

...ayer at school graduations being
ational and now the 5-4 judgement
ion is ever with us, (freedom of
I would conclude that Korihor is
l well! He and his followers contin-
fluence the judgment seat at every
ll we never learn? Or must history
self until we destroy ourselves in the

Mormonism remodeler just a vandal?

Lorraine Underwood
Salem

rising hostility

ostility some people have toward
rayer surprises me. Claiming public
offensive is ridiculous.

I six years in Japan and Korea. As I
involved with those cultures. I
that many of their customary daily
s included religious ceremonies. As
hen I chose not to participate in those
s practices. But I never considered
blic Buddhist or Shinto religious
s as an effort on their part to "stuff
ligion down my throat." I merely
d from participating. My non-partic-
did not offend them, their participa-
not offend me.

public prayer issue here in Utah
be approached in that same manner.
find yourself in a board meeting, a
graduation, or any other circum-
where they choose to open with pray-
you want to participate you should
at right. If you do not want to partici-
on't. But there is no reason to find
regardless of your religious point of

Richard L. Toyn
Roy

better choice?

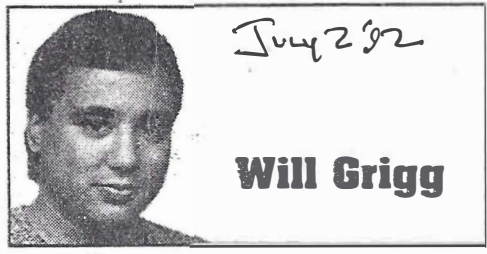
ere a better choice?
e believe that there is. Have we a true
ice" in George Bush, Bill Clinton or
Ross Perot? It used to be we had to
se between the lesser of two evils — but
t seems to be the "evil of two lessors"
is it three?

The besetting sickness of contemporary
American life is legalism — the belief that
all disagreements are ultimately conflicts
of rights and the tendency to pursue advan-
tage through litigation. Legalism encour-
ages the expansion of state authority into
fundamentally apolitical relationships and
associations, such as the family, private
clubs and the Boy Scouts. The LDS
Church may soon join that list.

Last weekend newspapers reported the
creation of an organization tentatively
called the "Mormon Defense League."
Salt Lake attorney Paul Toscano, the em-
bryonic group's nominal leader, explained
that "We are trying to form a group of
committed Latter-day Saints who want to
take some action to prevent Mormons
from abusing other Mormons and to pre-
vent non-Mormons from taking a virulent
anti-Mormon stance."

The envisioned organization would cat-
alog instances of defamation and the
abuse of power by Mormon leaders, create
investigative task forces and support
groups, and — if other means are unavail-
ing — file lawsuits. Toscano is emphatic in
describing litigation as the group's "de-
fault" option, or tactic of last resort. But
he insists that internecine conflicts within
the church are amenable to legal remedy.

Toscano believes that it is possible, per-
haps even necessary, to consider "unright-
eous dominion" a tort (or civil offense).
The expression "unrighteous dominion"
refers to the abuse of power by religious or
political leaders. There are means to ad-
dress the abuse of authority by political
leaders. Toscano's innovation would be to



At Home and Abroad

provide the means whereby disciplinary
decisions by ecclesiastical leaders would
be subject to review by judicial authorities.

According to Toscano, there are several
causes of action that may arise from a
disciplinary decision (such as an excom-
munication) by an LDS leader. For exam-
ple, an excommunication could result in
the infliction of emotional distress and in-
terference with business. Toscano also be-
lieves that church leaders are governed by
the same principles of fiduciary respon-
sibility that govern leaders of other private
organizations, such as clubs or founda-
tions.

But the most promising avenue for liti-
gation is provided by the concept of "spir-
itual abuse." Toscano believes that when a
religious leader exercises power over a
subordinate in a fashion harmful to the
"needs, rights, dignities, entitlements, or
empowerment of the subservient," an ac-
tionable offense exists.

Toscano's approach is similar to those
explored in a 1989 American Bar Associa-

tion seminar on "Tort and Religion,"
which featured such topics as "Expanding
the use of Tort Law against Religions"
and "Tort Law as an Ideological Weap-
on." The damages mentioned by Toscano
are abstract; the target of potential liti-
gation has unimaginably deep pockets. Tos-
cano's guidelines will inflame the ambi-
tions of ideologues and the appetites of
ambulance-chasers.

The "Mormon Defense League" would
also deal with anti-Mormon defamation,
but Toscano says that the group has yet to
"quarry out a specific position on the sub-
ject." In his opinion, abusive remarks di-
rected at Elder Scott (he has been de-
scribed as a servant and protector of child
abusers) do not reach the threshold of def-
amation: "He made some silly comments
(about child abuse) and he'll have to stand
the heat."

Toscano's group will draw heavily from
the heterodox Mormon intellectual com-
munity — it will be an ACLU for liberal
Mormons. Toscano maintains that in spite
of his reservations about the present
church leadership, he is a supporter of the
church: "I told (Elder) Dallin Oaks, 'It's
not that you guys aren't Apostles; it's that
you're the worst ones we've ever had,
because you aren't literary people.'"

He insists that his group's efforts, al-
though disruptive, will be of ultimate ben-
efit to the church: "It's the difference
between someone who's trying to destroy
the house and someone who's remodeling
it."

But aren't unsolicited "remodeling" ef-
forts vandalism?

Why many Israelis abandoned Likud for Labor

By TRUDY RUBIN
Knight-Ridder Newspapers

TEL AVIV, Israel — In the narrow
streets and run-down apartment warrens of
South Tel Aviv's Hatikvah quarter lies an

Street without incident and a huge poster
of Rabin stared down at traffic from a
second-story wall.

What changed? No doubt, a big part of
the answer is Yitzhak Rabin himself. A
man of military reputation and tough de-

fed up because there are no jobs for the
people of Hatikvah quarter and the educa-
tion system has gone to hell.

Of the 20 elderly men playing dominoes
at outdoor tables on a side alley, five
switched from Likud to Labor because of
the fiscal situation. "The economy is bad,

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