

## Baptist Joint Committee Supporting Bodies

- Alliance of Baptists
- American Baptist Churches USA
- Baptist General Association of Virginia
- Baptist General Conference
- Baptist General Convention of Texas
- Baptist State Convention of North Carolina
- Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
- National Baptist Convention of America
- National Baptist Convention U.S.A. Inc.
- National Missionary Baptist Convention
- North American Baptist Conference
- Progressive National Baptist Convention Inc.
- Religious Liberty Council
- Seventh Day Baptist General Conference

## REPORT from the Capital

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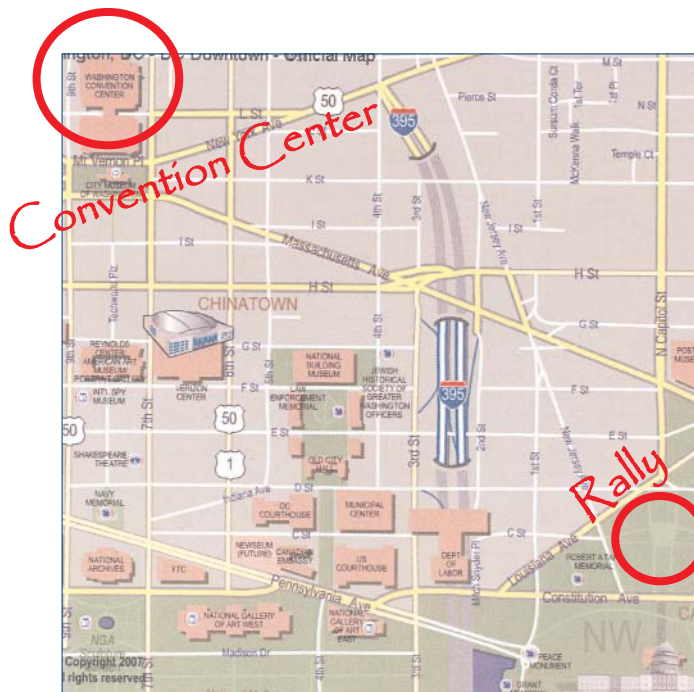
Report from the Capital (ISSN-0346-0661) is published 10 times each year by the Baptist Joint Committee. For subscription information, please contact the Baptist Joint Committee.

## Baptist Unity Rally for religious liberty at the Capitol

Join the Baptist Joint Committee for a celebration of religious liberty at 8 a.m. sharp on Friday, June 29. The rally is at Fountain Plaza of Upper Senate Park, adjacent to the U.S. Capitol and the Russell Senate Office Building.

In May 1920, George W. Truett, climbed the east steps of the U.S. Capitol to rally support for religious liberty and church-state separation. On June 29, Rep. Chet Edwards of Texas, Rep. Bobby Scott of Virginia, William Underwood, Daniel Vestal and many others will lead the celebration.

For those attending the overlapping meetings of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and American Baptist Churches USA, below is a map to the rally location.



## Getting there

### Metro

#### From Grand Hyatt

There is an entrance to the Metro Center stop in the Grand Hyatt Washington. At Metro Center, go down one level and take the red line in the direction of Glenmont and get off at the Union Station stop.

#### From Renaissance

Walk south (going with traffic) of 9th Street to the Gallery Place stop. Take the train in the direction Glenmont. Get off at the Union Station stop.

#### Union Station to rally site

When leaving subway, head toward Union Station shops entrance. Walk outside and head toward Columbus Circle, which is in front of the train station. Walk past Christopher Columbus statue. At the crosswalk, you're at Columbus and Delaware intersection. Take path to your slight right. And this leads you to D Street. Stay on D Street until you see a large fountain. This is Fountain Plaza at Upper Senate Park.



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# REPORT from the Capital

## Civil rights panel addresses school vouchers, 'Blaine' Amendments

The United States Commission on Civil Rights heard testimony June 1 on provisions sometimes called Blaine Amendments that exist in 35 state constitutions expressly forbidding government aid to sectarian or religious institutions. Specifically, the testimony centered on if these amendments were enacted out of anti-Catholic bigotry and whether they are valid barriers against school voucher programs.



K. Hollyn Hollman testifying before U.S. Commission on Civil Rights June 1.

In 1875, Rep. James G. Blaine proposed such a provision at the federal level. Blaine's measure passed in the House but failed in the Senate. Many states, however, later instituted similar amendments.

