



RELIGION WATCH

A Newsletter Monitoring Trends In Contemporary Religion

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LOW MORALE GROWING AMONG MAINLINE CLERGY AND LAITY

Several recent studies point to a growing amount of conflict and low morale between mainline Protestant clergy and laity. Among United Methodists, an extensive analysis of how the laity evaluates their pastors shows that members value the qualities that keep their congregations friendly and focused on local issues. Pastoral qualities such as courage, imagination, and ambition ranked considerably below those qualities which upheld congregational harmony. The study, conducted by the General Council of Ministries of the United Methodist Church and reported in the Washington Post (July 24), asserts that the values Methodist laity looks for in their pastors are the kinds of characteristics associated with a declining institution simply trying to maintain itself.

In a detailed study of mainline clergy sponsored by the Alban Institute of Washington, D.C., the results were much the same. The clergy find themselves demoralized because they cannot lead their parishioners to encompass a larger vision of the religious life broader than that of loyalty to the local body. Such tensions lead some 80 percent of the clergy surveyed to report their ministry was adversely affecting their families; a similar percentage stated they felt unable to meet the demands of the job, according to the study cited in The Lutheran magazine (August). The Alban report also shows that parish-pastor conflicts result in affected clergy either being removed or forced to leave the parish during the first ten years of congregational ministry. The trend is clearly leading an increasing number of clergy to very seriously consider resigning from the ministry.

Other observers, such as Bruce L. Shelley of Denver Seminary point to another source of clergy identity crisis. Pressures from the laity have reshaped the role of the minister from that of the traditional preacher-teacher to one of being an "enterprising healer." In Christianity Today magazine (May 17), Shelley suggests that America's success-driven culture now in the 1990s demands that a parish either grow in numbers and resources or accept the fact that the minister involved is not capable of nurturing such growth. Pastors are also expected to be healers of intra-congregational battles. Such a redefinition of clergy roles creates enormous morale problems for them, resulting in the crisis of confidence shown by an increasingly large number of ordained ministers. The St. Paul Pioneer Press (August 14) reports that in all mainline bodies,

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programs are underway to address these conflicts. Beyond improving communications among feuding members, these programs offer ministers counseling services, release time for reflection and study, and rededication to the primary goals of parish life. (*The Lutheran*, 8765 W. Higgins Rd., Chicago, IL 60631; *Christianity Today*, 465 Gundersen Dr., Carol Stream, IL 60188) -- By Erling Jorstad, RW contributing editor and professor of History at St. Olaf College.

HINDUS STARTING TO ADDRESS ABORTION, IN THEIR OWN WAY

Abortion and other life issues are just beginning to be discussed in American Hindu circles, although Hindu pro-life or pro-choice activism is not likely to emerge from such deliberations, according to one observer. Recent issues of Hinduism Today have focused on the abortion issue, with the June issue publishing a special section featuring Hindu holy men speaking out on how sacred texts have condemned the practice. The newspaper notes that the section was published as an effort to roughly craft a public statement for the Hindu community which has not dealt much with the issue in the past. The holy men strongly condemned the practice; one such religious leader, Swami Kamalathamadha, stated, "No human being has the right to destroy the fetus." But how will such opposition translate into a public Hindu stance on the issue? "You are not likely to see Hindus becoming activists and marching against abortion. From the Hindu point of view, there is the tradition of tolerance, the concern not to force our beliefs on other people," said Rev. Arumugaswami, managing editor of *Hinduism Today*, in an interview with RELIGION WATCH. There is also no single Hindu position as to how abortion is to be approached legally; some might argue that outlawing the practice would cause more deaths among women seeking illegal abortions, according to Arumugaswami.

Arumugaswami adds that while other religious groups have critically examined abortion, until his newspaper's recent focus on the issue, most Hindus have accepted the practice "without critique...It has been accepted for population control in India." While the Indian-Hindu communities in the U.S. see abortion as socially unacceptable, the newspaper's pro-life statement was aimed more at the large number of Indian doctors in the U.S., some of whom may be performing abortions, says the editor. This concern can be seen in the September issue of the paper, where a Hindu obstetrician writes that Indian doctors must follow their conscience, yet adds that abortion is a "large and bloody Amazon River washing away the lives of millions of unborn, innocent and tender lives..." Another area of concern is that some Indians (Sikhs as well as Hindus) have engaged in the practice of aborting a fetus when learning it is female through ultrasound methods. The practice is more common in India (causing growing criticism by Indian Hindus), but it has also been taking place in North America, according to an unnamed source. The September issue reports that Hindus are also protesting against euthanasia practices in the Netherlands. Such an issue is new for Hindus, but Arumugaswami says that the religion is facing such new challenges as it moves West from India. (*Hinduism Today*, 1819 Second St., Concord, CA 94519)

CHRISTIAN RIGHT BROADENING BASE, AGENDA TO CONNECT WITH MORE AMERICANS?

