

mail systems, allowing lonely hearts to exchange messages by calling a "900" number (and paying 95 cents per minute). Now some dailies are attempting to incorporate facets of the alternatives' formula, such as 900 number personals, and at least one daily, the *Scranton Times*, has purchased its own alternative.

Magazine-length investigative articles are "the real heart, the real soul of an alternative paper," asserts Bruce Schimmel, the *Philadelphia City Paper's* editor. Coverage in the *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, for example, prompted a successful proposition to limit city development; in many cities the alternative press led the way in reporting the spread of AIDS. The alternatives also act as watchdog of the

mainstream media. "Their press column is a must-read," *Washington Post* media reporter Howard Kurtz says of the alternative *Washington City Paper*.

Yet even among alternative journalists there is no consensus on what makes weeklies go. Jack Shafer, editor of the *Washington City Paper*, takes a skeptical view—papers become financially successful, he says, then concentrate on editorial quality. Readers pay more attention to the personals than to the muckrakers. "News-papers," asserts Shafer, "are advertising flyers with a story written on the back." Avis disagrees, arguing that it is precisely the weeklies' anti-establishment character that will enable them to survive the inevitable ad-poaching of the dailies.

## RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

### *God Belongs In Public Life*

"A New Order of Religious Freedom" by Richard John Neuhaus, in *First Things* (Feb. 1992), Inst. on Religion and Public Life, 156 Fifth Ave., Ste. 400, New York, N.Y. 10010.

Does the constitutional separation of church and state require that religion have no place in public life? Not at all, asserts Neuhaus, editor-in-chief of *First Things*. In a democracy, opinions should not be disqualified from the public realm for being religiously inspired, any more than they should be for being founded on atheism or psychoanalysis. "Ours is not a secular form of government, if by 'secular' is meant indifference or hostility to opinions that are thought to be religious in nature," Neuhaus says. "The civil government is as secular as are the people from whom it derives its democratic legitimacy. No more, no less."

In recent decades, he contends, some scholars and jurists have turned the First Amendment's religion clause ("Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof . . .") on its head. "One gets the distinct impression from [them] that no-establishment is the end to which free

exercise is something of a nuisance." He cites the statement of Laurence Tribe in *American Constitutional Law* (1978) that there is a "zone which the free exercise clause carves out of the establishment clause for permissible accommodation of religious interests."

But it is free exercise—not the no-establishment provision—that takes precedence, Neuhaus maintains. "Why on earth should we need a no-establishment provision? The answer is that no-establishment is required to protect the rights of those who might dissent from whatever religion is established. In other words, no-establishment is required for free exercise." Therefore, he concludes, any interpretation of the no-establishment provision that hinders free exercise of religion is a misinterpretation.

That is not to say that anything done in the name of religion should be permitted. "Sometimes—reluctantly, and in cases of supreme and overriding public neces-

### *Presbyterian Follies*

Last year, a special committee of the Presbyterian Church called for radical change in traditional Christian attitudes toward sexual behavior. In the *New Republic* (Dec. 2, 1991), Camille Paglia, author of *Sexual Personae* (1990), found in the committee's report only a new spirit of puritanism.

Keeping Body and Soul Together demonstrates the chaos and intellectual ineptitude in the fashionable liberal discourse on sex that now fills the media and the academic and political worlds. All human problems are blamed on an unjust social system, a 'patriarchy' of gigantic and demonized dimensions, blanketing history like a river of molasses . . . .

The report assails the 'influential tradition of radical asceticism' in 'Western Christianity' that expresses 'body-alienation,' 'fear of sex and, in particular, of women.' It assumes that eremites and monks were not contemplatives but killjoys, neurotics, and misogynists, scowling while the rest of the world caroused, footloose and fancy free. The report complains of 'our cultural captivity to a patriarchal model of sexuality and its

ethic of sexual control,' as if sexual rules and taboos were not prevalent in every culture . . . .

The committee members seem to have read nothing in their lives but feminist tracts churned out since 1969. Kate Millett and Carolyn Heilbrun, those intellectual giants, are approvingly quoted. Alice Walker is pushed forward to symbolize modern literature. There is no reference to any major writer in history except Dante, whose theory of love is superficially summarized . . . .

But there is something deeper at work in the report than contemporary platitudes and ignorance of world history and culture. It is the revival of the old Protestant ethic, masquerading in hip new clothes. Like so much current feminist ideology, this supposedly liberal statement on sexuality represents not progressive thinking but a throwback to pre-'60s conventionalism: rigid, narrow, and puritanical. It is a new tyranny of the group, pretending to speak for individuals while it crushes them. Humanitarian jargon-phrases are used to pin us in pious attitudes of compulsory brotherhood.

sity—the claim to free exercise protection for certain actions must be denied.” But the great danger today, he claims, “is not the threat that religion poses to public life, but the threat that the state, presuming to embody public life, poses to religion.” And that threat is not to religion alone. “When

the American people can no longer publicly express their obligations to the Creator, it is to be feared that they will no longer acknowledge their obligations to one another—nor to the Constitution in which the obligations of freedom are enshrined.”

### *A Place for Metaphysics*

“Metaphysics in Education after Hutchins and Dewey” by René Vincente Arcilla, in *Teachers College Record* (Winter 1991), Teachers College, Columbia Univ., 525 W. 120th St., Box 103, New York, N.Y. 10027.

“How can we consider man's destiny unless we ask what he is? How can we talk about preparing men for life unless we ask what the end of life may be? At the base of education, as at the base of every human activity, lies metaphysics.” So insisted Robert M. Hutchins (1899–1977), the long-time president of the University of Chicago and a leading advocate of the “Great Books” approach to higher education. Phi-

losopher and educational theorist John Dewey (1859–1952) strongly disagreed—and his argument largely carried the day. Yet the Hutchins–Dewey debate of the 1930s still reverberates today, with Allan Bloom and others taking up Hutchins's position, and Richard Rorty and others upholding Dewey's. Arcilla, a professor of philosophy and education at Columbia University's Teachers College, finds wis-