

REPORT

FROM THE

CAPITAL

Magazine of the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty

AMANDA TYLER: In Christ,
there is no Democrat or Republican

HOLLY HOLLMAN on church-state
testimony of Brett Kavanaugh

Fourth class of BJC Fellows learn
by immersion in Colonial Williamsburg



The 2018 BJC Fellows visit the historic First Baptist Church of Williamsburg, Virginia.

BJC honored for commitment to freedom by Touro Synagogue Foundation

The Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty was honored for its ongoing commitment to the ideals of tolerance and freedom with the 2018 Alexander George Teitz Memorial Award from the Touro Synagogue Foundation in Newport, Rhode Island.

The award is presented annually to recognize an individual or organization committed to those ideals, which were famously espoused in President George Washington's 1790 letter to the Touro Synagogue congregation.

Washington wrote the letter to thank the congregation for its hospitality after a visit to the city, and the letter reflected the policy of the new government toward groups with different religious beliefs. "For happily the Government of the United States gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance, requires only that

they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens, in giving it on all occasions their effectual support," he wrote.

For the 71st year, the Touro Synagogue Foundation and Congregation Jeshuat Israel held an event celebrating the letter, reading it aloud and noting its importance and message. During this annual celebration, the Touro Synagogue Foundation presented the Teitz Award.

In accepting the award on behalf of the BJC, Associate General Counsel Jennifer Hawks noted that Rhode Island's co-founders secured a charter more than 300 years ago to show that citizenship need not be tied to a state-approved orthodoxy.

"Whether it's the Baptists or Buddhists, Jews or Jehovah's Witnesses, Humanists or Hindus, Methodists or Muslims, Sikhs or Seventh-day Adventists, or any other



Photo by Jennifer Carter

Jennifer Hawks accepts the award on behalf of the BJC from Andrew Teitz.

group, we know that a threat to anyone's religious liberty is a threat to everyone's religious liberty," Hawks said. "The separation of church and state is indeed good for both."

Aidsand Wright-Riggins to deliver 2019 Shurden Lectures

March 26-27, 2019
Hosted by Central Baptist
Theological Seminary

Join the BJC in the greater Kansas City area for the 2019 Walter B. and Kay W. Shurden Lectures on Religious Liberty and Separation of Church and State, held March 26-27 on the campuses of Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Shawnee, Kansas, and William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri.

The **REV. DR. AIDSAND WRIGHT-RIGGINS** will be delivering the lectures. The mayor of Collegeville, Pennsylvania, Wright-Riggins is an ordained American Baptist minister with more than 40 years of community and congregational service as a pastor, professor and denominational executive.

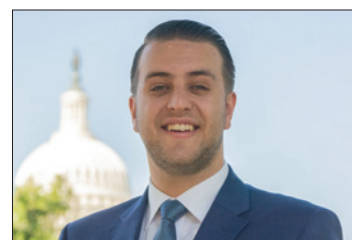
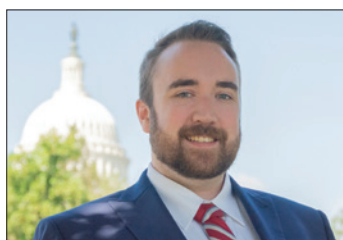
He served Chief Executive Officer of the American Baptist Home Mission Societies and Judson Press from 1991 to 2015, providing leadership for 5,800 churches, 1.5 million people, 16 colleges, nine seminaries and several neighborhood action centers, retirement homes and skilled nursing facilities. Wright-Riggins also served as a pastor in California and as the Director of Peace with Justice with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, where he bridged civil and human rights concerns.

The lectures and surrounding events will be free and open to the public. For more information, visit BJCOnline.org/ShurdenLectures.



Baptist Joint Committee welcomes fall interns

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



DYLAN SHIPMAN (LEFT), a native of Rochester, New York, is a senior at the College at Brockport in the State University of New York system, majoring in Political Science with a minor in International Studies and a focus in Pre-Law. He served as the vice president of the Political Science and Pre-Law Club and as treasurer of the EuroSim Club, which entails an inter-institutional simulation of the policymaking process in the European Union. Shipman plans to attend law school.

