a great privilege to love the Lord—and second to love the other people. Finally, we have to love ourselves, because if we love ourselves we love other people and we love the Lord.”

Dr. Scot E. Isaacson and Dr. Patrick Thurston provided the delegates with a historical review of the experience of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Latin America. From humble missionary beginnings in the 1850s it is now a major religious movement in the region today. But there is a history of trial and perseverance against religious discrimination and persecution.

A consistent theme throughout the presentations was the recognition that religious freedom not only includes the right to practice one's faith but it requires equal treatment among the religious communities. Examples were given of some Latin American countries that authorized only the majority religion's clergy to perform marriages.

Dr. Israel Leito, president of the Inter-American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, reminded the delegates that there is still a ways to go in the region to protect religious freedom. He suggested that there is “intolerance without boundaries.” “In most of our countries they recognize just one church.” He bemoaned the fact that in some situations the government says where a church may be built—“In other countries the church building has to be smaller than the main

church.” “To receive tolerance we must be tolerant and defend the right of everyone to praise the Lord as they want. Religious liberty requires respect to government officials. Churches cannot be involved in government matters.” “We need to support the person suffering for his religion,” Leito concluded. “It might be happening to him today but to me tomorrow.”

Professor Rosa Maria Martínez de Codes, a professor of history from Spain, argued that government must reflect the changing reality in society. Latin America is very different today from 50 years ago when not every religion was accepted. Today there is a greater plurality that requires a change in views. The

Spain to be recognized as such by the government.

The congress gave me a better appreciation of the status of religious freedom in the Dominican Republic. With a population of more than 9.2 million there is a vibrant faith expression in the community. I noted that there are 250,000 of my fellow Seventh-day Adventists.

On May 2, as a follow-up to the seminar, over 13,000 Dominicans showed up for the Festival of Religious Freedom. The program was very well organized and involved hundreds of young people who participated as members of choirs, bands, marching parades, and drama presentations.



fact that the Roman Catholic Church enjoys privileges, she noted, “doesn't mean the other religions should not be so recognized.” She warned that it will require much effort and gave the example of Spain. It took the Spanish government more than 10 years of negotiations with the religious communities to arrive at a comprehensive agreement of what would be required of a new religion in

“It is a great accomplishment,” noted Dr. John Graz, IRLA director, “for the Dominican Republic to have hosted this event. They have much to be proud of. The congress was very good and . . . the weekend festival was fabulous.”

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Gay Rights and the Limits of Religious Liberty

BY LAWRENCE SWAIM

ILLUSTRATION BY EDEL RODRIGUEZ

The experience of the Religious Right is a cautionary one. Successful in putting together a coalition with enormous electoral clout for over three decades, they were mainly unsuccessful in changing American life. In addition to adopting a hectoring tone that embarrassed many evangelical Christians, they were wrong about what the United States Constitution means in modern America. They

THE
POWER
TO
CHANGE





The most egregious mistake made by the Religious Right was a **dependence on state power to promote their religion, while ignoring the religious rights of others.**

often used religious liberty arguments incorrectly to promote their conservative social ideas, while at the same time trying to use the state to impose those ideas on people who didn't agree with them. Many of these same mistakes are in danger of being replicated in the controversy over gay parenthood and same-sex marriage.

The most egregious mistake made by the Religious Right was a dependence on state power to promote their religion, while ignoring the religious rights of others. Let us consider, as a point of departure, a modern example of religious coercion. An Army general orders a Jewish soldier to attend an evangelical Christian worship service—and this is not a suggestion, but comes as a direct order. It is also posted on a company bulletin board, and mentions that attendance is compulsory. Is the general simply engaging in free speech and the free exercise of his religion, as some commentators like James Dobson would have it? Not at all—it is actually a blatantly unconstitutional attempt to use the command structure of the military to interfere with *somebody else's free exercise of religion*. (It would be equally unconstitutional, of course, if an atheist officer ordered an evangelical soldier *not* to attend an evangelical worship service.) But this necessary balancing off of rights is something the Religious Right seems never to have quite understood.

