

Church, State And First Amendment Are Discussed

By PAULINE B. CHEEK

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

In 1791, James Madison could never have imagined the controversies which today surround this provision of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

"Church, State and the First Amendment" has been the subject of a year-long dialogue sponsored by the Program in the Humanities and Human Values at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the program brought educators, clergymen, lawyers and others together in Durham recently for a three-day program.

The three-day program examined the philosophical, religious and political perspectives of the First Amendment and its impact on American society.

Keynote speaker Robert Bellah said that religion has always played an important role in American life, but as the nation has become more pluralistic, religion has become more privatized. Bellah noted that, while "fundamentalism is rampant in the 1980's", he feared the dissolution on religious norms as a greater threat to society. Bellah, author of "Habits of the Heart," called for religious organizations to act and mediating bodies in disputes between individuals and the government.

U.S. Attorney Samuel Currin said that recent court decisions have "supported secularization and interference in religion."

Emory University law professor Harold Berman told the meeting that the U.S. was perceived as a Christian nation for the first 150 years of its history. A trend away from that perception began 60 years ago without any philosophical consensus, Berman said.

Saying that the Constitution would "become mere idolatry" unless "it has a higher justification in transcendent values."

UNC law professor Daniel Pollitt took issue with both Berman and Bellah's assessments. Pollitt argued that failure to apply the "free exercise" clause to the states would leave the U.S. "without much protection." He warned that this would lead to a

return of mandatory school prayer or a voucher system for the parents of children attending parochial schools.

Jesuit Robert Drinan, a Georgetown University law professor, said he believed that the First Amendment was evolving as a result of recent court decisions.

State Sen. Dennis Winner (D-Buncombe), Tuscola H.S. teacher Michael Lodico and Roger Sharpe, state director of People For The American Way, took part in a panel discussion regarding problems facing school administrators.

Can or should religion and politics be brought together?

The Rev. Joseph L. Roberts Jr. of the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta said that his successor, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., had demonstrated how religion and politics could be kept "in creative tension." The lesson of King's life, Roberts said, was "never to hate the person who holds a diametrically opposite view."

Rev. Roberts and Father Drinan both appealed for Americans to transcend their political and religious differences and address instead the global issues of peace and justice.

Local discussions were held in a series of forums at the Mars Hill Public Library. Dr. Richard Hoffman of Mars Hill addressed the most recent forum meeting. The local series was sponsored by the Mars Hill Town Library and Plowshares.

D.J. COGDILL, right, was honored by the Hot Spring Lions Club recently for 10 years perfect attendance. An active club member, Cogdill was presented with a plaque by club president Kenny Ramsey.

Bentley Named To ECU Honor Roll

Rhonda Lynn Bentley, a Madison in Greenville. High School graduate, has been named to the honor roll for the fall and Mrs. Fred B. Bentley of Mars semester at East Carolina University Hill.

Two Complete Air Force

Airman Sheila A. Lawson has completed Air Force basic training at Lackland AFB, Texas.

A 1982 graduate of McDowell High School, she is the daughter of Eugene Lawson of Upper Shut-In and Betty Lee of Old Fort.

AIRMAN SHEILA A. LAWSON

Airman First Class Gregory J. Stanton has graduated from U.S. Air Force basic training at Lackland AFB, Texas.

A 1982 graduate of Madison H.S., Airman Stanton is the son of Mr. and Mrs. William Stanton of Marshall. His wife, Peggy, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ray Moore of Leicester.



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SART To Hold Auditions

The Southern Appalachian Repertory Theatre (SART) will hold auditions for its 1986 season on March 15 from 1 until 5 p.m. in the Owen Theatre on the Mars Hill College campus.

Productions planned for the 1986 summer season include Ibsen's "An Enemy Of The People", Bernard Sabath's "You Caught Me Dancing" and two world premiers, "Earline", written by Judy Simpson Cook, and "Lollapalozza" by C. Robert Jones.

Auditioners are asked to prepare at least one short audition piece, approximately one minute long, and one song. An accompanist will be provided. For more information concerning the auditions, call managing director James Thomas at 689-1203.

UNC-A Offers Workshops

The University of North Carolina at Asheville will offer an introductory class in watercolor painting beginning Monday night. The class, for those with little or no painting experience, will be conducted by Mars Hill artist Paula Parker.

The classes will meet on Monday nights from 6:30 until 9:30 p.m. on the UNC-A campus. Cost of the eight-week course is \$40.

UNC-A is also offering a one-day workshop for day-care workers on Saturday from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. Entitled "Working With the Pre-School Child", the workshop will address childhood development and the impact of factors such as marital stress, divorce and friendships will be discussed. Fee for the workshop is \$6. To register, call UNC-A at 288-6220.

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