ADAM WONCH (RIGHT), a native of Buffalo, New York, is a senior at the State University College at Buffalo, majoring in Political Science with a minor in Public Legal Studies. A member of the Buffalo State Moot Court team, he participated in the 2018 American Moot Court Association National Tournament. Wonch is a member of Pi Sigma Alpha, a political science honors society. The son of Charles and Margaret Wonch, he plans to attend law school.

In Christ, there is no Democrat or Republican

By Amanda Tyler, BJC Executive Director



It's once again autumn in an even-numbered year, which of course means it is football and election season. I'm hoping that my team, the Texas Longhorns, is finally turning the corner after a long string of disappointing seasons. Their first real test comes at the "Red River Showdown" against the Oklahoma Sooners. (By the time you read this, we'll know if they passed!) For one Saturday in October each year, the Cotton Bowl in Dallas is split – burnt orange on one side, crimson on the other. The winner in this annual contest comes away with not just a victory but also taunting rights for the next year.

Campaigns for public office are increasingly resembling college football rivalries. Passionate supporters of both "teams" engage in verbal sparring leading up to the big "game." Political parties have even adopted colors – red for Republicans, blue for Democrats – so partisan supporters can wear their allegiance.

I hope all Americans will show up to vote and exercise their rights of citizenship, not just this November but in all elections. Increasingly, though, the voting booth is not the only place we see our partisan divisions play out. In her new book, *Uncivil Agreement: How Politics Became Our Identity*, Liliana Mason argues that our parties have become mega-identities. If I tell you how I vote, some marketer can also tell you what neighborhood I live in, what kind of car I drive, where I get my news, what television shows I watch, and where I buy my groceries. As we've reduced our personhood to these two labels, she writes, our national accord has eroded, and with it social norms of religious, racial and cultural respect have withered. In 2018, Republicans and Democrats aren't just rival teams. They are at war.

I find her thesis to be rather depressing and strikingly accurate. As we bemoan the loss of civility in our society, our partisan self-sorting may be mostly to blame. In speeches and opinion pieces written after the passing of Senator John McCain this summer, we heard calls to unify as Americans. As the anonymous "senior official in the Trump administration" wrote in the now infamous *New York Times* op-ed, "The real difference will be made by everyday citizens rising above politics, reaching across the aisle and resolving to shed the labels in favor of a single one: Americans."

I am grateful that the wise yet imperfect men who set up our government made clear that regardless of our religious labels, we are all equally American. Thanks to protections in Article VI of

the Constitution, which bans religious tests for public office, and the freedom of religion in the First Amendment, our citizenship is not dependent on our religious affiliation or lack thereof. That's a good thing because Americans are remarkably diverse when it comes to religion. We can pursue unity in these divided times by recommitting ourselves – Republicans and Democrats – to living up to the principle of religious non-favoritism.

"We can pursue unity in these divided times by recommitting ourselves – Republicans and Democrats – to living up to the principle of religious non-favoritism."

As a Christian, I take heart in Paul's letter to the churches at Galatia, which were also struggling with tribalism. A "rival version of the faith" had come into their midst, "a different gospel," and they were dividing themselves into teams, then over whether members needed to be circumcised. Paul argues that faith has made these distinctions and differences meaningless "for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. ... There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:26-28)

If he were writing to American churches today, perhaps Paul would add, "In Christ, there is no Democrat or Republican." Houses of worship are some of the last community spaces where Americans routinely gather across partisan lines, though we are seeing more uniformity of voting patterns even at church. If we are to come through these hyper-polarized times, we need to protect our nonpartisan spaces and laws like the "Johnson Amendment," which separates partisan campaign activity from 501(c)(3) nonprofits.

Though hope springs eternal, this fall will likely be another difficult one for Longhorn fans. This election season promises to be brutal for all Americans, no matter which candidates win. In the midst of great diversity and difference of opinion, we can forget how much we share in common, both as Americans who benefit from religious freedom and as children of God. Reflecting on all that binds us together in our differences will help us as we strive for unity before and after November 6.

State Department religious freedom summit ends with commitments, critiques

WASHINGTON — The State Department concluded its first-ever Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom on July 26, with declarations promising further efforts to reduce religious persecution, even as critics said they are waiting to see its statements turned into actions.

Closing the meeting of some 350 government officials, religious freedom advocates and others from more than 80 nations, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo pointed to an action plan, dubbed the Potomac Declaration, that lays out “concrete ways” to protect religious groups around the world.

