

HIGH COURT PICKS KEY CASES

The U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to accept three important religious-liberty cases. No rulings are expected before next spring.

Two of the cases deal with the constitutionality of posting copies of the Ten Commandments on public property. Those opposed to such displays maintain that it is wrong for the government to sponsor any religious display. Those who favor such displays say it is simply part of our religious heritage and is no more unconstitutional than having "In God We Trust" on our coins.

There are approximately 4,000 Ten Commandment monuments in the United States. Most of them were donated by the Fraternal Order of Eagles in the 1950s and 1960s. At issue is whether the Supreme Court will require such symbols to be surrounded by purely secular symbols, as it does with regard to Nativity scenes at Christmastime.

The third case involves the right of Wiccans, Satanists and white supremacists to practice their alleged religious practices in prisons without interference by prison officials. Prison wardens say that some inmates have used their religious liberties to subvert the authority of prison guards, hence leading to institutional breakdown.

In another development, the House of Representatives passed legislation that prevents the federal courts from ruling on whether the words "under God" should be deleted from the Pledge of Allegiance. The Senate has not ruled yet on this issue.

All of which proves that when it comes to religious liberty, all eyes are on the courts.