

## Separation of Church and State?

### Definitions First

Religion, as defined by the Founders of the Constitution and the First Amendment, was understood to mean a Christian denomination. First, let us review modern and classical definitions of religion. Very simply, using today's definitions to define yesterday's words may lead to ridiculous historical conclusions. This first definition is a current one, followed by the classical one that was framed into the First Amendment.

**Religion:** *"A set of beliefs concerning the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe"* (From: Random House Dictionary of the English Language, unabridged 2nd addition [New York: Random House, 1987], s.v. "*religion.*").

[Side note: Atheism falls under this definition, this is why there are tax-exempt atheist churches. Moreover, in 1969 Buddhism and Secular Humanism (atheistic religions) became official religions according to our Supreme Court. Secular Humanism (a materialistic, atheistic, explanation of our existence) has been taught and funded in our public schools for quite a long time]

**Religion:** *"Includes a belief in the being and perfections of God, in the revelation of His will to man, in man's obligation to obey His commands, in a state of reward and punishment, and in man's accountableness to God; and also true godliness or piety of life, with practice of all moral duties."* (From: Noah Webster, An American Dictionary of the English Language, [New York: S. Converse, 1828], s.v. "*religion.*")

With that in mind, anyone who reads the following will better understand the mind-frame in which the word *religion* was used.

### The First Amendment

The First Amendment never intended to separate Christian principles from government. Yet today we so often hear the First Amendment coupled with the phrase "*separation of church and state*. The First Amendment simply states: "*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.*"

Obviously, the words "*separation,*" "*church,*" or "*state*" are not found in the First Amendment; furthermore, that phrase appears in no founding document! While most recognize the phrase "*separation of church and state,*" **few know its source**; but it is important to understand the origins of that phrase. What is the history of the First Amendment?

The process of drafting the First Amendment made the intent of the Founders abundantly clear; for before they approved the final wording, the First Amendment went through nearly a dozen different iterations and extensive discussions.

Those discussions – recorded in the Congressional Records from June 7 through September 25, 1789 – make clear their intent for the First Amendment. For example, the original version

(followed by later versions) introduced in the Senate on September 3, 1789, stated:

*“Congress shall not make any law establishing any religious denomination.”*

*“Congress shall make no law establishing any particular denomination.”*

*“Congress shall make no law establishing any particular denomination in preference to another.”*

*“Congress shall make no law establishing religion [denomination] or prohibiting the free exercise there of.”*

By it, the Founders were saying: *“We do not want in America what we had in Great Britain: we don’t want one denomination running the nation. We will not have Catholics, or Anglicans, or any other single denomination. We do want God’s principles, but we don’t want one denomination running the nation.”*

Of interest is the proposal that **George Mason** – a member of the Constitutional Convention and “The Father of the Bill of Rights” – put forth for the First Amendment:

*“All men have equal, natural and unalienable right to the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience; and that no particular sect or society of Christians [denomination] ought to be favored or established by law in preference to others.”*

Their intent was well understood, as evidence by court rulings after the First Amendment. For example, a 1799 court declared:

*“By our form of government, the Christian principles – we do want God’s principles – but we don’t want one **denomination** to run the nation.”*

Again, note the emphasis: *“We do want Christian principles – we do want God’s principles – but we don’t want one **denomination** to run the nation.”*

### **Seperation?**

Thomas Jefferson, to whom the now popular phrase “*Separation of Church and State*,” is attributed, also believed, as did the other Founders, of denomination being the understood intent of the First Amendment – a fact he made clear in a letter to Benjamin Rush. In that letter, Jefferson committed himself as President to not allowing the Episcopalians, the Congregationalists, or any other denomination, to achieve what Jefferson called the “*establishment of a particular form of Christianity*.” So, what is the source of Jefferson’s now infamous phrase?

