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THE RUTHERFORD INSTITUTE

file

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October 7, 1983

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UPDATE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends of the Rutherford Institute:

You will soon be receiving the Institute's first newsletter, giving you details of the several cases and activities in which we are involved. The newsletter has been some time in coming--the first of anything often takes longer, I think, as we try to make it the best it can be.

In fact, we have discovered that a great deal of time and effort is required not only in our legal activities but also in our day-to-day responsibilities of answering correspondence, educating the Christian community on important legal issues, and communicating about our work. As a result, we have concluded that we must have more manpower to carry out effectively what God has called us to do.

Some of you may not know that for nearly the first year of its existence, the Rutherford Institute consisted only of myself and six other members of our Board of Directors. There was no full-time employee until last May, when the Institute hired an administrative assistant to take care of various office functions.

She has helped a great deal. But as the Institute has become increasingly engaged in criminal and civil cases involving religious liberties--plus several activities related to local,

state and federal government actions--we have felt an intense need for another full-time attorney to serve as our Executive Director.

After much prayer, interviews and consultation, the Board decided to hire Tedd Williams to assume this position, beginning October 1. Tedd comes to us with nine years of experience as a practicing lawyer, including four years with Florida's largest law firm, two years with the State Attorney's Office in Tallahassee, and two years with an Ohio firm actively involved with defending religious liberties.

Tedd will be a significant asset to the Institute as he assists with litigation, research and consultation. He will also be a principal spokesman for the Institute, corresponding with interested groups and individuals and participating in various seminars and media activities.

Hiring Tedd is a real step of faith for the Institute, as it requires a major increase in funds to cover his salary. It is also a real step of faith for Tedd, his wife and two children as they pull up roots in Florida to begin this new venture. But our faith steps are based on the assurance that this is God's special leading.

Even before he arrived, Tedd was hard at work on our most recent case, involving the student Bible Club at Lake Worth High School in Florida.

For the past 25 years, the Bible Club has met voluntarily after school hours. Last May, however--in the interest of so-called "neutrality" and the "separation of church and state"--school authorities established a new policy that forbids the club to meet on campus in the future. In addition, the principal of the school ordered his staff to take razorblades and literally slash the Bible Club's page from the 1983 yearbook.

Such censorship is a clear violation of the students' constitutional rights of freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of religious exercise and equal protection. The ruling specifically discriminates against religious students, since students in other clubs (such as student government or athletic clubs) are allowed to meet on campus.

When some of the Bible Club members asked the Institute to defend them in a discrimination suit, we agreed to take the case. Because of sweeping misinterpretations of Supreme Court rulings, more and more school authorities are prohibiting all religious expression on public school campuses. Attorneys with the Institute argue that students should not be denied the right to meet solely because the content of their meeting is religious.

In another major case, the Institute is defending Robin DeMaggio, who was arrested for criminal trespass after he knelt to pray in front of an abortion clinic in Rockland County, New York. Attorneys with the Institute will argue for the legal

doctrine of necessity; that is, the good DeMaggio was seeking (trying to save the lives of unborn children) far outweighs any harm caused by his alleged trespass.

One hearing was already held in mid-July, and attorneys now have a short time to further prepare their defense. This is a complicated, significant case, and we appreciate your prayers.

Requests for assistance continually pour in to the Institute, and we desire to do all we can to defend and protect our religious liberties and the sanctity of human life.

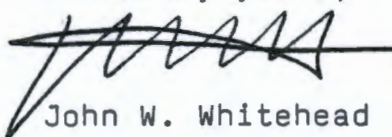
However, our swelling caseload and the hiring of needed personnel are also accompanied by a sharp increase in expenses of several thousand dollars. And since the Institute charges no fees for any of its legal services, we are totally dependent on the grants and contributions of interested groups and individuals to cover our rising costs.

Will you help us in our defense of such individuals as Robin DeMaggio and the students of the Lake Worth High School Bible Club--people now embroiled in civil and criminal cases only because they publicly expressed their religious convictions?

These particular cases are just two examples of a growing trend to deny religious persons their constitutional freedoms. We cannot afford to sit back in complacency and let this humanistic tide roll over us.

We need your help to effectively halt these violations and preserve our First Amendment liberties. Please consider supporting us with your prayers and finances.

Sincerely yours,


John W. Whitehead

P.S. In appreciation for your gift of \$50 or more to the Institute, we will send you a complementary copy of the Rutherford Report, The Freedom of Religious Expression in Public High Schools. Simply fill out and mail the coupon below.

Enclosed is my gift of \$_____. (For your gift of \$50 or more, a copy of The Freedom of Religious Expression in Public High Schools will be sent.)