The panel, testifying before the independent commission charged with monitoring and protecting civil rights, included Baptist Joint Committee General Counsel K. Hollyn Hollman. Also testifying were Ellen Johnson, president of American Atheists; Anthony R. Picarello Jr., vice president and general counsel for The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty; and Richard D. Komer, senior litigation attorney for the Institute for Justice.

Opponents of Blaine Amendments contend that the amendments were fueled by the anti-Catholicism sentiment prevalent in late 19th century America. And today, opponents add, the amendments prevent many parents from pursuing school vouchers for their children in struggling public schools.

Picarello, in his prepared statement to the commission, asserted that the Blaine Amendments "were not designed to implement benign concerns for the separation of church and state traceable to the founding,

but instead to target for special disadvantage the faiths of immigrants, especially Catholicism."

Hollman countered that "painting such provisions with a broad anti-Catholic brush is a flawed tactic that betrays our country's rich history of religious freedom."

Hollman continued, "The effort is one that portrays laws that prohibit government funding of religion as sharing a common and pernicious heritage that has resulted in discrimination against religion. In fact, neither the heritage nor the result of such laws can fairly be equated with religious discrimination."

Hollman asked that the commission keep the record open to allow for scholarly contributions by historians who have studied the matter, since none of the panelists were historians. She acknowledged that anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic sentiments fueled some of the debates about government funding of religious schools during particular times in U.S. history, but asserted that the anti-Catholicism argument is a precarious one as it relates to the legality of school vouchers.

"The relevance of historical animus of some toward immigrants in the 19th century to current debates over funding religious schools is highly questionable since the state constitutional provisions are applied broadly to all religious institutions and do not discriminate based upon particular religious denomination," she said.

After completing an investigation, the commission will present a briefing report to the president and Congress within six months to a year.

— Phallan Davis

Newsletter of the Baptist Joint Committee

Vol. 62 No. 6

June 2007

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# Imam, Catholic lawyer added to United States Commission on International Religious Freedom

WASHINGTON — A Muslim imam, a Catholic lawyer and a retiring evangelical college president were nominated May 14 to a federal commission charged with monitoring religious freedom around the world.

Outgoing Northwest College President Don H. Argue was named to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom along with Imam Talal Y. Eid of Boston and Leonard Leo of Washington.

Michael Cromartie, an evangelical expert at the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington and the panel's current vice chair, was reappointed for an additional one-year term.

The commission investigates countries accused of suppressing religious expression and issues policy recommendations to the president, the State Department and Congress.

The panel released its 2007 annual report, urging Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to declare 11 nations "Countries of Particular Concern" for their

violations of religious human rights. Among the 11 were Iran, North Korea, China and Saudi Arabia.

The commission also publishes a "Watch List" of countries with lesser, but still serious, religious freedom violations. This year Iraq was added to the Watch List for the first time since the 2003 U.S. invasion.

Commissioners are selected on a bipartisan basis by the White House and congressional leaders.

Argue, who was nominated by Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., is the outgoing president of Northwest University in Kirkland, Wash., and a former president of the National Association of Evangelicals.

The other three nominees, including Cromartie, were selected by President Bush. Leo is executive vice president of The Federalist Society and adviser on Catholic outreach at the White House. Eid is director of religious affairs for the Islamic Institute in Boston.

— RNS



## IRS says complaints of church politicking up in 2006

WASHINGTON — Complaints about improper politicking by tax-exempt organizations went up 43 percent in the 2006 elections compared to 2004, according to a report released June 1 by the Internal Revenue Service.

The IRS was asked to investigate 237 cases involving churches and other organizations as part of the agency's Political Activities Compliance Initiative for the 2006 election year. In 2004, the IRS received 166 complaints.

However, only 100 cases were retained for examination by IRS officials in 2006, a figure that remained relatively stable from the 110 cases examined in 2004. Forty-four of last year's cases involved churches; 56 were non-church organizations.

"In our view, the IRS public awareness program contributed to the rise in the number of referrals we received," a report on the 2006 initiative states.

Most of the 2006 cases remain open, but cases involving 14 churches and 26 non-church groups had

been closed as of March 30. Of the 14 churches, four were issued written advisories for improper political intervention, and 10 were cleared.

Of the 110 cases examined from 2004, all but five had been closed by March 30, the report said. Of the closed cases involving churches, 42 were given written advisories and four were found not to have been involved in political intervention.

Asked why a similar number of cases were determined worthy of a thorough examination even though complaints

increased, IRS spokesman Eric Smith said, "It's very much of a case-by-case process."