“The Potomac Declaration is a formal affirmation that says right up front that the United States takes religious freedom seriously, that we will work with others around the world to help those under attack for their beliefs, and that we expect leaders around the world to make it their priority as well,” Pompeo said in a news conference.

The plan of action accompanying the declaration calls for the repeal of “inherently subjective” anti-blasphemy laws abroad and the protection of the publication of religious materials. Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom Sam Brownback called the meeting’s work a demonstration of “a moment where the Iron Curtain prohibiting religious freedom is coming down.”

In addition, 25 countries co-signed a statement condemning abuses of religious freedom by terrorist groups, while fewer than a dozen added their names to statements condemning religious restrictions in China, Iran and Myanmar.

The meeting was welcomed by groups not aligned with the Trump White House as well as some experts who have disagreed with the administration.

Jehovah’s Witnesses, who did not attend the ministerial, expressed hope that the summit could help religious minorities like them who have faced restrictions. More than two dozen Jehovah’s Witnesses have been detained in Russia and dozens more are imprisoned in Korea as conscientious objectors.

“We’re certainly hopeful that the things that are happening to Jehovah’s Witnesses — or anybody else whose freedoms are being restricted — that it gets noticed and that it could improve for everyone,” said Jarrod Lopes, a communications representative for the Witnesses.

Imam Mohamed Magid, the leader of All Dulles Area Muslim Society in Virginia who was at the ministerial, said he appreciated in particular Brownback’s push for a global alliance of leaders to address religious freedom, adding that he hopes there will be regional alliances on the continents of Africa and Asia.

“We have to have people around the world who are activists,” said Magid, who noted the ministerial was the largest gathering of religious people from other countries that he can recall attending in the United States.

Peter Henne, who teaches political science at the University of Vermont and has questioned the Trump administration’s treatment of Muslims, said the summit seemed to produce substantive discussions.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo delivers closing remarks with Ambassador Sam Brownback at the Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom on July 26, 2018, at the U.S. Department of State. Public Domain photo from the State Department.



“This was not the Magna Carta for religious freedom, but it wasn’t just a sham for evangelicals,” said Henne, who followed the summit on Twitter.

Other critics of the White House sharply contrasted Trump policies with the summit’s talk of religious freedom.

“This administration is led by Islamophobes, runs internment camps for children separated from parents seeking asylum from persecution, and has failed to deliver promised reconstruction funds for Iraqi Christians and other minorities,” said Shaun Casey, who launched the State Department’s Office of Religion and Global Affairs under former Secretary of State John Kerry.

“The conference produced a cloud of words that in no way changed facts on the ground regarding either the Trump Administration’s dreadful record on religious freedom or the behavior of other nations.”

Suhag Shukla, executive director of the Hindu American Foundation, said the meeting showed the State Department was putting religious freedom on par with other interests, such as security and trade.

“What received scant mention, however, is a fundamental principle that’s been a key to America’s success in this realm — that is the healthy distance between religion and state,” she said. “It’s our abiding hope that as our country seeks to promote religious freedom abroad, we not forget the principles which have made religious liberty possible at home.”

Brownback seemed ready to counter that criticism, saying at the news conference that protecting religious freedom is a “safe space” for government that can also lead to greater economic growth and less terrorism.

“You have a right to religious freedom, to do as you choose with your own soul, period,” he said. “That’s what we are pushing, and we think that’s fully consistent with separation of church and state. The government’s role in this is to protect the right.”

By Adelle Banks, Religion News Service with BJC Staff Reports

Hearings reveal weak view of religious liberty

By Holly Hollman, BJC General Counsel

Prior to the initial Senate Judiciary Committee hearings for U.S. Supreme Court nominee Judge Brett Kavanaugh, the BJC reviewed his church-state record and published a report raising concerns about his likely impact on the Court. We asked Committee members to probe further, and we watched the hearings closely. BJC Blogger Don Byrd provided annotated excerpts of relevant testimony on the BJC's *Blog from the Capital*. While overshadowed by other issues, the confirmation hearings revealed a troubling picture for the future of religious liberty. Both in his testimony and in documents released from his prior service in the executive branch, Judge Kavanaugh appears to favor more government support and sponsorship of religion and less concern for individual religious freedom.

