

# REPORT

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FROM THE

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# CAPITAL

Magazine of the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty

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**A THREAT TO ANYONE'S RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IS A THREAT TO EVERYONE'S RELIGIOUS LIBERTY**

# Recasting *Report from the Capital*



**By Cheryl Crowe**  
**Director of Communications,**  
**Report from the Capital editor**

Welcome to the latest chapter in the 70-year history of *Report from the Capital*.

Last year, we began focusing on how we can better serve our audiences and reach new people, including the next generation. Two action items emerged regarding *Report*: updating the design and changing its production schedule, which will allow us to create more online and multimedia content as well as respond more immediately to events impacting religious liberty.

These goals cannot be achieved overnight, but you've probably noticed

small steps in that direction through videos, podcasts and statements released through social media and our blog. While this magazine is not the only source of information from the BJC, it remains our flagship publication.

The changes may look dramatic, but they are really an extension of and emphasis on what we have been doing across the board: modernizing how we deliver our quality content, and doing so as effectively as possible.

In addition to the new design of these pages, there will be a distinct cover photo on each edition. It will arrive in your mailbox six times a year instead of 10, but with more pages than previous editions. Brent Walker and Holly Hollman will continue to write their columns, but you can expect at least one more column from a staff member or other supporter of religious liberty. Additionally, as we have increased our educational programs over the years, we will bring more of that work to you through these pages.

There is no bigger fan of *Report* than yours truly. I have a copy of every edition in my office, dating back to our first one in 1946, and I use them often for reference and inspiration.

The earliest editions provided a service geared toward Baptist leaders and editors, sharing reports from Washington and news gathered from secular and religious outlets across the country. Today we take for granted how a click of the mouse or a flick of our finger can bring us articles from all perspectives and areas, but *Report* filled a news void when few other options existed.

The publication began a “new era” in 1962 as it transformed from a publication of pages that looked as if they came directly from a typewriter into a “printed bulletin” with a layout. It was shifting to meet the need “for a more popularized piece that can achieve wide circulation in Baptist churches.”

In 1965, *Report* modified its look to use a cover photo and pushed to “give the reader the latest possible information about events that affect

the Baptist movement,” including more in-depth articles.

An expanded *Report* launched in January 1980, which began the tradition of labeling the executive director’s column as “Reflections.” In 1994, the magazine changed its schedule to arrive more frequently in homes, which worked to strengthen ties to friends and supporters.

As we began a new millennium, methods of gathering news and staying connected shifted with the rise of the internet and 24-hour cable news. By the time *Report* reached homes, any news in its pages was already available through an avalanche of options. In 2003, the BJC made what I consider one of the major changes to *Report*: we removed the subscription cost. While it always had been free to Baptist leaders, others had to pay a small fee. From that point forward, the magazine became free to everyone, making it more widely available and easier to share. It became a full-color magazine, published 10 times a year and offering more context and analysis to provide needed insight in a faster-paced world.

Our 2016 format points us even more in that direction. Gone are the days where you depend on us to gather breaking news, but we are here to provide you with trustworthy and reliable analysis. And, producing fewer editions allows us to focus more on responding to issues in real time through the internet and social media. You don’t have to watch your mailbox to stay connected – sign up for our emails, follow us on Facebook and Twitter and visit our website to get updates from us at any time.

I know what this publication can do – it influenced my life before I worked at the BJC. In the mid-2000s, I struggled with articulating my love for the Ten Commandments and my concern about a government-funded Decalogue monument in my home state of Alabama. Conversations were not always fruitful. A friend faxed (yes, faxed) me a copy of a column written by Holly Hollman about that exact issue, which offered tips for discussion. I posted it in my home, and her analysis helped me see the full situation and engage in thoughtful dialogue on the issue with people from a variety of viewpoints.

This magazine is meant to equip you for conversations and situations that arise in the church-state realm. I hope you find pages share-worthy, either on your refrigerator or through your social media channels. Each article is available individually on our website, and we now provide the entire magazine in a format that is easier to read on your tablet. And, it continues to be free, thanks to our generous donors. If you would be willing to help offset the cost, you can make a donation at [BJCOnline.org/donate](http://BJCOnline.org/donate).

We want *Report from the Capital* to be informative, useful and something you would share, and I want to know if we are meeting those goals. Email me at [ccrowe@BJCOnline.org](mailto:ccrowe@BJCOnline.org) or call me at the BJC office to share feedback. As the staff said in the 1962 redesign, we aim to provide a “source of reliable and authentic information and interpretation,” now and for years to come.



## How to handle religious expression in public schools

By Brent Walker, BJC Executive Director



A group calling itself the Legislative Clergy Council is spearheading a prayer-in-school movement and held a gathering on the National Mall dubbed “Worship in Washington 2016” to call for the return of prayer to the public schools. Their motivating assumption – perhaps in good faith – is that, when they took prayer out of school in 1962, schools and culture went into a downward spiral. They cite – without any substantiation – that since then violent crime and murder have increased 544 percent, divorce 300 percent, pregnancies 187 percent, and so on — one horrible statistic after another.

