

Moral perspectives

Church and state—it's still an issue

Recent decisions by the U.S. Supreme Court regarding the First Amendment of the Constitution are starting to establish an official religion for America — a religion of the secular.

The First Amendment guarantees that there will be no established religion in the United States and that all religions will be granted the right of freedom. The First Amendment sought a bal-

ance between one official religion (such as exists in England, Portugal, etc.) and that each religion must have the right of existence and worship.

But subtly, the Supreme Court is pursuing a precedent of the establishment of a religion of secularism, where any mention of a personal God is forbidden. The court has been so sensitive to the one aspect of the First Amend-

ment forbidding the establishment of a specific religion that the court has neglected its concerns about the free exercise of religion.

THE NOW famous 1963 and 1963 court decisions on prayer and

that and threw its weight on the side of those who believe our society as a whole should be a purely secular one.

THE MAJORITY opinion expressed in Justice Stewart's opinion was the concern to the heart of the First Amendment which upholds the free exercise clause. Instead, it expressed many imaginary evils about the possibility of an established religion.

Chief Justice Burger was quite disturbed by the majority report and also wrote a dissenting opinion in which he denounced the court's majority opinion as "extravagant and crabbed attitude" in defense of only one side of the First Amendment.

Burger stated that he found absolutely "no support for the supposed dangers" listed in the majority opinion. Burger stated that the majority opinion "does not simply tilt the Constitution against religion; it literally turns the religion clause on its head."

Chief Justice Burger makes a final plea that behooves all of us to show some serious consideration about the trend that presently exists in the Supreme Court. "I hope that at some future date, the court will come to a more enlightened and tolerant view of the First Amendment's guarantee of free exercise of religion."

IF THE COURT and public opinion in general don't start showing some genuine concern for the free exercise clause of the First Amendment, we will awaken one day only to have found that we have lost one of our most basic rights.

We will be told that our government must "not only be neutral about religion but that it must throw its weight on the side of those who believe our society as a

whole should be a purely secular one." The cautious warning of Justice Rehnquist can well be an omen of the future.

The First Amendment of the Constitution must be protected. That protection lies in a balance of the two extremes. The pendulum has swung to the extreme left in supporting the barrier of Church and State. It has forgotten the second part of the amendment which grants free exercise of religion.



By
FR. BERNARD HARRINGTON
Holy Name Church

Bible reading in public schools were some of the first indications of this trend. However, recently the Supreme Court has become quite explicit in its attack on religion.

The case in question is the recent court decision (May 19), regarding Pennsylvania's aid to non-public schools. Although the court upheld the use of text books to be legal, the court maintained that the State of Pennsylvania cannot lend material or auxiliary services to non-public schools.

Justice William Rehnquist, expressing the minority opinion of the court in the Pennsylvania decision, calls attention to the overtones of the majority report written by Justice Potter Stewart. Justice Rehnquist points out that the majority report states that the First Amendment not only demands religious neutrality on the part of the government, but Rehnquist accuses the majority of the court on the legal precedent that "requires that this Court go fur-

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Volunteers tap slate

New officers were recently elected for the Volunteer Committee of the Founders Society, Detroit Institute of Arts. The election was held at the recent 13th annual meeting of the group.

Area residents elected include Mrs. Henry Krystal of Birmingham, 1975-76 chairman; Mrs. Charles Johnson of Birmingham, second vice chairman, and Mrs. George Golden of Farmington, treasurer.

Those chosen to lead the service and administrative committees include Mrs. Robert Miller of Birmingham, vice chairman, art to the schools; Mrs. James Moore of Birmingham, vice chairman, do-

cents: Mrs. Robert F. Schutz of Birmingham, chairman, information center; Mrs. Andrew Miller of Farmington, vice chairman, museum shop; Mrs. Edward C. Wilkins of Birmingham, chairman, staff aides; Mrs. Frederick Betz of Troy, chairman, personnel placement; Mrs. David Stulberg of Birmingham, vice chairman, personnel placement; Mrs. Frederick Katz of West Bloomfield, chairman, relations, and Mrs. Thomas McLean of Bloomfield Hills, chairman, welcome.

Directors of the volunteer committee include Mrs. Edward J. Bush of Birmingham, Mrs. Arthur Kellman of Southfield and Mrs. Don L. Weihe of Bloomfield Hills.

Following luncheon in the North Court, the volunteers heard guest speaker Mrs. G. Mennen Williams, a museum trustee, talk on the collection of African art and Oriental porcelain owned by her and her husband, State Supreme Court Justice Williams.

Women named to WUF board

Mrs. Wilber H. Boutell of Bloomfield Hills and Mrs. Robert Gabriel of Birmingham were elected to the Women for the United Foundation's board of directors at the group's annual meeting recently.

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