Protecting against government-sponsored religious exercises, particularly in public schools, is one important way the U.S. Constitution ensures that religious practice is voluntary, not coerced by the government. The Establishment Clause limits the role of government in religion and thereby respects religious differences among citizens. It ensures that government entities, including public schools, do not pick preferred religions to advance or lead in religious exercises. The Court's rulings on religion in the public schools are clear. There are two long-standing principles, which Kavanaugh summarized in his testimony: "First, school-sponsored prayer is impermissible. Second, student expression is protected." The BJC agrees and has spent decades advancing those clear principles as the proper balance for protecting religious liberty in the public schools.

Yet, Kavanaugh seemed to lament a decision that struck down a policy providing official prayers at school-sponsored events. As a private lawyer, he filed a brief in support of a policy allowing student-led prayers over a public address system at public school football games. Kavanaugh and Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, who argued the case for the school district as Texas Attorney General, were on the losing side when the Supreme Court found the policy violated the Establishment Clause. The BJC supported the challengers, including Mormon and Catholic families, who expect public schools to be neutral toward religion and not use the power of the state to conduct religious exercises.

Instead of explaining how the Court's ruling in *Santa Fe v. Doe* (2000) was an application of core principles, Kavanaugh seemed to agree with Sen. Cornyn who recalled Chief Justice William Rehnquist's dissent that the majority opinion "bristles with hostility to all

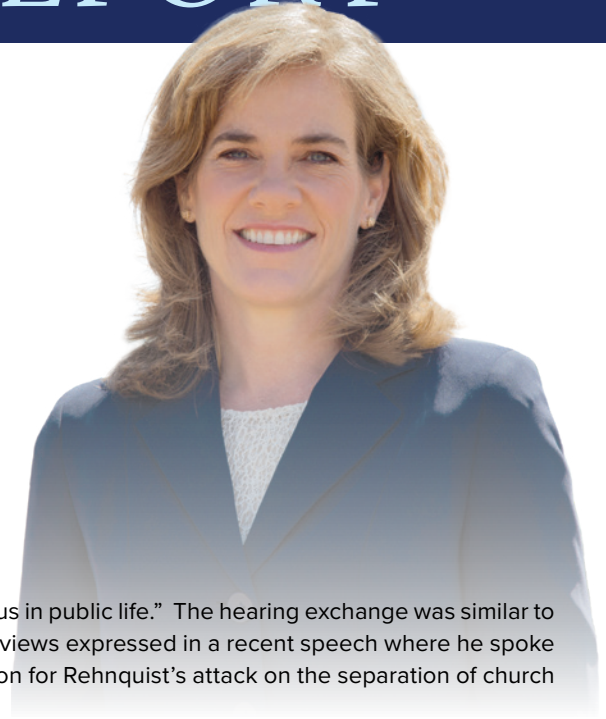
things religious in public life." The hearing exchange was similar to Kavanaugh's views expressed in a recent speech where he spoke with admiration for Rehnquist's attack on the separation of church and state.

Kavanaugh's weak view of the Establishment Clause was also demonstrated in documents from his time working for the George W. Bush administration. Documents released during the hearings included emails discussing the Bush administration's "faith-based initiative." Kavanaugh argued for a position that would allow government funding of religious programs. This goes well beyond the Bush administration's policy, which focused on increasing government partnerships with religious organizations while avoiding the unconstitutional funding of religion. Government funding of religious practices would have significant negative consequences for religion and religious liberty.

When Kavanaugh was asked in general about his views on religious liberty, we at the BJC appreciated that he began by referring to the original Constitution's Article VI, which prohibits any religious test for office. More than once, he stated that the Constitution's religious liberty protections provide that we are all equal citizens without regard to religion. In response to Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, who said that some people think religious people shouldn't work in government because they swear duties to church, Kavanaugh affirmed his constitutional duty. He said he takes an oath to the Constitution, which protects all equally and that his religion has "no relevance to judging."

When asked about the relationship between the No Establishment and Free Exercise Clauses of the First Amendment, Kavanaugh said that both "support religious freedom" and "preclude coercion." But, he was hesitant to explain his view of the Establishment Clause beyond noting it was "a complicated body of law." His testimony and advocacy in positions before becoming a judge suggest little appreciation for how that essential protection against government involvement in religion supports religious liberty for all.

On both sides of the political aisle, religious liberty is praised as foundational. Regardless of religion or political affiliation, many maintain that religious liberty has been a fundamental commitment and source of strength for our country. But too often, political discourse denigrates fundamental aspects of our religious freedom and denies what should be affirmed. The separation of church and state is good for both.





