

REPORT

from the Capital

Justice Stephen Breyer helps open BJC's Center for Religious Liberty

WASHINGTON — Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer thanked the Baptist Joint Committee for filing briefs before the High Court, saying at the Oct. 1 opening of the BJC's new Center for Religious Liberty on Capitol Hill that "when you file briefs, they help."

He continued, "It doesn't mean you always win," drawing laughter from the audience that included members of the Baptist Joint Committee Board of Directors and friends.

BJC Executive Director J. Brent Walker and General Counsel K. Hollyn Hollman gave Breyer a private tour of the Center before the justice made brief remarks to a gathering held in conjunction with the annual board meeting. He spoke on the opening day of the new Supreme Court term.

In his remarks, Breyer mentioned a book by a member of the British Supreme Court that made an impression on him. "If you want to look to the foundation of our liberty," he recalled of Lord Radcliffe's *The Law and Its Compass*, "look to the freedom of religion."

He said he is well aware of Baptists' long-fought battles protecting religious freedom not just for themselves, but for people of other faiths as well.

BJC General Counsel K. Hollyn Hollman, who introduced Breyer, said it was a great honor to have a sitting justice attend the opening event.

"The Supreme Court is extremely important in the continuing fight to protect religious freedom," Hollman said. "We are grateful to Justice Breyer for his service and contributions to protect our first freedom."

Breyer has served on the High Court since 1994 after his nomination by President Bill Clinton. He joined the Court after serving as a judge for the 1st U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. A graduate of Stanford University,



Top: Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer delivers remarks to members of the BJC Board of Directors at the open house for the Center for Religious Liberty on Capitol Hill. Pictured with him are BJC Executive Director J. Brent Walker and General Counsel K. Hollyn Hollman. **Bottom:** The new Center expands the organization's education efforts in support of religious liberty for all.

Oxford University and Harvard Law School, Justice Breyer worked as a law clerk for Supreme Court Justice Arthur Goldberg and served in various positions in government and academia.

The Center for Religious Liberty expands the BJC's education efforts, including additional space for scholars and advocates, displays illustrating the history and mission of the organization and improved technology throughout.

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Pew Forum report: religious freedom restrictions increasing worldwide

Religious believers throughout the world face a rising tide of restrictions, according to a study released Sept. 20.

In the one-year period ending in mid-2010, 75 percent of the world's population lived in a nation with high or very high restrictions on religious beliefs or practices, according to the study conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. Pew tracked religious freedoms denied by government and cultural authorities.

A previous Pew study on the subject found that 70 percent of the world lived under religious restrictions.

The increasingly hostile climate does not come as a surprise to John Pinna, director of government relations for the American Islamic Congress.

"As countries, particularly developing nations, search for stability, religious persecution is a tool for consolidation of authority," Pinna said. "Furthermore, in the developing world, governments lack the capacity to protect vulnerable populations from non-state actors who have their own political agendas."

The Pew researchers found increasing intolerance in every region of the world. Government and social



restrictions on religious freedom particularly tightened in the Middle East-North Africa region, Europe and sub-Saharan Africa, according to the study.

The Middle East and North Africa showed the highest levels of social and government hostility involving religion well before the beginning of the tumultuous period known as Arab Spring swept across the region.

Globally, restrictions increased not only in countries that already afforded few protections for religious freedom, such as Nigeria and Indonesia, but also in countries where citizens have generally enjoyed a high degree of religious liberty, such as Switzerland and the United States,

the study found.

Among incidents cited in the United States: the intense opposition to the building of a mosque in Murfreesboro, Tenn., and a spike in the number of religion-related workplace discrimination complaints.

The study covered 197 countries and relied on 19 sources of information, including the U.S. State Department's annual reports on religious freedom.

—Lauren Markoe, *Religion News Service*

Survey: Young evangelicals at odds with their political parties

WASHINGTON — A large majority of young evangelicals see a conflict between their faith and their political party — but Democrats grapple with this disconnect much more than Republicans.

So says a new survey from Sojourners, the progressive Christian group, which asked evangelicals under the age of 35 about their political views and civic engagement.

The survey — of mostly single, college-educated evangelicals — showed that 54 percent identified as Republicans, 26 percent as Democrats and 20 percent as Independents or something else.

Of the Republicans, 65 percent said their faith convictions frequently or sometimes conflict with the positions taken by the political party they usually support. That was true of 83 percent of Democrats.