This tired argument suffers many dubieties. First, it’s a classic *post hoc ergo propter hoc* (“after this, therefore because of this”) logical fallacy. Just because two events (even assuming they are true) occur one after another does not mean the first **caused** the latter. The rooster’s crowing at dawn does not make the sun come up! Second, many states discontinued government-sponsored prayer and devotional Bible reading long before the 1960s. The Illinois Supreme Court, for example, struck down official religious exercise in 1910. Others did away with mandating school prayer on policy grounds. Third, the truth be known, state-sponsored prayer unfortunately continues to this day in parts of the country.

So, trying to blame the supposed decline of Western Civilization on one Supreme Court decision in 1962 is laughingly wrongheaded – all the more when one realizes that the Court’s ban of state-sponsored prayer actually preserved voluntary, student-initiated prayer. Vital religious experience must be voluntary and free; state-sponsored religion is always coercive at worst and rote at best.

The start of a new school year provides an opportunity to unpack the many ways religion can properly be exercised, studied and otherwise included on public school campuses, while keeping school officials out of the business of officiating religious exercises or even promoting religion in general.

Here are some reminders of what can be done:

- Students may pray – alone or in a group, silently or even out loud – as long as it is voluntary, non-disruptive and respects the rights of other students not to participate.
- Students may form religious clubs in secondary schools when other non-curriculum related groups are allowed. Outside adults may not lead or regularly attend club meetings, and teachers may be present only to monitor the meetings.

- Students may display and communicate religious messages – on their clothing and orally – in the same way other messages are allowed. Generally, they may wear religious garb, such as yarmulkes and headscarves, as well.
- Students may distribute religious literature, under the same rules as other material may be distributed. This right is subject to reasonable time, place and manner restrictions, such as requiring material to be placed on a table rather than handed out.
- Students may speak to and persuade other students about religious topics, including inviting them to religious services and events. But, such speech cannot be allowed to turn into religious harassment. A “no thanks” must end the conversation.
- Students are allowed to include religious themes in their schoolwork and homework assignments, as long as those religious references are germane to the assignment.
- Students may learn about religion where the topic naturally arises in the curriculum. The teaching should be academic, not devotional, and pursue an educational goal. In other words, schools may expose students to religious views but may not impose any particular view.
- A religious holiday may be an occasion to teach about that particular religion, but not celebrated as a religious event. Along the same lines, religious music may be played or sung and sacred artwork observed and appreciated as long as it serves an educational goal.
- Students may be excused from lessons that are objectionable based on religious convictions, and they must be excused if the school does not have a compelling interest in requiring all students to participate.
- Teachers and other school personnel may meet with one another for Bible study and prayer, as long as such gatherings are voluntary and outside the classroom (in the teachers’ lounge, for example) during lunch breaks or other free time.

These are but a few of the many ways religion may be included in the school day that are culturally sensitive and constitutionally sound. They are vital and volitional religious experiences that may do the students some real good.

What we don’t need is a return to the days where the government – through state actors like teachers – tell our children when, where and what to pray.

Visit the Baptist Joint Committee website at [BJCOnline.org](http://BJCOnline.org) for more information on religion in the public schools.

# Administration announces new plans to fight religious discrimination

White House and other government officials released new federal policies and resources aimed at combating religious discrimination at a July 22 event. The program included members of the Know Your Neighbor coalition – a diverse group of organizations committed to increasing understanding across religious lines.

At a December 2015 White House event centered on celebrating and protecting America’s tradition of religious pluralism, the Department of Justice announced plans for a series of policy roundtables across the country focusing on issues related to religious discrimination.

Held from March through June, roundtable topics ranged from how to protect people and houses of worship from religion-based hate crimes, how to combat religious discrimination – including bullying – in education and employment, and addressing unlawful barriers interfering with the construction of houses of worship. After the roundtables, Department of Justice leaders held discussions with advocacy and religious organizations, including members of the coalition, to review the findings and develop policy recommendations.

New information, updates and policy changes as a result of the roundtables include:

- Updates on the Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division website to ensure communities know about its enforcement of laws related to hate crimes.
- A new report from the Civil Rights Division on its enforcement of the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act, protecting the religious freedom of – and preventing discrimination against – people exercising their religion through the construction and use of property and those who are confined to institutions. The report also looks at key trends and developments in the use of RLUIPA.
- Changes to the way the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission collects demographic data from individuals who file charges, which will allow the EEOC to collect more precise data about the religion of the individual alleging discrimination. This is meant to assist the government and the public in recognizing and responding to trends in the data.
- A fact sheet for young workers from the EEOC about their rights related to religious discrimination in the workplace.
- A revised online complaint form from the Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights to clarify when the office can investigate complaints from those who believe they have experienced racial, ethnic or

national origin discrimination involving their religion.

