

# VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION  
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

THURSDAY  
JULY 2, 1981

## Group warns of moral decay

Dear America,

Our unique birth was just over 200 years ago. As one nation under God, we have grown to be one of the mightiest and greatest nations in history — a land of unprecedented liberty and opportunity for all. Our country has survived many assaults upon it; since defeating the powerful British army in 1776 until today, we've always found the courage to defend ourselves.

But now we seem to be facing another crisis more serious, one that has graver consequences than ever before. Recently, former President Ford warned that, "America is in serious trouble." A well-known retired general is reported to have said, "It is possible that America could have less than 1,000 days of freedom left."

Hundreds of national leaders including politicians, military men, economic advisors, and ministers are issuing the same grave warning: We are facing the deepest crisis in our history.

Our crisis is more threatening because it is an internal problem — not the threat of a visible enemy, but a moral crisis in our own lives. Alexis de Tocqueville, the famous French historian and statesman, visited our country during the early 1800s in order to search out the reason for our greatness. He went to the schools, the economic centers, the shipyards, and the halls of Congress; but it wasn't until he went to our churches and heard their pulpits aflame with righteousness, that he understood the secret of our nation's power and genius. He concluded that, "America is great because America is good; and if America ceases to be good, America will cease to be great."

God puts it this way: "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." (Proverbs 14:34)

Any student of our history will acknowledge that we have become great because of

### Reader's Forum

the blessings of God. Since the landing of the Pilgrims as the first settlers, our nation has acknowledged Almighty God and seen, as Abraham Lincoln said, "that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord."

But today, we in America have turned away from the God who has blessed us so. As a result of rejecting God's truth and opting for the modern philosophies of our time, we are reaping the judgment of God. What are our sins? Public acceptance of adultery, sexual immorality, homosexuality, drunkenness, drug abuse, disrespect for authority, the murder of over 1 million unborn babies each year, greed and materialism are but a few. What are the results of these sins? An economic crisis, a loss of respect in the eyes of the world, the highest divorce rate in the history of the world, the generation gap, children's lives burnt out on drugs and alcohol, venereal disease at epidemic rates — and worst of all, a God who is angry and about to judge our nation. No nation in history has sinned against God to the degree that our nation has and escaped His judgement. We will not prove to be the first nation to lift itself up in pride against the Lord and not experience the consequences of such sin.

What must we do?  
America, we're too young to die, and it's not too late for us to be saved. What we

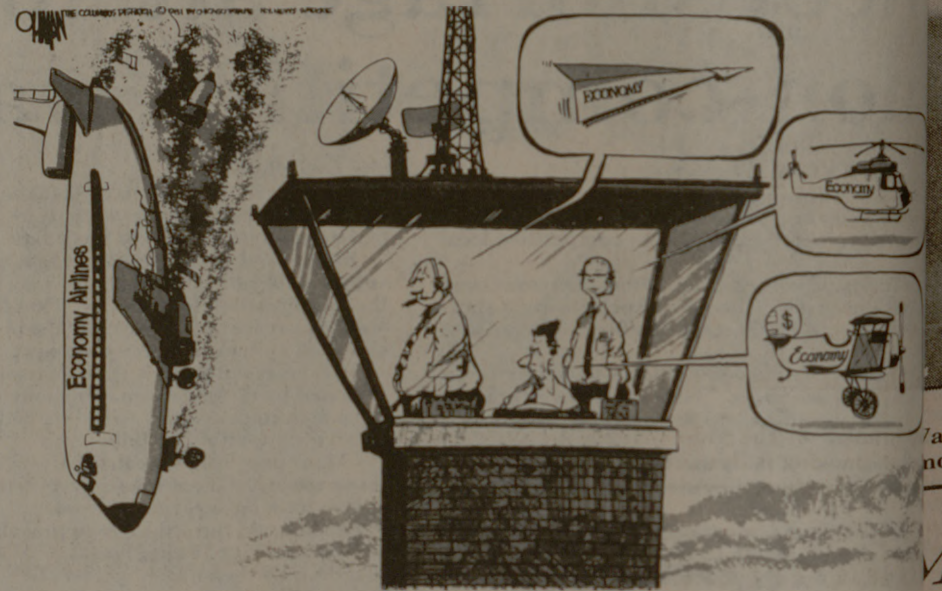
need most is a spiritual revival. Millions of our people must turn from their sinful ways and trust in our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. We must pray and seek to do the right thing that will honor God in every circumstance. Our nation is only as strong as its people. Individually we must each have a right relationship with God.