Allegations about inappropriate political campaigning ranged from distributing documents supporting candidates to improper use of an organization's facilities. Charges that a church official made a statement endorsing candidates during "normal services" were made 13 times in the 2006 election and 19 times in 2004.

— RNS





# REFLECTIONS

## Herb Reynolds: A Christian gentleman, encourager and champion of religious liberty

Recently, this column has been the all-too-common venue for lamenting the passing of members of a great generation. I'm not talking about those soldiers who fought in World War II, but the heroes who fought the battle for religious liberty. People like Foy Valentine, Phil Strickland, John Baugh and Father Robert Drinan. Now another has left us: Herbert H. Reynolds. Disappointed that I was unable to make the trip to Waco, Texas, I write this column as the funeral is being conducted at First Baptist Church as my own meager attempt to offer a suitable tribute.

Herb Reynolds was a soldier, psychologist, president and later chancellor of Baylor University and a visionary Baptist. But I think he can best be characterized simply as a "Christian gentlemen." It seems like only last week (actually it was mid-March) that I heard him, in apparent good health, deliver a moving tribute at the memorial service in honor of John Baugh.

Herb Reynolds meant so much to me, to the Baptist Joint Committee and to the cause of religious liberty. I don't how we'll replace him. First of all, he was a constant source of encouragement. I met Herb 17 years ago when I briefed him, along with other presidents of a number of Baptist colleges, in Washington on current church-state issues. From that time on, he took a special interest in providing a supportive word, a helpful note, and later a comforting e-mail.

Moreover, Herb was a great champion of the BJC. He understood the importance of a joint Baptist witness on Capitol Hill that articulates a message of religious liberty for all and stands up for the indispensability of church-state separation as a insurance policy to preserve that liberty. At least once a year, sometimes more often, he would drop a generous check to the BJC with a hand-typed and typically modest note saying, "Brent, I hope that this helps the cause a bit." And quite significantly, in 2005, he was instrumental in obtaining a gift to the BJC of a quarter million dollars over a three-year period.

Finally, he was an accomplished advocate for religious freedom and human rights. In the early 1990's, Herb approached his congressman from Waco, Chet Edwards, and gave him copy of George W. Truett's sermon "Baptists and Religious Liberty," delivered in 1920 on the east steps of the U.S. Capitol. The copy of that sermon turned the then-neophyte congressman into the

fiercest champion of religious liberty and church-state separation that we have on Capitol Hill.

Here is Rep. Edwards' own recollection delivered in March 1999, when he was awarded the BJC's Mark Hatfield/Barbara Jordan Political Courage Award for leading the fight to defeat the mischievous attempt in the House to amend the First Amendment:



Dr. Herbert H. Reynolds died May 25.

"It was about four years ago when I came here and was having a conversation with Herb Reynolds .... He said, "I'm going to send you George Truett's speech" — his famous speech on the steps of the U.S. Capitol about religious liberty. He did that, and it has haunted me ever since; it has inspired me ever since. It has caused me to change my political priorities. And of all of the wisdom expressed in that famous speech, the one central

statement that he made that affected me so deeply was when he said, 'God doesn't want forced worshippers. God wants free worshippers and no other kind.' .... [God] gave us a gift to distinguish us from all other animals in the animal kingdom, and for anyone, but particularly for government, to take away that gift, whether through good motivations or otherwise, I think is sacrilege."

The BJC will host the "Baptist Unity Rally for Religious Liberty" June 29 at 8 a.m. on the Capitol grounds near where Truett stood nearly nine decades ago. During the rally, some of Truett's speech will be read by Baptists from all over the land. Rep. Edwards will be there, too. Herb wanted to come, but declined several months ago saying he and Joy would be spending the summer in Angel Fire, N.M., where he died May 25. If you are coming to the CBF/ABC meetings this summer or if you work in downtown D.C. and can come on your way to work, I hope you'll join us for the rally.

Yes, we have lost a valued friend, a Barnabas-like encourager, and one who almost single-handedly equipped the singular champion for religious liberty in our nation's capital. Quite a legacy. What a challenge to this generation's Herb Reynolds to step up and fill his shoes.



J. Brent Walker  
Executive Director

"We have lost a valued friend, a Barnabas-like encourager, and one who almost single-handedly equipped the singular champion for religious liberty in our nation's capital."

# Legislators' prayers are co

TRENTON, N.J. — “Let us pray. Mother and Father of us all, we give thanks for the women who have been part of our life’s journey ...”

