

[This paper has been reformulated from old files without formatting, but maintains the original pagination—despite the resulting odd page breaks.]
Journal of the Adventist Theological Society, 8/1–2 (1997): 120-136.
Article copyright © 1997 by Norman R. Gulley.

The Christian Coalition and the End Game¹

Norman R. Gulley
School of Religion
Southern Adventist University

In America, bastion of religious liberty, forces are at work to tear down the wall of separation between church and state. There is a relentless attack against the first amendment of the Constitution, and leading the fight is the Christian Coalition. According to the historicist reading favored by Adventist interpreters, prophecy tells us that America will exercise “all the authority of the first beast” (Papacy) and will make “the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast” (Rev 13:12, NIV). In fact, America will set up an image of the Papacy. The Papacy is a union of church and state, so the image in America will be a union of church and state (Rev 13:13-14). When church and state unite in America, then the church will use the government to enforce its agenda, for the issue in Revelation 13 is worship (vss. 4, 8, 12, 15). Whoever refuses to engage in the mandated false worship will be threatened by boycott and death (vss. 15-17).

Purpose of the Constitution and the First Amendment

In their book, *The Godless Constitution: The Case Against Religious Correctness*,² Isaak Kramnick and R. Laurence Moore demonstrate that the Constitution is a secular document, even though Christians took part in producing it. The framers of the Constitution believed religion to be a personal matter between the believer and God; church matters were not for government. Church and state were to be two separate powers, one to serve the spiritual and the other the secular needs of citizens. The First Amendment is a two way street, in which the government must not meddle in Religion, and Religion must not meddle in governing. A wall of separation kept them apart. History had proven the wisdom of this separation of powers. The framers of the

GANE: APOCALYPSE NOT YET

Constitution knew the necessary limits of both church and state to safeguard religious liberty, so often lost in countries where they merged.

Liberty article, “Our Godless Constitution,” Kramnick and Moore note the Constitutional framers, building on good English political theory derived from John Locke, limited government “to protect people’s rights to life, liberty, and property, not to tell them how and when to pray.” Nowhere in the Constitution is Christianity or even God mentioned. No prayers for guidance were offered during the Constitutional Convention. Although the founding fathers were mostly believers in God, “they did not want a godless America, just a godless Constitution.”³ However, the framers of the Constitution did not have “a radical secular agenda for the nation.”⁴ Obviously, they were only interested in separating church and state, which is anathema to the Christian Coalition.

Attacks on the First Amendment

The First Amendment reads, “Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” Here are two important principles: the Establishment clause and the Free Exercise clause. The government must stay out of the sphere of religion, which also means that religion should not force government to legislate in matters of faith and conscience. The Christian Coalition supports candidates for government who will promote their religious agenda. They have considerable influence in the Republican party and hope to get the Republican President of their choice elected in the year 2000.

The Berlin wall came crashing down in Germany. Forces are working to tear down the wall of separation between church and state in America. As Rob Boston observes, Christian Coalition critics “insist that destruction of the wall of separation between church and state remains a key goal of Robertson and the Coalition.” In October 1981, “Robertson’s ‘700 Club’ aired what amounted to a week-long attack on the separation of church and state.”^{5,6} Robertson wants His Christian Coalition to rule. He once said, “We have enough votes to run the country . . . And when people say, ‘We’ve had enough,’ we’re going to take over.”⁷ He sees no problem with the church ruling the state, governing the people. It’s as if the First Amendment had never been written. It’s as if he had amnesia about other church-state regimes that inflicted religious bigotry and intolerance on dissenting minorities.

“In 1992 the American Center for Law and Justice, a legal group founded by Robertson, printed an article titled “TEAR DOWN THIS

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

WALL!” in its Law & Justice newsletter. The article, written by ACLJ director, Keith Fournier, compared the wall of separation between church and state to the Berlin Wall and demanded that it be demolished. Fournier insisted that religious liberty in the United States, ‘has been hampered by this fictitious wall that was never intended by the founding fathers and one which militates against the First Amendment.’ In the same newsletter, Robertson raged against the “so-called ‘wall of separation’ between church and state.”⁸

The New Christian Right is out to Christianize America. Randall Terry, founder of Operation Rescue, challenged, “Our goal is a Christian nation. We have a biblical duty, we are called by God to conquer this country.”⁹ There’s no biblical duty about Christianizing America. But there is a warning about the result of uniting church with state (Rev 13:11-17). In commenting on the Coalition’s “Contract with the American Family,” Sandy Alexander stated, the Christian Coalition aims to “abolish the long-held Constitutional doctrine of separating church and state.”¹⁰ In speaking about the “many religious conservatives” who “would like to junk” church-state separation, *American Business Review* republished a Chicago *Tribune* editorial stating “Church and state stand best apart.”¹¹

