

"My last job in the Air Force was to train young men and women as navigators. Part of my responsibility was to teach them ethical and responsible decision making. Much of that seems to be a waste in light of the example of Oliver North. It is even more disturbing in light of biblical principles that deal with integrity."

"Oliver North is not a good example for people," Rhodes said. "He should be repenting, not seeking reward from God."

## Vatican Ambassador Urged U.S. To Recognize Catholic Chivalric Order

Former U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See William Wilson urged the Reagan administration to establish diplomatic ties with the Knights of Malta, a Roman Catholic chivalric order.

According to documents obtained by the *National Catholic Reporter*, Wilson advised the U.S. State Department in 1984 that President Reagan should send a personal envoy to the Knights' headquarters in Rome.

Wilson, a member of the Knights, said the U.S. might benefit because the group has diplomatic relations with over 40 other countries, especially those who donate or receive humanitarian assistance.

The Sovereign Military Order of Malta was founded in the 12th Century to assist with the crusades. Today, it draws its membership from wealthy businessmen, right-leaning politicians and European nobles, and has developed into an international network of the Catholic elite. Critics have charged that the group's hospitals and other humanitarian efforts have sometimes been co-ordinated with right-wing political goals.

An estimated 2,000 Americans belong to the organization, including some of the nation's most prominent men. They include automaker Lee Iacocca, businessman J. Peter Grace, columnist and editor William F. Buckley, former Secretary of State Al Haig, and former Secretary of the Treasury William Simon.

(The late CIA Director William Casey also was a member.) Cardinal John O'Connor serves as spiritual adviser to the American Knights' brigade.

Despite this heavyweight assemblage, U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz turned down Ambassador Wilson's diplomatic venture. Shultz wrote, "The United States government may not recognize the legal existence of, or maintain diplomatic relations with, an organization which is not an independent foreign state. While appointing a personal envoy at the diplomatic level obviously falls short of establishing relations, it would set a precedent that we would rather avoid."

Ironically, Shultz's action came just months after he and the Reagan administration persuaded Congress to go along with the exchange of full diplomatic relations with the Holy See, an "independent foreign state" (108 acres) in name only.

In other developments:

- A federal district court in Mississippi has ruled that the Holy See cannot be sued for the conduct of one of its priests because the Vatican enjoys sovereign immunity under federal law.

In his *Spann v. Thorne* decision in May, U.S. District Court Judge William Barbour said the church headquarters cannot be held liable for the actions of the Rev. Vance Zebulon Thorne, a Jackson, Miss., pastor accused of child molestation.

The family of the child alleged to have been molested charged that church officials are engaged in a criminal conspiracy to obstruct justice in child abuse cases. They asked that the Vatican and other church organizations be found responsible.

- The city government of Pontiac, Mich., is suffering a financial hangover from the party thrown for Pope John Paul II in September of 1987. No one has picked up the tab for the security and traffic control needed for a papal mass at the Pontiac Silverdome and the bill is \$50,000.

It looks like taxpayers may have to bear the burden. A negotiated settlement

between city officials and the stadium authority said the city will pay at least half the cost.

Pontiac Police Chief Reginald Turner said the Catholic archdiocese of Detroit originally agreed to pay for the security costs, but has now refused. Church spokesman Jay Berman disagreed. He said the pope should receive free protection, as any head of state would.

In a second problem, Pontiac has filed suit to discover what happened to an estimated \$2.64 million the city was hoping to receive from medals issued to commemorate the papal visit. A city contract with HPT Industries of Utica reportedly called for the production of 200,000 silver coins to be sold at \$50 a piece. The city claims it has seen not one thin dime of its 20 percent cut.

## Marine Base Cross Sends Religious Message, Says Federal Court

A federal court has ruled that a large cross overlooking a Marine base in Hawaii violates the constitutional separation of church and state.

In an Aug. 30 decision, U.S. District Judge Thomas F. Hogan said, "The 65-foot lighted cross on Bordelon Field at Camp Smith may fairly be considered to convey a message of governmental endorsement of Christianity."

The U.S. Justice Department had argued that no religious purpose was intended by the symbol. The cross was placed, said attorney Frederick M. Morgan Jr., to memorialize Americans killed or missing in Vietnam.

Opponents, however, said the government account was mistaken. The cross, they said, was put in place in 1966 for an Easter sunrise service. Its use for that purpose continues each year, they added.

Judge Hogan found the government argument unpersuasive. "The principal symbol of Christianity, this nation's dominant religion, is too laden with religious meaning to be appropriate for a

government memorial assertedly free of any religious message," he held.