BJC Fellows begin advocacy journey

This summer, ten young professionals from across the country became the fourth class of BJC Fellows.

Representing a variety of professional and educational backgrounds, the newest class gathered in Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, for a four-day intensive seminar that explored foundations of and how to be an advocate for religious liberty. They heard from members of the BJC staff and other scholars, engaged with historical interpreters and the area around them, and discussed how they can make an impact on the future.

In these pages, the BJC Fellows share in their own words what they learned, alongside snapshots of their time together (for more photos of the 2018 BJC Fellows, search #BJCFellows on social media).

If you or someone you know is interested in applying for the BJC Fellows Program, visit BJCOnline.org/Fellows for information.



On the classroom experience



Chelsea Clarke, Washington, D.C.

The BJC Fellows Seminar in Colonial Williamsburg is a bit like off-season training camp for religious liberty advocacy and education. The incredible staff not only open up their playbook, but my BJC Fellows cohorts shared ideas that both validated and challenged my own beliefs and world view. The guest lecturers, historical interpreters, tours and assigned readings were like watching old game tapes – they provide valuable information and a historical context that inform today's realities.

At the end of the BJC Fellows Seminar, we left feeling equipped and empowered to contribute our gifts and talents to the important work of defending and extending religious liberty for all within our respective spheres of influence, and we know there is still a lot of work to be done.



Daniel Headrick, Smyrna, Georgia

I was joined by nine others who were devoted to religious liberty — seven Baptists, a Mormon, a Catholic and a Muslim. We bonded over history, theology, law and seeing the anachronism of a person dressed in 18th century garb driving a golf cart.

So, what did I learn? I reaffirmed the wisdom of our church's support for the BJC. The Baptist Joint Committee advocates for issues arising out of the two religion clauses of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. The Free Exercise Clause allows for broad exercise of religious liberty unconstrained by governmental interference except in cases of generally applicable laws. The Establishment Clause operates as a check on governmental attempts to establish an official religion or favor one religion over another.



Erika Perez, Edinburg, Texas

I was surprised to learn that the Pew Research Center reports that more than 79 percent of the world's population lives in countries with high or very high restrictions on religion. Fortunately, here in the United States, the First Amendment of the Constitution prohibits the government from establishing or sponsoring a religion or interfering in the free exercise of religion.

This is a reminder that the freedom to our thoughts and beliefs is granted by God and protected by our government. It also helps us recognize that we are not the only ones in this world, but that there are minds that think and believe differently than we do, and we should lift our voices when anyone's religious freedom is jeopardized.

On religious liberty



Brent Newberry,
Worcester,
Massachusetts

Religious liberty is about so much more than simply allowing people to worship. It's about their fundamental right to exist — to be human.

When we begin to allow our governments to diminish or denigrate or discriminate against people because of their religion, when entire religions are misunderstood or misrepresented or mischaracterized by our governments, we aren't protecting anyone — we're harming everyone.



Annette Owen,
Warrenville, Illinois

Ringling the Freedom Bell at First Baptist Church of Williamsburg both as a group as well as individuals was a powerful moment. It made me realize my own responsibility to take up the song of freedom. While my presence and participation in the BJC Fellows Program was the result of my interest in religious liberty, ringing the Freedom Bell with my colleagues was a call to action — a reminder that we all have a part to play in this ongoing work of protecting and promoting religious liberty. It reminded me of the good news that we're not alone in this work.



Tanner Bean,
Boise, Idaho

Now I am aware why the BJC is so important and why awareness of, and education in, our inheritance of religious liberty is so important. Until people are fully aware of how unsettled such liberties truly are, silence and often neglect provide avenues for those same liberties to be undermined.



Imran Suhail,
Canajoharie, New York

Freedom of religion goes far beyond just allowing us to pick what religion, or lack thereof, we choose to follow. Without freedom of religion, we cannot have freedom of thought. ... Through hearing different speakers, it became clear that the government doesn't give us our rights but merely recognizes and protects them.

Snapshots from Colonial Williamsburg





What's next?