Spoken aloud at a public high school graduation, these words probably would trigger a lawsuit. But in the New Jersey legislature, where they were said recently, it’s just a matter of getting things started.

The state’s tradition of inviting a member of the clergy to deliver an opening prayer dates to 1846. And while it may be a comfort to many, the practice has remained controversial.

On roughly three days out of 10, legislators in Trenton hear a prayer offered in the name of Jesus Christ. In Indiana, such an invocation could get someone jailed for contempt of a federal court order.

Last December, hours after a state Senate committee approved a bill allowing gay couples to form civil unions, the visiting clergyman intoned: “We curse the spirit that would come to bring about same-sex marriage.”

Senate leaders say he won’t be back.

Despite ongoing disputes about what opening prayers should contain, the practice is virtually universal. In fact, according to a 1983 U.S. Supreme Court ruling upholding the Nebraska legislature’s hiring of a chaplain to offer invocations, the practice “has become part of the fabric of our society.”

Of 85 legislative bodies that responded to a 2002 survey by the National Conference of State Legislatures, only the Massachusetts Senate did not open each session day with prayer, reserving it for special occasions.

Similar to 78 other legislative chambers, the New Jersey Senate and Assembly use visiting clergy members, rotating among different religions, to present invocations. The prayers carry a \$100 stipend.

“We’ve had all denominations,” said Assembly Minority Leader Alex DeCroce, a Republican, who suggested that if any group can use divine guidance, it’s New Jersey lawmakers.

“We always need a prayer,” he said. “I don’t think we want to stop the practice; I certainly don’t. I think it’s meaningful, specifically to certain people here.”

Not everyone agrees.

“For most people, prayers are sacred acts that belong to faith communities, individuals and their families, and they shouldn’t be politicized by making them part of a government activity,” said Deborah Jacobs, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of New Jersey.

It’s a debate that has been going on in New Jersey for 161 years.

“The first time a member of the clergy in either house in

**1774:** Over the objections of delegates John Jay and John Rutledge, the Continental Congress establishes a tradition of opening its sessions with a prayer by a paid chaplain.

**1776:** New Jersey’s first constitution provides that no person “shall be compelled to attend any place of worship” or pay tithes to any church, but limits eligibility for public office to Protestants.

**1789:** The first Congress authorizes payment of its chaplains. Three days later, the same Congress agrees on the wording of the First Amendment, prohibiting “an establishment of religion.”

**1802:** In a letter to Baptists in Danbury, Conn., President Thomas Jefferson says he reads the First Amendment as “building a wall of separation between Church and State.”

**1846:** The New Jersey Assembly begins the practice of opening its sessions with a prayer by an invited clergy member. The Senate follows days later.

New Jersey commenced a session with prayer was on Jan. 16, 1846,” said Peter Mazzei, manager of the Office of Legislative Services’ library, who checked records dating to 1776.

Mazzei said the Assembly voted 45-4 on Jan. 15, 1846, to open sessions with prayer. The first invocation was given the following day by the Rev. Samuel Starr of St. Michael’s Church in Trenton. Three days later, the Senate voted 11-3 that “it becomes Christians in all circumstances to recognize their obligations to and dependence upon God.”

A month later, Assemblyman Clayton Lippincott, a Quaker, declared legislative prayer was “fraught with dangerous consequences to the religious liberties of the people” and should be rescinded. His motion was killed by tabling it, 35-15, Mazzei said.

And so it continues — with some ground rules.

Invocation etiquette strangely requires that a prayer not directly address two things: religion and politics.

The Rev. Vincent Fields, who leads a nondenominational church in Absecon, learned what happens when you mix poli-

# Common but controversial

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF PUBLIC PRAYER

Legislative prayers and controversies about them go back to the founding of the republic.

**1853:** The U.S. Senate considers and rejects a claim that having a paid chaplain violates the First Amendment.

**1962:** The U.S. Supreme Court rules 6-1 it is unconstitutional to begin each day of public school with a nonsectarian prayer to “Almighty God” composed by the New York Board of Regents.

**1981:** The New Jersey Supreme Court unanimously rules the Metuchen (N.J.) municipal council may open its meetings with a nondenominational invocation, but warns that “more distinctively religious exhortations” might be unconstitutional.

**1983:** Citing “an unbroken history of more than 200 years,” the U.S. Supreme Court concludes “the practice of opening legislative sessions with prayer has become part of the fabric of our society.” By a vote of 6-3, it rules the Nebraska legislature acted constitutionally in keeping the same paid chaplain — a Presbyterian — for 18 years.

