



REPORT FROM THE CAPITAL

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NewsMakers

◆ **Steve Magee**, pastor of Exeter Presbyterian Church in Exeter, N.H., said that it was possible "God is calling us back to worship" through the terrorist strikes in New York and Washington, D.C. "I'm not talking about prayer in schools. I'm talking about the church remembering our only hope is faith in Christ who died on the cross," he told his congregation.

◆ **Rep. Walter Jones**, R-N.C., spoke at a recent news conference to rally support for his legislation that would permit churches to engage in political speech without the risk losing their tax-exempt status with the IRS. He said that the United States should celebrate its diversity in culture and faith. "To rob even one citizen of the right to free speech is wrong," Jones said. "To do it in the name of the tax code is even worse."

◆ **Bishop Joseph A. Fiorenza**, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, wrote a letter to President George W. Bush expressing support for efforts "to seek out and hold accountable" those responsible for the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on New York's World Trade Center and the Pentagon. However, he said, "any military response must be in accord with sound moral principles, notably the norms of the just war tradition such as the probability of success, civilian immunity, and proportionality." Δ

Coalition warns against hasty response to terrorist attacks

A broad coalition of groups from across political, religious, ethnic and racial spectrums have expressed concern that a hasty response by the U.S. government to the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks could infringe on religious and civil liberties guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution.

The joint statement, titled "In Defense of Freedom at a Time of Crisis," insists that those who committed the terrorist acts be held accountable, but cautioned that the tragedy requires all Americans to examine carefully the steps our country may now take to reduce the risk of future terrorist attacks.

Among the 128 agencies endorsing the

statement, were the Baptist Joint Committee, American Civil Liberties Union, the American Muslim Council, Rutherford Institute, the Ethics and the Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, the National Council of Churches of Christ and the Eagle Forum.

"In a remarkable show of unity, groups from the farthest reaches of the religious and political spectrums have come together to uphold freedom and counsel caution," said Brent Walker, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

A list of signers is available on the Internet (www.indefenseoffreedom.org). Δ

In Defense of Freedom at a Time of Crisis

1. September 11, 2001, thousands of people lost their lives in a brutal assault on the American people and the American form of government. We mourn the loss of these innocent lives and insist that those who perpetrated these acts be held accountable.
2. This tragedy requires all Americans to examine carefully the steps our country may now take to reduce the risk of future terrorist attacks.
3. We need to consider proposals calmly and deliberately with a determination not to erode the liberties and freedoms that are at the core of the American way of life.
4. We need to ensure that actions by our government uphold the principles of a democratic society, accountable government and international law, and that all decisions are taken in a manner consistent with the Constitution.
5. We can, as we have in the past, in times of war and of peace, reconcile the requirements of security with the demands of liberty.
6. We should resist the temptation to enact proposals in the mistaken belief that anything that may be called anti-terrorist will necessarily provide greater security.
7. We should resist efforts to target people because of their race, religion, ethnic background or appearance, including immigrants in general, Arab Americans and Muslims.
8. We affirm the right of peaceful dissent, protected by the First Amendment, now, when it is most at risk.
9. We should applaud our political leaders in the days ahead who have the courage to say that our freedoms should not be limited.
10. We must have faith in our democratic system and our Constitution, and in our ability to protect at the same time both the freedom and the security of all Americans.