“Not true!” thunders the Coalition. Church and state were never supposed to be apart. “Indeed,” they say, “America was a Christian nation,” a fact that James Madison denied, and he was one of the principle designers of the Constitution.¹² Furthermore, the *Federalist papers*, written by James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Gray right after the Constitutional convention, are the most authoritative commentary on the Constitution. This series of eighty-five letters were published under the pseudonym Publius in the New York newspaper, and, as Clifford Goldstein concludes, “are almost as secular as the Constitution itself. They never once use the name ‘Jesus Christ’ or ‘Christian.’ The word *Christianity* appears once, in *Federalist* #19, in this context: ‘In the early states of Christianity, Germany was occupied by seven distinct nations.’ A handful of references to ‘Providence’ (#2), ‘heaven’ (#20), and ‘the Almighty’ (#37) show that the authors believed in God, not that they were establishing a Christian republic. The most telling refutation of the Christian nation idea was in *Federalist* #69, written by Hamilton.” Comparing the President with the king of England he said, “The one has no particle of spiritual jurisdiction; the other is the supreme head and governor of the national church.”¹³

The contrast couldn’t be greater. The British monarch is head of the secular state and the national church of England, thus imaging the Papacy to the extent that the Pope resides over the Vatican state and

GANE: APOCALYPSE NOT YET

the Catholic church. It is precisely this image to the beast, this union of church and state, and its resultant legislation, that Scripture warns about in Revelation 13, and which the Christian Coalition seems to be on a fast tract to fulfill.

Not persuaded by the facts about the Constitution, its First Amendment, and the Federalist papers, the Christian Coalition says, “the words ‘Wall of separation’ do not appear in the Constitution or in the First Amendment, they are just a bad metaphor from a quick letter penned by President Thomas Jefferson to the Danbury Baptist Association of Connecticut. Hear the facts. The twenty-six churches forming the Danbury Baptist Association were a religious minority who longed for religious liberty in a state where Congregationalism was the established religion. It was out of this context that they congratulated the President as he came to the Presidency, for they knew his stand on religious liberty.”¹⁴

Thomas Jefferson’s January 1, 1802, letter to the Danbury Association said, “Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between man and his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legislative powers of government reach actions only, and not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should ‘make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, thus building a wall of separation between church and state.’”¹⁵ These words spoke to the lack of liberty suffered by the Danbury Association because of an established religion, and also represent the real intent of the First Amendment.

The Danbury Association were discriminated against by a church, not by the state. The Separating Wall was intended to work both ways. The Christian Coalition sees the state as interfering with religion when Christian prayer is not a part of the public school experience, or Bible reading is not in the public school curriculum, or Christian religious symbols are excluded from secular government property. What they utterly fail to realize is that any place given to one religion over others in the secular sphere would be an establishment violation, as surely as Jefferson and the Danbury Association discerned in Connecticut.

David Barton’s book, *The Myth of Separation: What is the Correct Relationship between Church and State?* also puts a revisionist spin on things. He says, “There is no ‘wall of separation’ in the Constitution, unless it is a wall intended by the Founding Fathers to keep the government out of the church.”¹⁶ The Christian Coalition is not alone in this antipathy to Jefferson’s Wall metaphor. The Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, William A. Rehnquist, concludes, “The ‘wall of separation between church and state’ is a metaphor based on

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

bad history, a metaphor which has proved useless as a guide to judging. It should be frankly and explicitly abandoned.¹⁷ I agree with Robert Alley that Rehnquist's conclusion was based on "a remarkably weak historical argument," which one can follow in his article "Mr. Rehnquist's Misplaced Metaphor."¹⁸ I also agree with Haig Bosmajian that the Supreme Court justices are revisionists when they base their argument on Justice Holmes' aphorism that "a page of history is worth a volume of logic."¹⁹ For, when arguing about the Free Exercise clause of the first amendment, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor and Justice Antonin Scalia arrive at opposite conclusions.

Christian Coalition Attacks on the First Amendment

It is important to understand the worldview of the Christian Coalition. Pat Robertson, past Founding President of the Coalition, and now Chairman of the Board, in his book *The New World Order*, sees two forces at work on the planet: the "Babylonian humanistic and occultic traditions to unify against the people of the Abrahamic, monotheistic tradition." Hence "the world government of the new world order will one day become an instrument of oppression against the Christians and Jews around the world." In light of this worldview, he describes the mission of the Christian Coalition: "We must rebuild the foundation of a free, sovereign America from the grassroots, precinct by precinct, city by city, state by state."²⁰ What he fails to see in this scenario is the parallel between the two forces, with the Babylonian forces ruling the world and the Christian Coalition ruling America.

A part of the Christian Coalition worldview is the misguided sense that Christians are being persecuted in America today. Sam Munger, in *The Nation*, wrote of "Martyrs before Congress."²¹ Brittany Settle Gossett stands before a giant American flag in a Capitol Hill hearing room. "She leans toward the microphone and declares, in a voice heavy with indignation, that religious persecution exists in the United States. In fact, because of such bigotry she received a failing grade on a high school writing assignment. The crowds nodded sympathetically." She claimed that she failed because her subject was Jesus Christ. But the teacher advised her to choose another topic because she knew that topic. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit concluded, "The student has no constitutional right to do something other than that assignment and receive credit for it."REF?