"As a young Christian, I know no candidate or party ever lines up perfectly with my religious beliefs. But that doesn't stop me from voting or engaging the political system," said Tim King, a young evangelical who also works as a spokesman



for Sojourners.

"Voting is always a choice between imperfect people. That's why engaging in advocacy is so important — when politicians are missing important issues, we have the ability as voters to try and put those issues on their agendas," King said.

Sojourners released "Young Evangelicals in the 2012 Elections" on Oct. 16 as a snapshot of the group as a political force.

Because the survey was based on only 161 respondents, Sojourners acknowledged that the survey gives more of an impression of the group than solid scientific data. The margin of error of the survey is a relatively high plus or minus 8 percentage points.

Among other questions, the survey also asked about the separation of church and state (47 percent agree or strongly agree that there must be strict separation) and the content of sermons they hear (55 percent had heard abortion addressed from the pulpit, and 73 percent had heard about poverty).

—Lauren Markoe, *Religion News Service*

REFLECTIONS

Holding up the jewel of religious liberty

I eagerly anticipate the Baptist Joint Committee's board meeting each October. In fact, the whole staff does because we draw such energy and encouragement through our interaction with this talented and involved group representing the BJC's 15 member bodies. Our board reflects the jointly held commitment of these bodies, and provides a crucial connection to churches and individuals for whom religious liberty is among the most cherished values in need of protection. At the meeting, we review the activities of the past year and prepare for the challenges of the next year.

This year, however, the board meeting also marked a renewal of the BJC in many ways as we celebrated the opening of the Center for Religious Liberty.

Emphasizing the need for a more visible presence on Capitol Hill and expanded and improved work facilities, the journey to establish this Center began in earnest in the fall of 2005 at the board meeting. The board celebrated the Center's completion and opening at its meeting on Oct. 1. Thanks to all — the BJC's staff, campaign steering committee, architect, contractors and donors — who worked so hard during the past seven years to bring this vision into fruition.

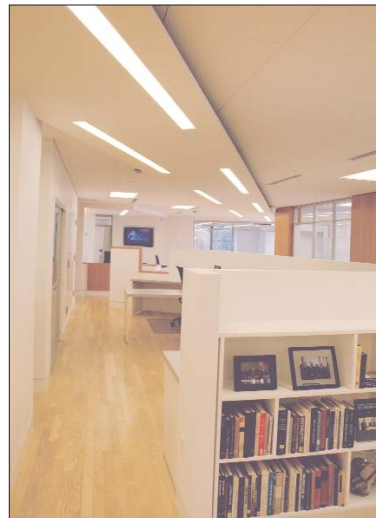
The BJC's mission to defend and extend religious liberty for all — through litigation, legislation and education — will be advanced by this great leap forward. With a 50 percent expansion in office space and a beautiful conference suite overlooking the U.S. Supreme Court building and the U.S. Capitol, we will be able to accommodate larger and more frequent groups from churches, colleges and seminaries, and, with our new state-of-the-art communications technology, we can educate many more. With an enhanced focus on education, we will continue to provide new and improved resources and literature — in printed form and online.

For me, two features of the Center are worthy of particular notice. Arriving at the Center, you will notice a four-foot wide soffit protruding from the ceiling bisecting the Center diagonally from northeast to southwest. The Center's design and capacious vistas through open space and glass allow the eye to follow the soffit out from the southwest corner of the building in the direction of the Supreme Court and the Capitol dome. I think of this imaginative design feature as a visible reminder of our mission — as if it were a prophetic arrow perennially directed at the target of the Court and the Congress and beyond to Baptist life and the culture at large.

The other feature is the donors' wall constructed of 202 tiles of various widths and thicknesses in six different shades of blue and five panels. The tiles and



(Top) More than 670 donors are recognized on the donor wall on tiles of varying color and size. **(Right)** The soffit that cuts diagonally across the ceiling points the eye toward the Baugh-Walker Conference Suite and views of the Supreme Court and Capitol.



panels bear the names of our more than 670 friends who financially supported the vision for the Center, and the wall is a monument to the staff's gratitude to you for making the Center a reality. I hope and pray someday you will be able to visit us. The Center, as significant a development at the BJC as it is, though, cannot be permitted to become an icon. It is instrumental — simply a means to the end of holding up the jewel of religious liberty for all and fighting to uphold the separation of church and state as its constitutional corollary.