- A new webpage from the department’s Office for Civil Rights that consolidates resources from the federal government about religious discrimination.

- Guidance for communities on how to protect their houses of worship is now highlighted on the Department of Homeland Security’s Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships and FEMA website.

“These are significant steps forward,” said Gurwin Singh Ahuja, the organizer of the Know Your Neighbor coalition and founder of the National Sikh Campaign. “Government agencies can move slowly, but this speed and these results show their commitment to protecting everyone from religious discrimination.”

The July 22 event at the White House included remarks from key administration officials, including White House Counsel Neil Eggleston, Principal Deputy Attorney General Vanita Gupta of the Department of Justice’s Civil Rights Division, and Melissa Rogers, executive director of the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships. There were two panel discussions with leaders from government agencies and groups who are part of the Know Your Neighbor coalition. One panel focused on preventing religious-based hate violence and attacks on houses of worship, and the other discussed how to confront religious discrimination in schools, workplaces and communities.

Meetings with the Know Your Neighbor coalition served as a catalyst for the December event, and the group actively pushed for policy changes to better protect religious freedom for all people and combat religion-based discrimination. The coalition includes more than a dozen diverse groups, including the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty, the Becket Fund, Interfaith Alliance, Center for Inquiry, Muslim Advocates, National Sikh Campaign, National Council of Churches, ACLU, Hindu American Foundation, Shoulder-to-Shoulder Campaign, and Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism.

“We are grateful for the work of the agencies as well as religious and other civil society leaders on these important issues,” Rogers wrote in a White House blog post announcing the changes. “Americans deserve to be free from religion-based discrimination. We are committed to continuing to work with our partners to make this promise a reality.”

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By Cheryl Crowe



During the panel on preventing religion-based hate violence and attacks on houses of worship, Michael Lieberman of the Anti-Defamation League holds up a copy of the FBI’s Hate Crimes Data Collection Guidelines and Training Manual. His fellow panelists are (from left) Megan Mack from the Department of Homeland Security, Robert Moossy and Paul Monteiro from the Department of Justice, and Madihha Ahussain of Muslim Advocates.



Gurwin Singh Ahuja speaks on a panel about confronting religious discrimination in schools, workplaces and communities.

## Protecting the unique legal status of churches

By Holly Hollman, BJC General Counsel



In *Trinity Lutheran Church of Columbia, Inc. v. Pauley*, the U.S. Supreme Court will consider the case of a church that sued the state of Missouri because it was denied a government grant to pay for capital improvements to its property. While it appears unlikely to attract the widespread attention of other recent church-state cases, *Trinity Lutheran* raises important issues of federalism and protection for religious liberty. In fact, the questions the Court will consider in the case go to the heart of the relationship between the institutions of church and state in our religious liberty tradition.

The case arises out of an unusual context. Missouri created a discretionary grant program to reduce landfill waste and encourage the use of recycled tire scraps for playground resurfacing. The Alliance Defending Freedom, a legal organization that represents Trinity Lutheran, argues that the church has a federal free exercise and equal protection right to participate in the state's grant program. But doesn't government support for church property fly in the face of America's long-standing constitutional tradition? Surely, the separation of church and state that has long protected religious freedom supports a state policy that keeps the state from funding church property improvements.

The First Amendment's "no establishment" clause prohibits government sponsorship of religion. Unsurprisingly, the Court has never decided a case involving direct financial aid to churches, much less found that the Free Exercise Clause **requires** churches to be included in a government funding program. In previous cases involving Establishment Clause challenges to aid programs for other religious institutions, such as religiously affiliated schools or social services charities, the Court has warned of the special dangers that are inherent if a program involved direct aid to churches. The state of Missouri is well aware of those dangers, and its scrap tire program was designed consistent with the state's policy of separation between the institutions of religion and government.

Missouri, like 39 other states, has a state constitutional prohibition against funding churches with tax dollars. In fact, Missouri has **three** such "no-aid" provisions. The first one was included in its very first constitution written in 1820 and has remained virtually unchanged in each successive constitution (Missouri is now on its fourth state constitution). The district and appellate courts both held that Missouri had correctly interpreted its constitution as preventing it from paying for a church's capital improvement project.

These provisions reflect a long-standing commitment to religious freedom that makes sense for practical and historical reasons. Churches (and other houses of worship) are the quintessential religious entities organized for religious expression. They are unique institutions in American society that receive special treatment in the law to maintain a separation from government that benefits religion. That unique legal status is reflected in exemptions and accommodations, and in safeguards to prevent government interference, favoritism and control. Maintaining special legal status depends on understanding and protecting the distinct role churches play and the historical context for that role.