For more Religious Right public school horror stories that don't stand up under scrutiny, see *Church and State*, May 1997, p. 7. Compare them with the 160, 000 Christians martyred worldwide every year, reported by Jeff Taylor, managing editor of Compass Direct,

GANE: APOCALYPSE NOT YET

which monitors real Christian persecution.²² Clifford Goldstein rightly says, “The rhetoric sounds as if the authors were Christians in Nero’s Rome, not evangelicals living in a nation that allows them the freedom they would use to destroy freedom for others.”²³

Here are the facts about religious persecution. For Christian Coalitioners it’s persecution of Christians when government cannot legislate school prayers and Bible reading and the Ten Commandments cannot hang in secular government places—ignoring the fact that this discriminates against the Veda for Hindus, and other such religious prayers, readings, and documents for other religions. It’s as if the Christian Coalition believes that God owns America, and so Christians have a right to make all other religions toe the line according to the Christian agenda. What kind of persecution will this lead to? It’s sad that on March 5, 1995, by a 295-125 vote, the U.S. House of Representative adopted the H. Con. Res. 31, a non-binding resolution that endorses the display of the Ten Commandments in government buildings and courtrooms.²⁴

In the fiftieth anniversary conference of the Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, on November 1-3, 1997, in the Hotel Washington in Washington, D.C., a debate was held between Americans United president Barry Lynn and Oliver North. During questions from the audience, a Rochester, New York, woman, who said she was pagan, asked North about Judge Moore’s display of the Ten Commandments in his Courtroom in Alabama. She asked if “he would support the right to post the Wican Rede (a religious code for witches) on her courtroom wall if she were a judge. ‘No,’ replied North curtly. When the crowd jeered, North added, ‘I believe that this country’s whole premise going back to the seminal documents of this country were based on Judeo-Christian principles, and you don’t have to like it but they were.’²⁵

Lynn said, “the Religious Right wants to interfere in the personal decisions of families and individuals. ‘I don’t want people meddling in my moral choices.’” Lynn pointed out that since the Supreme Court’s landmark 1947 *Everson v. Board of Education* decision emphasizing church-state separation, “religious beliefs and practices have not suffered. He derided North’s claim that religion is being squelched in America. Citing Princeton Research Center polls, Lynn noted, ‘In 1947 when this organization [Americans United] was founded, a whopping 90 percent of Americans said they prayed regularly. Fifty years later in 1997 a mere 90 percent say the same thing. Fifty years ago 41 percent of Americans went to church frequently and today that percentage has plummeted to 41 percent. In 1947 95 percent of all Americans believed in God. After 50 years of cultural warfare against heaven itself, 96

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

percent believe in God . . . It looks like religion in America is doing just fine.”²⁶ Christian Coalition advocates don’t think so. They look at the moral degradation in the country and rush to legislate morality. “Make this a Christian nation” they cry, as their sledge hammers pound the wall of separation.

In its intent to break down the wall of separation, the Christian Coalition is using “stealth” candidates. They get them elected to Congress on a “balance the budget” agenda and other neutral issues, and then when they are there, they are ready to work on the religious (non-neutral) agenda of the Coalition. This same “stealth” method is seen in “the Samaritan Project” unveiled January 30, 1997, in Washington, D.C. Here the Coalition took up a neutral project, to help the poor. Reed said, “We believe that government and the church can be partners in undertaking this great endeavor.” The trouble is that the second item in a list of eight²⁷ speaks of “Opportunity Scholarships,” which is really another name for religious school vouchers, or a way to get government to spend tax dollars to fund sectarian education.²⁸

It should be remembered that former Secretary of Education, William Bennett is opposed to the wall of separation. *Church and State* reports that “According to Bennett, there really is no wall, only ‘a pile of stones here and a pile of stones there.’” He has dodged the July 1, 1985, U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Aguilar v. Felton*, where federal funds for remedial education were disallowed. Bennett circumvented the law, launching the van program to take federal remedial education to a close distance to private schools, so that parochial students could come aboard and receive government education. For example, in New York, “126 vans are leased at an annual cost of more than \$106,000 apiece, which includes salaries for security personnel and drivers. The end result is that New York’s Catholic schools are being bombarded with federal dollars.”²⁹ The Christian Coalition wants to increase the flow of government aid to churches through “the Samaritan Project.” But in this case, there is no bus driven to a neutral place, the poor will come to churches and receive government aid through religious leaders, with all of the religious impact that could make. Government funding to parochial schools, or to the poor through the church, violates the wall of separation.