On November 7, 1801, the Baptists of Danbury Connecticut wrote Jefferson, concerned that the guarantee of the “*free exercise of religion*” appeared in the First Amendment. To them, this suggested that the right to religious exercise was a government-granted rather than a God-granted right. Thus implying that someday the government might try to regulate religious expression. They believed that freedom of religion was a God-granted, unalienable right, and that the government should be powerless to restrict religious activities unless, as the Baptists

explained, those activities “*caused someone to work ill to his neighbor.*”

On January 1, 1802, Jefferson responded to the Danbury Baptists. He concurred with their belief that man accounted to God alone for his faith and worship, not to the government; and he further emphasized that none of man’s “*natural rights*” – including the natural right to obey publicly the duties which God had imposed upon man (say current social issues: homosexuality, abortion, etc.) – would ever place man in a situation where the government would interfere. Jefferson understood their concern. In his response, he assured them that the free exercise of religion was indeed an unalienable right and would not be meddled with by government. Jefferson pointed out to them that there was a “*separation between church and state*” to insure that government would never interfere with religious activities.

Today, all that is heard of Jefferson’s letter is the phrase, “*a wall of separation between church and state,*” without either context, or the explanation given (from that letter), or its application by earlier courts. The clear understanding of the First Amendment for a century-and-a-half was that it prohibited the establishment of a single *national denomination.* National policies and rulings in that century-and-a-half always reflected that interpretation.

For example, in 1853, a group petitioned Congress to separate Christian principles from government. They desired a so-called “*separation of church and state,*” with chaplains being turned out of Congress, the military, etc.. Their petition was referred to the House and the Senate Judiciary Committees, which investigated for almost a year to see if it would be possible to separate Christian principles from government.

Both the House and the Senate Judiciary Committees returned with their reports. The following are excerpts from the House report delivered on March 27, 1854:

*“Had the people [the Founding Fathers], during the Revolution, had a suspicion of any attempt to war against Christianity, that Revolution would have been strangled in its cradle. At the time of the adoption of the Constitution and the amendments, the universal sentiment was that Christianity should be encouraged, but not any one sect [denomination].... In this age, there is no substitute for Christianity.... That was the religion of the founders of the republic, and they expected it to remain the religion of their descendants.”*

Two months later, the Judiciary Committee made this strong declaration:

*“The great, vital, and conservative element in our system [the thing that holds our system together] is the belief of our people in the pure doctrines and divine truths of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”*

The Committees explained that they would not separate these principles, for it was these principles and activities that had made us so successful – they had been our foundation, our basis.

During the 1870’s, 1880’s, and 1890’s, yet another group, which challenged specific Christian principles in government, arrived before the Supreme Court. Jefferson’s letter had remained

unused for years, for as time had progressed after its use in 1802 – and after no national denomination had been established – his letter had fallen into obscurity. Now – seventy-five years later – in the case *Reynolds v. United States*, the plaintiffs resurrected Jefferson’s letter, hoping to use it to their advantage.

In that case, the Court printed a lengthy segment of Jefferson’s letter and then used his letter on “*separation of church and state*” to again prove that it was permissible to maintain Christian values, principles, and practices in official policy. For the next fifteen years during that legal controversy, the Supreme Court utilized Jefferson’s ***whole*** letter to ensure that Christian principles remained a part of government.

Following this controversy, Jefferson’s letter again fell into disuse. It then remained silent for the next seventy years until 1947, when, in *Everson v. Board of Education*, the Court, for the first time, did not cite Jefferson’s entire letter, but *selected only eight words from it* (thus taking the intended meaning out of context). The Court now announced:

*“the First Amendment has erected ‘a wall of separation between church and state.’ That wall must be kept high and impregnable.”*

This was a new philosophy for the Court. Why would the Court take Jefferson’s letter completely out of context and cite only eight of its words? Dr. William James, the father of Modern Psychology – and a strong opponent of religious principles in government and education – perhaps explained the Court’s new strategy when he stated: “*there is nothing so absurd but if you repeat it often enough people will believe it.*” [This is evidenced in the fact that people I talk with are under the impression that the phrase “*separation of church and state*” is in the First Amendment].

This statement precisely describes the tact utilized by the Court in the years following its 1947 announcement. The Court began regularly to speak of “*a separation of church and state,*” broadly explaining that, “*This is what the Founders wanted – separation of church and state. This is their great intent.*” The Court failed to quote the Founders; it just generically asserted that this is what the founders wanted (no precedence Gilbert... sound familiar?).