The New Christian Right may be steering away from single issue politics toward an agenda stressing more practical family concerns, according to one of its leading spokesmen. Ralph Reed Jr., the director of the Christian Coalition, the fastest growing and most influential Christian Right group, writes in the conservative Policy Review (Summer) that the "pro-family movement has not yet completely connected its agenda with average voters. The pro-family movement still has limited appeal even among the 40 million voters who attend church frequently, identify themselves as evangelicals or orthodox Roman Catholics, and consider themselves traditionalists on cultural issues." Reed adds that while visible religious figures have played a vital role in building grassroots membership and generating financial support, "without specific policies designed to benefit families and children, appeals to family values or America's Judeo-Christian values will fall on deaf ears." He cites a recent survey by the Marketing Research Institute that found that, aside from the economy, the chief concern of voters who attend church four times a month was not abortion, pornography, or prayer in school, but cutting waste in government and reducing the deficit.

Reed advises fellow activists not to give disproportionate attention to such issues as abortion and homosexuality and to branch out to such areas as family tax relief, crime, health care, school safety, and welfare reform. Reed stresses commonalities between all Americans rather than highlighting controversial moral issues. He writes there is "growing evidence that suggests that evangelicals and their Roman Catholic allies are concerned about the same issues as the broader electorate, but with a pro-family twist." In returning to moral issues, Reed cites the much publicized case in New York City where evangelicals joined with Catholics, orthodox Jews, and racial minorities in turning back a multi-cultural school curriculum that included instruction on homosexual lifestyles as the blueprint for future cooperative activism. "The pro-family movement's inroads into the African-American, Hispanic, Catholic, and Jewish communities may be the most significant development since its emergence in the late 1970s," he adds. (Policy Review, 214 Massachusetts Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002-4999)

TALK RADIO SERVING AS CATALYST IN EVANGELICAL ACTIVISM

Talk radio is playing an increasing role in shaping the activism and social views of evangelical Christians, according to World magazine (July 17). Taking cues from the popularity of such talk show gurus as Rush Limbaugh, one media analyst estimates that more than half of the nation's 1,400 Christian stations feature such shows. Evangelical talk shows, and Christian radio programming in general, have evolved from once stressing biblical study and pastoral advice to, in the words of one talk show host, now stressing "social and cultural critique." Marlin Maddoux, whose show "Point of View" is now on a national network of 280 stations, says "I saw early on that the Christian community was getting its gospel from the church and its worldview from the media and television sitcoms...I talk about issues Christians don't hear in the secular media..." The view that Christian talk radio is battling the influence of the secular media seems fairly common among proponents of the medium.

Another broadcaster adds, "Christian radio is helpful in the cultural

wars. You've got so many of these stations around the country, and they're able to get the information out to the Christian community quickly." For many callers, the shows serve as an outlet to vent their concerns, but for others, "it's just a beginning; a larger activism follows." Among the "hot button" subjects are homosexuality (often featuring views that secular stations might not allow, such as whether AIDS patients should be quarantined), the New Age movement, abortion, outcome-based education, and, perhaps most frequently, the policies of President Bill Clinton. Al Kresta, who admits he does some pro-life activism through his Detroit-based show "Talk from the Heart," adds that many of the activists associated with Christian talk radio "are hitching their wagons to right-wing conservatism. They begin to see the world as divided between liberals and conservatives, and that's not true. The world is divided between those who are being drawn to Jesus and those who are running away from him." (World, P.O. Box 2330, Asheville, NC 28802)

RECOVERY MOVEMENT, BOOKS REACH OUT FOR SPIRITUAL THRUST

Many critics have claimed that religious belief is gradually being engulfed by a secular therapeutic mindset, especially evident in the use of self-help and 12-step techniques. But according to a recent survey of the market on recovery books, it is the self-help movement that is increasingly being taken over by spiritual and religious currents. Publishers Weekly (July 5) reports that while recovery books were among the most popular in the 1980s, the market has hit a dead end. The recovery movement--which ranges from 12-step AA meetings to co-dependency workshops-- has not shown any signs of decline, but there is a lack of interest in the subject at the bookstores, mainly because of economic changes and because everybody interested in recovery has already bought these books. The theme of recovery itself may be outplayed. "What's dead to me is the pathology of recovery, people looking backwards in terms of why am I unhappy, why am I not functioning as well as I think I should be functioning," says one publishing executive.