The next example of the Christian Coalition’s attack on the First Amendment is their backing of Judge Roy Moore of Etowah County, Alabama, and Governor Fob James of Alabama. The American Civil Liberties Union sued Judge Moore for sponsoring religion in the courtroom by opening each session with prayer and by hanging the Ten Commandments in the courtroom. Montgomery County Circuit Judge Charles Price ruled against Judge Moore in November 1997. Judge

GANE: APOCALYPSE NOT YET

Moore defied the order. Governor Fob James backed Judge Moore. In a speech he thundered, “I say to my fellow Alabamians at this moment, the only way those Ten Commandments and that prayer will be stripped from that court is with the force of arms. Make no mistake about that statement.” He was inspired by a speech from Richard Land, director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission who “encouraged people to work through government to legislate morality.”³⁰

Legislate morality—that’s precisely the plan of the Christian Coalition. Doesn’t that sound like Revelation 13? Pat Buchanan “hailed Gov. James’ threat of force and suggested it may be the start of a national showdown similar to the American Revolution.” Buchanan asked, “Are the Ten Commandments a religious document?” Then he answered, “of course they are. . . They were a foundation of American law. From Sunday blue laws to anti-blasphemy laws, to laws against adultery, false witness and murder, they served as the basis upon which we built much of our civil code and public life. Who is to tell us they cannot serve again?” *The Mobile Register* said the governor is pledging his ‘maximum effort’ to keep the Ten Commandments in the courtroom and indicated that he might defy both the state and the federal courts if necessary. . . The governor suggested that his ultimate goal is to overturn the Supreme Court’s decisions on church and state, complaining that citizens didn’t do enough to fight the court’s 1962 and ‘63 decisions against public school-prayer and Bible reading.” And that’s why the Christian Coalition have thrown their full support behind the governor and Judge Moore.³¹

Governor James “threatened to call out the National Guard and state troopers if necessary to keep the government-sponsored Christian religious expressions in place.” Ralph Reed, then Executive Director of the Christian Coalition, said, “As long as there is breath in our bodies the Ten Commandments will never come down from this courthouse.” Americans United director Barry W. Lynn said, “The organizers of this rally are courting anarchy and promoting theocracy. Many Christians have been fooled into thinking this rally is about support for the Ten Commandments. In fact, it’s about the rule of law and church-state separation. When public officials threaten to defy lawful courts and vow to enforce their personal religious agenda, the American form of government is placed in jeopardy.”³²

“Game Plan” of the Christian Coalition

On September 13, 1997, there was a closed door breakfast for Christian Coalition state leaders in Atlanta. Pat Robertson “offered a

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

detailed ‘game plan’ for delivering the White House to a hand-picked Christian Coalition candidate in the year 2000.” “According to Robertson, the nation faces the threat of annihilation by God due to legal abortion. The only way to save the country from God’s wrath, he added, is for the Christian Coalition to elect a president who will implement the organization’s agenda.” Someone taped Robertson’s speech and it went public. He called for his Coalition to get behind one Republican candidate for president, and so revealed the partisan nature of their scheme.³³

For the Coalition to seek religious tax exempt status when engaged in partisan politics shows how blind it is to the moral issue involved. No organization with any partisan agenda can legally claim religious tax exempt status. But it comes as no surprise to find the Coalition seeking this status when it rejects the separation of church and state.

Church and State journal reports that “Robertson insisted that the time has come for the Coalition to demand that Congress implement its agenda. We just tell these guys, ‘Look, we put you in power in 1994, and we want you to deliver. . . Don’t give us all this stuff about you’ve got a different agenda. This is your agenda. *This is* what you’re going to do this year. And we’re going to hold your feet to the fire while you do it....we’re going to say, ‘Gentlemen, it’s time.’ You know our time has come.”³⁴ This is the kind of church control of the state that caused the pilgrims to flee from Europe to the American continent. This is the kind of church control of Congress that is expected to fulfill Revelation 13. Right now it seems that the Christian Coalition is on a fast track to fulfill that chapter.

Even those who know nothing about Revelation 13 and the end-game in America are alarmed at the Christian Coalition. Robert Boston’s book, *The Most Dangerous Man in America? Pat Robertson and the Rise of the Christian Coalition*,³⁵ gives important insights. Presbyterian minister Robert H. Meneilly dubbed the New Right as “a present danger greater than ‘the old threat of Communism.’”³⁶ What makes the Coalition so dangerous is their deep conviction that God is using them to redeem America, to restore it as a Christian nation, to enforce a Christian agenda on the nation in spite of what non-Christians think. William Martin’s book *With God on Our Side* expresses their sentiments well. They believe they have a God-given mandate to break down the wall of separation, to force their moral agenda, and wash away moral degradation. Instead the wall will come crashing down with the onrush of religious intolerance.

An enigma in the Coalition’s take-over of the Republican party is that the party is against big government and is concerned with individual freedom. Yet the Coalition ignores individual free choice

GANE: APOCALYPSE NOT YET

about prayer and Bible study in the public square by mandating it for all. *The New York Times* editorial for May 17, 1995, said, "It ought to terrify Republicans who believe in their party's traditional concern for individual liberty and Constitutional integrity. That tradition is about to be hijacked by religious activists who value the party not as a political institution but as a vehicle for promoting their churches' social agendas."³⁷

The 1995 Coalition "Road to Victory" Convention

I attended the Christian Coalition Road to Victory '95 convention in Washington, D.C., September 8-9, 1995. The Washington Hilton Ballroom was packed. I thought about the first meeting, just five years before, when 250 delegates attended. This year 4,260 came. Of the 143 speakers on the program, 7 of the 9 Republican Presidential candidates spoke. Others included William Bennett, Newt Gingrich, Dick Armey, Pat Robertson, Phyllis Schlafly, Judge Robert Bork, Peter Marshall, Jr., Ralph Reed, Keith Fournier, Jay Sekulow, E. V. Hill, and Oliver North. Clearly the elections of November, 1994, which catapulted the Republican Party into control of both the Senate and Congress, stirred the delegates to further conquests as they geared up for 1996.