Let me urge those of you who did not give to the Center (and, of course, those who did) to continue to give regularly to the BJC so we can fund the staffing and programming needed to fully implement the promise of the Center. We are on the cusp of a new era in the 76th year of the BJC. Indeed, it is an exciting time for all of us.



J. Brent Walker
Executive Director

Hollman REPORT



K. Hollyn Hollman
General Counsel

Celebration of a new beginning highlights the BJC's collaborative work

With the opening of the Center for Religious Liberty, the BJC is poised to strengthen its advocacy in the nation's capital and beyond. As we celebrate this new beginning, we also rededicate ourselves to our mission and to expanding our reach in the future.

Throughout our history, the BJC has demonstrated its commitment to defending and extending religious freedom for all, working in cooperation with others. At the same time, we recognize that if we are to honor the Baptist legacy of religious freedom, as well as to continue to have influence and be successful in our efforts, we must tailor our work to meet the changing needs of each generation. Fortunately, the BJC has invested its advocacy resources in a variety of venues — churches, schools, legislatures and courts — to respond to the steady stream of contemporary threats to religious free-



All living former BJC general counsels gathered at the opening event for the Center for Religious Liberty. From left to right: Oliver "Buzz" Thomas (General Counsel 1985-1993), Brent Walker (1993-1999, Executive Director 1999-present), Melissa Rogers (1999-2000), and Holly Hollman (2000-present). The BJC's first general counsel, John Baker, was named to the position in 1979 and served in that role until he passed away in 1985.

dom. With the Center's expanded capacity for staff and visitors, we are in a better position to share our expertise, collaborate with others and meet new challenges.

As with any move, preparation for the opening of the new Center required some house cleaning. During the months

leading up to and during construction, the staff sorted through dozens of file drawers filled with the work of the BJC in decades past. As we reduced files full of documents, photos and brochures and prepared materials for archiving, we were inspired by the work of former members of the staff in



Progressive National Baptist Convention President Carroll Baltimore views some of the history exhibited in the Center for Religious Liberty. Displayed are a selection of volumes by and about the BJC's 15 member bodies, a collection of photos taken on various college and seminary campuses for the BJC's annual Walter B. and Kay W. Shurden Lectures on Religious Liberty and Separation of Church and State, items representing the legacy of Baptists through history and much more.

legislative and litigation matters. We also were amazed by the breadth of those with whom the agency has worked. Some of what we uncovered is now on display in our new offices to share these stories with our visitors and bear witness to the longstanding Baptist commitment to freedom and the power of cooperation.

Of course, the collaborative way the BJC works is built into our structure by virtue of being a “joint” endeavor of our member bodies. That model extends beyond Baptist life to the work we do in coalitions with other religious, civil liberties, education and advocacy organizations. We understand that our success is tied to our ability to work with others for shared goals. The Center provides a new home for hosting conversations and deepening the partnerships necessary to defend religious freedom for all. Our location, just across the street from the Senate office buildings, provides a convenient place for organizing press events or visits with congressional offices.

Our proximity to the U.S. Capitol and Supreme Court has long been an asset. In addition to the work we do to monitor legislation and educating members of Congress and their staffs, a consistent part the BJC’s advocacy efforts has been in the U.S. Supreme Court. As members of the Supreme Court bar, BJC Executive Director J. Brent Walker and I are able to attend oral arguments witnessing the

important role of the Court firsthand, as well as participating in religious liberty cases through our *amicus* work.

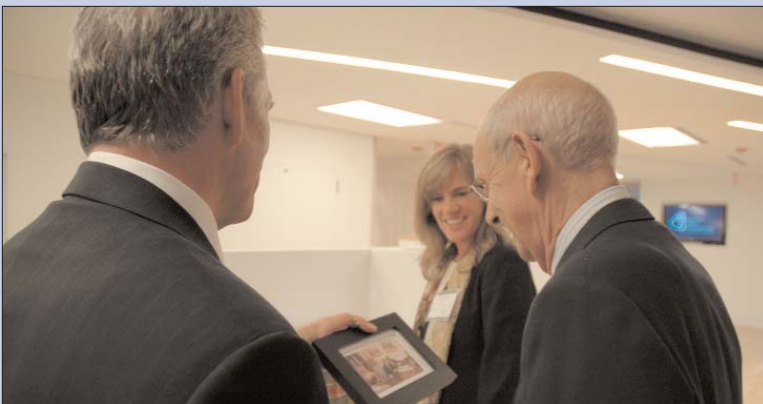
As the final arbiter of constitutional law, the Supreme Court can have a profound effect on our country’s religious liberty. It was, therefore, a great honor to have Justice Stephen Breyer join us as a guest at the opening of the Center for Religious Liberty. In his brief remarks, Justice Breyer said he counts on friend-of-the-court briefs because they come from groups that often know more about the issues at hand than the lawyers representing the parties. His gracious and kind comments affirmed our continuing focus on this aspect of our religious liberty advocacy.