Today, "recovery considerations are being merged with traditional psychology/self-help, and spirituality has become a prominent theme," writes Margaret Jones. One publisher adds that the "recovery market has gone beyond the stop-drinking books and are now looking to answer the spiritual questions that may have been involved in their search through drugs or whatever in the first place." An example of the change of emphasis can be seen in the current marketing strategy of RPI (formerly known as Recovery Publications before the downturn): recovery is now treated in four stages: awareness, discovery, wholeness, and transformation. Popular recovery books and authors who show the new spiritual thrust include Bantam's "The Sprituality of Imperfection," which presents story-telling from the world's religions and avoids recovery lingo, even though the book's co-authors Ernest Kurtz and Katherine Ketcham are recognized recovery authorities. The success of such books as Thomas Moore's "Care of the Soul," and Marianne Williamson's "Return to Love" (based on the esoteric Christian "Course on Miracles") has also served to alert recovery publishers that the future (or the book sales) will be in spirituality. (Publishers Weekly, 249 West 17th St., New York, NY 10011)

CORPORATIONS TAKE ON CHAPLAINS TO BOOST PRODUCTIVITY

Corporations in America are increasingly using industrial chaplains to improve productivity among employees, according to the National Catholic Reporter (August 13). "Chaplains are proving themselves extremely valuable in factories and office buildings, offering immediate counseling in the face of bad news, seeing employees through marital or family disputes..." writes Cheryl Heckler-Feltz. During the past five years the ranks of industrial chaplains have grown to about 2,000, with such corporations as General Motors, and Allied Systems hiring such clergy; the United Auto Workers now sponsors at least part-time chaplains in every plant where its members are employed, even where the corporation isn't paying for one. The increased hiring of industrial chaplains from the corporate perspective is a "matter of how many man hours can a chaplain save a company by meeting with the employee on the job site," says one Methodist layman involved in this ministry. (National Catholic Reporter, P.O. Box 419281, Kansas City, MO 64141)

WOMEN FINDING MORE ACCEPTANCE IN PENTECOSTAL, CHARISMATIC CIRCLES

Women leaders are beginning to find acceptance within Pentecostal and charismatic churches, though not without resistance, reports Charisma magazine (July). Pentecostal and charismatic denominations have been slow to place women in positions of leadership, even though some Pentecostal denominations were historically among the first to ordain women and still officially allow the practice. The newer charismatic groups, such as the Association of Vineyard Churches, are strongly opposed to such a development. But the magazine reports that "there are signs that attitudes toward women in leadership are changing within other Pentecostal and charismatic groups." Leaders of the influential charismatic Youth With a Mission organization recently appointed their first female national director in Switzerland. The group's founder, Loren Cunningham, has called for more women leaders.

While women still cannot serve as pastors in the Church of God (Cleveland, Tenn.), they were granted the right to participate in policy decisions at last year's General Assembly. The Assemblies of God, which ordains women and permits them to be senior pastors, recently appointed a woman for the first time to a district post in New Jersey. Women pastors are still rare in most Pentecostal denominations (women clergy only comprise 15 percent of Assemblies' clergy), but the article suggests that as women pioneer successful congregations, they are finding more acceptance from male colleagues. (Charisma, 600 Rhinehart Rd., Lake Mary, FL 32746)

BLACK CHURCH INCORPORATES MORE AFRICAN ELEMENTS IN WORSHIP

The ongoing trend of American blacks seeking to reclaim their African roots is now having an impact on the traditional worship patterns in the black church, according to Christian News (July 19). "As a result, the Sunday morning worship hour is more lively than ever before. Choir members not only clap, sway, shout and stomp their feet, but members dance, shake their rumps, bop their heads and even 'leap for joy' as they sing to the rhythms of African-rooted sacred song," writes Yvonne Samuel in the Religious News Service-based report. Such practices have been

encouraged by black musicians and pastors as a means of reclaiming African traditions of dance, song and language. "Often, worship houses have been redecorated with the same end in view. African kinte cloth adorns pulpits and altars; icons of religious figures are displayed with non-traditional 'black faces.'" At some black congregations, worshippers often dress in African attire. In the past, the use of such "Africanisms" as percussion instruments were disdained by many blacks trained by European-oriented missionaries and churches.