Some of the speakers really got the delegates riled up. "Let's get rid of Kennedy of Massachusetts!" Thunderous applause ripped through the crowd. "Take the nation back for God!" "Out with the liberals!" "Away with their agenda!"

"Crucify them!" I heard that refrain break into my mind from other religionists bent on getting the state to do their bidding. "We have no king but Caesar!" You can't join state and religion any closer than that. Properly understood, any church joining the state is an illegitimate marriage—Caesar replaces Christ.

I listened and wondered. The Christian Coalition wallows in adultery and knows it not. The very movement opposed to moral degradation is up to its neck in it. Another love has captured its heart. Caesar beckons. "Get power! Control the future! Be in charge!" The One who said, "My Kingdom is not of this world" lays trampled on the "Road to Victory." His words, "Go ye into all the world with the gospel" are drowned out in the mad dash. "Get those God-hating dummies out!" "That's the way to go. Christ needs to be relevant. This is the eve of the third millennium. Everyone knows that power means everything. The way to take the gospel to the world is to take over the world and legislate your agenda. Sure beats going from door to door, and having it slammed in your face!"

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

I attended Keith Fournier's afternoon session. Fournier is one of the leaders in the Christian Coalition. He's Catholic. An all-Catholic panel led out. I sensed they felt at home. "About 250,000 of Christian Coalition's 1.7 million members nationwide (in 1995) are Catholics, according to Mike Russell, the Christian Coalition communications director."³⁸ Think of it. Protestants and Catholics have slung heresy charges at each other for centuries! They've died for doctrine. Not now. Here they sit cozily snug in a common cause. They sense victory in the air, and it's not Calvary's but Caesar's. They'll take over, come what may. Nothing will stop them. It's only a matter of time.

"Catholics are 15 years behind Protestant evangelicals," Catholic Deal Hunson reported in that afternoon session. Two months later, in November, 1995, Catholics organized at the grass roots. They formed the Catholic Alliance, which is a spin-off of the Christian Coalition. Imagine when 27 million Catholics are organized like the 1.7 million Christian Coalition members! There's every reason to believe these Christians will travel a fast track to take over government in order to push their moral agenda.

"We can no longer afford to be divided. It is a luxury that is no longer ours," said Ralph Reed, Executive Director of the Christian Coalition, to a gathering in Boston, Massachusetts, "The left wants you and me to be divided," he said. "Nothing frightens them more than Christians shattering the barriers of denomination."³⁹

In his book *Politically Incorrect*, Ralph Reed says, "The future of American politics lies in the growing strength of evangelicals and their Roman Catholic allies. If these two core constituencies—evangelicals comprising the swing vote in the South, Catholics holding sway in the North—can cooperate on issues and support like-minded candidates, they can determine the outcome of almost any election in the nation . . . No longer burdened by the past, Roman Catholics, evangelicals, Greek Orthodox, and many religious conservatives from the main-line denominations are forging a new alliance that promises to be among the most powerful and important in the modern political era."⁴⁰

Secular or Spiritual Power?

The fact that America is morally awash pushes the churches together. If only they can have a united front, they'll make a difference. Isn't this the way to be salt in the world, and its light? Even the Promise Keepers men's movement, founded by Bill McCartney, with its desire to make men keep promises to wives and family, focuses on the uniting of denominations. As L. Dean Allen, II, stated, "Promise Keepers' 1996 conference theme, 'Break Down the Walls,' was intended

GANE: APOCALYPSE NOT YET

to refer to removing the racial, denominational and other barriers between Christian men.”⁴¹ A commitment to truth is far more important than any other commitment. Breaking down the wall of separation between church and state or between churches is not led by the “Spirit of Truth” (John 15:26). Any union not based on truth is suspect, because all the world will unite in false worship in the end-time (Rev 13:39, 12-17).

The book *Power Religion: The Selling Out of the Evangelical Church?* is a powerful critique of evangelicals who have taken up political issues while forgetting issues of the Gospel. In this book Charles W. Colson says, “Today’s misspent enthusiasm for political solutions to the moral problems of our culture arises from a distorted view of both politics and Christianity—too low a view of the power of a sovereign God and too high a view of the ability of man.”⁴² The Christian Coalition rushes to become sovereign, with little thought about the One who is.

