

National Association of Evangelicals  
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Insight

A Witness for the Church...  
Bringing the Gospel to Bear on Government

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EVANGELICALS Washington, DC October/November 2005

## NEW HEAVEN, NEW EARTH

In a cover story entitled “New Heaven, New Earth” the highly-respected *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report* (October 17, 2005) reports that “for a generation, evangelicals have been a mainstay of the Republican Party’s base of support, and fighting the culture wars has been their main objective. But they’re asserting themselves on a much broader policy front that includes the environment, global trade and poverty, human rights and foreign policy.” What’s the potential here? “Seismic” is their conclusion.

This is serious coverage [8 pages] by *CQ*, revered as the top source for congressional news. Copies go into every Senate and House office, as well as to Embassy Row and foreign capitals around the globe.

Here’s what we see happening: evangelicals are a movement in transition, from domestic to global [vision], narrow to comprehensive [strategy], exclusive to inclusive [tactics]. Susan Benkelman, executive editor of *CQ*, describes us as “complicated and dynamic,” defying “easy labels like ‘Christian Right.’”

“They have the political skill, and muscle, to become a force on their own terms,” concludes writer John Cochran, a veteran of the Hill. “It’s not a long leap,” he writes, “from concerns about global poverty to calls for things such as human rights con-



ditions on trade agreements.”

In fact, our Washington office is currently helping assemble a coalition behind the “Scoop Jackson National Security and Freedom Act” (to be introduced in January) that will tie trade restrictions with China to humane treatment and asylum for refugees fleeing persecution in North Korea. The *CQ* article can be read at [www.nae.net](http://www.nae.net) by clicking “governmental affairs.” □

## JUDGE ALITO SELECTION APPLAUDED

The nomination of Judge Samuel Alito to the Supreme Court won the quick endorsement of legal groups credited with protecting religious freedoms. Sam Casey, executive director of the Christian Legal Society called Alito’s qualifications “outstanding” and director of their Center for Law and Religious Freedom, Gregory S. Baylor, said Alito’s service on the Third Circuit shows he has “correctly interpreted and applied the First Amendment’s religion clauses.”

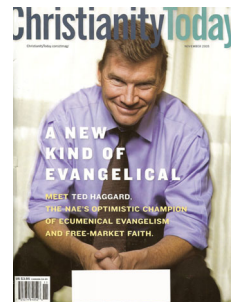
In *Blackhawk v. Pennsylvania*, Judge Alito and his colleagues unanimously concluded that Pennsylvania officials had violated the religious freedom rights of a Lakota Indian. In *Fraternal Order of Police v. City of Newark*, Alito held that city officials unconstitutionally interfered with the religious exercise of Muslim

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continued from inside

## NAE SUNDAY HELD

The rising influence of the NAE was exemplified by two influential publications carrying major cover stories on its top two leaders this month: *Christianity Today* (November) and *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report* (October 17). This coverage couldn’t be scripted by any Hand except from above. If your church did not participate in “NAE Sunday” on October 30, contact us for information. We are most grateful for all of those churches that took an offering.



NAE President Ted Haggard on the cover of *Christianity Today* magazine



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continued from front page

police officers. In *Abramson v. William Paterson College*, Alito held that state officials had violated an Orthodox Jewish woman's workplace religious freedom rights.

According to the CLS, Alito's rulings also show that he rejects the idea that the First Amendment's Establishment Clause requires the removal of all things religious from the public square. He twice rebuffed the ACLU's efforts to dismantle holiday displays that included Christmas trees, menorahs, nativity scenes, Kwanzaa symbols, and a banner stressing the importance of diversity. The cases are *ACLU of New Jersey v. Schundler* (1999) and *ACLU of New Jersey v. Township of Wall* (2001).

Since 1942, the NAE Board of Directors has on only two occasions endorsed Supreme Court nominees (Robert Bork and Clarence Thomas), rare instances when the nominees were subjected to withering assaults on their character and qualifications. We expect a real donnybrook before Alito's confirmation but also a fair hearing. Will his opponents engage in venomous attacks? Stay tuned. □

## SPIRITUAL ENCOURAGEMENT

A variety of challenges facing President Bush, from the five-count indictment of Vice-President Cheney's top aide for perjury and obstruction of justice to the rising death count of our soldiers in Iraq, have driven his poll numbers to an all-time low.

"Now Mr. Bush is in the first crisis of his presidency, a crisis unusual, even perhaps unprecedented, in modern American politics, in that his own side has risen up and declared it no longer sees him as one of his own," said former Reagan speechwriter Peggy Noonan writing (about opposition to the appointment of Harriet Miers) in the *Wall Street Journal* (October 20), on "How Bush Can Save Bush." It is comparable, she wrote, "to what happened to Margaret Thatcher in 1990, when Conservative Party members turned on her. That rebellion was more personal than policy based, but an old rule of politics per-

tains to both cases: Friends come and go but enemies accumulate." What should Mr. Bush do?