CURRENT RESEARCH: RECENT FINDINGS IN RELIGIOUS BEHAVIOR AND ATTITUDES

* The reunion of adult adoptees with their birthparents is often viewed as a spiritual experience or described in spiritual terms by both parties, according to a recent study. A fairly recent phenomenon in Western society has been the reunion of tens of thousands of adult adoptees with their birth parents and families of origin. Dr. LaVonne Harper Stiffler studied 70 reunited families and often found surprising coincidences (or "synchronicity") between parents and children in their similar names, search activity, marriage patterns, religiosity, education and occupations. In Numinis (June), the newsletter of the Alister Hardy Research Centre in England, Stiffler writes that the "self-actualizing, peak experience of reunion with one's lost parent or child is often described in spiritual terms, and in my study surprise was expressed at their own new sense of spirituality, prefacing comments about God's timing or action in the 'miracle' reunion with the words, 'I'm not a religious person, but...'" She concludes that "For parents and children whose lives before reunion were based on elements of falsehood and denial, a true and complete selfhood after reunion seemed to activate a move in the direction of freedom and transcendence." (Numinis, Alister Hardy Centre, FREEPOST, Oxford, OX2 9BR England)

* The fastest growing Protestant denomination in the U.S. since 1982 has been the Church of God in Christ (COGIC). The black Pentecostal denomination has become the nation's fourth largest Protestant body, surpassed only by the Southern Baptist Convention, the United Methodist Church, and the National Baptist Convention, another African-American church. The Yearbook of the American and Canadian Churches, 1993 reports that the COGIC's membership of 5.5 million members has increased with little media attention paid to its presence as compared to more high profile mainline bodies as the Episcopal Church and the United Church of Christ, each with just one million members. The yearbook reports enormous gains among COGIC urban churches, including some 200,000 new members and nearly 600 new congregations annually since 1982. Since 1982 the church has grown by 48.3 percent, compared with 22.3 for the Mormons, 22 percent for the Assemblies of God, and 14.4 percent for the Roman Catholic Church. The Washington Post (August 7) reports that church growth specialists attribute COGIC's high growth rate to its highly sophisticated recruitment planning; outreach programs that run daily in its churches; and a sense of ethnic loyalty and cohesion.--By Erling Jorstad

* The growing trend of congregations engaging in community development projects (see November 92 and May RW) often changes the churches involved in such work, according to a recent study. Initiatives in Religion (Summer), a newsletter of the Lilly Endowment, cites a study of seven

successful community development projects by Elliot Wright which shows that community development work (which can mean anything from congregations rehabilitating buildings to church-based credit unions) often deepens the faith commitments of the church groups or individuals. "There may also be a broadening of religious fellowship as persons of different traditions come to know one another outside their sanctuaries, and those new relationships can lead to joint worship and shared social occasions," Wright reports. Each project was found to be led by one or several "charismatic" individuals, and each one often has their own "foundational philosophy." As examples of this, Wright describes one of the projects as driven by an Episcopalian intentional-communitarian outlook and another by a Roman Catholic liberation theology orientation. Wright also finds that young ministers often view the projects as much as an education as was their seminary training. (*Initiatives in Religion, Lilly Endowment, 2801 North Meridian St., P.O. Box 88068, Indianapolis, IN 46208-0068*)

* A hymnal that generated controversy when it was introduced in the United Methodist Church several years ago is now finding greater acceptance, according to a recent study. The initial resistance had been to changes intended to make the hymnal more inclusive of women and racial minorities, as it included songs from diverse ethnic heritages and deleted male representations of God. The New York Times (July 31) reports that of the 112 congregations surveyed in the study, only one said the hymnal had gone over "poorly." Another congregation in the survey, which was conducted by Candler School of Theology professor Don Saliers, said it was "resistant" to the hymnal. The rest of the responses ranged from "positive" to "enthusiastic."