Does the end justify the means? Has it ever? Consider the evangelical reaction to the 1988 MCA/Universal film *The Last Temptation of Christ*. “There are many ironies in *The Last Temptation* affair,” says Kenneth A. Myers, “that make it a microcosmic example of the great temptation facing American evangelicals. Stated simply, that temptation is to become so preoccupied with power *in the service* of holiness and truth that holiness and truth become eclipsed. As more and more Christians succumb to that temptation, a further problem is increasingly evident: Theology, the biblically rooted study of God, His Word, and His will, is gradually replaced by ideology, a system of assertions, theories, and goals that constitute a sociopolitical program.”⁴³

“Although one might respect the intentions of people who promote them,” says Myers, “the use of boycotts in the name of Christ is always liable to distract attention from the prophetic, authoritative proclamation of truth and repudiation of error that is the first duty of the church of Jesus Christ . . . If the tactics of the parachurch dominate Christian activity as it confronts a post-Christian culture, protest and politicking will loom larger *in the public mind* than the proclamation of the church . . . The E. T. boycott attempted to render judgment on MCA/Universal by a jury of angry consumers. That is a fine way to distract New York and Hollywood executives from contemplating a judgment that will render all profit and loss statements meaningless.”⁴⁴

There’s a new twist in church relations today. No more battle for the truth. Only war against those who don’t have the truth. “Doctrinal distinctives are simply treated with indifference,” comments Myers, for “one is most trusted in evangelical leadership if he adheres to social,

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

cultural, and political conservatism, regardless of whether or not he can define ‘justification,’ which, according to Martin Luther, was ‘the article by which the church stands or falls.’”⁴⁵

Let’s face it. The Christian Coalition is appalled at the moral disarray in the country, but winks at the doctrinal disarray in the church. They shout out against moral degradation, but don’t even whimper about doctrines on the trash heap. This uniting for a moral cause is a moral disaster. Here truth is also on the scaffold while wrong is on the throne. How can one be abhorred and the other bring a yawn? Where is morality in all this? Why rush to change someone else’s morals when your own are worse? Why render unto Caesar and not unto God? It’s not just the nation that is morally awash, but the Christian Coalition, too! How can they, in the name of Christianity, drag Christian truth in the dust while scrambling to get rid of liberals? Are they not liberal, too—theologically? They call themselves conservative. Are they? Their passion for social morality without spiritual morality (truth) is humanism, not Christianity. Yet behind their revolt against moral degradation is their cry against humanism! They evidently don’t get it.

One of the leading thinkers of our day, David F. Wells, writes about the danger of imposing laws in a time when morality has ebbed. He states, “When moral principle breaks down, of course, we are left with no other recourse than that of law.” He then comments, “Today we stand at the turbulent meeting place of these two swirling, swollen currents. From one side, the loss of moral vision threatens to undo culture along its entire front; from the other side comes the escalating recourse to law in order to contain a society that is splitting its own seams. This contest between license and law is one that, in the absence of recovered moral fiber, can only become more shrill, more frustrating, more culturally destabilizing, more damaging, and more dangerous, and it is one that poses both temptations and opportunities to Christian faith.”⁴⁶

Ervin S. Duggan warns, “the evangelical church must hold to its historic priorities of worship, teaching, pastoral care, and evangelism—and not imagine that political shortcuts can further the work of the kingdom. To renounce such shortcuts can further the work of the kingdom. To renounce such shortcuts will not diminish the power of the church to do good in the world; it will enhance it.”⁴⁷

Edward G. Dobson, senior editor of *Christianity Today* and pastor of the Calvary Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan, wrote a powerful article, “Taking Politics Out of the Sanctuary.” Nearly every week he receives letters or phone calls soliciting his church’s involvement in a political issue for the community. “If I decline their request (which I do), they are often upset with me, and in subtle ways they call into

GANE: APOCALYPSE NOT YET

question my Christian conviction. Nearly every pastor I know faces this same pressure on a regular basis.” He makes sound judgments that need to be heeded by the Christian Coalition: (1) “We should keep the church out of partisan politics and political action.” It’s one thing for individuals to be involved politically, and quite another thing for the church. (2)“We war against abortion, but what alternatives are we providing? What kind of love and concern do we demonstrate for the mothers who walk into abortion clinics and the people who work in them?”(3)“Ultimately, the Great Society and the Contract With America will fail. The only solution is the gospel of Christ, which changes people from the inside out. Some Christians have lost this perspective.”⁴⁸

Today there is a uniting of churches and a uniting of churches with the state that covers the lack of the churches uniting with Christ. Secular power has never been a substitute for spiritual power. To the degree that Christians seek the former is the degree to which they may not seek the latter.

The Impending Conflict

The Great Controversy says, “Let the restraint imposed by the divine law be wholly cast aside, and human laws would soon be disregarded.”⁴⁹ There is a necessary relationship between the divine and the secular when it comes to morality. For example, “Had the Sabbath been universally kept, man’s thoughts and affections would have been led to the Creator as the object of reverence and worship, and there would never have been an idolater, an atheist, or an infidel.”⁵⁰ Separation of church and state doesn’t mean separation of the influence of the moral from the secular. All moral laws of society reflect moral values. This is not the issue. The issue is the danger of moralists attempting to legislate their moral values on minorities. This is the danger of the Christian Coalition agenda, and that of Dominion theology. In past history we may see how other Christians, even Protestants, have legislated their view of morality on the rest, and religious bigotry and persecution followed. But this has happened even in pagan religious persecution, and as proposed in Plato’s *The Republic* and *Laws*.