Name _____

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Make check payable to the Rutherford Institute. All gifts are tax deductible.

Mail to: The Rutherford Institute, P.O. Box 510, Manassas VA 22110.

The Rutherford Institute

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"The Rutherford Institute is an organization of vital importance. Religious people in America who are concerned to see traditional freedoms maintained have a vested interest in doing all they can to support the work of the Institute."

Dr. Francis A. Schaeffer

STAMP

What is the Rutherford Institute?

The Rutherford Institute is a legal and educational organization established to serve two basic purposes:

1. to defend persons whose First Amendment religious liberties are threatened by state action;
2. to educate the public on key issues confronting the religious community.

Priority issues include protecting the family, the church, private religious schools, and the sanctity of human life; preserving freedom of speech in public places (including the public schools); and assisting those oppressed for their religious beliefs in Iron Curtain countries.

How will the Institute accomplish these goals?

The Institute employs three major strategies: conferences, written materials, and courtroom litigation.

Through educational conferences and various publications, the Institute assists in equipping attorneys and other professionals, law students, and lay people to respond intelligently to the priority issues of the day. The Institute also assists litigants in select cases through briefs and consultation, as well as by direct participation in the courtroom.

Why is there a need for the Rutherford Institute?

The authors of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution recognized a Supreme Creator whose absolute laws were to be the basis of

political thought and action in America. Through the years, however, that recognition of a Supreme Lawgiver has been increasingly ignored and the foundation of absolute principles increasingly eroded.

Today the courts and government are dominated by a secularistic philosophy that has jeopardized many of our rights and liberties. The Constitution is continually being revised by judicial interpretation, as the Framers' original understanding is routinely abandoned by the courts. These activities have resulted in the deprivation of rights, particularly in the religious community.

The Rutherford Institute seeks to reverse this trend and to secure the constitutional liberties established by the Framers of the Constitution.

What are some specific activities of the Institute?

1. In its brief existence, the Institute has been involved with several important court cases, including:

Out of religious conviction, a nurse refused employment with an abortionist. The state responded by cutting off her unemployment compensation benefits. When the Institute threatened to file suit, arguing that the state's action deprived the woman of her constitutional rights, the state restored her benefits.

An Orthodox Jew was denied an absentee ballot for an election held on the Jewish Sabbath. As a result, the Institute filed suit, arguing that failure to provide the absentee ballot denied Jewish people their fundamental right to vote.

Several religious people who demonstrated and spoke out against abortion clinics are now defendants in either civil or criminal lawsuits. The Institute is defending the free speech rights of these people to speak out publicly on any issue.

In a suit brought by the American Civil Liberties Union, the city of Pawtucket, Rhode Island, has been ordered by the courts to remove a nativity scene from its annual Christmas display, leaving only secular holiday symbols. The Institute filed an *amicus curiae* brief in the United States Supreme Court, arguing that the Constitution does not prohibit such a display.

2. At the request of state and federal officials, the Institute has provided expert testimony and other assistance on religious freedom issues, including:

The rights of parents to educate their children in their own homes;

The rights of public high school students to meet for prayer and Bible study;

The right of private religious schools to operate free from excessive state regulation.

3. The Institute has registered complaints with the Soviet Embassy on the treatment of religious persons in the Soviet Union. Joining with other concerned groups, the Institute also co-sponsored a full-page advertisement in the *New York Times* urging the Soviet Union to allow the emigration of Soviet Jews.

4. The Institute is undertaking a major educational effort by making available *Rutherford Reports* to inform the public of specific issues in law and government. Other educational activities planned for the future include:

"Intensity Seminars" for law students, lawyers and other professionals;

Radio programs;

Monographs;

Seminars and conferences for the general public.

5. State chapters of the Institute are being established in key metropolitan areas across the United States. Directed by local attorneys, these chapters will provide more accessible legal service to individuals and groups in surrounding areas.

How is the Institute funded?

The Institute is funded by private contributions. It *does not charge* for any of its educational activities or legal services, even though expenses can range from hundreds to thousands of dollars *per case* to cover research, court costs, and reimbursement of expert witnesses.

All gifts to the Institute are tax deductible.

How can I be involved?

Simply fill out and return the attached response form or write to:

The Rutherford Institute
P.O. Box 510
Manassas, Virginia 22110

Board of Directors

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Yes, I want to help protect and defend our constitutional freedoms.

Enclosed is my contribution of \$ _____

Send me your newsletter, updating me regularly on key legal and political issues.

Name _____

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Please make checks payable to the Rutherford Institute. All contributions are tax deductible.