

# Ramsey To Host Vance Dinner

Speaker of the House Liston B. Ramsey will serve as banquet chairman for the annual Vance-Aycock dinner, Democratic Party Chairman David E. Price has announced. This year's dinner will be held October 6 in Asheville, in the new ballroom of the Grove Park Inn.

"Vance-Aycock weekend promises to be a gala occasion," Ramsey said. "It will serve as a time for all good Democrats to join together as one, and unite their efforts for Democratic

victories in November. Now is the time for the western part of North Carolina to shine," he added.

The Vance-Aycock Dinner is the North Carolina Democratic Party's major fall fundraiser. It was named for Governors Zebulon B. Vance of Buncombe County and Charles B. Aycock of Wayne County.

Speaker Ramsey has served 11 terms in the North Carolina House, and has served as Speaker since 1981. In addition to his duties in the

House, he has served on the State Democratic Executive Committee, on the Board of Aldermen in the town of Marshall, and as a delegate to the 1968 Democratic National Convention.

Ramsey is a native of Marshall and currently resides there with his wife Florence. His daughter, Martha Ramsey Geouge, lives in Asheville.

Ramsey is a member of the Elks, Masons, American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars, and served in the Army Air Corps from 1944 until 1946.

# Religion Mixing Pulpit, Politics

By DIANE WINSTON and ELIZABETH LELAND  
The News and Observer

Biblical prophecies concerning the war between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness are on the Rev. Tom Vestal's mind.

So is the November election for president and U.S. senator in North Carolina.

"We're fighting a spiritual battle," said Vestal, pastor of Mount Olivet Baptist Church in Raleigh. "It's time for Christians to be involved in politics."

Vestal has involved himself in voter registration drives at his church. "You're hearing more and more people take a stand for righteousness based on the morality of the Bible and taking that stand and letting it spill over into the legislative and political arena," Vestal said. "That excites me."

Vestal is one of many conservative Christians who agree with President Reagan's recent remark: "Politics and morality are inseparable. And as morality's foundation is religion, religion and politics are necessarily related."

In this election year, the traditional American separation between religion and politics is being blurred — not for the first time, but perhaps to a greater extent than before — as conservative and New Right politicians invoke God, the Bible and morality in their campaigns. Their efforts have prompted concern in some religious and political circles that the New Right is trying to impose its morals on others by having them written into law.

That concern was expressed recently by Democratic presidential candidate Walter F. Mondale, who said: "Once you let the politicians interfere with religious faith, you destroy it."

In North Carolina, Christian fundamentalists have become vocal in their support of Republican Sen. Jesse A. Helms, who has placed issues such as

abortion and school prayer alongside stands on defense and foreign policy in his re-election campaign. Helms is being helped by the Rev. Jerry Falwell, head of the Moral Majority. Together, the preacher and the politician will travel in North Carolina this month to try to register thousands of conservative voters.

Unlike Helms, Democratic Gov. James B. Hunt Jr., who wants to take Helms' Senate seat, has not made moral issues a centerpiece of his campaign. Hunt's longtime friend and legal counsel, J. Phil Carlton, has warned about the perils of mixing religion and politics.

"I have no problem at all with Jerry Falwell preaching a sermon on abortion, but don't tell me I'm a godless liberal if I have a different view," Carlton said in an interview. He referred to Hunt's position that abortion — although the governor personally opposes it — should be a decision

between a woman and her physician, not a decision by the government.

"Nobody in this campaign is claiming that religion doesn't have a place in politics," Carlton said. "Everything I do has been affected by my religion. But it's this dogmatism I don't like."

"These extremists claim that we have no place in this campaign because we believe in things they say are immoral ... because we believe that other things like the economy and the environment ought to be addressed," he said. "They narrow the agenda to issues that scare people and then claim to have exclusive truth on all those issues."

The Rev. H. Lamarr Mooneyham disputes that. He says the very reason for the New Right's religious activism is that liberals have been imposing their morality on others for years.

"People realize that all the laws and legislation are, in effect, the imposing of someone's morality or the lack of it," said Mooneyham, former North Carolina president of Moral Majority who now heads the organization's national field office in Lynchburg, Va.

"I see Democrats rejecting absolutes ... The grass roots of the nation are returning to old, traditional values. They want representation in Washington that at least acknowledges the existence of a moral Biblical absolute."

The Moral Majority, under Falwell's leadership, for the past year has been trying to register new conservative voters to support Helms and Reagan — at the same time that the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson has been mobilizing black voter registration on behalf of Democrats.

While Jackson's focus on economic issues has a traditionally Democratic appeal, the conservatives, by focusing on moral issues, are crossing party lines and mobilizing a new conservative constituency. It's not party politics these Christians are concerned about; it's issues such as abortion and school prayer.

"We're becoming very shaken," said the Rev. Charles Denhart, pastor of Cary Alliance Church. "We realize we've been too quiet. We're not trying to upset anything. We're trying to help people understand where we are."

Denhart, a conservative evangelical, has for years felt strongly about such issues as abortion. But he didn't become politically involved until this summer when the Rev. Sun Myung Moon was sent to jail for tax evasion. Denhart saw the government's prosecution of Moon as state interference in religion and decided then to help elect candidates who shared his beliefs.

"The other morning I had breakfast with Bill Cobey," Denhart said, referring to the Republican congressional candidate from Chapel Hill. "He is really a fine Christian man. ... I don't dare stand up on a Sunday morning and say, 'Vote for Bill Cobey.'"

But I can say it in a Sunday School class and I'm beginning to talk to people in groups of four and five and encourage them to know the issues.

"I say from the pulpit, 'Don't vote the party. Vote the issues.'" Michael Lienesch, an associate professor of political science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill who is writing a book on Christian conservatives, described the religious right as "a shadow party."

"They're ideological rather than Republican," Lienesch said. "So they often find themselves supporting conservative Democrats and by the same token opposing liberal Republicans like George Bush and Howard Baker."

"Before 1980, they were not only uninvolved in politics, they were really quite uninformed," Lienesch said. "Because of the fact that there is a conservative president who goes to prayer breakfasts, makes references to the Bible and tells their congregations to support the president, people are becoming more involved."

"These people are not going to vote a vote of cynical protest to elect an idiot. It is quite certain that if Ronald were elected we would see much less of them. A lot has to do with the fact that Ronald is a power. People

# TRAC Presents Musical

The Toe River Arts Council will present "Cotton Patch Gospel," a musical based upon Dr. Clarence Jordan's 'Cotton Patch Version Of Matthew and John' on Sept. 15 at Mountain Heritage H.S. in Burnsville.

Showtime is 8 p.m. in the school auditorium. Tickets are \$6 for adults, \$3.50 for children under 12 and are available at the NCNB branch in Spruce Pine and at the TRAC offices in Burnsville. For more information, contact TRAC at 682-7215.



THE MARS HILL BLUE JAYS took first place in the recent Madison County softball tournament.

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