As Clifford Goldstein points out, “In fact, Plato even urged the death penalty for those whose worship deviated from the state religion, because, he wrote in *Laws*, those who do deviate ‘increase infinitely their own iniquity, whereby they make themselves and those better men who allow them guilty in the eyes of the gods, so that the whole state reaps the consequences of their impiety to some degree—and deserves to reap them.’”⁵¹

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

During the 1990s there have been unprecedented natural disasters, including earthquakes, floods, tornadoes, and hurricanes. Each year there are 6,000 major earthquakes, and there were a record 1,297 tornadoes in 1993.⁵² The Christian Coalition and the New Right consider these natural disasters as judgment acts of God for moral degradation. And this fires them up in their push to place secular leaders in power to push their religious agenda. But *The Great Controversy* gives the real purpose of these disasters. Satan “will bring disease and disaster, until populous cities are reduced to ruin and desolation. Even now he is at work. In accidents and calamities by sea and by land, in great conflagrations, in fierce tornadoes and terrific hailstorms, in tempests, floods, cyclones, tidal waves, and earthquakes, in every place and in a thousand forms, Satan is exercising his power. He sweeps away the ripening harvest, and famine and distress follow. He imparts to the air a deadly taint, and thousands perish by the pestilence. These visitations are to become more and more frequent and disastrous.”⁵³

As we watch the Christian Coalition out to force through its social revolution, we remember that “Protestant churches shall seek the aid of the civil power for the enforcement of their dogmas.”⁵⁴ Then, as a part of their moral agenda, Christians will paradoxically cause the moral law to be repudiated (Fourth commandment, Exod 20:8-11) by enforcing a Sunday law, a human substitute (Rev 13:12-17). But such a law is a moral outrage—a defiance of God’s moral law! What right have any humans to tamper with God’s moral law in their quest to legislate “Christian” morality? So the church will use the state to legislate morality and tear down the very Sabbath law, that if kept from the beginning, could have safeguarded the world from immorality. What a paradox! So even “in free America, rulers and legislators, in order to secure public favor, will yield to the popular demand for a law enforcing Sunday observance. Liberty of conscience, which has cost so great a sacrifice, will no longer be respected.”⁵⁵ That’s where the union of church and state is heading.

“This very class put forth the claim that the fast-spreading corruption is largely attributable to the desecration of the so-called ‘Christian sabbath,’ and that the enforcement of Sunday observance would greatly improve the *morals* of society.”⁵⁶ At that time, “Those who honor the Bible Sabbath will be denounced as enemies of law and order, as breaking down the *moral* restraints of society, causing anarchy and corruption, and calling down the judgments of God upon the earth.”⁵⁷

Imagine. The only ones loyal to the moral law will be blamed for breaking down moral restraints. Those true to God will be blamed for God’s judgments. That’s how morally bankrupt the church-state union

GANE: APOCALYPSE NOT YET

will become one day. While thinking they are fighting for God they will be doing the opposite, for it's Satan who is mad against the end-time commandment keepers (Rev 12:17). "When the leading churches of the United States, uniting upon such points of doctrine as are held by them in common, shall influence the state to enforce their decrees and to sustain their institutions, then Protestant America will have formed an image to the Roman hierarchy, and the infliction of civil penalties upon dissenters will inevitably result."⁵⁸ That's the result of breaking down the wall of separation. That's the end-game.