**1992:** In a ruling that forbids the recitation of “nonsectarian” prayers by invited clergy at public high school graduations, the U.S. Supreme Court declares “it is no part of the business of government to compose official prayers.”

**2004:** A federal appeals court rules the town council of Great Falls, S.C., unconstitutionally promoted a particular faith by consistently invoking Jesus’ name in its opening prayers.

**2005:** A federal appeals court upholds the Chesterfield, Va., county council’s practice of inviting a variety of clergy members to lead its nonsectarian opening prayers. It rejects a claim by a self-described “witch” that she should be allowed to lead the prayers.

**2005:** A federal judge orders the Indiana House of Representatives to instruct clergy members invited to give the prayer that they may not utter “Christ’s name or title or any other denominational appeal.”

tics with prayer after he spoke against gay marriage during his remarks. He later said he had not planned on doing it but “the Holy Spirit took over.”

For most visiting clergy, however, the bigger challenge is giving a prayer that is not specific to a particular religion.

The National Conference for Community and Justice, formerly the National Conference of Christians and Jews, advises clerics giving invocations at civic events to use “universal, inclusive terms for deity” such as “almighty God” or “our maker.”

Some federal courts have ruled the Constitution requires public invocations be nonsectarian. In 2004, a federal appeals court in Richmond, Va., ruled that the town of Great Falls, S.C., had unconstitutionally used its prayers to advance Christianity and ordered it to stop.

In 2005, a federal district court judge found prayers offered in the Indiana House of Representatives “consistently advance the beliefs that define the Christian religion.” The judge ruled that if the speaker of the House allowed “any form of legislative prayer” to continue, he must advise those

offering it to “refrain from using Christ’s name or title or any other denominational appeal.”

The ruling is in the federal appeals court in Chicago, which refused to lift the injunction until it issues its decision.

Assemblyman Alfred E. Steele, a Democrat and pastor of Seminary Baptist Church in Paterson, who has delivered invocations for the legislature, finds the Indiana ruling “troubling.”

“There’s no freedom of speech in prayer? To me, we’re saying there’s a separation of church and state, but the government can now tell clergy how to pray. I don’t think that’s what this nation was founded on,” Steele said.

Assemblyman Neil Cohen, a Democrat and a Jew, said he “vividly” remembers feeling uncomfortable during school prayer as a child.

“I felt different,” he said. “There should be some instructions that [legislative prayer] be kept religious-neutral, and on many occasions, it has not been.”

— Robert Schwaneberg is a writer for the Religious News Service.





K. Hollyn Hollman  
General Counsel

## Summer meetings in D.C. a chance to celebrate unity, reinvigorate efforts

It is summer in Washington, D.C., and it feels like it. It is not just the hot temperatures, but also the growing excitement of the staff, board and extended BJC family as we look forward to our annual gathering of individual supporters at the Religious Liberty Council Luncheon. As you know, this year's luncheon is in our nation's capital (see [www.bjconline.org](http://www.bjconline.org) for details), as Washington hosts two of our largest supporting Baptist bodies for their meetings at the end of the month. A variety of other events planned in conjunction with these conventions ensure that an even broader spectrum of friends will be gathering.

We have long awaited the opportunity to welcome you to Washington. As always, the luncheon will offer a chance to join in large numbers for food, fellowship, and an inspiring keynote address. We will also report on the latest developments in religious liberty news, church-state law and all the work we do on your behalf. Among other things, you can expect to hear about our continued efforts to monitor the "faith-based initiative," including a recent legislative victory against religious discrimination in government-funded job positions. The BJC has also been active in supporting litigation against government funding of prison ministries; supporting free exercise protections in zoning disputes and in the U.S. military; and supporting taxpayer standing for Establishment Clause challenges, as in the *Hein* case, which remains pending before the U.S. Supreme Court. You'll also hear an update on the BJC's campaign to establish a Center for Religious Liberty on Capitol Hill. New giving circles can guarantee recognition for your contribution to the effort.

Of course, these efforts are possible only through your continuing commitment to the

Baptist legacy of religious freedom. We count on your financial support, as well as your prayers and encouragement. We count on your education efforts about Baptist history in your congregations and your voice in public debates in your community. Those efforts in your community are essential to maintaining the separation of church and state. Our staff considers it a privilege to be your voice in the nation's capital and we relish the chance to work together. In addition to attending the luncheon, we hope many of you will take advantage of being in Washington by meeting

with government officials or participating in other events that allow you to be more

directly involved in the work of Baptists together.

