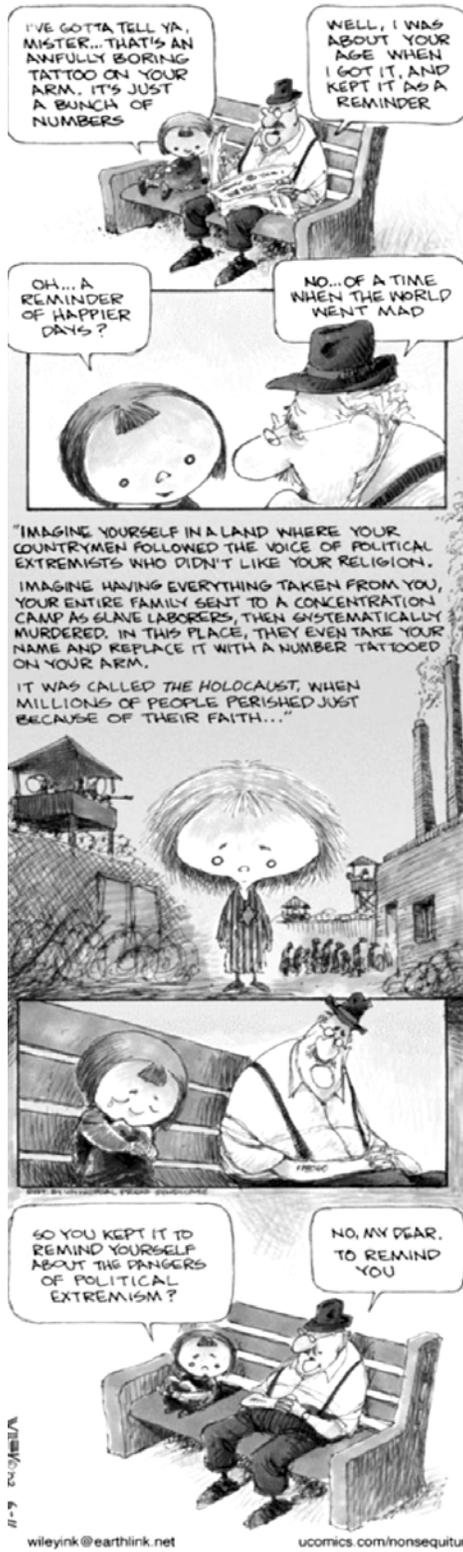


NON SEQUITUR
BY WILEY



Quote of Dear

“A TV reporter asked the grandfather of two of the girls who died where he had forgiven the killer. ‘In my heart, yes,’ he said. ‘Through God’s help.’”¹

A far better man than me, that grandfather did what I do not think I could do. What grace. The *English*, as the Amish call the secular community around them, helped the Amish families of the victims of a psychotic and demon-possessed killer, Charles Carl Roberts IV, the milkman who “lined 10 little girls up in the one-room schoolhouse last week” who became a “force of darkness” in the West Nickel Mines Amish School; he shot them, then killed himself. Ironically, every guest who came to the school was met by a sign over the blackboard “Visitors Brighten People’s Days.”²

God help our children in these dangerous times.

‘Dry’ Counties Are Drying Up in Texas

Even more are putting the liquor option to voters since easing of law

LUFKIN — Sarah Strinden is tired of what she calls the “pain-in-the-neck” drive she must take as a consequence of Texas’ patchwork of local liquor laws. From her house it’s a 10-mile jaunt to the metal-sided beer barns and package stores in either of two adjoining wet counties. “We don’t buy a lot and store it, so when we’re planning a casual drink with friends it’s a 40-minute trip,” she said. “It’s just inconvenient.” Strinden and others in Angelina County will vote in November whether to allow beer and wine in their grocery and convenience stores as well as whether restaurants can serve beer, wine and mixed drinks.

The vote comes as part of a wave of local-option elections that are steadily “wetting up” the more populous parts of Texas. Lufkin’s Baptist churches and others are mounting a campaign to keep their corner of East Texas dry, but trends are not on their side.