The religious liberty we enjoy and the way it is protected in our federal and state constitutions are direct results of the problems with religious establishments that were well known in the founding era. State-established churches were our European heritage and the experience in most of our Colonies. One key element of establishment was state financial support for the church and its ministers. Our Baptist forebears were among the staunchest advocates to sever this financial cord between church and state. Disestablishment, as reflected in law, was a major advancement in protecting the religious liberty of its citizenry. Concerns over financial entanglement of government and churches pre-date our Constitution and resulted in a variety of expressions of "anti-establishment" language that exist in the federal and most state constitutions, like Missouri's.

Unlike cases about prayer at government meetings or religious objections to contraceptive coverage in employee health plans, this case may not immediately provoke strong opinions. The grant program at issue is small and may appear to have little religious significance if extended to churches, but Missouri's policy is sound. As we argue in our brief, "[The] Court has recognized the importance of avoiding government funding of religion, even in cases where aid to religion has been upheld. In our constitutional tradition, restrictions on aid to religious institutions are never inherently suspect. On the contrary, in both federal and state law, such restrictions are widespread, long-standing, and effective means to protect crucial constitutional boundaries."

For more on the case, including a video, podcast and the BJC brief, go to [BJCOnline.org/TrinityLutheran](http://BJCOnline.org/TrinityLutheran).

# Brent Walker honored at RLC Luncheon

As his retirement approaches, the BJC executive director shares reflections on 27 years of fighting for religious liberty in the nation's capital

He's had substantive face-to-face meetings with four U.S. presidents.

He's been called a "hypocritical Baptist minister" by Judge Roy Moore during a Congressional hearing because he opposed Moore's government-sponsored Ten Commandments display.

He's been in a Capitol Hill meeting with Bono, lead singer of the rock band U2.

And, at the end of this year, he's retiring as executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty.

But, Brent Walker isn't giving farewell speeches just yet. Instead, he thinks of this time as the "seventh inning stretch," and he is casting a vision for the future of the organization.

Walker brought the crowd to its feet at the Religious Liberty Council Luncheon in Greensboro, North Carolina, on June 24 as he shared his passion for religious liberty and the tenants of his work throughout his 27-year career at the BJC.

Standing firm in Baptist heritage, Walker explained three underpinnings of the BJC's focus.

"We think **theologically**," he said, noting that "soul freedom" is a gift from God to all humankind.

"We act **responsibly**, embracing the ethical imperative of religious liberty for all, not just for ourselves individually, or even our own Baptist tribe, but for all of God's children," he continued.

"We reason **constitutionally**," Walker said, pointing out that the First Amendment's Religion Clauses require government to be neutral toward religion.

Walker explained the BJC's work as a type of balancing act – ensuring that government accommodates religion without advancing it; protects religion without promoting it; and lifts substantial burdens on the exercise of religion without giving it an impermissible benefit.

"Over the past quarter century, we have sought to apply these principles in the give-and-take of real world experience," he said, noting that the BJC seeks "both/and" solutions in the congested intersection of church and state.

"So, for example, the BJC says 'yes' to voluntary student prayer, but 'no' to prayers delivered in a public school classroom by a teacher. We say 'yes' to tax exemption for religious and other nonprofits, but 'no' to subsidies for churches to support their ministries," Walker said.



Walker reaffirmed the BJC's support for the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act, but he raised concerns about the dangers posed by statutes proposed in some states without the same carefully crafted language. The BJC chaired the coalition that pushed for the federal legislation in 1993.

While the BJC files briefs in the U.S. Supreme Court, pressures Congress and advises the White House, Walker pointed out the importance of education in the organization's work. We teach "Baptists in the pews, teachers in academia, the national media and the culture at large about the proper understanding of religious liberty and the separation of church and state," he said.

During Walker's tenure, the BJC's focus on education has included opening the Center for Religious Liberty on Capitol Hill to host groups for educational programs, hiring a full-time Education and Outreach Specialist, expanding the internship program, creating an essay contest for high school juniors and seniors, developing the BJC Fellows Program for young professionals, and continuing to find new ways to teach about the importance of religious liberty.

In looking toward the future, Walker discussed the BJC's ambitious expansion targets, including addressing global religious liberty more often, responding in real time and mobilizing advocates.

He also took a moment to pay tribute to his predecessor, James Dunn, who told Walker not to be discouraged if the BJC doesn't grow to be "much more than what we've got." Walker said it was more of a pastoral word at



**"Let's all go forward together  
to defend and extend  
God-given religious liberty  
for all God's children."**

**BRENT WALKER**

the time than a negative view of the possibilities. "But, I think that James understood before he died last year that — with the doubling of our annual budget, the construction of our Center for Religious Liberty and a six-fold increase in our endowment that he started — that, while we are still a boutique in the sense of our singular focus and a relatively small staff and budget when compared to others with whom we compete, we are far, far healthier than ever, with the potential of soaring to much greater heights."

He concluded with a charge to the crowd and his future successor. "Let's all go forward together, to defend and extend God-given religious liberty for all God's children."