It would have been an honor for any of the nine justices to attend the Center opening, but hosting Justice Breyer seemed particularly fitting. He is known for his pragmatic approach to constitutional law, both in his work on the Court and his writings generally. He has written two books that teach us about the Constitution, the judicial process and the importance of civic participation: *Active Liberty: Interpreting our Democratic Constitution* (2005) and *Making Our Democracy Work* (2010). He has articulated a vision of the U.S. Constitution as a document that provides a basic and enduring set of values intended by the Founders to adapt over time to the needs

of our democracy. The Constitution, he has argued, should be viewed as containing “unwavering values that must be applied flexibly to ever-changing circumstances.”

That certainly seems apt to the undertaking of the BJC in defending religious liberty as we begin this new chapter of our work together.

This photo of President Bill Clinton at the signing ceremony for the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) in 1993, accompanied by a pen he used to sign the bill, is a reminder of one of the BJC’s most significant legislative achievements. It came in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court’s disastrous decision in *Employment Division v. Smith* (1990). Leading a coalition of more than 60 groups, the BJC worked to pass RFRA, restoring the pre-*Smith* free exercise standard as a matter of federal statutory law. The photo and pen are on display in the BJC’s legal conference room.



Above: During a tour of the Center for Religious Liberty, Brent Walker shows Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer a photo of Justice Harry Blackmun speaking at a meeting of the Baptist Joint Committee in the early 1990s. Blackmun was Breyer’s predecessor on the Court. At right: Breyer signs the BJC guest book as Walker and Holly Hollman look on.



Center for Religious Liberty on Capitol Hill

The Center for Religious Liberty on Capitol Hill opened Oct. 1. The layout is a complete redesign and expansion of the Baptist Joint Committee's office space, located on the 3rd floor of the Veterans of Foreign Wars building in Washington, D.C. Situated two blocks from the U.S. Capitol and a block from the U.S. Supreme Court, the new Center provides the latest technology for visitors and staff, more space for meetings — including a state-of-the-art conference suite and legal conference room, displays of Baptist and BJC history, and space for visitors to relax or work while in the nation's capital.



Open House

On Oct. 1, members of the BJC Board of Directors and friends gathered to celebrate the opening of the Center for Religious Liberty.



Tyrone Pitts of the Progressive National Baptist Convention greets Daniel Glaze, who represents the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina on the BJC Board of Directors.



Kent and Ann Brown sign the guest book at the reception desk, as BJC Board members and friends tour the center.

Dedication of Baugh-Walker Conference Suite

On Oct. 1, members of the First 16 gathered to dedicate the Baugh-Walker Conference Suite, named for BJC supporter Babs Baugh and BJC Executive Director J. Brent Walker. The First 16, named for the first 16 words of the First Amendment, is a group of current and former board members who have

made a long-term commitment to support the BJC's operating budget through personal gifts and fundraising. The ceremony inside the suite in the Center for Religious Liberty included a responsive reading and communion to dedicate the space, which doubles the BJC's meeting capacity.



Clockwise from top: BJC Board Chair Mitch Randall welcomes the attendees to the dedication. Randall presided over the service and led the responsive reading portion of the program; Jeffrey Hagray, pastor of First Baptist Church of Washington, D.C., offers words of dedication for the suite. Hagray was the chair of the BJC Board when the capital campaign began. In his remarks, he said, "Religious freedom is so foundational and central to the Christian faith that in every generation we must rededicate ourselves to its preservation and propagation"; Former BJC Executive Director James M. Dunn leads a prayer of consecration for the suite; Immediate past BJC Chair Pam Durso offers the benediction at the dedication ceremony.