Or take the following case: a conservative evangelical posts a sign at his workplace with verses from Leviticus critical of homosexuals, positioned in such a way that everyone in the workplace can see them. A group of gay and lesbian employees asks the supervisor to take the sign down. The supervisor refuses, and the homosexual employees file a lawsuit. The gay workers prevail, because the judge rules that the only reason for displaying those particular verses was to single out co-workers on the basis of sexual orientation, and to some extent expose them to ridicule and humiliation. The right of the believer to display his Bible verses was trumped by the right of other employees to be free of a hostile work environment.

Another case, however, resulted in a victory for an evangelical employee. In this situation, a man was asked to sign a form by his employer agreeing to be tolerant of gays and lesbians. The objective, the employer said, was to ensure civil-

ity in the workplace. Furthermore, the employer made it clear that the employee's future employment was dependent on signing what might be called a "tolerance agreement." But the Christian evangelical employee refused to sign. He had no problem getting along with his gay and lesbian co-workers, he said, and he specifically agreed with his employer on the importance of civility in the workplace. He just didn't want to sign a document that seemed to embrace a worldview he couldn't agree with.

The court ruled in his favor, and it's not hard to see why. The document could be interpreted as having the power of a contract, and the management was asking the employee to codify private beliefs that were none of their business. Furthermore, the employee couldn't be sure how the company would interpret such a signed document or contract in the future. In any case, the employer had already achieved compliance from the employee, so in the absence of further problems no signed document was needed.

What makes these two seemingly disparate cases interesting is that while they both involve social advocacy, they also involved religious liberty. The first case is an example of freedom *from* religion (Bible verses used selectively to single out gay co-workers), whereas the second involved freedom *for* religion (in which management was prohibited from imposing a contract that contradicted the religious beliefs of its employee).

The principles involved in these cases reverberate in different guises throughout any discussion of gay rights. At the center of the controversy is the role of the state, and the way modern democracy works. There is a general consensus that pluralism doesn't work without civility, and a grudging admission that yes, organized religion has at times singled out unpopular minorities. At the same time, there is also a growing consensus that laws or regulations against hate speech—like the heavy-handed "tolerance agreement" the employer wanted his worker to sign in the example above—don't work. The culture wars have been a hard school for both evangelicals and secularists.

But since they see themselves as the embodiment of American virtue, some in the Religious Right have not always considered the rights of



others, nor have they automatically engaged in dialogue. They have often turned to the courts with the expectation that they could institutionalize their religious beliefs. A good many Americans did not want that, and the Religious Right failed to fully realize their valid underlying concerns. Interestingly, the movement to limit abortion has now been taken up by secular women who promote sex education, new birth control methods, and secular moral arguments for responsible sexuality.

Of course the religious scruples of the individual should be protected, and that is precisely the job of agencies that protect religious liberty. If you are asked to do an artificial insemination, perform a same-sex marriage, issue a marriage license to a gay couple, sell prescription birth control pills, or assist with an abortion, and you have religious scruples that prevent you from doing so, *that is an authentic religious liberty issue*. It is the responsibility of all people in our society that cherish religious liberty to protect you from being forced to violate your religious scruples, and there should be no legal or occupational retaliation. And I believe you *will* prevail, because there's ample case law to protect you.

In states where there is no same-sex marriage, you can also campaign for or against it, depending on your position. But can you successfully petition the courts to stop same-sex marriages in those states that permit such mar-

riages? The reason, again, has to do with the balancing of rights. While *your individual rights* usually trump everything else (the state cannot compel you to do something against your religion), the courts and legislatures may decide that the US Constitution guarantees rights *to other people* that have not been considered before. This is likely to happen where same-sex marriage is concerned. You cannot take away these new rights, in those states where they have come, but you can protect your own. And in states that do not have same-sex marriage, you can advocate against it, if you do not like it. But that is not religious liberty. That is social advocacy.

This might be a good time for churches to consider how they approach social advocacy. It is at best a half truth, that marriage between a man and a woman is "under attack" by gays. Straight marriage is in trouble more because of the narcissism, materialism, and infidelities of straight people. Here's another way to express this problem: of all the sins of our time, including torture, unnecessary war, and corporate exploitation, why should Christians concentrate on same-sex marriage as being especially deserving of condemnation? It is no less morally important if we also address these very real challenges.