Also during the luncheon, BJC General Counsel and Associate Executive

## Scenes from the RLC Luncheon



Notable moments from the luncheon, clockwise from top left: Brent Walker and BJC Board Chair Daniel Glaze (far right) recognize outgoing board members Mark Edwards and Amanda Tyler, both of the Religious Liberty Council; Holly Hollman greets Brent Walker on stage prior to his address; Walker receives a standing ovation from the crowd of more than 700 attendees.

Director Holly Hollman gave an update on the BJC's work and introduced Walker. She pointed out that the term "religious liberty" has been used in different contexts and with different connotations recently, but we have to speak up for religious liberty in the historic Baptist tradition. While it means individuals may have different views and we all have to find ways to accommodate people with a variety of religious beliefs, it "should not be code for anti-gay or anti-any other group," she said.

Hollman also introduced a video looking at Walker's contributions to religious liberty and Baptist life. It featured reflections from Central Baptist Theological Seminary President Molly T. Marshall, Baptist Women in Ministry Executive Director Pam Durso, American Baptist Home Mission Societies Executive Director Jeffrey Haggray and BJC Board Chair Daniel Glaze.

As the individual donor organization of the Baptist Joint Committee, the Religious Liberty Council (RLC) cultivates an understanding of religious freedom among Baptists and the larger public. It is one of the 15 supporting bodies of the BJC, with 13 RLC members serving three-year terms on the BJC Board of Directors.

During the luncheon, those in attendance elected new RLC representatives to the BJC board. Madison McClendon of Illinois and Nelson Roos of Washington, D.C., were elected for new terms, while Jackie Baugh Moore of Texas, Jesse Rincones of Texas and Mica Strother of Arkansas were re-elected for their second term on the board. C. Lynn Brinkley of North Carolina was elected to fill an unfinished term.

Two RLC representatives rotating off the board were recognized at the luncheon for their service: Amanda Tyler of Washington, D.C., and Mark Edwards of North Carolina.

For more information about this year's event – including links to photos and a video of the entire luncheon – visit [BJCOnline.org/Luncheon](http://BJCOnline.org/Luncheon). The 2017 event will be in Atlanta, held in conjunction with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship General Assembly.

By Cheryl Crowe

For more photos from the 2016 Religious Liberty Council Luncheon, go to [BJCOnline.org/Luncheon](http://BJCOnline.org/Luncheon).



Those in attendance include, clockwise from top: Members of the James Dunn Legacy Circle; Longtime BJC supporters Babs Baugh (left) and Suzii Paynter, Executive Coordinator of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship; Students and staff from George W. Truett Theological Seminary, one of several seminaries with representatives at the luncheon.

## Hollman and Hawks lead legal workshop

While the BJC staff was in Greensboro, General Counsel Holly Hollman and Associate General Counsel Jennifer Hawks led a workshop on the latest religious liberty cases at the Supreme Court and provided updates on federal and state legislation. The workshop was offered as part of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship General Assembly.

Hollman provided an in-depth explanation of two recent Supreme Court cases in which the BJC filed friend-of-the-court briefs: *Zubik v. Burwell* and *Trinity Lutheran Church v. Pauley*.

Hawks used her time at the lectern to discuss the wave of "religious freedom" legislation and the balance of protecting both rights of conscience and human rights.

During a question-and-answer period that ended the workshop, Hollman and Hawks addressed other church-state issues across the country, as well as concerns about religious liberty abroad.





# Pastors, pulpits and politicking

By BJC Associate General Counsel  
Jennifer Hawks

**W**ith the 2016 presidential candidates named for the Democratic, Republican, Green, Libertarian and about a dozen other parties, the American political season is in full swing. What this means for the BJC is an increase in questions about political activity of churches and pastors. Here are answers to three of these frequently asked questions that you or your church might find helpful as you work to faithfully navigate this year's elections.

## **Why do some people say that churches cannot be involved in politics?**

Actually, they can be, but not with tax-exempt dollars. Churches are usually 501(c)(3) tax-exempt entities, which means that your tithes and financial contributions to the church are tax deductible. Tax deduction is one of the greatest benefits for 501(c)(3) entities, and not every nonprofit organization falls into this category. For example, contributions to a candidate's campaign or a political action committee would not be deductible by the donor. Churches and pastors acting in their pastoral capacities can speak as much as they want about the issues of the day, but they are not permitted to endorse or oppose candidates. This limitation applies to all 501(c)(3) entities, which comprise a variety of religious, educational, charitable and scientific organizations. Violation of this IRS regulation does not lead to imprisonment or criminal prosecution, but rather could result in a loss of the church's 501(c)(3) tax status.

## **What about pastors who are personally endorsing candidates?**

Pastors, in their individual capacities, are absolutely permitted to endorse or oppose political candidates as long as church resources are not used and it is clear that the pastor is speaking or acting in an individual capacity and not for the church. Though legally permissible, this is an area where church leaders should be cautious. Personal endorsements may prevent a pastor's moral or prophetic message from being heard. When past or future scandals emerge, pastors who personally endorsed these candidates may find themselves in an untenable position of walking back their personal support and unable to credibly speak out against similar misbehavior by other civic leaders. If a pastor is known for only endorsing candidates of one political party and then attempts to speak prophetically about the negative effects of policies from the other party, he or she may be met with extreme skepticism or dismissed as a partisan hack instead of being seen as Christ's representative.