Since late 2003, when changes in state law made it easier to put alcohol on local ballots, there have been 177 elections across the state to legalize some form of alcohol sales. A lopsided 82 percent have passed, according to the Texas Alcohol and Beverage Commission.... Today, only 42 of Texas’ 254 counties are completely dry, fewer than half the number in 1975, when there were 87. And each year several more fall from the list. Located mostly in West Texas and the Panhandle, 28 of the state’s dry counties have populations of fewer than 10,000....

Garey’s organization, which represents the state’s \$29 billion-a-year food-service industry, was the driving force behind several little-noticed changes in state law in 2003 that made it easier to hold wet-dry elections. The new law lowered the number of signatures required ..., doubled the amount of time ... and dropped several red-tape requirements that made it impossible to hold alcohol elections in some cities.

“Getting on the ballot is everything,” said Oscar Dillahunty, 69, a retired beer distributor who is leading alcohol proponents in Lufkin.³

< Cartoon sent by Rev. Jack Lewellen, Moderator, New Bethel Baptist Association

¹ Will Sullivan, “Eyeing the Unspeakable, and Forgiving,” *U.S. News & World Report* (9-16-6): 11.

² Ibid.

³ Source: <http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/front/4227278.html>. By Thomas Korosec, Houston Chronicle (10-1-6).

McKissic Wants SBC to Address 'Tongues' in Baptist Faith & Message

NASHVILLE (ABP)—A Southern Baptist trustee, whose recent seminary chapel sermon was partially censored over his comments on speaking in tongues, has asked that the denomination address the issue in its official confession of faith. Dwight McKissic, pastor of Cornerstone Baptist Church in Arlington, and a trustee at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in nearby Fort Worth, publicized a letter he sent to members of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee, which met Sept. 18-19 in Nashville, Tenn. In it, he asks SBC President Frank Page and other leaders to study the issue of tongues among Southern Baptists. "The purpose of this letter is to respectfully and prayerfully request that the president and Executive Committee of (the) SBC initiate a process of addressing and formally adopting a position sanctioned by the SBC in 2007 or 2008 annual meeting, to be included in the 'Baptist Faith & Message,' regarding our position(s) on spiritual gifts, private prayer language and speaking in tongues," he wrote.... He also criticized a policy, recently established by trustees at the Southern Baptist Convention's International Mission Board, that bans the appointment of missionaries who practice such private versions of glossolalia, or speaking in tongues.⁴



Roberts Court May Be Defined in Second Term

WASHINGTON, Oct. 1 — If Year 1 was the transition for the new Roberts court, Year 2 is likely to be the test.... Less than six weeks from now, for example, the court will hear the Bush administration's defense of the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act of 2003.... Two federal appeals courts, in St. Louis and San Francisco, declared the federal Partial-Birth Abortion Act of 2003 unconstitutional, basing their rulings on the Supreme Court's decision in *Stenberg v. Carhart*, which struck down Nebraska's similar law six years ago. The new cases, *Gonzales v. Carhart*, No. 05-380, and *Gonzales v. Planned Parenthood*, No. 05-1382, are the Bush administration's appeals of those rulings.⁵

The statute outlaws a surgical procedure that doctors use to perform abortions after about 12 weeks of pregnancy. In its decision six years ago, the Supreme Court held by a vote of 5 to 4 that the law had to take into account medical judgments that the procedure was sometimes necessary.... Congress responded by enacting a federal law without a health exception, declaring that the procedure was never necessary to protect a pregnant woman's health....⁶

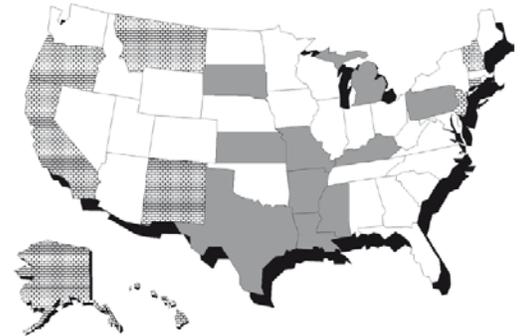
House Injects Prayer Into Defense Bill

The House passed a \$513 billion defense authorization bill yesterday that includes language intended to allow chaplains to pray in the name of Jesus at public military ceremonies, undercutting new Air Force and Navy guidelines on religion....