Homophobia, of course, is not the disapproval of sexual acts between consenting adults, but an irrational and disproportionate hatred of those people who engage in them. Feelings about

People with opposing viewpoints on Proposition 8 demonstrate outside California Supreme Court in San Francisco. REUTERS/Robert Galbraith

Dialogue with people who are different from us is actually a **democratic dynamo** that drives much-needed social, political, and **theological growth**.



A man writes with chalk on Santa Monica Blvd. outside the Los Angeles California Temple of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints during a "No on Prop 8" march and rally protesting the Mormon Church's support of Proposition 8.
REUTERS/Danny Moloshok

homosexuality are deeply intertwined with social attitudes. Anybody who knows anything about bullying knows that a large proportion of it is gay-baiting, but when confronted by evidence of violence against gays, some evangelicals denounce it as secular propaganda.

The social interests of Christianity, whether conservative or progressive, should be primarily based on arguments that are compelling enough to change society one person at a time. Although it may deal with the same issues, religious liberty is different, because it usually comes into play on an emergency basis to protect the individual or a minority, and is often a matter of legal precedent that must be considered against the claims of competing interests. To what extent is the core debate about same-sex marriage and artificial insemination a religious liberty issue? Not much, I'd say. Opposition to them is social advocacy, not be confused with religious liberty, until it involves protection of individuals asked to do something that is unacceptable because of their religion.

It is sometimes difficult for those who live in sheltered religious communities and denominations to accept this, but religious, political and social pluralism works so well because it is larger, both demographically and ideologically, than they are—and therefore requires a degree of dialogue and negotiation that they'd never need in a less diverse society. To the Religious Right, the need for dialogue with people who weren't

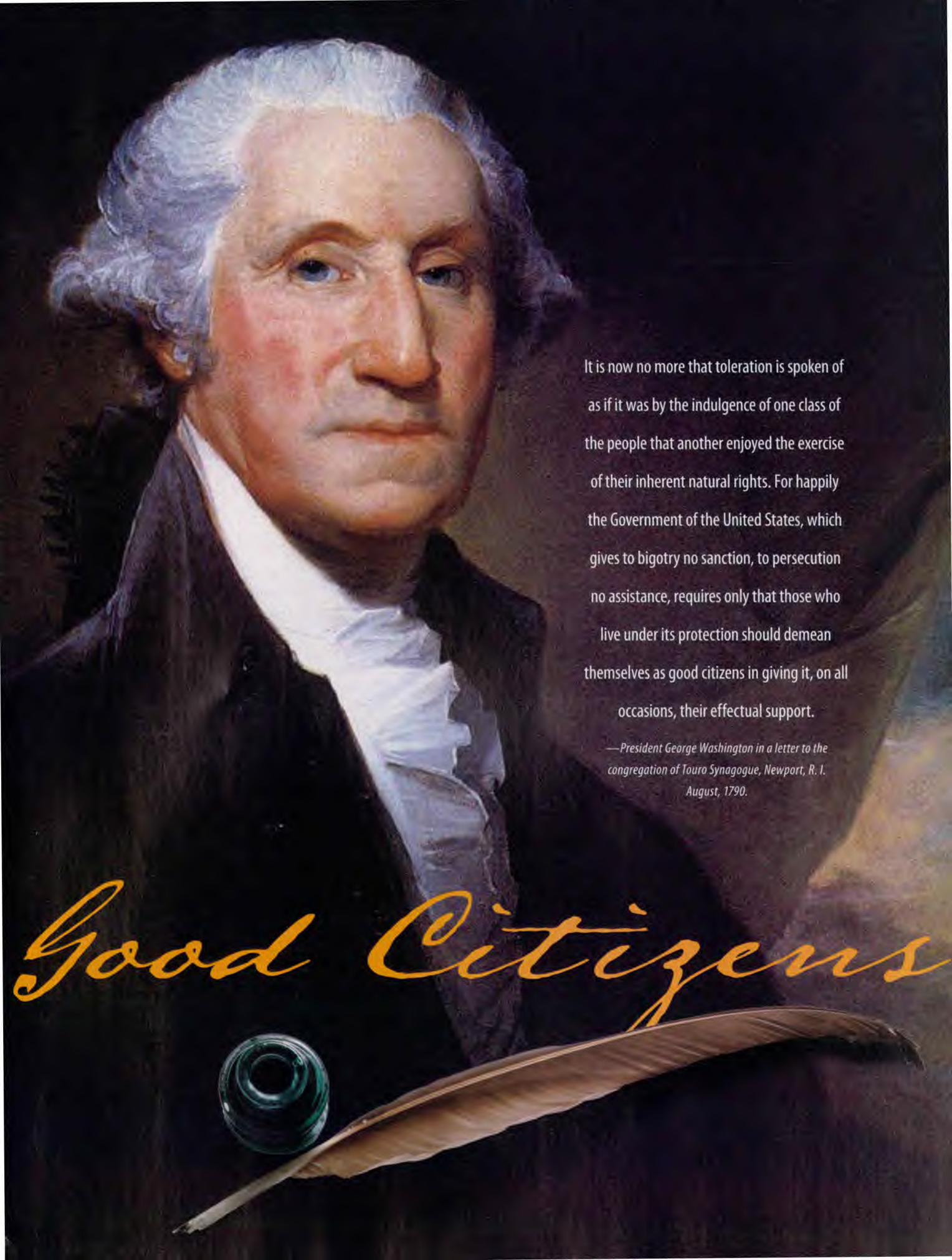
exactly like them was confused with signs of social decline. But the need for dialogue can lead directly to the process of communication of ideas to others known as witnessing for one's faith. Dialogue with people who are different from us is actually a democratic dynamo that drives much-needed social, political, and theological growth. As such we should welcome it.