## **How can my church be involved in elections?**

Churches can be political influencers in at least three concrete ways without running afoul of the 501(c)(3) rules or the separation of church and state. Churches can:

1) Provide a theological lens through which the issues of the day can be analyzed. Leaders can preach about issues that matter to people of faith, including justice, care for the poor, life, God's creation, family or charity, providing a depth that is often lacking in our 140-character culture.

2) Host nonpartisan voter registration drives and "get out the vote" drives. Church members can go into the community or even set up a registration booth at a local fair but shouldn't steer the registrants to one party or the other. They can also provide transportation to the voting location if there is no condition on the person voting a certain way.

3) Invite candidates to speak either as candidates or in their individual capacities. Church leaders should affirmatively declare that the church does not endorse candidates. If inviting candidates to speak as candidates, the church should invite **all** candidates for that office to participate on an equal basis. For example, a church should not invite one candidate to preach on a Sunday morning with an average attendance of 250 while inviting the opposing candidate to speak during a Wednesday night supper with an average attendance of 25. If a candidate is invited in an individual capacity to speak on an issue of personal or professional expertise, no mention should be made of the candidacy or upcoming election by the church or the candidate. Simply put, if a church invites a candidate to speak, invite all candidates equally. If a church invites someone to speak who happens to be a candidate, don't allow the occasion to be a forum for talk about an election.

This list is by no means exhaustive. Many ways exist for churches to participate in an election cycle without violating the 501(c)(3) rules or compromising their prophetic voice. The separation of church and state does not exclude religious voices from the public square, but most congregants want their tithes to be used to promote Kingdom goals, not a candidate's agenda. The church has a permanency that should not be traded for the roller coaster of the ever-changing political agenda.

For more resources on churches and political campaigns, visit our website page on the topic:

[BJCOnline.org/electioneering](http://BJCOnline.org/electioneering)

# ***Honorary and Memorial Gifts to the Baptist Joint Committee***

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**In memory of John Binder**

By Barbara Binder

**In memory of G. William Carlson**

By John F. Anderson

**In memory of James M. Dunn**

By Susan Borwick

**In memory of  
James R. & Wilma F. Huff**

By James A. Huff

**In memory of James B. Johnson**

By Elaine and James B. Johnson II

**In memory of  
Quentin & Mary Alene Lockwood**

By Quentin Lockwood, Jr.

**In memory of  
Rev. & Mrs. Lewis C. McKinney**

By Margie and Carroll Wheedleton

**In memory of Ira Peak, Jr.**

By David R. Currie

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# BJC Fellows prepare to become religious liberty advocates

On July 27-31, the 2016 Baptist Joint Committee Fellows met in Colonial Williamsburg for the BJC Fellows Seminar. The 10 members of this year's class hailed from states across the country, with career paths ranging from ministry and education to law and social work. Although they brought different perspectives, expectations and denominational backgrounds, each arrived with one purpose: to become better advocates for religious liberty.

Over the course of four days, the Fellows learned about religious liberty from legal, historical and theological perspectives. BJC Executive Director Brent Walker gave the Fellows a primer on religious liberty issues and policies in the United States. He explained how the Constitution provides protection for both “no establishment” of religion and the free exercise of one’s faith. He also spoke about his work standing against anti-Muslim rhetoric and refuted the false idea that the United States is a “Christian nation” in a legal sense. He also provided an overview of the BJC’s history and the long track record of working with coalition partners on issues related to religious liberty.

Following an introduction about the BJC’s legal work from General Counsel Holly Hollman, Associate General Counsel Jennifer Hawks provided an in-depth view of court cases that have shaped religious liberty law and policy. She also looked at some of the landmark religious liberty legislation passed by Congress over the years, including the Equal Access Act and the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which were both championed by the BJC. Hawks also touched on recent Supreme Court cases where the BJC has been involved, including *Greece v. Galloway*, *Zubik v. Burwell* and *Trinity Lutheran Church v. Pauley*. By the last full day of the seminar, the Fellows



Sarah Amick  
Richmond, Virginia



Mariamarta Conrad  
Fayetteville, North Carolina



Jaimie Crumley  
New Haven, Connecticut



Jenny Hodge  
Chesapeake, Virginia



Brian Knight  
Johns Creek, Georgia

were able to apply both Religion Clauses and make arguments for and against different sides in a church-state case.

But their education extended well beyond the classroom. At the beginning of the Seminar, the Fellows took an extended tour of the historic grounds at Colonial Williamsburg. Not only did they learn about everyday life during colonial times and see sites like the Governor's Palace, but they also discovered how people worshipped and practiced their faith.

