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tions should be illegal, 56 percent of the faculties said yes, as did 53 percent of the public.

The theologians overwhelmingly agreed that religious values should affect governmental decision-making, though they doubted that Christianity mandates specific political prescriptions. Three-fourths thought that religion's influence in the United States was "too low," but only 32 percent supported establishing a period of voluntary, silent prayer in public schools.

Denominational affiliation significantly influenced the theologians' responses. Abortions were most likely to be considered moral or "morally neutral" by American Baptists (63 percent) and Methodists (54 percent). The strongest opponents of current U.S. military spending were Episcopalians (92 percent) and Catholics (89 percent).

On a few issues, the theologians were almost unanimous. Ninety-five percent believed that church property used for nonreligious purposes should be taxable. And 99 percent said they would oppose a constitutional amendment declaring Christianity the official national religion.

Churchgoing Colonists

"Church Adherence in the Eighteenth-Century British American Colonies" by Patricia U. Bonomi and Peter R. Eisenstadt, in *The William and Mary Quarterly* (Apr. 1982), Box 220, Williamsburg, Va. 23187.

According to most historians of American religion, the early colonists may have arrived on these shores filled with religious zeal, but their sons and daughters soon lapsed into indifference. Not so, say Bonomi and Eisenstadt, historians at New York University. They contend that early American church life was remarkably stable.

The traditional view is logical enough: Many colonies had no officially established church; formally educated ministers were rare. Early in the century, Anglican priests lamented the colonists' "indifferency, carelessness, [and] unconcernedness" toward worship. But where many historians see apathy toward religion, Bonomi and Eisenstadt see a different religious culture.

Church membership figures for the 1700s seem low, but they are misleading. Anglicans, to cite one difficulty, required a bishop's presence to confirm new members, and no bishop ever visited the colonies.

A better indicator is church *attendance*. In 1724, 56 percent of potential white adult Virginians (excluding Quakers, Catholics, and other "dissenters") were in an Anglican church each Sunday. In South Carolina, it was 61 percent. Churches in the North were stronger. In all 13 colonies, adherence to eight major denominations dropped only slightly—from 80 percent of whites in 1700 to 74.7 percent in 1740 to 69 percent in 1765.

Many churches grew so quickly that their buildings were almost al-

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ways too small. A South Carolina minister wrote in 1724 that his congregants "were forced to stand without the door, and others hang at the windows." Churches were usually the first institutions created on the frontier. Presbyterianism in the South grew from a few scattered churches early in the century to 45 in 1750. Immigrant Lutheran congregations mushroomed by 160 percent between 1740 and 1776.

Ordinary colonists simply had less narrow views of Christian doctrine than their pastors had, the authors conclude. Thus, the "indifferency" clergymen decried was simply a lack of concern for denominational differences. When Charles Woodmason, an Anglican priest in rural South Carolina in the 1760s, denounced the region's "infidels and Atheists," he meant that they were not Anglicans. Thriving Presbyterian, Baptist, and independent churches had formed, he noted unhappily, in every "Hole and Corner where they could raise Congregations."

Prayer and the President

"The President as Preacher" by Albert Menendez, in *Church & State* (May 1982), 8120 Fenton St., Silver Spring, Md. 20910.

President Reagan's recent proclamation of a National Day of Prayer may seem to reflect the current surge of religious fundamentalism. But, writes Menendez, research director for Americans United for Separation of Church and State, the President was simply obeying the law—a law with a 200-year history behind it.

During the Revolutionary War, the Continental Congress assigned a number of national days of "public humiliation, fasting and prayer." The peace following Pennsylvania's Whiskey Rebellion in 1795 prompted George Washington to create an official day of thanksgiving. In 1808, Thomas Jefferson declined to comply with this tradition, citing the Constitution's proscription against the "intermeddling" of religious and civic affairs. Refusing petitions from religious leaders for a national prayer day, Jefferson observed that "every religious society has a right to determine for itself the times for [fasting and prayer]."

Jefferson's successor waffled. Though a staunch proponent of the separation of church and state, James Madison felt an allegiance to the presidential tradition and assigned several days "on which all who thought proper might unite in consecrating it to religious purposes, according to their faith and forms."

In 1832, Andrew Jackson drew reproach from Congress for refusing to declare a public day of fasting and prayer in response to a cholera epidemic. After bitter debate, Congress passed a resolution over Jackson's objection, recommending "fervent supplications to Almighty God that He will avert the Asiatic scourge."

Abraham Lincoln, a religious man but no churchgoer, was moved by the crisis of Civil War to declare nine separate days of penitence and prayer during his 49-month administration. To Lincoln, the "awful