Lawrence Swaim writes from Napa, California.

This article addresses the very contentious issue of gay rights and gay marriage in a way that invokes the true principles of religious liberty. I know that by us including it some of our strongest supporters will be inclined to critique the moral moorings of Liberty. Let me say as directly as I can that the Biblical moral values I espouse, and that are held by my church—the Seventh-day Adventist Church—are incompatible with the gay lifestyle. One has to hold rather exotic views of biblical interpretation and be prepared to ignore the plainest of biblical statements to think otherwise.

But we need to remind ourselves that the biblical model of religious freedom is to allow people to "choose you this day whom you will serve," and to recognize that there are natural consequences to all of our choices that God will not withhold from us. We need to recognize also that the civil model of religious freedom is to allow all belief and unbelief to coexist, without compulsion and restriction.

Of course people of differing moral viewpoints have a right, even an obligation to voice them—and, in a democracy particularly, an opportunity to insert them into the public discussion that may eventually change the public view. My church once participated in a broad-based temperance movement that sought to change public attitudes. Of course it was done from a point of moral advocacy not from a platform of religious liberty. Even today, in operating a department of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty, my church makes a distinction between what we call "Public Affairs"—or the concern of a religious entity to insert its viewpoint into society and to advance the church's interests in the civil sphere—and the "Religious Liberty" component of its department title—this being the promotion of religious freedom for all, the protection of religious rights and the defense of a separation of church and state as being the best enabling model for true civil religious freedom. Editor.

A portrait of George Washington, an older man with white hair, wearing a dark coat and a white cravat. He is looking slightly to the right. The background is dark and indistinct.

It is now no more that toleration is spoken of
as if it was by the indulgence of one class of
the people that another enjoyed the exercise
of their inherent natural rights. For happily
the Government of the United States, which
gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution
no assistance, requires only that those who
live under its protection should demean
themselves as good citizens in giving it, on all
occasions, their effectual support.

—President George Washington in a letter to the
congregation of Touro Synagogue, Newport, R. I.
August, 1790.

Good Citizens

A quill pen and a small glass inkwell are positioned at the bottom of the page. The quill is light brown and lies horizontally. The inkwell is dark green and sits to the left of the quill's base.



LETTERS

"You perhaps feel no need to defend atheists against the attacks of the religious."

Guaranteeing Rights

Thank you for the "Freedom Under Attack" article in *Liberty*.

Another way religious freedom is under attack worldwide is various governments preventing us from feeding the hungry within that government's country.