"The tour was a great way to start the seminar," said Ashton Wells, a recent graduate of Central Baptist Theological Seminary. "It gave us a unique perspective into the world the Founders lived in. The best part was sitting in a church box learning about Virginia's law on mandatory church attendance and reflecting on the implications of forced religion."

Few people know more about the struggles of Colonial Americans to practice their faith than professor Michael Meyerson. The constitutional law expert, who teaches at the University of Baltimore School of Law, wrote the book *Endowed By Our Creator*, which details the Founding Framers' push to make religious liberty a bedrock of the newly formed United States. A former Shurden Lecturer, he also led educational sessions at last year's seminar. During a pair of lectures, Meyerson described the plight of Baptist and Methodist preachers who were thrown in jail for preaching the Gospel without a license. He also mentioned the contributions of George Washington, whom Meyerson said was a strong advocate of religious liberty in addition to his role as general.

A trip to Colonial Williamsburg wouldn't be complete without

interacting with historical interpreters. The Fellows listened to rousing stories from an actor portraying Gowan Pamphlet, the first black ordained Baptist minister in America. Pamphlet spoke of his call to the pulpit while still a slave, as well as his near-deportation to Jamaica. They also heard from Thomas Jefferson, who explained why he fought so hard to secure religious liberty for all Americans. He also took time to answer a multitude of questions from the Fellows and staff.

Between classroom sessions, the Fellows enjoyed getting to know each other and members of the BJC staff. Over meals, they chatted about the roles each play in their own communities as well as their theological views. Meyerson, who was present for several of the meals, talked about the origins of his book and the unexpected episodes in American history he uncovered during his research.

Many of the fellows joined BJC Education and Outreach Specialist Charles Watson Jr. on a bike ride through much of Colonial Williamsburg and the campus of the College of William and Mary. Stops included the oldest surviving college building in the United States and a statue garden dedicated to the members of the Tyler family who attended the college, including President John Tyler.

The 2016 class of BJC Fellows left Colonial Williamsburg with plans like developing religious liberty curricula for youth and engaging in interfaith dialogue with local leaders and clergy. After four intense days, they gained new perspectives and tools that will help them move forward as advocates.

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**By Jordan Edwards**



Speakers at this year's seminar included from left: BJC Executive Director Brent Walker, General Counsel Holly Hollman, University of Baltimore Law Professor Michael Meyerson and Associate General Counsel Jennifer Hawks.

For more on 2016 BJC Fellows Seminar, including photos, videos and reflections from this year's class, go to [BJCOnline.org/Fellows](http://BJCOnline.org/Fellows).



**Megan Pike**  
Little Rock, Arkansas



**Jo Bair Springer**  
Hastings, Nebraska



**Christopher The**  
Pasadena, California



**John Weber**  
Louisville, Kentucky



**Ashton Wells**  
Kansas City, Missouri

# BJC Fellows in Action



Scenes from the 2016 BJC Fellows Seminar clockwise from left: Gowan Pamphlet discusses his experiences as the first black ordained Baptist minister in the U.S.; Fellows tour the grounds at Colonial Williamsburg; Fred Anderson portrays John Leland and describes the struggles of early American Baptists; Michael Meyerson shares a laugh with the Fellows at breakfast; Fellows take notes during one of the classroom sessions.

## Catching up with the 2015 BJC Fellows

In addition to Sabrina Dent's position at the Newseum Institute (see *Why We Give*, opposite page), many members of the inaugural class of BJC Fellows have new roles since last summer's seminar at Colonial Williamsburg. Here are updates on four of them.



**Elijah Zehyoue**

A graduate of Morehouse College and the University of Chicago Divinity School, Zehyoue was recently hired as the director of programs and communication at the New Baptist Covenant in Washington, D.C.



**Caitlyn Furr**

In June, Furr was named a Cooperative Baptist Fellowship Vestal Scholar. She is a second-year student pursuing her Master of Divinity degree with a certificate in Baptist studies at Candler School of Theology at Emory University.



**Adam Wright**

Wright was named president of Dallas Baptist University in May of this year. He has served multiple roles at DBU, including professor, dean of the Cook School of Leadership and vice president of the university.



**Lauren McDuffie**

After graduating from Vanderbilt University Divinity School and serving as a chaplain resident at Wake Forest Baptist Health, McDuffie returned to her hometown of Memphis to become a PRN chaplain at Methodist Health.

## Why We Give

*“I felt like it was my social responsibility to give back to an organization that does so much to educate people about religious liberty.”*

I learned about the Baptist Joint Committee from my mentor, Dr. Adam Bond, at Virginia Union University. In the fall of 2014, he invited Charles Watson Jr. to give a presentation on religious liberty and insisted that I would appreciate the cause. As an advocate for interfaith cooperation (and then serving as president of the Interfaith Council of Greater Richmond), I could only agree with Dr. Bond. For me, religious liberty is about protecting human rights and humanity.