Air Force and Navy rules issued in recent months allow chaplains to pray as they wish in voluntary worship services. But the rules call for nonsectarian prayers, or a moment of silence, at public meetings or ceremonies, especially when attendance is mandatory for service members of all faiths.

Focus on the Family, the Christian Coalition and other evangelical Christian groups have lobbied vigorously against the Air Force and Navy rules, urging President Bush to issue an executive order guaranteeing the right of chaplains to pray in the name of Jesus under any circumstances. Because the White House has not acted, sympathetic members of Congress stepped in.

Top Ten For/Against Abortion States – by Americans United for Life



The 10 Best / 10 Worst States for Life

10 BEST STATES

1. Michigan
2. Missouri
3. Louisiana
4. Texas
5. Pennsylvania
6. South Dakota
7. Kansas
8. Mississippi
9. Arkansas
10. Kentucky

10 WORST STATES

1. Vermont
2. New Jersey
3. Oregon
4. California
5. Connecticut
6. Hawaii
7. Alaska
8. New Hampshire
9. New Mexico
10. Montana

⁴ Source: <http://www.baptiststandard.com/postnuke/index.php?module=htmlpages&func=display&pid=5414>, by Robert Marus - Associated Baptist Press (9/22/06).

⁵ See http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/organizations/p/planned_parenthood_federation_of_america/index.html?inline=nyt-org.

⁶ Linda Greenhouse, *New York Times*, 10-2-6.

“We felt there needed to be a clarification” of the rules “because there is political correctness creeping into the chaplains corps,” said Rep. Walter B. Jones (R-N.C.). “I don’t understand anyone being opposed to a chaplain having the freedom to pray to God in the way his conscience calls him to pray.”

Among the provision’s opponents is the chief of Navy chaplains, Rear Adm. Louis V. Iasiello, a Roman Catholic priest. “The language ignores and negates the primary duties of the chaplain to support the religious needs of the entire crew” and “will, in the end, marginalize chaplains and degrade their use and effectiveness,” Iasiello wrote in a letter to a committee member.

The National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces, a private association of religious groups that provide more than 70 percent of U.S. chaplains, also objected to the language. “Chaplains represent their faith communities and we endorse them to represent that faith community with integrity and loyalty to that tradition, not to the dictates of their individual conscience,” the association’s executive committee wrote.

Abraham H. Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, called the language “divisive.” Rep. Steve Israel (D-N.Y.) offered an amendment to add that chaplains should show “sensitivity, respect and tolerance for all faiths,” but it was defeated on a party-line vote in committee, and the Rules Committee did not allow floor debate on the chaplaincy provision.⁷

Chaplain Prayer Provision Cut From Military Spending Bill

WASHINGTON, Sept. 30 — Congress removed a controversial provision in a military bill on Friday that would have permitted chaplains to offer sectarian prayer at mandatory nondenominational events. At the same time, lawmakers moved to rescind guidelines issued last year by the Air Force and Navy meant to curtail the risk of religious coercion and proselytizing within the ranks.

“The provisions in today’s bill represent a full step forward and a half step back,” said Representative Steve Israel, Democrat of New York and a member of the House Armed Services Committee. “We removed dangerous language undermining religious freedom and military effectiveness, but I am distressed that instead of moving forward with unequivocal religious tolerance in the military, we are reopening old loopholes that permitted some acts of coercion and proselytizing.”

For several weeks, wrangling over the chaplain prayer provision had stalled the National Defense Authorization Act, a bill that sets military spending levels....

Congress did hand some evangelicals a victory by abrogating the Air Force and Navy guidelines on religious expression first issued in the wake of a 2004 scandal in the Air Force Academy,⁸ when some staff members, alumni and cadets accused evangelical Christians in leadership posts of aggressive proselytizing and discrimination.

Spokesmen for the Air Force and the Navy said Friday that they had not had a chance to review Congress’ decision and so had no comment on eliminating the guidelines.⁹

Fight Over Army Chaplains May Be Renewed

WASHINGTON – Christian conservatives in Congress are expected to renew their fight to allow military chaplains to pray in the name of Jesus at public events, contending that existing practices infringe upon basic religious freedoms.