Examples are the rulers of Myanmar (Burma) preventing food and help reaching their distressed citizens on the peninsula. Apparently the hunger of people in Darfur, Sudan, is deepened by the government's denial of access to the regions of near starvation, and it was reported that some of those who registered to vote against the ruler of Zimbabwe were denied government-authorized food unless they recanted.

My religion tells me to feed the hungry. Should there be international common law guaranteeing me the right to get food to the hungry of the world? I think so. Do you agree? If so, hold the thought. Such an international law would guarantee us the religious freedom to follow the religious adjuration to feed the hungry.

EDWARD N. FADELEY
RETIRED AS JUSTICE OF
OREGON SUPREME COURT
CRESWELL, OREGON.

There is such a law in the universal moral code Christ promised to apply at His coming. It is in feeding the hungry and in aiding the distressed that we show the humanity that impresses Divinity. However, an international law to compel such an attitude might itself result in a confederacy of compulsion—the type of thing my Bible warns will come in stressful times. Editor.

A Matter of Sovereignty

Gerald Weber ("A Matter of Sovereignty," September/October 2008) confesses that he has never understood the United Nations. He then (as so many do) cites a biblical passage in support of his view.

However, that passage (1 Thessalonians 5:3): "For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.") could be applied to any form of political organization that is predicated on reaching for "peace and safety." Any system must challenge in some respect any individual's belief system, to answer the closing point of your response to the letter. Some do say that "peace and safety" would come about in the absence of political organization beyond the minimal state. To those that so think I ask: Is Thomas Hobbes wrong in his view that life is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short"? What evidence is there humans are inherently cooperative and amiable? An issue not addressed is this: Why does anyone believe that political truths can be found in biblical passages? I would think those who are unyielding proponents of the separation of church and state certainly would not think that way. Commitment to religious freedom assumes diversity of interpretations and controlling, if not eliminating, the impulse to find political certainty in open-ended texts.

PROFESSOR PETER WOOLSTENCROFT
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO
ONTARIO, CANADA

Far be it from me to defend letters to the editor. We do not restrict your comments. However, the point is well taken: we must be careful not to confuse spiritual maxims with the goals and structure of the secular state. The reflex rejection of the U.N. by some religious conservatives works with their rose-colored glasses of nationalism to show a disregard for true spirituality. Editor.

Defend Against Religion?

I came across the *Liberty* article "Faith Attack" (September/October 2008) by

Clifford Goldstein on Richard Dawkins' Web site. I felt I should read the magazine to see what *Liberty* actually means to you.

I was intrigued to find an article arguing defending a football coach who participated in before-match prayers. I did a search of your Web site to see if you had covered the case of Nicole Smalkowski, a young atheist persecuted by teachers and children at her high school in Oklahoma for refusing to join in a prayer before a basketball game. Neither, as far as I can see, have you written at all about the cases of Jeremy Hall and Dustin Chalker, atheists bullied by members of the American military for refusing to take part in prayers.

You perhaps feel no need to defend atheists against the attacks of the religious. But religious liberty surely includes the right not to pray, and the separation of church and state surely implies that state schools and the military should not discriminate against atheists, or favor those who have, or are prepared to pretend to have, religious belief.

JOE HIGMAN
E-MAIL

Point well taken. The First Amendment certainly guarantees the right to be free from religion, and no person of faith should endorse coerced religion. Editor.

Seeking Peace?

As a longtime reader and supporter of *Liberty* magazine, I was disappointed at the two articles with misleading information about Islam in the March/April 2009 edition.

"Islam: Religion of Peace?" makes the majority of Muslims seem peace-loving and makes the extremist Muslims seem small. This is the perception that is widely being promoted today. The truth is that even if this "minority" were only 10 percent, they would still outnumber all the people in Russia. If even



20 percent of the so-called "moderates" quietly supported the 10 percent extremists, they would together be equivalent to all the people in the U.S. and Russia. Anyway you cut it, they are not a small group. Also, if they are such a small part of Islam and if 90 percent of Islam is peaceful, then why haven't these 90 percent (which is equivalent to all North and South Americans, Europeans, and Australians combined) shut down the work of the radicals. But to date they have not.