The donor wall and illuminated Baptist Joint Committee sign greet guests as they exit the elevator into the Center.



The sliding glass doors of the Baugh-Walker Conference Suite open into an airy reception seating area and gathering place which includes sweeping views of the Supreme Court and Capitol dome.

Deities & Dialogue: the proper

The 2012 Religious Liberty Essay Scholarship Contest asked high school juniors and seniors to examine the role religion should play during a presidential campaign. The grand prize winner was Scott Remer, a 2012 graduate of Beachwood High School in Beachwood, Ohio. As part of his grand prize, Remer won a \$1,000 scholarship. His essay is reprinted below.

By
Scott Remer
2012 Religious Liberty Essay
Scholarship Contest
Grand Prize Winner

On February 26, 2012, Republican presidential candidate Rick Santorum said that John F. Kennedy's landmark speech about religious freedom

made him want to "throw up" and intimated that Kennedy's speech, which advocated religious pluralism, tolerance, and open dialogue between people of diverse faiths, was an unequivocal rejection of religion.¹ Although Santorum's remarks misconstrued Kennedy's speech, they highlight the extent to which religion has become an issue in the 2012 presidential campaign. Considering elections of years past, our Founding Fathers' original intent (as best as we can interpret it), and the purpose of the presidential campaign, we can say that religion should play a role in a presidential campaign, albeit a very limited, carefully circumscribed one. Whereas candidates' religious beliefs and affiliations are important to understand as expressions of their personal philosophies and worldviews, candidates' political stances should be of the utmost importance, and voters should not cast their ballots based solely or primarily upon candidates' faith. Moreover, candidates must be cautious and courteous when discussing religion; they must always keep in mind the potential for religion to divide the people.

Since the first days of the Republic, there has been a body of thought that holds that candidates should be reticent about their faith and that faith should play no role in presidential politics. Rooted in the Constitution, it points to Article Six, which specifies that "no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public

Trust under the United States"² and the First Amendment ("Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion"), interpreting them as advocating a clear-cut distinction between the "civil" and the "ecclesiastical," to use the phrasing of Isaac Backus, an eighteenth-century Baptist preacher, in his *Appeal to the Public for Religious Liberty*.³ Thomas Jefferson formulated the opinion of this school of thought best when he called for "a wall of separation between Church & State" in an 1802 letter, stating, "Religion is a matter which lies solely between Man & his God ... he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship."⁴ John F. Kennedy echoed this idea over a century and a half later, declaring in a 1960 address, "I believe in a President whose religious views are his own private affair, neither imposed by him upon the nation or imposed by the nation upon him as a condition to holding that office."⁵ The religious reserve that Kennedy and Jefferson championed serves a prophylactic function, insulating the public from fractious arguments over theology.

The possibility that a discussion of candidates' religious beliefs might sow discord and engender friction within the body politic is very real and very dangerous. Unfortunately, it has been with us throughout our nation's history: in the 1800 presidential election, seeking electoral gain, John Adams and the Federalists accused Thomas Jefferson of being an atheist; in the 1928 election, Al Smith faced considerable anti-Catholic sentiment; and in 1960, John F. Kennedy, like Smith, was forced to confront widespread suspicion that he would be subservient to Rome if elected.⁶ More recently, President Obama's religious identity has been attacked by crude e-mail smear campaigns that suggest that he is secretly a Muslim, simultaneously insulting Muslims by insinuating that it is somehow wrong to be a Muslim,⁷ and by bloviating commentators who seek to cast aspersions on his Christianity for political reasons.⁸ In addition, as underscored by Rick Santorum's frequent speeches about his own religious faith and his recent comments about Obama adhering to a "phony theology,"⁹ a discussion of one's religious and moral principles can quickly descend into a denunciation of one's opponents' beliefs.

Since religion is such a deeply personal and profoundly important part of people's lives, vilipending others' faiths is extremely hurtful and divisive. It corrodes the sense of unity and civility that knits together the disparate groups in our multicultural land. Ultimately, the undeniable danger to unsubtly introducing religion — one hot-button issue — into politics — another hot-button issue — is that it exacerbates divisions in both realms of life. Using reli-

Check it out online



Scan this QR code with your smart phone or visit Vimeo.com/bjcvideos to see Scott Remer read his essay.



role of religion in presidential elections

gion, a vehicle for love, human unity, and transcendence, for the mundane purpose of fracturing and fragmenting the body politic and fomenting rancor and division is a perversion of everything that religion stands for.