Britt Luby, Fort Worth, Texas

Using what I learned at the BJC Fellows Seminar, I will be reframing the “why” of interfaith work on the Texas Christian University campus. I serve as a staff advisor for TCU Better Together, our campus interfaith club that works closely with Interfaith Youth Core. This diverse club meets weekly to engage in activities like interfaith dialogue, community service and visits to local places of worship. While facilitating a student club that centers on free food and conversation is both fun and meaningful, I now have the knowledge I need to inject a more intentional *why* into the organization. Our student organization matters because we are learning about our neighbors. Learning about our neighbors matters because we are called, as people of faith, to love our neighbors. And loving our neighbors requires us to advocate for our neighbors. In continued collaboration with the BJC, I know I can empower these students to be advocates for all.



Will Thomas-Clapp, Falls Church, Virginia

In the time since we left Colonial Williamsburg, I've been reflecting on how I am different now. It's taken all of that time to dig into the depths of my recollection and find those nuggets that gleam with possibility. It has taken this time to find that one thing that I want others to know. I have gone over my notes and the slides I have in my possession and re-read the content of our Dropbox as I contemplated my experiences. Through that process, I was reminded of just how much information we covered over those few days. ...

I have come home with a renewed sense of urgency for making those new challenges something my community — of friends, family and church members — aware of how our world could change, if only we would get involved.



Claire Hein Blanton, Houston, Texas

I spent most of the three days in the throes of a pessimism that has persisted since late 2016. And then, on the third day, hope sprung anew. We started talking about our power to advocate for those not in power. We heard about the work that the BJC does alone and in coalitions to protect the right of religious liberty.

I left our final session strangely energized and slightly optimistic. History often repeats itself, but every once in a while, committed individuals are able to alter it in small but foundational ways. In this room were nine other individuals with different spheres of influence that were as committed to protecting the right of religious liberty as I was. Going before us were 30 other BJC Fellows, the staff of the BJC and their predecessors from the past 80 years.



Go online for more!

Read longer reflections from our latest class of BJC Fellows and learn more about them by visiting a special section on our website at BJCOnline.org/Fellows.

You can support future classes of BJC Fellows by participating in the BJC's Giving Tuesday campaign. Watch our social media channels for details and make a donation on November 27 (the Tuesday following Thanksgiving).

Know someone who would be a great fit for the program? Let them know that applications for the 2019 class will be available December 1.



A Rhode Island pilgrimage

By Jennifer Hawks
BJC Associate General Counsel

On Sunday, August 19, I joined what is probably a very short list: people who have spoken at two different Colonial houses of worship on the same day. I began the day preaching during the morning worship service for The First Baptist Church in America in Providence, Rhode Island, and ended it at the Touro Synagogue in Newport, where I accepted the 2018 Alexander George Teitz Memorial Award on behalf of the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty.

Rhode Island may be the smallest state in the United States, but it played a foundational role in the development of the American tradition of religious liberty for all. The state was founded in 1636 by Roger Williams, a religious dissenter who had been banished from the Massachusetts Bay Colony for his heresy. Before he could be forced back to England, Williams slipped out of town and fled to the area he named “Providence.”

Known as the “prophet of religious freedom,” Williams believed that “forced worship stinks in the nostrils of God” and supported the complete separation of church and state. He established Rhode Island as the only Colony without an official church or religious requirements for civic duties. An ordained minister and continuous religious seeker, Williams held regular worship services in his home that all members of the Colony were free to attend — or not — as their own consciences led. In 1638, Williams and approximately 20 other congregants entered into believer’s baptism, creating the first Baptist congregation in the New World.

For lovers of history and supporters of religious liberty for all, Rhode Island has many fascinating places of interest. Visitors to the State House can see the original Colonial charter guaranteeing religious freedom. You can tour numerous Colonial houses of worship, including The First Baptist Church in America, Touro Synagogue, Great Friends Meeting House and Trinity Episcopal Church. Especially meaningful are the grave markers for Baptist icons Obadiah Holmes and Dr. John Clarke. I was excited to visit each of these places but had no idea Rhode Island was responsible for another first: the legal recognition of a woman’s right to conscience.

At the Roger Williams National Memorial, I found a pamphlet titled “A Woman’s Right to Liberty of Conscience” and learned just how deep Williams’ commitment was to religious freedom for everyone. Several families joined Williams in Providence upon its founding in 1636, including Joshua and

Jane Verin, who were also Williams’ next door neighbors. Joshua had no interest in attending the worship services at Williams’ house, but Jane attended, despite her husband’s objections. To punish her disobedience, Joshua beat Jane. This was the first controversy that the fledgling community had to decide: While Joshua was free not to attend services, would the community permit him to dictate his wife’s religious observance?