Even though God wants to bless us, our sins and rebellion have caused a separation from Him. Jesus Christ paid the penalty for our sin when He died on the cross, shedding His precious blood to pay the eternal death penalty we each deserve. In Christ, the barrier of our sin is taken away, giving us confident access to God the Father, and opening up a new relationship with Him that is impossible to have outside of Christ. As an individual created in the image of God, we can receive Jesus Christ by simply repenting of our sinful, rebellious attitude toward Him and willfully submitting to his rightful authority of our lives. He will come in, forgive and lead us in the most abundant life possible.

The problems in our great nation are primarily spiritual, and will not be solved until we once again honor God. What about you fellow American? Why not be a part of the solution to our nation's problems by entrusting your life to Jesus Christ right now as both your Saviour and Master. It will make a lasting difference both now and for eternity.

Americans for a Renewed Nation  
Larry Winkler, spokesman

Editor's note: Americans for a Renewed Nation is a group of citizens in the Bryan-College Station area. The opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the author. The editor welcomes all viewpoints for publication on the editorial page.



## Voting Rights Act is definitely needed

By DAVID S. BRODER

ATLANTA — On June 15, President Reagan wrote Attorney General William French Smith a carefully phrased letter asking for a full Justice Department review of the merits of extending or altering the Voting Rights Acts of 1965, key provisions of which are due to expire next year.

That law, as the President said in his letter to Smith, "has made a massive contribution to the achievement of full constitutional and political equality" for blacks and Hispanics by facilitating their registration, voting and seeking public office.

But as the President also noted, there is controversy about parts of the law, especially those which require states and localities with a history of voting discrimination to obtain the Justice Department's prior approval of any changes in their voting procedures, from the location of a polling place to the redrawing of district lines.

That controversy has divided Reagan's own Republican Party. Some Republicans favor a straight extension of the law as it stands. Others seek to remove the regional onus by making the same pre-clearance requirements apply nationwide. And still others seek to make it easier for the covered areas to "bail out" of federal supervision by demonstrating their recent adherence to non-discriminatory practices.

Reagan's letter was a device for buying time before the administration has to declare itself in the congressional hearings already under way. He asked for a report by October 1, but encouraged Smith to consult with "concerned citizen groups" and public officials "whose thoughtful views will contribute to the development of a just and sound administration position."

One source of that kind of advice can be found upstairs from the loan company, on the third floor of a ramshackle building in downtown Atlanta, where the Voter Education Project (VEP) has its headquarters. Formed three years before the Selma-to-Montgomery march spurred President Johnson to ask Congress to pass the Voting Rights Act, the foundation-financed group has been involved in more than 1,700 local voting-registration drives. It probably has accumulated more experience in this field than any other organization.

Bob Flanagan, the sad-eyed civil rights activist who came to VEP after 12 years as Georgia field director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, has a very simple response to the question Reagan raised with his attorney general.

"We've got a lot of work to do still," he told a visitor the other day. "We're operating under handicaps, even with the act. Without the Act, it would be impossible. The gains are impressive. As Geraldine

Thompson, executive director of VEP, said in the House subcommittee consideration of the issue last week, black registration has increased 11-fold in Mississippi, more than doubled in several other states since the Act went into effect. The number of black elected officials in the South jumped from 100 to 2,400. But as the gap between black and white registration across the South is just as wide today as it was in 1965. And at no time do blacks approximate their share of the population.

Those who see one-time segregationist senators campaigning before black judges, hiring black aides and backing black officials find it easy to think the problem has been solved and Voting Rights Act can be honorably retired.

But the folks at VEP know better. In 1980 — last year — in the DeKalb County Atlanta metropolitan area, officials decided that they would banter neighborhood voter-registration drives on or contest in court, the county agreed to submit the rule to the Justice Department under the Voting Rights Act. Justice ruled it was improper.

In Alapaha, Ga., soon after the election was elected to the town council in a 1979 election system, the registration schedule of filing fees were revised in ways that would reduce the chances of that happening again. The Justice Department, using the Voting Rights Act, vetoed the changes.

How could these and similar incidents be happening in Georgia, almost 10 years after Jimmy Carter stood on the steps of the state capitol and declared the days of discrimination were over? "That was Jimmy Carter talking," Flanagan said, "but other folks still don't want to see black public office."