All of that being said, there is a legitimate conversation to be had regarding candidates' religious life, and perfectly reasonable religion-related questions abound. For instance: If a candidate is deeply religious, would she be able to make a decision that goes against her personal religious beliefs for the greater good of the country? Does a candidate believe in using his spiritual principles to guide his decision-making? What do the actions that a candidate took when serving a clerical capacity in the past say about her character or conscience? When deciding who the next leader of the most powerful nation on Earth will be, the public has a right to know about the totality of factors that have shaped the candidates' worldview. The media already discusses such trivial issues as how much money candidates' haircuts cost and how they treat their dogs — why not begin a discussion on something with actual philosophical heft and import?

By necessity, the conversation must have ground rules. Candidates should agree to use religion as an instrument of unity, not of divisiveness, rejecting the ugly religious stereotyping that Smith and Kennedy had to contend with and appeals to religion that exclude minority faiths, agnostics, and atheists. The public should agree not to vote for candidates based on religion and not to hold candidates responsible for their religion's every foible. Moreover, in accordance with Article Six of the Constitution, disclosure and discussion

of religious affiliation should be completely optional for presidential candidates.

Should candidates choose to discuss their beliefs in a non-divisive way, everyone would benefit. If a candidate is proudly religious, he should share how it has influenced his thoughts. Since he can speak eloquently and passionately about his religion, evincing his authenticity, he can only benefit. As the case of Mitt Romney illustrates, there is still a great deal of latent prejudice when it comes to Mormonism and less well-known religions, so if a candidate practices a non-mainstream religion which the public is wary of, explaining the rudiments of his religion helps dispel any misconceptions the public may have and promotes religious tolerance and harmony. Naturally, the public would benefit as well. The public would see the candidates through yet another prism, which aids in the difficult process of deciding which candidate is best, and voters would be educated on different faiths.

An inclusive, respectful dialogue about religion can elevate our national civic discourse and create more well-informed voters. As long as presidential hopefuls and voters focus chiefly on political issues, and as long as candidates refrain from using their religion as a means of obtaining votes or belittling their opponents or potential constituents, initiating a candid conversation with clear limits can enlighten our politics. As Kennedy so eloquently put it, once religion is no longer used to cultivate "attitudes of disdain and division," we can turn our attention to the promotion of "the American ideal of brotherhood."¹⁰

The prizes for the 2013 Religious Liberty Essay Scholarship Contest have increased! Visit www.BJOnline.org/contest for details on the 2013 contest and to read the three winning entries from 2012.

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 10. see 5.

Losing our religion: One in five Americans are now 'nones'

The number of Americans who say they have no religious affiliation has hit an all-time high — about one in five American adults — according to a new study released Oct. 9 by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life.

Labeled “nones” because they claim either no religious preference or no religion at all, their ranks have hit 46 million people. Much of the growth is among young people — one in three U.S. adults under 30 are now considered nones.

The report also found that the number of self-described atheists and agnostics has hit a peak — 13 million people, or 6 percent of the U.S. population. That's a rise of 2 percentage points over five years.

And while the “nones” are growing, Protestantism is on the decline, shrinking from 62 percent of the religiously affiliated in 1972 to 51 percent in 2010. Meanwhile, the number of U.S. Catholics held steady, at about one in four Americans.

“These are continuations of longer trends in American religion,” said Greg Smith, a lead researcher on the study, as he and colleagues presented the findings to the 63rd annual Religion Newswriters Association conference. “I think it goes without saying these are pretty significant changes in the American religious landscape.”

With some pretty significant implications, too. The study shows that “nones” lean heavily Democratic — 75 percent voted for Barack Obama in 2008, about the same percentage of evangelical Christians

who voted for John McCain.

John Green, director of the Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics at the University of Akron, said the Pew survey showed the unaffiliated have become a large and important constituency of the Democratic Party — perhaps larger than black Protestants, who turned out in large numbers to support Obama.

“It may very well be that in the future the unaffiliated vote will be as important to the Democrats as the traditionally religious are to the Republican Party,” Green told reporters.

“If these trends continue, we are likely to see even sharper divisions between the political parties and sharper divisions within (the parties).”