The courts continued on this track so steadily that, in 1958, in a case called *Baer v. Kolmorgen*, one of the judges was tired of hearing the phrase and wrote a dissent warning that if the court did not stop talking about “*separation of church and state,*” people were going to start thinking it was part of the Constitution. That warning was in 1958!

Nevertheless, the Court continued to talk about separation until 1962 the Court explained that the word “*church*” would now mean “*a religious activity in public.*” This was the turning point in the interpretation of the First Amendment.

Understand what the Court had just announced, no longer would the First Amendment simply prohibit the establishment of a federal denomination, it now would prohibit religious activities in public settings. This exact act seems to go against the very clear statement of the First Amendment, which reads:

*“Congress shall make no law establishing religion [denomination] or prohibiting the free exercise there of.”*

We were born into the belief that there is a wall between the state and the church, but the wall - in its original meaning by the authors of the actual document that encapsulates our freedoms - has a totally opposite meaning than what we have been lead to believe!

### **Jefferson & Madison on Religion**

Some people quote James Madison and Thomas Jefferson in their “*Virginia Bill for Religious Liberty*” as the national standard when dealing with separation of church and state. One is led to believe that the “*Virginia Bill for Religious Liberty*” (often called the “*Virginia Statute*”) was the prototype for the entire nation. It was not.

In Virginia, the Church of England (the Anglican Church) was the **only** legally recognized and established denomination even though the members of other denominations (Baptists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Quakers, etc.) were more numerous than the Anglicans. To rectify this inequity, Jefferson authored the Virginia Statute to disestablish the Anglican church and place all groups (denominations, not religions... this is important to understand) on equal footing. However, before the passage of the Statute, Jefferson traveled overseas to represent American interests. James Madison assumed the mantle and led the successful fight for its passage.

In 1984 the erroneous charge that Jefferson and Madison via the Virginia Statute was the primary catalyst for the entire nation (as stated in *Everson v. Board of Education*, 1962) was ably rebutted by Justice William Rehnquist in *Wallace v. Jaffree*:

*“The Court’s opinion in **Everson** – while correct in bracketing Madison and Jefferson together in their extortions in their home State leading to the enactment of the Virginia Statue of Religious Liberty – is totally incorrect in suggesting that Madison carried these views onto the floor of the United States House of Representatives when he proposed the language which would ultimately become the Bill of Rights. The repetition of this error in the Court’s opinion in Illinois ex rel. McCollum v. Board of Education, 333 U. S. 203 (1948), and, Inter alia, Engel v. Vitale, 370 U. S. 421 (1962), does not make it any sounder historically. Finally, in Abington School District v. Schempp, 374 U. S. 203, 214 (1963), the Court made the truly remarkable statement that “the views of Madison and Jefferson, preceded by Roger Williams, came to be incorporated not only in the Federal Constitution but likewise in those of most of our states.” On the basis of what evidence we have, this statement is demonstrably incorrect as a matter of fact [referring to states that put denominations on equal footings prior to the Virginia Statute. These states include: New Jersey, North Carolina, Delaware, New York, Pennsylvania, Georgia, and Vermont.] And its repetition in varying forms in succeeding opinions of the Court can give it no more authority than it possesses as a matter of a fact; stare decisis [the reliance on previous precedent] may bind courts as to matters of law, but it cannot bind them as to matters of history.”*

### **What Other Bills At The Same Time Passed With The Virginia statute?**

Because of the manner in which the Courts invoke Jefferson and Madison when Striking down passive and voluntary religious activities, one is led to believe that these two were opposed *in toto* to religious activities in official public arenas; this is patently untrue – especially in the case of Jefferson.

Although Jefferson and Madison may certainly be considered two of the less overtly religious among the Founders, they certainly were *not* religion-hostile. Furthermore, the current portrayals of Madison and Jefferson fail to mention that these two did not even agree with each other on what was a permissible religious expression; each drew the line differently.

For example: Madison offered Presidential proclamations for national days of prayer, fasting, and thanksgiving; but Jefferson refused to do so because he believed it to be the responsibility of the State governments rather than a federal one. Therefore, only as Governor of Virginia did Jefferson issue such call. The point is he **did** issue such decrees.