The author inadvertently reveals why there is apparent peacefulness of some parts of Islam. He says that when Islam is threatened, it looks at the "war verses" of the Koran, and when it is no longer in danger, it looks at the "peace verses." That is seen today. When Islam is less than 2 percent of a country's population, they are quiet and peaceful—too small to do anything, such as in the U.S. When they go over the 2 percent mark, they are at war, demonstrate violently, and cause civil unrest such as in much of Europe. When they are the full majority, they are peaceful such as in Saudi Arabia (if you can call it peaceful not to allow your citizens to practice).

JEFF ZAREMSKY
FLORIDA

The article did point out the contradiction between Islam's peaceful side and at times violent militants. It is not the role of Liberty to try to characterize any religion. All religions have a history of violence and disruption when unbalanced elements interact with perceived threat or vulnerability. Our call is to openness and true religious freedom. Editor.

Great Publication!

I keep reading and am now going to subscribe for myself *Liberty* magazine, which originally came to the lawyers

in my office. Great publication! Always timely and thought provoking. One thing I learned from my experience in what some people refer to as a "cult" is that unless a person constantly challenges their own beliefs, they do not grow emotionally or mentally or spiritually, and they are not helpful to others.

ROSALIE DURON
HILLSBORO, OREGON

I Use Liberty

To say that I enjoy your magazine would be a substantial understatement. There is no better reading than to learn and enjoy. In addition to my full-time judge work I teach Criminal Justice and Corrections at a local college. I have used the magazine many times to stimulate discussion and to answer questions.

So thank you, and please keep up the great work.

RICHARD GLEASON
DUBUQUE, IOWA

Prayers From the Dead?

I found your editorial "Very Public Prayers" (March/April 2009) very interesting. I was pleased to see that someone out there agreed with the fact that the Bible teaches clearly the "dead know not anything." So, Dr. King and others are not watching from heaven, but waiting in their graves for the resurrection. I wanted to point out, however, that the scriptural citation should be Ecclesiastes 9:5—not Proverbs 21: 4.

PAT PROVENZANO
E-MAIL

Fresh Air

My wife Pat and I have been sponsors of *Liberty* for umpteen years. Even at those times when funds were scarce your magazine held a priority. It is always like a breath of fresh air.

The idea of liberty of conscience helped me choose to take a course of study for an M.A. at Andrews University,

Michigan, 1963. I found that it's been a vital theme throughout history. I own a book printed in 1820 entitled *Charles Phillips, Esquire*. Phillips was an outstanding barrister in Ireland and England. His speech at Sligo on separation of church and state echoes with themes of freedom of conscience.

"The union of church and state only converts good Christians into bad statesmen, and political knaves into pretended Christians. It is at best but a foul and adulterous connection, polluting the purity of heaven with the abomination of earth, and hanging the tatters of a *political piety* upon the cross of an insulted Savior. Religion, holy religion, ought not, in the words of its Founder, to be 'led into temptation' (p. 22).

JAMES BALL
BROOKINGS, OREGON

Read it All

I just wanted to thank you so much for the wonderful job that you, the staff, and the contributors do to make *Liberty* such a great magazine. For the first time I read every article in the January/February 2009 issue. Usually there are a lot of legal terms in some of the articles, so I might not read the whole story. But I really enjoyed "The Break From Rome." I am looking forward to reading the whole series. This issue really taught me so much—with all of the great writing and stories. I always enjoy your great editorials and the letters also. You all do such a great work for God. I am a member of the SDA Church, and I volunteer for our Bibleinfo.com; I will be able to use all this information as a witnessing tool to explain to others how Protestantization got its start. May God bless you, and keep up the great writing.

LEEANN R. WARD
PACIFIC, WASHINGTON



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OFTEN THANKLESS

The continuing defense of civil liberties is indispensable if often **thankless.** Strong and determined opponents of human rights have always used the rhetoric of patriotism and practicality to subvert liberty and to dominate the weak, the unorthodox, and the despised. . . .

As embodied in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, these principles reflect a glorious tradition extending from the ancient world to modern times.

—Norman Dorsen in "Civil Liberties," from *Encyclopaedia of the American Constitution*, eds., Leonard W. Levy, Kenneth L. Karst, and Dennis J. Mahoney (New York: Macmillan, 1986), p. 379.