Noonan's advice is similar to what George W. Bush did in 1986, when he was at a personal crisis in his life. His father said he "stood up, took responsibility, and changed his life." He had reached a crisis point in his life and changed what wasn't working. He got humble. He questioned himself. He can do it again, and should. As W. later said, the evangelist Billy Graham had planted "a seed in his heart," and the seed took hold. Mr. Bush stopped drinking and began to practice his faith.

President Bush also needs to consider that a biblical response to the indictments brought against a top Vice-Presidential aide for perjury (a serious felony) and obstruction of justice is to zealously pursue the Truth. He must never minimize criminal conduct or disparage the prosecutor. He needs to fire any advisors who would coverup, mislead, or lie, whether about the Iraq war or any other public business. That's what faith in God, as opposed to faith in your advisors, is all about. □

## LESSONS FROM THE FRONT

Evangelicals disagreed over the nomination of Harriet Miers but there won't be any "split" in the movement. Staff members for various organizations, meeting at the Capitol Hill Club after Miers withdrew, were all in a good mood and ready to move on.

**Observation #1:** Stick to principles regardless of party (or even the President in the White House). We don't want our support to be presumed by anyone or to be at the whim of someone's political strategy.

**Observation #2:** Champion the principles articulated in the document *For the Health of the Nation: An Evangelical Call to Civic Engagement* and agreed upon by a wide spectrum of evangelical leaders. Most evangelicals are not single-issue thinkers and voters.



Peggy Noonan

The current Congress, White House and executive branch agencies – on a wide variety of issues ranging from protecting the family to caring for creation – need to be pushed toward our agenda. It's a broad set of principles which come straight from the Scriptures. We need to be bold and unapologetic. □

## GUIDELINES NEED CHANGING

Evangelical groups, including the NAE, are insisting that the Air Force soften or drop its new restrictions on public prayers and proselytizing in the armed forces.

In an attempt to pacify non-religionists, the guidelines allow for "a brief nonsectarian prayer" in special ceremonies, extraordinary circumstances, and "preparation for imminent combat." In effect, the guidelines ask chaplains to only remain true to their faiths during exceptional or special occasions. At other times, chaplains are urged to check their beliefs at the gate in order to guarantee a non-offensive environment.

"The constitution does not guarantee a no offense environment, it guarantees the free exercise of religion. Guidelines that mitigate against that free exercise seek to restrict appropriate and moderate religious speech which infringes on the constitutional rights of cadets, faculty, staff, and chaplains," Stephen Leonard, executive director of the NAE Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel, stated in a letter to Major General Charles Baldwin, Air Force Chief of Chaplains.

Last week seventy House members, both Republicans and Democrats, petitioned the President to overturn the guidelines through executive order. Among the signatures were Armed Service Committee members Walter B. Jones Jr. (R-N.C.) and Mike McIntyre (D-N.C.). In a recent interview Congressman Jones stated, "If you continue to go down this road, you will have a time when you have chaplains restricted in what they can say over a dying soldier on the battlefield."

The new guidelines prompted Baldwin, a Southern Baptist, to voice his own views on the matter via a videotaped message to chaplains: "This is America, and for those of us who come from belief system that require us to tell others

... what we believe, [it] is so important that we feel free to do this." Clearly there are few who find the interim guidelines acceptable.

If you want to provide input, contact: Cecil B. Richardson, Chaplain, Brigadier General, USAF, Deputy Chief of Chaplains, at the following e-mail address: Cecil.Richardson@Pentagon.af.mil. □

## INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT DESERVES SUPPORT

In March of this year, the United States decided to abstain and, thereby not veto, a measure in the U.N. Security Council that would bring in the International Criminal Court (I.C.C.) to convict criminals in the troubled Darfur genocide. This decision marked a change in the Bush Administration's attitude on the role of the I.C.C., at least with respect to Sudan. (The Bush Administration has not generally supported the work of the Court.) And, on May 20, Nicholas Burns, the undersecretary for political affairs at the State Department, told the *Boston Globe* that "we [the United States] wanted to ensure that the international community spoke with one voice on this important moral issue." This was a good decision.

The International Criminal Court is uniquely situated to render justice in Darfur. It's a permanent court with jurisdiction to try individuals accused of some of the most serious international crimes. It is designed as a court of last resort, which usually can not supersede national authority, except in cases where the government has acted to



NAE Interns (on left) Janine Dixon and Alexei Laushkin, Judge Kirsch, and Legislative Assistant Heather (Hirschy) Gonzales.

perpetuate violence as in Sudan.

In October, NAE staff and Board members dialogued with I.C.C. President the Honorable Judge Philippe Kirsch. Our aim

is to better understand the international issues surrounding the I.C.C. and seek principled ways for evangelicals to engage international issues. □

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