The unaffiliated are also increasingly liberal on social issues — another finding with major political implications. Nearly three in four say abortion should be legal, compared to 53 percent of all Americans. A slightly smaller number (73 percent) favor same-sex marriage (compared to 48 percent of all Americans).

Researchers also found that almost two-thirds (65 percent) of the unaffiliated think it is not important for a president to have strong religious beliefs (compared to 29 percent of the general population), and 54 percent say it makes them “uncomfortable” when politicians talk about religion.

Ryan Cragun, an assistant professor of sociology who specializes in the nonreligious at The University of Tampa, said the study's findings offer clear warnings for both political parties.

“The point politicians need to get is that it is time to stop pandering to the religious because there is a growing percentage of the population that does not want to hear that stuff,” Cragun said. “It is time for them to realize that they are going to be left behind if they do not do that.”

Still, claiming no religious identity does not mean an absence of religious beliefs, the report found.

The majority of “nones” — 68 percent, including some who say they are atheists — say they believe in God or some form of higher being. Half say they feel “a deep connection with nature,” and 20 percent say they pray every day.

Why do the nones continue to grow? Smith attributes it to the natural replacement of older, more conservative generations with younger, more liberal ones, as well as a worldwide rise in secularism among developed nations.

Another interesting twist to the study's findings is how broad-based they are.

“The change is occurring among both men and women, those with college educations and those without, within several income levels and in all regions of the U.S.,” said Cary Funk, another of the study's lead researchers. “The growth does tend to be concentrated among whites, with no significant change with blacks and Hispanics.”

The survey was conducted by digging deeper into material gathered by Pew and other organizations from 120,000 respondents between 2007 and 2012, and from the General Social Survey, with data dating to 1972.

—Kimberly Winston, Religion News Service

John Q. Nones: A profile of the fast-growing religiously unaffiliated

From Religion News Service &
Pew Research Center

Who is the typical “none”? Here's a snapshot drawn from the poll:

- ◆ **He's a he.** Fewer than half of Americans are male, but 56 percent of nones are.
- ◆ **He's young.** The older the American, the more likely he or she is to be affiliated with a religion. One-third of Americans under 30 say they have no religious affiliation, compared to 9 percent of those 65 and older.
- ◆ **He's white.** Of all nones, 71 percent are white, 11 percent are Hispanic, 9 percent are black and 4 percent are Asian.
- ◆ **He's not necessarily an atheist.** The largest group of nones (68 percent) say they believe in God or a universal spirit. Some nones do consider themselves religious, just outside the confines of a religious organization.
- ◆ **He thinks abortion and same-gender marriage should be legal.** Big gaps separate nones and Americans in general on these issues. While 53 percent of the general public say abortion should be legal in all or most circumstances, 72 percent of the unaffiliated do. And while 48 percent of the general public favors same-sex marriage, 73 percent of nones do.
- ◆ **He's not necessarily hostile toward religious institutions.** He just doesn't want to belong to one. More than half of the nones (52 percent) say religious institutions protect and strengthen morality, though an even greater proportion (70 percent) believes these institutions are too concerned with money and power.
- ◆ **He's more likely a Westerner.** Nones are most concentrated in the West and least concentrated in the South.

BJC welcomes fall interns

The Baptist Joint Committee is pleased to have two fall semester interns working alongside our staff in Washington, D.C.

Andrew Reynolds of Waco, Texas, is a junior at Southwestern University, majoring in English with a double minor in political science and communication studies. The son of Caryl and Kevin Compton, he grew up in Lakeshore Baptist Church in Waco. Following graduation in the fall of 2013, Andrew plans to pursue a master's degree in political communications.



Reynolds

Jennifer Rutter of Hendersonville, Tenn., is a junior at Belmont University, majoring in political science and minoring in Christian ethics. The daughter of Judy Gray and Richard Rutter, she is a member of the First Baptist Church of Nashville. Rutter will graduate in the fall of 2013.



Rutter

Judge dismisses Pa. suit over 'Year of the Bible'

HARRISBURG, Pa. — A federal judge on Oct. 1 dismissed a lawsuit filed by an atheist group that challenged a "Year of the Bible" resolution passed early this year by Pennsylvania lawmakers.

Yet U.S. Middle District Judge Christopher C. Conner also questioned whether the resolution should have been adopted at all. The nonbinding resolution, introduced by state Rep. Rick Saccone, urges Pennsylvanians to read the Bible during 2012.