Hogan ordered the cross removed or replaced with a nonsectarian symbol, but he gave the Marine Corps and the government 60 days to appeal his *Jewish War Veterans v. United States* decision to a higher court.

Ironically, when a Jewish group in Hawaii first protested the cross in 1985, a Marine legal officer agreed that it violated church-state separation. He recommended that it be taken down and the base commander agreed.

However, Gen. P.X. Kelley, then Marine commandant, said removing the cross would be a "victory for the forces of evil" and overturned the order.

## Maryland Court Upholds Confidentiality Claim By Priest Psychologist

A Maryland judge has refused to force a Roman Catholic priest to testify about conversations he had with another priest who faces charges of child molestation.

The Rev. Paul M. Norton, a priest and psychologist, refused in August to give a full deposition about his conversations with the accused priest because they were confidential and took place in Norton's role as confessor and counselor. (Catholic priests take a vow not to repeat information revealed in the confessional.)

Attorneys for a family whose son was molested said Norton should be found in contempt of court. The family is suing the Rev. Peter M. McCutcheon and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington for \$12 million in damages. They contend that church officials knew or should have known about McCutcheon's behavioral problems. (The priest pleaded guilty to abusing three boys. His 25-year prison sentence has been reduced to five years' probation and he has been transferred to a church treatment facility in New Mexico where he must take a drug that reduces sexual desire.)

Montgomery County Circuit Court Judge Stanley B. Frosh, however, declined

to rule against Norton. Although Frosh said the priest had no legal grounds to hold back part of his testimony, the judge saw the issue as a matter of conscience.

"If I were to say today that Father Norton is in contempt of a court of law," Frosh commented, "I would be visiting upon him a sanction that would require him to be in contempt of his own religious principles." In so doing, the judge added, "I would be violating my own principles."

Although he refused to act against Norton, Frosh vowed to prohibit any "stonewalling" on the part of church officials as the case progresses.

## Preaching Strode Kids May Study At Home

The controversial preaching Strode children of Marion, N.C., may give up their public school work for study at home.

Duffey Strode, age 11, created a furor last spring when he was repeatedly suspended from classes for shouting epithets and Bible verses at school officials and fellow students. (See "Holy Terrors," July 1988 *Church & State*)

Duffey was suspended again Aug. 22 when he returned to fall classes and screamed at Principal Jim Gorst. Gorst says the boy thrust a Bible in his face and yelled, "Go to hell." Commented the principal, "I have trouble when a child says that to an adult and an authority figure."

Duffey's father David Strode denies the boy made the comment. He says Duffey yelled, "You'll go to hell," a warning the militantly fundamentalist family issues to all unrepentant sinners.

With a representative from the Caleb Campaign, a Chicago-based organization, acting as an intermediary, school officials and the Strodes have tentatively agreed for the family to teach Duffey and siblings Matthew and Pepper at home.

"McDowell County schools rejected the Bible," quipped the irrepressible Strode, "so I reject them."

Strode refused to sign a release form that protects the school system from future

litigation, but Strode's friends say that won't upset the agreement.

Barry Weaver, who does street preaching with Strode, recalled the negotiations held with the school officials. "I said, 'You got to understand me and Dave. When we look at you, we don't see lawyer and [Superintendent David] Ricketts. We see the devil,'" he told the Associated Press. "Everything we deal with has to be in that Bible. If it ain't in the Bible, it don't exist. So Dave ain't gonna sign your paper. But just leave him alone, let him teach his kids at home and everything will work out fine. And that was it."

## New York Parochial Battle Heats Up

The New York City Board of Education has announced plans to build classrooms on leased property at three parochial schools.

According to *The New York Times*, the public school board will pay \$5,005 a year to rent space at three Catholic schools, Holy Cross, St. Rita's and Holy Spirit. Structures resembling construction trailers will be built to house publicly funded remedial education classes.

The arrangement will be funded through the Chapter One program, the nation's largest federal aid-to-education program. The Chapter One law, originally called Title One when it was first passed in 1965, requires public schools to serve disadvantaged students in both public and private schools. Because most private schools are sectarian, church-state problems have often resulted. In 1985 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that publicly paid teachers could not be sent into parochial schools to teach classes. Such aid could lead to government advancement of religion and entangle church and state, a majority of the justices said.

Church-state separationists say the recent New York school board action also violates the First Amendment. Stanley Geller, attorney for the Committee for Public Education and Religious Liberty