Similarly noteworthy is the fact that the Virginia Statute was only one from a group of bills simultaneously authored by Jefferson and subsequently introduced and promoted by Madison. These other bills (seldom mentioned by the *social promoters* of Madison and Jefferson) further clarify the views of Jefferson and Madison on religion. Those bills included:

*“A Bill for Saving the Property of the Church Heretofore by Law Established,”*  
*and “A Bill for Punishing Disturbers of Religious Worship and Sabbath*  
*Breakers,” “A Bill for Appointing Days of **Public Fasting and Thanksgiving,**”*  
*and “A Bill **Annuling Marriages Prohibited by the Levitical Law [Biblical]** and*  
*Appointing the Mode of Solemnizing Lawful Marriage.”*

Additionally, today’s so-called “Jeffersonians” ignore the fact that Jefferson designated space in the Rotunda of the University of Virginia for chapel services. He expected students to participate in the various religious schools which he personally had invited to locate adjacent to and upon the University property. That he praised the use of the Charlottesville court house for religious services; and that he stated that religion is “*deemed in other countries incompatible with good government and yet proved by our experience to be its best support.*”

### **Federally Funded Missionaries Supported By Jefferson**

In fact, Jefferson thought Christianity so important that he personally authored a work for the Indians entitled (which today would be labeled as a politically incorrect thing to do... how dare Jefferson push his morality on another culture!) The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth, which set forth the teachings of Jesus, as delivered in the Gospels (the Bible). While President of the United States, Jefferson even approved several measure appropriating **federal funds** to pay for Christian missionaries to the Indians (boy, he is getting more politically incorrect as we go on). Of one of these, Justice Rehnquist explained:

*“Jefferson’s treaty with the Kaskaskia Indians... provided annual **cash support for the Tribe’s Roman Catholic priest and church....** The treaty stated in part: “And whereas, the greater part of the Tribe have been baptized and received into the Catholic church, to which they are much attached, the United States will give*

*annually for seven years one hundred dollars towards the support of a priest of that religion [denomination]... and... three hundred dollars to assist the said Tribe in the erection of a church.”*

Jefferson supported these provisions in other Indian treaties as well:

Two similar treaties were enacted during Jefferson’s administration – one with the Wyandotte Indians and other tribes in 1806, and one with the Cherokees in 1807. In 1787, another act of Congress ordained special lands for the Moravian Brethren *“for civilizing the Indians and promoting Christianity...”* Congress extended this act three times during Jefferson’s administration and each time [Jefferson] signed the extension into law.

Madison is harder to pin down, but I will use just a few examples from many that will reveal his beliefs. He was a member of the committee which authored the 1776 Virginia Bill of Rights and approved of its clauses declaring that: *“It is the mutual **duty** of **all** to practice Christian forbearance, love, and charity toward each other.”*

Madison’s proposed wording for the First Amendment demonstrate that he opposed only the establishment of a federal denomination, not public religious activities. His proposal declared:

*“The civil rights of none shall be abridged on account of religious belief or worship, nor shall any national religion [denomination] be established.”*

In 1789, Madison served on the Congressional committee which authorized, approved, and selected paid congressional chaplains. In 1812, President Madison signed a federal bill which economically aided a Bible Society in its goal of the mass distribution of the Bible (**federal funds** to pass out Bibles).

Madison, later in his life, changed his positions on many of these items just mentioned (known as the Detached Memoranda). However, the point is that his views in understanding these themes were of one conviction when appropriating legal matters, wording, and definitions of the Constitution and First Amendment. He *later* changed his thoughts on these things.

### **Religion In Schools?**

*~ Which has everything to do with this topic stated at the very beginning of the original post, mainly, the separation of church and state ~* During and immediately following the Revolution, the nation governed itself under the Articles of Confederation. In 1787, while still under the Articles of Confederation, the Founding Fathers passed the *“Northwest Ordinance,”* setting forth the provisions whereby territories could become states in the new Union. When the Constitution replaced the Articles of Confederation, the Founding Fathers re-passed the *“Northwest Ordinance”* to ensure its continued effectiveness under the new Constitution.