They lost a battle last week to push through legislation that would have allowed military chaplains to publicly lead groups in sectarian prayers. The language was championed by conservatives who say service policies are so restrictive that chaplains cannot invoke Jesus’s name when praying in public, including over a dead soldier on the battlefield.

Military chaplains often lead groups in prayer outside private religious services, but omit references to any particular religion. Opponents have said allowing specific religious references during public military prayers could be divisive.

Debate on the legislation came just weeks before the Nov. 7 elections and was seen by critics as a last-ditch effort by conservatives to cater to religious voters, who can often sway election outcomes.

⁷ Alan Cooperman and Ann Scott Tyson, Washington Post (5-12-6): A05. Source of full article: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/05/11/AR2006051102009.html>.

⁸ http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/organizations/u/united_states_air_force_academy/index.html?inline=nyt-org.

⁹ Source: http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/01/washington/01chaplain.html?_r=1&oref=slogin. By Neela Banerjee, October 1, 2006.

Critics also say the language could cripple U.S. efforts to win the “hearts and minds” of Muslims in the Middle East by painting the American military as evangelizing Christians.

Rep. Walter Jones and other conservatives who supported the legislation say their proposal is not intended to allow evangelizing within the military.

“This is about a First Amendment right” to free speech, said Jones, R-N.C., in an interview Monday.

Jones and Rep. Todd Akin, R-Mo., said pushing legislation next year to lift religious restrictions on chaplains would be a focus for them if re-elected.

“The Navy and Air Force regulations that we are striking prevented chaplains from praying according to their faith and conscience, whether they were Muslim, Christian, Jewish or of any other faith,” said Akin.

House conservatives led by Rep. Duncan Hunter, chairman of the Armed Services Committee, tried last week to attach language to a defense policy bill that would have allowed chaplains to pray “according to the dictates of the chaplain’s own conscience.” But their efforts were blocked by John Warner, R-Va., Hunter’s counterpart in the Senate, who said he wanted more time to debate such a measure.

Warner and Hunter, R-Calif., who negotiated the final defense bill, agreed to drop the provision but added another one asking the Navy and Air Force to rescind their policies aimed at increasing religious sensitivity.

The agreement was seen by Jones and other conservatives as a small step in their favor, but did not go far enough to clarify what chaplains can and cannot say at public events.

Mikey Weinstein, a graduate of the Air Force Academy who sued the Air Force for acts he said illegally imposed Christianity on its students, called the agreement “red meat” thrown to religious conservatives just before the elections and a forecast of what was to come.

“We know the religious right will come back twice as hard in January,” said Weinstein, who started the Military Religious Freedom Foundation.¹⁰

Democrats have largely opposed the measure and could try tightening restrictions to prohibit “proselytizing” of service members if they gain control of Congress next year.

“The battle ahead will be to work with the military on a new set of guidelines that reflect America’s mainstream values and ensure good order and discipline on our military bases,” said Rep. Steve Israel, D-N.Y.

Seniors—No Downside!

The *U.S. News & World Report* reported that in 1900 only 4.1% of the population was over 65, today about 12%, and projected that in 2030 that 19.6% of our American population would be over 65. Also, and best of all, “There’s no doubt that seniors have been a boost to economic activity. Prof. William Hall, senior economist at the Center for Business and Economics Services at UNCW, estimates that retirees ... generate \$2 in economic activity for every \$1 they spend.” In Wilmington, North Carolina, Connie Majure-Rhett, president of the Greater Wilmington Chamber of Commerce, noted many improvements. One noted that he was “hard-pressed to think of any downside to the flood of seniors.”¹¹



BGCT Texas Christian Life Commission, www.christianlifecommission.org & www.bgct.org, 888-332-5870 — **Baptist Joint Committee**, Washington, DC — www.bjcpa.org — **SBC Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission**, www.erc.com — **American Center for Law and Justice**, www.aclj.org - **Christian polling**: www.grassfire.org & www.ethicsdaily.com ~ **Christian Coalition** www.cc.org

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¹⁰ Anne Plummer Flaherty, Associated Press, 12:03 AM PDT, (10-3-6).

¹¹ U.S. News & World Report (10-2-6): 57.