One of the themes you will hear emphasized as we welcome friends from across the country to D.C. is unity. Sure Baptists come in lots of different stripes, but at our best, we also share some distinct principles. Religious freedom is one of those bedrock principles, and the BJC is proud to serve 14 different Baptist entities, bringing them together so that they can stand strong to protect freedom of conscience and guard against efforts that would allow government to interfere with or usurp the role of religion. While some of the diversity and richness of Baptist life will be proudly on display in Washington this month, we trust that so, too, will our shared commitment to religious liberty for all.

The Baptist legacy of religious freedom and church-state separation deserves our very best efforts. Not only does it unify Baptists but it also serves our country so well. As the BJC's brand new bumper stickers says, "Separation of Church and State is Good for *Both*."



**SEPARATION OF CHURCH & STATE IS GOOD FOR BOTH**

[www.BJConline.org](http://www.BJConline.org)

### 3 summer interns begin work at the Baptist Joint Committee

Allison Collins of Fayetteville, N.C., Michael Causey of Fayetteville N.C., and Brad Jackson of Tampa, Fla., are serving summer internships at the Baptist Joint Committee.

Collins is a rising junior at Mars Hill College in Mars Hill, N.C. She is studying international relations with concentrations in political science and history. She is the daughter of Robert and Robin Gantt of Fayetteville, N.C.

Causey is currently studying law at the Washington College of Law at American University. He graduated from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill in 2005 with majors in political science and history. He is the son of Steven and Nancy Causey.

Jackson is currently attending the Candler School of Theology at Emory University. He previously earned a B.A. in history from the University of South Florida. He is the son of Larry and Marilyn Jackson of Tampa, Fla.

### Colorado Christian University to appeal tuition assistance ruling

A Christian university in Colorado plans to appeal a federal judge's ruling that a state education commission could deny tuition assistance to its students.

U.S. District Judge Marcia S. Krieger of Denver ruled May 18 that the Colorado Commission on Higher Education could exclude "pervasively sectarian" Colorado Christian University because that exclusion "operates to advance a compelling governmental interest."

The state offers tuition assistance to low-income college students but its constitution prohibits the distribution of public money for religious education.

The college, which sued in 2004, argued that the commission's "pervasively sectarian" test violated aspects of the Constitution, including the Establishment Clause and Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment. It noted that students who attend the university and pursue studies in secular professions are disqualified while students at public institutions who have the same majors are not.

She said the school's argument about secular education is "misplaced" because the secular instruction at other schools is "readily severable from any religious teaching."

The judge referred to a U.S. Supreme Court decision in 2004, *Locke v. Davey*, which permitted Washington state to prohibit scholarships to college students seeking theology degrees.

"... Based upon the application of *Locke*, the commission is only required to demonstrate that the exclusion of 'pervasively sectarian' schools from tuition assistance is rationally connected to a legitimate governmental

interest," she said.

Colorado Christian University President Bill Armstrong said the school intends to appeal the case to the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. — RNS

### School faces suit for distributing free Bibles to students

AMITE, La. — The Tangipahoa Parish School Board is facing another federal lawsuit, this time from a parent claiming that the district permitted the distribution of Bibles to students on school property during class. The suit, backed by the American Civil Liberties Union, was filed May 17 in U.S. District Court in New Orleans. In addition to the nine school board members, the suit names the schools superintendent and a middle school principal as defendants.

"They're habitual offenders when it comes to promoting religion in schools," said Joe Cook, executive director of Louisiana's branch of the ACLU. "In this case, they teamed up with someone else."

The lawsuit centers on an incident described by "Jane Roe," a fifth-grader at Loranger Middle School.

"Roe's" teacher sent the class to the front office where two men, assumed to be representatives from The Gideons International, were passing out Bibles to the students, according to the suit.

The men handed a Bible to each student and said, "God bless you," the suit claimed.

Gideons are part of an evangelical Christian organization that distributes Bibles to various institutions worldwide. School officials had approved the distribution, which occurs every year in the fifth grade, according to the suit.

The girl's parents, who are Catholic, objected to the practice, claiming it violated their right to control the religious upbringing of their child and subjected her to religious indoctrination, Cook said. — RNS

### Supporters honor, memorialize others with donations to BJC

**In memory of Dr. J. Clark Hensley**  
Jo and Harold Hollman

**In memory of Dr. Herbert H. Reynolds**  
June Rose Garrott  
John and Karen Wood

**In memory of Phil Strickland**  
**In honor of Brent Walker**  
Sybil Strickland