Confirmation comes from the office of the hall, where Laughlin McDonald, regional director of the American Civil Liberties Union, works. McDonald noted his group has been engaged for the year in a lawsuit against the board of education of Sumter County, Ga., a famous alumnus, ironically enough, of Jimmy Carter. The suit challenges the 1973 decision to switch from district large elections — a favorite device for blocking the black vote and preventing communities from gaining representation on such boards. Just two months ago Gen. Smith was given authority to convene in the case, now expected to conclude early trial.

In the offices on the third floor, McDonald took from now until October 1 to determine whether the Voting Rights Act is needed. They know the answer is yes.

## Reagan woos the opposition

By HELEN THOMAS  
United Press International

WASHINGTON — "Come on in the water's fine," says President Reagan in inviting Democratic congressmen to defect from their party and join the ranks of the Republicans.

Reagan made the remark in an address to the California Taxpayers' Association in referring to a report that Democratic National Chairman Charles Manatt had indicated he would like to purge Rep. Phil Gramm, D-Texas, a strong Reagan supporter and co-author of his federal spending cuts, from the party ranks.

Aides say that Reagan was not kidding, that he means it and would welcome any newcomers to the GOP. The president noted that he had been a long time Democrat before he saw the light.

As for whether there would be an active drive to recruit the Democrats who have been voting along with Republican colleagues on major budget and economic issues, Reagan's chief lobbyist, Max Friedersdorf, says these lawmakers are

"philosophically and ideologically in tune with the president's thinking" on spending cuts, lower taxes and national defense.

"So there's a meeting of minds there and whether or not they would change parties, there's always that speculation," he told reporters. "I don't think anybody can sit here in June of 1981 and predict what's going to happen on that."

But he added, "Obviously, if we would win the House or get very close next year, it would be an attractive thing for some of those folks to think about, but I would hesitate to guess at this point what would happen with regard to that."

More important at the moment, Friedersdorf said, is that Reagan now thinks he has a "very established coalition" within the House, made up of Republican and Democratic supporters who will push through his programs.

At the same time, another top Reagan aide says he would be "very surprised" if the Democratic leadership kicked out members who are voting with the president.

"What we really have seen here is the mainstream of American political thinking shift more towards the center," he said.

"And I think to punish Democrats for following the best interests of their districts and for following the best interests of the American people would be a terrible thing to happen," he said, "and I really don't think it's going to happen."

Reagan is confident that he has enough Democratic support now to pass his 25 percent, 33-month tax cut bill. But he is leaving nothing to chance, and plans to be on the telephone again courting the more reluctant legislators who have been enticed to his side of the fence again.

Reagan aides, meantime, say that he has learned a lot since his days as governor of California. They say he was "aloof" in Sacramento and often at sword's point with the California legislators, paying them no mind, and hardly in a mood to woo them.

But since he became president, Reagan has gone out of his way to soften up the opposition and to butter up lawmakers. He has not been aloof when it comes to listening to their concerns or to their special interests.

His aides like to point out that politics is the art of compromise, and they do not believe a bit of horse trading here and there should be verboten when the stakes are so high.

Rarely are the names of the congressmen Reagan telephones disclosed when he is wooing their votes. Most of the time he has focused on Southerners who are closer to his political persuasion.

The president obviously has made some promises, and a major pledge is not to campaign against a Democratic supporter. Reagan says he could not do that in "good conscience."

Whether the Democrats who are buying his programs are ready to jump ship is not yet known. But the remainder of the congressional session may tell the story, and as far as Reagan is concerned the honeymoon is still on.

### the small society

by Brickman



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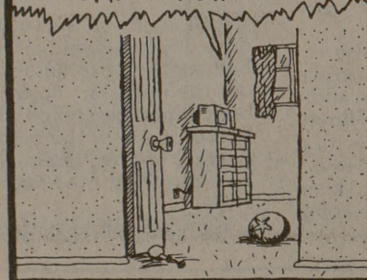
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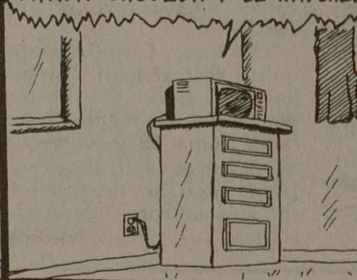
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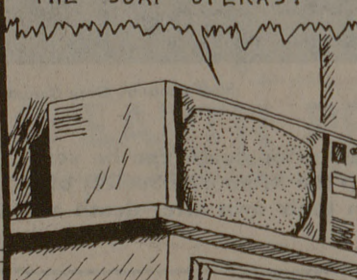
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