The time in which Congress re-passed the Ordinance is important: the House approved it on July 21, 1789; the Senate on August 4, 1789; and President George Washington signed it into federal law on August 7, 1789. Significantly, this was the identical time in which those identical Founding Fathers were drafting the First Amendment. (Of course, it is the First Amendment, which has been interpreted by the Courts over recent decades as prohibiting religious activities

and teachings from public education.)

Interestingly, Article III of the “*Northwest Ordinance*” – which, again, was passed by the Founders at the same time that they were working on the First Amendment – linked education and religion together, declaring:

*“Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.”*

The Framers of the Ordinance – and thus the Framers of the First Amendment – believed that schools and education systems were a proper means to encourage the “*religion, morality, and knowledge*” which they deemed so “*necessary to good government and to the happiness of mankind.*”

This Question is very important:

*Is it likely that the Founding Fathers required something by law that they thought violated the First Amendment, which they also passed?*

Certainly not! Clearly, the Founding Fathers did not feel that encouraging *religion* [see definition at the beginning of the paper] in schools (that received **federal monies**) was unconstitutional; rather, just the opposite!

The continuing influence of Article III of the Ordinance, and its lasting impact on American education, is demonstrated in the documents accompanying the admission of new states into the Union for generations following the passage of the Ordinance and the First Amendment. When a new territory would apply for statehood, Congress frequently granted an enabling act allowing that territory to form a state constitution with express stipulation that their constitution be “*not repugnant to the principles of the ‘Northwest Ordinance.’*”

For example, on April 30, 1802, Congress passed an enabling act for the Ohio territory which permitted citizens to meet on November 1, **1802**, to form their state constitution. Since the enabling act required that their new state constitution be “*not repugnant to the principles of the ‘Northwest Ordinance,’*” the Ohio state constitution stated:

*“Religion, morality, and knowledge, being essentially necessary to the good government, and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of instruction shall forever be encouraged by legislative provision.”*

The same provision was present when Mississippi was admitted in **1817**, its state constitution declared:

*“Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government, the preservation of liberty and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall be forever encouraged in this state.”*



When Nebraska was admitted in **1875**, its constitution stated:

*“Religion, morality, and knowledge, however, being essential to good government, it shall be the duty of the legislature to pass suitable laws... to encourage schools and the means of instruction.”*

This provision was found for decade after decade (e.g., Kansas, **1858**) and still appears in current constitutions (e.g., North Carolina). Again, the reason that this provision appeared so often is that the Founding Fathers – through a federal law – included it as a component of statehood in the United States.

*Isn't it ironic that the Founding Fathers of the Constitution would be ruled unconstitutional by it!*

Fisher Ames – the Founding Father who offered the final wording for the House version of the First Amendment – authored an article wherein he expressed concern that the Bible might become under-emphasized as the primary textbook in public schools. He warned that the Bible should never lose its place of prominence in the classroom, as newer and newer textbooks became available.

*“Why then, if these [new] books for children must be retained – as they will be – should not the Bible regain the place it once held as a school book?”*

Fisher Ames concluded his article by stressing that the fact that the Bible was the source of sound morals in America was a further reason that it must never be separated from the classroom (Ames, Works, pp. 134-135). Clearly, the use of the Bible in public schools did not violate Fisher Ames' view of the First Amendment – and he was one of the key Founders who provided its wording!

Dr. Benjamin Rush provides further evidence of the Founders' views of the propriety of religion in public arenas. Dr. Rush was a signer of the Declaration of Independence and later served in the administrations of Presidents John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison. Additionally, Dr. Rush was one of America's leading educators (helping found five schools and universities, of which three still exist today); and he was the first Founding Father to call for free public schools under the Constitution, thus properly earning the title of *“The Father of the Public Schools under the Constitution.”*

In an educational policy paper he authored in 1791, Dr. Rush offered compelling reasons why the Bible should never be taken from the American schools, even predicting that if the Bible were removed from the classroom, there would be an explosion of crime. He explained:

*“In contemplating the political institutions of the United States, (if we removed the Bible from schools), I lament that we waste so much time and money in punishing crimes and take so little pains to prevent them.”*

How prophetic!

### **State Constitutions**

On the day the Founding Fathers signed the Declaration of Independence, they underwent an immediate transformation. The day before, each of them had been a British citizen, living in a British colony, with thirteen crown-appointed British state governments. However, when they signed that document and separated from Great Britain, they lost all of their State governments.