* Effective congregations in Canada are found to have four characteristics: orthodoxy (or an emphasis on theological truth), community, relevancy, and outreach, according to a recent study cited in the Canadian evangelical magazine Faith Today (July/August). The survey, conducted by researchers from World Vision Canada and the Angus Reid Group, is based on interviews and questionnaires of "healthy" congregations in 15 mainline and conservative Canadian denominations. In developing a "model" church from the results, the researchers found that the above characteristics have to be held in balance, as, for instance, focusing on orthodoxy often erodes relevancy and can lead to isolationism. The researchers also warn that cloning American methods may not work in Canada, especially when the prototypes are megachurches with vast resources; Canada was found not to have one church in this category. The survey also revealed "remarkable similarities between mainline and evangelical denominations on what they think makes an effective church." (*Faith Today, Box 8800, Stn B, Willowdale, Ont. M2K 2R6*)

* A recent study has served to puncture holes in the "idealistic myths about India's religious lifestyle and social fabric," reports Hinduism Today (August). The Anthropological Survey of India office's 46,000-page, "Life of the People of India," is the largest study of its kind, involving 500 field sociologists and 3,000 researchers. The study "exploded" the myth of Hindu vegetarianism: 88 percent of India's Hindus dine on meat when they can afford to or can catch it, ranging from beef to field rats. There are now 4,635 distinct communities (castes and subcastes) in India, making it the most segregated nation on earth. While it has always been assumed that Hinduism is the least proselytizing faith

in India, the religion has converted 383 communities to its teachings compared with Christianity's 267 and Islam's 112. The brahmin oligarchy traditionally responsible for carrying out religious duties is now being challenged by 1,656 communities which have "evolved their own priests." It was also found that while in the 1930s most non-brahmin families paid a dowry to the bride's family, today 40 percent of such Hindus follow the brahmin custom of paying dowry to the boy's family.

RUSSIAN IMMIGRATION INTENSIFYING JEWISH IDENTITY IN ISRAEL

The influx of Russian immigrants into Israel during the past several years is likely to "pose a potentially explosive demographic challenge...that could upset the balance of power between the religious and secular forces in Israeli society," according to the Washington Post (August 14). The recent case of an Israeli soldier who was refused burial with his fellow soldiers because he had a non-Jewish mother has reignited the whole question of "Who is a Jew?" in the country. Israeli law (following Jewish tradition) defines a Jew as someone with a Jewish mother or who has converted to Judaism. The half-million immigrants from the former Soviet Union that have arrived in the past three years often don't fit the bill: a recent poll found that only two percent of such immigrants identified themselves as religious, 19 percent said they were "traditional," and the rest either were not religious or could not identify themselves; 10-30 percent of the newcomers are estimated to be non-Jews.

Such a lack of religious identity causes problems when the new immigrants attempt to marry or divorce. The Orthodox Jewish religious authorities--who control marriage licensing--bar many of them from marrying Jews. Since the rabbinical courts do not recognize mixed marriages, they also refuse to grant the immigrants divorces. The situation is said to be a "time bomb" for conflict between immigrants and Orthodox Jews. "We're talking about tens of thousands of people. It's not anymore a question of several secular citizens who don't want to use the services of the ultra-Orthodox," said one activist working for religious pluralism in Israel.

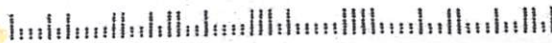
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FINDINGS & FOOTNOTES

— A Bi-Monthly Supplement of Religion Watch —

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PRESSNOTES

* A resource helpful in understanding the mindset and developments in the Vatican and especially the papacy--both in their religious and political aspects--is the new magazine Inside the Vatican. The Rome-based magazine, which attempts to be unbiased in its reporting, has recently featured articles on the Vatican strategy concerning the Balkans crisis, and the prospects of Catholic-Eastern Orthodox rapprochement, as well as offering a running commentary on anything a reader might like to know about the pope-- from his health to his busy travel schedule. A subscription to the monthly is \$49.95 and is available from: Inside the Vatican, New Hope, KY 40052.

* The May issue of the The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science is devoted to religion in the 1990s. The volume carries 11 essays that do a good job at highlighting the various directions that religion is moving in, mostly from academic perspectives. Notable among the collection is church historian Martin Marty's overview of contemporary religion (viewing religious groups' emphases on healing as one of the major trends of the decade); Roger Finke's and Laurence Iannaccone's essay on supply side theory and religious change, reflecting the recent trend among sociologists of examining religion from an economic perspective. Other articles deal with such subjects as the New Age movement, televangelism, and religion and social change. The issue is available for \$13 from: The Annals, Sage Publications, P.O. Box 5084, Newbury Park, CA 91359.