All heads of households were called together on May 21, 1638, to judge Joshua — not for nearly beating his wife to death, but for whether he had interfered with Jane’s rights of conscience. Some in the town supported Joshua arguing that to punish him would actually violate *his* religious conscience because he believed that God has required wives to be submissive to their husbands. Others spoke strongly in favor of Jane, with one resident noting that to decide Jane had a lesser right to follow her conscience than her husband would spark outrage among all the wives in Providence. Fortunately for the cause of religious liberty, Joshua and his contingent were the minority opinion. The Providence town record reveals that the town voted for Jane, revoking Joshua’s voting privilege until such time as he would change his mind. Even though Joshua moved his family back to Salem where he would be permitted to decide religious matters for his wife, this case was an important milestone affirmatively finding that women in Rhode Island had the independent right to follow their own religious conscience.

Eventually, the Rhode Island settlement included Newport and other communities. Touro Synagogue, America’s oldest synagogue, was completed in 1763, and it has its own role in the formation of the American religious liberty tradition. President George Washington’s “Letter to the Jews of Newport” is one of the earliest acknowledgments that American religious liberty protects everyone.

To commemorate that famous letter and Touro’s place in America’s religious history, the synagogue foundation hosts an annual program highlighting the letter and recognizing an individual or organization who best exemplifies the ideals of religious and ethnic tolerance with the Teitz award. This year, the BJC was the honoree (see page 2 for details).

Walking the hallowed ground of America’s commitment to religious liberty in Rhode Island is a pilgrimage for any Baptist and a reminder of how important it is to defend this freedom for all.

Honorary and Memorial Gifts to the Baptist Joint Committee

In honor of Alyssa Aldape

By Anyra Cano

In honor of Babs Baugh and John Jarrett

By Martus and Jeanie Miley

In honor of Robert Phelps Tyler Behrendt

By Bob and Lynn Behrendt

In honor of the BJC Fellows

By Caitlyn Cook Furr

In honor of Andrew Chancey

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In honor of David R. Cooke, Jr.

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In honor of June Holland McEwen

By Lynelle Mason

In honor of Walter Shurden

By Sherry Shurden Brewer
and Dan Brewer
Paula Shurden Batts

In honor of Emil Williams

By Alan Patteson

• • • • •

In memory of Bob Ayres

By Babs Baugh
Kim and Jackie Baugh Moore

In memory of Roy Gene Edge

By Cindy Lee Edge

In memory of

Jimmy D. Edwards

By Jimmy and Sue Edwards

In memory of Jo Hollman

By John and Janet Clark
Janet and Bobby Hawks

In memory of Loyd Starett

By Elaine MacGray Starett

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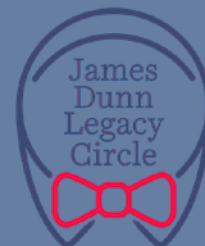
RLC Luncheon tables in honor of BJC Fellows

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Baptist Theological Seminary
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Eula Mae and
John Baugh Foundation
Bayshore Baptist Church,
Tampa, Florida
Churchnet (Baptist General
Convention of Missouri)
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River Oaks Baptist Church,
Houston, Texas
Royal Lane Baptist Church,
Dallas, Texas
Melissa Rogers
Tambi and Paul Swiney
Texas Baptists
Amanda Tyler and
Robert Behrendt
Wake Forest University School
of Divinity
Brent and Nancy Walker
Gary Walker and Erl Piscitelli
Rebecca and Mark Wiggs
Wilshire Baptist Church,
Dallas, Texas

Members of the James Dunn Legacy Circle

Those who create an estate gift to the BJC automatically become members of the James Dunn Legacy Circle. If you have included the BJC in your estate plans or would like more information about naming us as a beneficiary of a will or retirement plan, please contact Taryn Deaton at 202-544-4226 or legacycastle@BJCOnline.org. Visit BJCOnline.org/planned-giving for more information.



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Report From The Capital (ISSN-0346-0661) is published 6 times each year by the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty.
For subscription information, please contact the Baptist Joint Committee at bjc@BJCOnline.org.

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