The BJC has proven its commitment to educating young leaders about the importance of religious liberty. Whether it is through internship opportunities, the essay contest or the BJC Fellows Program, there’s something so valuable about education. The BJC makes its knowledge, tools and experience accessible to everyone. This empowers communities and gives them a voice to demand change.



After my experience as a 2015 BJC Fellow, I felt like it was my social responsibility to give back to an organization that does so much to educate people about religious liberty. It was important that I made an investment not just with my words of encouragement but also my financial resources. My experience as a BJC Fellow literally changed my life; so, I

am grateful.

In the United States, we are fortunate to exercise our freedom of conscience or belief without legal punishment or fear of death. As a monthly donor, I benefit by witnessing the number of individuals and groups (especially young people) who are impacted by the mission of the BJC. At the same time, every day I am honored to work at the Religious Freedom Center of the Newseum Institute — where I serve as the education advisor — to engage religious and civic leaders who are committed to learning about religious liberty principles. The privilege of giving

towards this socially responsible cause is not anything that I take lightly. It reminds me that I am making a difference by being a stakeholder in a movement that is a necessary essential in our world.

For anyone considering becoming a donor, I ask you to imagine a world where your freedom of belief or conscience is not protected nor validated. Imagine being in a place where your speech is censored. Imagine a life without the hope of possibilities — that’s life without the BJC. Your contribution and investment will make a difference. Just do it.

**By Sabrina Dent**  
Arlington, Virginia

Make a lasting investment in religious liberty by becoming a monthly donor today. Visit [BJCONLINE.ORG/GIVE-MONTHLY](http://BJCONLINE.ORG/GIVE-MONTHLY) to set up your gift or contact Taryn Deaton, senior director of operations and development, at [tdeaton@BJCOnline.org](mailto:tdeaton@BJCOnline.org) or call the BJC at 202-544-4226 for assistance.

## BJC: School voucher program compromises religious liberty

Funneling taxpayer funds to religious schools through a voucher program compromises religious liberty, according to a brief filed at the Nevada Supreme Court and joined by the Baptist Joint Committee.

Nevada’s school voucher program allows public dollars to flow to private schools, including religious schools, by diverting money from the state’s designated public education fund. The diverted money can be used for certain education expenses, including tuition at private religious schools and religious instructional material for those schools.

“Funding religious schools with taxpayer money can violate the consciences of citizens who disagree with their teachings,” said BJC Associate General Counsel Jennifer Hawks. “Parents have the right to choose a religious education for their children but not the right to insist that taxpayers pay for it through any type of voucher program.”

The brief notes how the separation of church and state “recognizes that governmental support for and funding of religion corrodes true belief, makes religious denominations and houses of worship beholden to the state, and places subtle — or not so subtle — coercive pressure on individuals and groups to conform.”

The Hindu American Foundation also joined the brief in the case of *Duncan v. Nevada*, which was heard by the Nevada Supreme Court on July 29. A decision is expected soon.

## BJC symposium on religious liberty and the black church

This fall, the BJC is sponsoring a lecture and panel discussion focusing on religious liberty and the black church.

The Rev. Dr. Raphael Warnock will headline the two presentations, which will be held November 10 on the campus of Howard University Divinity School and Law School in Washington, D.C.

For more than a decade, Warnock has served in Atlanta as senior pastor of the historic Ebenezer Baptist Church, which was the spiritual home of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Active in the community, Warnock has taken on contradictions in the criminal justice system and defended voting rights. The recipient of numerous honors and awards, the media frequently asks him to comment on the issues of the day. He is the author of *The Divided Mind of the Black Church: Theology, Piety, and Public Witness*.

**Religious Liberty and the Black Church: A Baptist Joint Committee Symposium** will include a lecture from Warnock and a panel discussion with other members of the Howard faculty. The symposium events will be free and open to the public. For more details and information, visit our website at [BJCOnline.org/HowardSymposium](http://BJCOnline.org/HowardSymposium).





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The Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty defends religious liberty for all people and protects the institutional separation of church and state in the historic Baptist tradition. Based in Washington, D.C., we work through education, litigation and legislation, often combining our efforts with a wide range of groups to provide education about and advocacy for religious liberty.

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- Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina
- National Baptist Convention of America
- National Baptist Convention USA Inc.
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- North American Baptists Inc.
- Progressive National Baptist Convention Inc.
- Religious Liberty Council
- Seventh Day Baptist General Conference

## REPORT FROM THE CAPITAL

**J. Brent Walker** EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
**Cherilyn Crowe** EDITOR  
**Jordan Edwards** ASSOCIATE EDITOR



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On our podcasts page, listen to Holly Hollman and Jennifer Hawks break down the BJC's latest Supreme Court brief, plus hear interviews with members of the BJC staff and analysis of church-state issues.



### [Vimeo.com/BJCvideos](https://Vimeo.com/BJCvideos)

Watch the tribute to Brent Walker and other videos covering BJC events, history and action on Capitol Hill.