Consequently, they returned home from Philadelphia to their own States and began to create new State constitutions. Samuel Adams and John Adams helped write the Massachusetts constitution; Benjamin Rush and James Wilson helped write Pennsylvania's constitution; George Read and Thomas McKean helped write Delaware's constitution; the same is true in other States as well. The Supreme Court in *Church of Holy Trinity v. United States* (1892) pointed to these State constitutions as precedents to demonstrate the Founders' intent.

Notice, for example, what Thomas McKean and George Read placed in the Delaware constitution:

*“Every person, who shall be chosen a member of either house, or appointed to any office or place of trust... shall... make and subscribe the following declaration, to wit: ‘I do profess faith in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, and in the Holy Ghost, one God, blessed forever more, and I acknowledge the Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testament to be given by divine inspiration.’”*

Take note of some other State constitutions. The Pennsylvania constitution authored by Benjamin Rush and James Wilson declared:

*“And each member [of the legislature], before he takes his seat, shall make and subscribe the following declaration, viz: ‘I do believe in one God, the Creator and Governor of the Universe, the rewarder of the good and the punisher of the wicked, and I do acknowledge the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be given by Divine Inspiration.’”*

The Massachusetts constitution, authored by Samuel Adams – the Father of the American Revolution – and John Adams, stated:

*“All persons elected must make and subscribe the following declaration, viz. ‘I do declare that I believe the Christian religion and have firm persuasions of its truth.’”*

North Carolina's constitution required that:

*“No person, who shall deny the being of God, or the truth of the [Christian] religion, or the Divine authority either of the Old or New Testaments, or who shall hold religious principles incompatible with the freedom and safety of the State, shall be capable of holding any office, or place of trust or profit in the civil department, within this State.”*

You had to apply God's principles to public service, otherwise you were not allowed to be a part of the civil government. In 1892, the Supreme Court (*Church of Holy Trinity v. United States*) pointed out that of the forty-four States that were then in the Union, each had some type of God-centered declaration in its constitution. Not just any God, or a general God, say a "higher power," but **thee** Christian God as understood in the Judeo-Christian principles and Scriptures. This same Supreme Court was driven to explain the following:

*"This is a religious people. This is historically true. From the discovery of this continent to the present hour, there is a single voice making this affirmation.... These are not individual sayings, declarations of private persons: they are organic utterances; they speak the voice of the entire people.... These and many other matters which might be noticed, add a volume of unofficial declarations to the mass of organic utterances that this is a Christian nation."*

### **Secular Humanism?**

This is merely the tip of the proverbial "ice-berg." These pieces to the grander puzzle should be adequate for those who truly believe that there is a constitutional mandate for separating religious principles from public life (e.g., government, schools, etc.) to further investigate this claim with the scrupulous eye of a detective. The reason that this historical approach to what the Founders intended is bypassed in our educational institutions is simple. A philosophical worldview has replaced the long held view of the Judeo-Christian understanding of Nature and man's relation to that Nature. The scope of this paper does not allow time nor space to deal with this "counter view," but I will commence with an adolescent brush of this "other" worldview.

John Dunphy, a secular humanist, wrote in The Humanist magazine:

*"I am convinced that the battleground for humankind's future must be waged and won in the public school classroom by teachers who correctly perceive their role as the proselytizers of a new faith; a religion of humanity that recognizes and respects the spark of what theologians call divinity in every human being. These teachers must embody the same selfless dedication as the most rabid fundamentalist preacher, for they will be ministers of another sort, utilizing a classroom instead of a pulpit to convey humanist values in whatever subjects they teach regardless of the educational level – preschool daycare or large state university. The classroom must and will become an arena of conflict between the old and the new – the rotting corpse of Christianity together with all its adjacent evils and misery..."*

This is one of the catalysts that brought Judge Pendergerst of the Baltimore Superior Court to say:

*"It is abundantly clear that the petitioner's real objective is to drive every concept of religion out of the public school system. If God were removed from the classroom, there would remain only atheism [secular humanism; a religion]. The word is derived from the Greek **atheos**, meaning 'without a God.' Thus the*

