

# SOUTHEAST LAW INSTITUTE™

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October 2001

Dear SLI Supporter:

In the wake of the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attack, many troubling events have rapidly unfolded causing much uncertainty in our lives. What will happen next? More terrorists? War? Recession? By the time you read this, who knows what may have happened or what new questions we may be asking.

In light of all the uncertainty our usual activities and concerns seem unimportant, but as we have heard so many times recently, life must go on. So, while much of the future remains uncertain; as troops are readied for war; the stock market fluctuates; as broken hearted families place their loved ones to rest, and we wonder what is the next terrorist target. . . we return to our daily activities. All the while hoping and looking for evidence that all (these) things work for good.

These heinous acts perpetrated in the name of religion serve to emphasize the importance of our ministry and one of our most important issues - religious freedom. Right now, our county is praying for spiritual renewal and victory. Yet with all this, how long will it be before the old ways return - attacking religious freedom and ignoring God? About eight days after the attack, I heard an NPR commentator discussing the importance of viewing Arab Americans not as a threat, but as fellow citizens. She spoke of others who had been discriminated against listing Jews, Mormons and unbelievably, "fundamentalist Christians". It just makes you wonder if we (Christians who believe in the inerrancy of God's word, the divinity of Jesus Christ, and the strength of traditional values) are curiosities in America today?

In the days ahead, we will have to keep track of our government and law enforcement agencies to see if their responses to the attack will have any effect on our basic constitutional rights and freedoms. It could come in the form of things like increased electronic surveillance, or actually, any number of ways. If problems occur, if you have a concern, if you want our opinion, or if you need us to communicate with your elected officials - call us. We will be happy to assist you.

Last month we reported on an important case involving the improper regulation of church daycare centers. We asked for and received your financial assistance in that case. We are grateful for your response, but we still need help. A court hearing has been held and there is a good possibility the Judge will dismiss that part of the case which adversely effects churches. We will report more on that case in the future. In the meantime, please keep the court decision in your prayers. We will also be reporting on other and new efforts to regulate these important church ministries.

Thank you for your continuing support. Please do not forget our ministry as current events scream for your attention. We have many issues with which we must still contend and we cannot do so without your help. Thank you for your prayers and financial support. With personal regards, I am,

Yours Very Truly,

A. Eric Johnston

AEJ/dcw

**AN EDUCATIONAL UPDATE FROM  
THE SOUTHEAST LAW INSTITUTE™, INC.**

**To: SLI Supporters**  
**From: A. Eric Johnston**  
**Date: October, 2001**  
**Re: Religious Freedom and the Strength of the Nation**

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We have chosen to write this month's memo on the National Day of Prayer and Remembrance. Each month, we write a memo on an issue or event which is timely and which is of interest or need to our supporters or others. Since September 11, 2001, we have been consumed by the national tragedy and grief of the terrorist attack on New York City and Washington, D.C. We have all suffered a lack of ability to concentrate and the ever present preoccupation with this unprecedented tragedy for America.

The terrorist attacks on America have brought our people together in a historic way. Suffering brings people together - prosperity makes them comfortable, apathetic, and self-righteous. We will strive together to overcome the evil that has befallen us. And make no mistake, it is evil. Evil means an absence of good. How do we combat this? Not just with planes and tanks - though that will be necessary - but, with a unity of spirit which comes before God saying:

***If my people, which are called by my name, shall  
humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, then  
will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and  
will heal their land. II Chronicles 7:14***

SLI has as one of its chief purposes the struggle against the reality of evil in the public square. Those are issues of freedom and values which are the presence of good. America struggles with keeping her godly heritage. She has much for which to be forgiven.

As we face this crisis, we must humble ourselves, confess our sins and seek forgiveness, and ask God to heal our land - to heal her of her sin, her blight, and her injury. Reverend Billy Graham reminded us of this need in his sermon at the National Cathedral in the National Day of Prayer and Remembrance service on September 14, 2001.

We see the unity of government leaders, most of whom usually disagree, on decisions regarding what must be done. But above this, we see the unity of faith. This unity has been an appeal to our faith in God and our need for his divine healing, help and guidance. For those who watched the National Day of Prayer and Remembrance service, we saw a recognition of different faiths, but it was distinctly a Christian service, evidence of our Christian heritage and the reality of true religion.

We have a godly heritage of Christianity in our nation. It is the freedom of that religion, which includes the religious rights of other faiths, that forms the bedrock of our national will. Our national will shall take us into dangerous places, but by God's grace we will prevail.

Without this bedrock of religious freedom, America could not do the tasks that lie ahead. So why have we faced years of religious suppression in America? Will that now change? Will this tragedy bring revival in America? The past attacks of the American Civil Liberties Union, Americans United for Separation of Church and State and other such organizations on our right to public religion now appear ludicrous. How did they feel about the National Day of Prayer and Remembrance service? Will they try to stop further public displays of religion? We have observed religious freedom at its best during these tragic days.

What has been done as religious acts can only be responded to with religious acts. Evil inspired by religion must be responded to with the love, compassion, mercy and, yes, justice, of true religion. For those who say religion has no place in public life, they do not understand public life, nor life, nor death. Spirituality is an integral part of a person, just as his flesh and blood. America has tried to separate faith from physical. When times are good, it is easy. When times are uncertain, it cannot be done. But, life is always uncertain and this is what the ACLU and others do not appreciate about the need for faith. One of the workers at the World Trade Center ruin observed that life is uncertain and we cannot explain why this tragedy happened, but that is why we have religion.

Join us in prayer and the exercise of our religious freedom for the difficult days ahead. Pray that we may maintain and use the most powerful weapon we have in our arsenal, the power of prayer to our all powerful God. Finally, in these perilous times, pray for our President, Vice-President, Secretaries of State and Defense, Attorney General, military leaders, members of Congress, and other leaders; for those in government and military service; and for those individuals and families who have lost loved ones, and who probably will as we face the future. God Bless America.