* The summer/fall issue of Creation Spirituality magazine is devoted to looking back at the beginnings and ahead at the future prospects of the creation spirituality movement. Creation spirituality, a movement started by Catholic priest Matthew Fox, blends New Age-oriented and Christian mysticism together with the ecology movement. This issue carries "testimonies" of many creation spirituality followers as well as profiles of the impressive number of ministries and communities espousing Fox's theology that have emerged over the last decade. Both the testimonies and the profiles suggest that the movement continues to drift from its Catholic beginnings to an ecumenical, inter-faith identity; it appears that mainline Protestant churches have been the most receptive to the movement. In an article on the future of creation spirituality, Fox, who was recently expelled from the Dominican Order, states that the next step in his work will be developing a creation spirituality worldview and institutions-- from schools and free universities to TV programs. This issue costs \$4 and is available from: Creation Spirituality, 4185 Park Blvd., Oakland, CA 94602.

* Religion Watch contributing editor Erling Jorstad has recently written Popular Religion in America: The Evangelical Voice (Greenwood Publishing Group). Jorstad examines the development of the evangelical subculture between 1960 and 1990 and how the movement harnessed American popular

culture and mass media to spread its views. The book costs \$55 and can be ordered by phone with a credit card: (1-800) 255-5800, or by writing: Greenwood Publishing, 88 Post Road West, Box 5007, Westport, CT 06881.

* While Christian reconstructionism--the school of thought teaching that societies and governments should be Christian-based-- has been subject to numerous critiques and exposés since the mid-1980s, there has not been much in the way of balanced, book-length examinations of the movement. Heaven On Earth: The Social and Political Agendas of Dominion Theology by Bruce Barron, meets such a need as it looks at both the movement's more sensational aspects--its use of the Old Testament as a blueprint for society--and its less known facets, such as its diversity and divisions (the chapter on Pat Robertson and his Regent University is especially informative). The book, which is written from a broadly evangelical perspective, is also good at tracing the influence of reconstructionism in the wider Christian Right and "Christian worldview" movements. The book costs \$12.99 and can be obtained from: Zondervan, 5249 Corporation Drive, Grand Rapids, MI 49512.

* The Price of Prophecy: Orthodox Churches on Peace, Freedom, and Security by Alexander Webster, examines the social teachings and activity of Eastern Orthodoxy just as these churches are reemerging as significant actors in the religious and political worlds. The book examines both the Orthodox churches in the U.S. and those in their native countries, including: the records of the Russian and Romanian Orthodox churches during communism and their prospects in the post-communist period, the controversy surrounding the Antiochian Orthodox Church's pro-Palestinian politics; Serbian and Ukrainian Orthodoxy and nationalism; and how Orthodoxy relates to such concerns as human rights and war and peace (Webster reports that pacifism is finding a new "concrete expression" in Orthodoxy today). The book costs \$24.50 and is available from: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1015 Fifteenth St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20005

ON/FILE A Survey of Groups, Movements and People Impacting Religion

1) Laymen for Religious Liberty (LRL) is a controversial Seventh Day Adventist group which has recently started a billboard campaign around the U.S. attacking the Roman Catholic Church and drawing wide protests from the public. The organization, which is not officially tied to the denomination, started erecting billboards in Orlando, Florida, last November showing pictures of the pope with the question, "Why Is the Vatican Trying to Change Our Constitution?" and advertising the book "The Great Controversy," written by Adventist founder Ellen White. Since then such cities as Portland, Maine, Loma Linda, Calif., and Denver, Colorado (during the pope's recent visit to the city) have become targets for the campaign. Laymen for Religious Liberty is led by two Adventists originally from the Caribbean islands, David Mould and Webster Barnaby. LRL's campaign has "driven the church into a most awkward position at a most crucial crossroad, coming as it does on the heels of Waco." At issue is that "The Great Controversy" is officially considered to be inspired by the church, even though its anti-Catholic (and anti-non-Adventist Protestant) views are not often publicized today. Thus the LRL's quoting or citing the book for its campaign could not be criticized by church leaders without meeting negative response from many Adventists. LRL's plan to intensify its billboard campaign may further polarize the Adventist community on the question of the authenticity and inspiration of Ellen White's writings. (Source: Spectrum, May.)