The judge dismissed the suit by the Wisconsin-based Freedom From Religion Foundation after concluding that House members have "absolute legislative immunity" in passing such measures.

Conner emphasized, however, that his decision to grant immunity "should not be viewed as judicial endorsement for this resolution. It most certainly is not."

"At worst, (the Bible resolution) is premeditated pandering designed to provide a re-election sound-bite for use by members of the General Assembly," Conner wrote.

He called the resolution's language "proselytizing and exclusionary," and said the measure "pushes the envelope" of the separation of church and state.

"At a time when the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania faces massive public policy challenges, these (government) resources would be far better utilized in meaningful legislative efforts for the benefit of all of the citizens of the commonwealth, regardless of their religious beliefs."

Saccone, a Republican from the southwest corner of the state, praised the dismissal of the suit, but called

Conner's assertion that the resolution butts against constitutional religious freedom protections "nonsense."

"This has been done hundreds of times," he said. "We have a National Day of Prayer. 'In God we Trust' is on our money."

Annie Laurie Gaylor, co-president of the Freedom From Religion Foundation, called the outcome of the case a "Pyrrhic victory for the Legislature," given Conner's criticism of the resolution.

The judge's comments about the case "are exactly what we think," Gaylor said. "I hate to lose a lawsuit, but this is kind of a silver lining in it."

—Matt Miller, *The Patriot-News*,
distributed by Religion News Service

Survey: Americans overstate size of religious minorities

The typical American underestimates how many Protestants there are in the United States, and vastly overestimates the number of religious minorities such as Mormons, Muslims, and atheist/agnostics, according to a new study.

Grey Matter Research and Consulting asked 747 adults to guess what proportion of the American population belongs to each of eight major religious groups: Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Mormon, Muslim, atheist/agnostic, believe in God or a higher power but have no particular religious preference, and any other religious group.

The average response was that 24 percent of Americans are Catholic, 20 percent are Protestant, 19 percent are unaffiliated, 8 percent are Jewish, 9 percent are atheist or agnostic, 7 percent are Muslim, 7 percent are Mormon and 5 percent identify with all other religious groups.

Respondents were correct on Catholics — 24 percent of the country is Catholic. But according to the 2008 U.S. Religious Landscape Survey from the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, 51 percent are Protestant, 12 percent are unaffiliated, 2 percent are Jewish, 4 percent are Atheist/Agnostic, less than 1 percent are Muslim, 2 percent are Mormon and 4 percent identify with all other religious groups.

While Protestants make up more than half of the American population, Ron Sellers, president of Grey Matter Research, said there are several reasons why there is such a gross underestimation of their numbers.

"Protestant is an umbrella word that people don't think of," he said, noting that people are much more likely to identify with individual Protestant groups, such as Baptist, Methodist or Lutheran, rather than with the Protestant tradition as a whole.

Respondents under the age of 35 were even more likely than older participants to underestimate the Protestant population. Dan Cox, research director for the Washington-based Public Religion Research Institute, said that may be because young people tend to have more friends who are religiously unaffiliated.

—Jeanie Groh, *Religion News Service*



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- Seventh Day Baptist General Conference

REPORT from the Capital

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BJC Board of Directors meets in D.C.

The Baptist Joint Committee Board of Directors gathered in Washington, D.C., Oct. 1-2, to hear reports of the work of the BJC staff, adopt the operating budget, and open the BJC's new Center for Religious Liberty. Members of the board (pictured above) include denominational representatives and others connected to the BJC's 15 supporting organizations. Board Chair Mitch Randall (Religious Liberty Council), Vice Chair Carroll Baltimore (Progressive National Baptist Convention), Secretary Terri Phelps (Religious Liberty Council) and Treasure Rob Appel (Seventh Day Baptist General Conference) were all re-elected for a second year. Retiring board members Stan Hastey (Alliance of Baptists) and Rob James (Baptist General Association of Virginia) were



Pictured are the new Religious Liberty Council Officers: Co-chairs David Massengill (New York), Pam Durso (Georgia) and Secretary Rebecca Mathis (North Carolina). The Religious Liberty Council is the individual membership organization of the Baptist Joint Committee. The officers were elected at this summer's RLC Luncheon in Fort Worth, Texas.

recognized for their service to the organization.