*beliefs of virtually all pupils would be subordinated to those of Madelyn Murray.”*

### **Consequences**

Fyodor Dostoyevsky’s maxim rings just as true today as it did in his day, “*If there is no God, all things are permissible.*” Without an absolute ethical norm, morality is reduced to mere preference and the world is a jungle where might makes right. Mussolini commented once:

*“Everything I have said and done in these last years is relativism by intuition.... If relativism signifies contempt for fixed categories and men who claim to be bearers of an objective, immortal truth... then there is nothing more relativistic than fascistic attitudes and activity.... From the fact that all ideologies are of equal value, that all ideologies are mere fictions, the modern relativist infers that everybody has the right to create for himself his own ideology and to attempt to enforce it with all the energy of which he is capable.”*

Hitler added that, “*I freed Germany from the stupid and degrading fallacies of conscience and morality... we will train young people before whom the world will tremble. I want young people capable of violence – imperious, relentless and cruel.*”

The rejection of moral absolutes creates what? Young people who will scare the bejesus out of the world. I contend that fifty[+] years after Hitler’s comments, the American public school system (grounded in liberal educational philosophies) is pumping out those children. When what Mussolini calls the “*immortal truth,*” and Hitler refers to as “*stupid and degrading fallacies of conscience and morality,*” is removed, what is left? Let’s see.

The third article in the Humanist Manifesto I & II begins:

*“We affirm that moral values derive their source from human experience. Ethics is autonomous and situational, needing no theological or ideological sanction. Ethics stems from human need and interest.”*

For the *Humanist/Naturalist* (non-Theist), man himself is the only standard by which his own behavior is to be assessed. Man is to be the sole arbiter in all matters of justice and law, right and wrong. In the words of the Encyclopedia Americana, “*Since there is no God, man is the creator of his own values.*” The British author John Hick bluntly asserts, “*There is no God; therefore no absolute values and no absolute laws.*” Joseph Lewis in, The Bible Unmasked, says, “*There is in reality no absolute standard by which we can judge... In the final analysis our guide in moral affairs should be what gives to the individual the greatest possible happiness.*” Friedrich Nietzsche agreed: “*...the advantage of our times, nothing is true, everything is permitted.*” Hedonism is thus the *maxim* of the land.

Allan Bloom in his book The Closing of the American Mind, said that, “*There is one thing a professor can be certain of. Almost every student entering the university believes, or says he believes, that truth is relative.*” How did the college student get this way? Let us allow the Father of modern educational philosophy answer that, John Dewey:

*“There is no God and no soul. Hence, there are no needs for props of traditional*

*religion. With dogma and creed excluded, then immutable [i.e. unchangeable] truth is also dead and buried. There is no room for fixed, natural law or permanent moral absolutes.*”

From Cristina Odone (from *Melrose Place*) saying in the June 1997 Daily Telegraph that, “*What’s right is what you feel,*” to Ernest Hemingway’s creed: “*What is moral is what you feel good after, and what is immoral is what you feel bad after.*” The philosophy of humanistic naturalism is creating a people who will try to enforce their “*will and way*” (happiness) above others.

This is why the “*Hitler’s*” and “*Stalin’s*” will always be mandatory when the moral imperatives of God are thrown to the wayside; there is a power vacuum. Malcolm Muggeridge made a great point about this power vacuum:

*“If God is dead, somebody is going to have to take his place. It will be megalomania or erotomania, the drive for power or the drive for pleasure, the clenched fist or the phallus, Hitler or Hugh Hefner.”* (Not making any reference to the Clinton administration whatsoever)

In 1983, the dissident Soviet author Alexander Solzhenitsyn had been awarded the prestigious Templeton Prize for religious progress. In accepting the award, he gave a clear assessment of the tragedy that had been so devastating to his homeland:

*“I have spent well-nigh fifty years working on the history of our Revolution. In the process, I have read hundreds of books, collected hundreds of personal testimonies, and have already contributed eight volumes of my own towards the effort of clearing away the rubble left by that upheaval. But if I were to be asked today the main cause of the ruinous Revolution that has swallowed up some sixty-million of our people, I could not put it more accurately than to repeat: ‘Men have forgotten God; that’s why all this has happened.’”*