Notes

- 1 This article also appears as a chapter in my book, *Christ is Coming*, Review and Herald Publishers, 1998.
- 2 Isaac Kramnick and R. Laurence Moore, *The Godless Constitution: The Case Against Religious Correctness*, (W.W. Norton, 1996).
- 3 Isaac Kramnick and R. Laurence Moore, "Our Godless Constitution," *Liberty*, May/June, 1996, pp. 13-14.
- 4 Isaac Kramnick and R. Laurence Moore, "Yes! A Godless Constitution," *Liberty*, November/December, 1996, p. 12. This article was in answer to "A Godless Constitution?" by Daniel L. Dreisbach in the same issue of *Liberty*, pp. 10-13.
- 5 Robert Boston, *The Most Dangerous Man in America? Pat Robertson and the Rise of the Christian Coalition*, (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1996), p. 69.
- 6 Rob Boston, "Ralph Reed's War on Poverty: Hope or Hype?" *Church and State*, March 1997, p. 6.
- 7 Pat Robertson, quoted by Clifford Goldstein, "Him Whose Name Is Above All Names," *Liberty*, May/June, 1996, p. 30.
- 8 Rob Boston, *The Most Dangerous Man in America?* p. 76.
- 9 Randall Terry, quoted in Clifford Goldstein, *One Nation Under God: Bible Prophecy—When the American Experiment Fails*, (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1996), p. 37.
- 10 Sandy Alexander, "The Re-Packaged Bigotry of the Christian Coalition," *NOW*, August, 1995.
- 11 Editorial from the *Chicago Tribune*, "Church and State Stand Best Apart," *American Business Review*, West Haven, May 21, 1997.
- 12 Robert H. Meneilly, "New Right Wrongs," *Liberty*, March/April, 1994, p. 16.
- 13 Clifford Goldstein, *One Nation Under God*, p. 69.
- 14 Daniel L. Dreisbach, "Another Meaning of the Metaphor: Is the 'Wall of Separation' really what we think it is?" *Liberty*, September/October, 1997, pp. 16-17.
- 15 Derek H. Davis, "What Jefferson's Metaphor Really Means," *Liberty*, January/February, 1997, p. 12.
- 16 David Barton, *The Myth of Separation: What Is the Correct Relationship Between Church and State?*, (Aledo, TX: Wall-builder Press, 1992), p. 45.
- 17 William A. Rehnquist, *Wallace v. Jaffree*, p. 2517; quoted in Derek H. Davis, *Liberty*, January/ February, 1997, pp. 13-14.
- 18 Robert Alley. "Mr. Rehnquist's Misplaced Metaphor," *Liberty*, January/February, 1997, pp. 19- 20.
- 19 Haig Bosmajian, "Aphoristic History: Is a Page of History Worth a Volume of Logic?," *Liberty*, November/December, 1997, pp. 20-24.
- 20 Pat Robertson. *The New World Order*, (Dallas, TX: Word, 1991), pp. 258, 261.
- 21 Sam Munger, "Martyrs Before Congress," *The Nation*, June 23, 1997, Vol 264, Issue 24, p.5.
- 22 Jeff Taylor, "Hollow Cries," *Liberty*, January/February, 1998, pp. 27-29.
- 23 Clifford Goldstein, *One Nation Under God: Bible Prophecy—When the American Experiment Fails*, (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1996), p. 37.
- 24 *Church and State* published a list of each member of the House and how they voted, April 1997, p. 7.
- 25 Joseph L. Conn, "50 Years of Freedom," *Church and State*, December 1997, p. 13 (parenthesis supplied).
- 26 Ibid., p. 12

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

- 27 Faye Bowers, "Christian Coalition Tempers Its Wish List for Congress in '97," *The Christian Science Monitor*, January 31, 1997, p. 4.
- 28 Rob Boston, "Ralph Reed's War on Poverty: Hope or Hype?," *Church and State*, March 1997, p. 4.
- 29 Rob Boston, "Religious Schools, Tax Dollars, and the Supreme Court," *Church and State*, April 1997, pp. 10-13.
- 30 Joseph L. Conn, "Armed and Dangerous?," *Church and State*, March 1997, p. 9.
- 31 Ibid., pp. 10-12.
- 32 Joseph L. Conn, "Tear Down The Wall," *Church and State*, May 1997, pp. 9-12.
- 33 Rob Boston and Joseph Conn, "Boss Pat," *Church and State*, October 1997, pp. 4-9.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 Robert Boston, *The Most Dangerous Man in America? Pat Robertson and the Rise of the Christian Coalition*, (Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 1996).
- 36 Robert H. Meneilley, "New Right Wrongs," *Liberty*, March-April, 1994, p. 14.
- 37 "Prayer, by Government Order," *The New York Times*, May 17, 1995, A18.
- 38 Martin Finucane, "Coalition Seeking Catholic Support," *Daily News*, Bowling Green, Kentucky, Sunday, Dec 10, 1995 (parenthesis supplied).
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 Ralph Reed, *Mainstream Values Are No Longer Politically Incorrect: The Emerging Faith Factor in American Politics* (Dallas, TX: Word, 1994), p. 16.
- 41 L. Dean Allen II, "Breaking Down The Wall?" *Church and State*, January 1997, p. 13.
- 42 Michael Scott Horton, ed, *Power Religion: The Selling out of the Evangelical Church?* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1992), p. 32.
- 43 Ibid., p. 39.
- 44 Ibid., pp. 46-47.
- 45 Ibid., pp. 48-49.
- 46 David F. Wells, "Our Dying Culture," in James Montgomery Boice and Benjamin E. Sase, eds, *Here We Stand: A Call from Confessing Evangelicals*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1996), p. 40.
- 47 Ervin S. Duggan, "The Living Church," in *Here We Stand*, p. 55.
- 48 Edward G. Dobson, "Taking Politics Out of The Sanctuary," *Christianity Today*, May 20, 1996.
- 49 Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 585.
- 50 Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 438.
- 51 Clifford Goldstein, "Shipwrecked?" *Liberty*, September/October 1997, p. 14.
- 52 The two statistics were taken from the Net '96 CD-ROM on signs.
- 53 Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 589-590.
- 54 Ellen G. White, *Last Day Events* (Boise, ID: Pacific, 1992), p. 228.
- 55 Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 592.
- 56 Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 587.
- 57 Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 592, emphasis added.
- 58 Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 445.