

# Government Policy Toward Teaching Religion in State Schools

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Religion, Education and the Role of Government

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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate that the government has an ethical and constitutionally compatible obligation to promote the teaching of religion in state schools. The appropriateness of such a policy is based on history, sociology, and epistemology.

The historical section will explore the government's previous role in fostering religion in order to establish the constitutionality of such an endeavor. The facts of history will be considered in order to establish an ethical obligation to promote such teaching. The sociological portion will demonstrate the essentialness of teaching religion in order to promote understanding of contemporary society and contributions from diverse cultures. The epistemological segment will demonstrate how an inadequate and exclusivist view of knowledge produced the present restrictions and antipathy toward teaching religion. The essay will conclude with four principles, which provide an educationally sound and constitutionally compatible method for teaching religion in state schools.

While most of the particulars regarding the wording of the Constitution, history, laws, and other germane issues discussed in this paper refer directly to the United States, the general principles and ideas should, in most cases, be applicable to other countries. In addition, the proposed guidelines for teaching religion are transferable to different countries though the content conveyed through the different categories will surely change.

The difficulty of the task and present confusion about what should be the government's policy toward teaching religion in state schools has resulted in the unfortunate reality that according to Charles C. Haynes, Freedom Forum Senior Fellow, "many educators (and textbook publishers) have tried to quell controversy by avoiding religion altogether. This strategy hasn't worked. Ignoring religion only increases tension, builds distrust, and frequently culminates in lawsuits."<sup>1</sup> The controversy is exacerbated when those on either end of the spectrum frame the debate: those who only support teaching *their* particular religion and those who believe that schools should be religion-free zones.

I will be using the term education to mean "the act or process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgment, and generally of preparing oneself or others intellectually for mature life."<sup>2</sup> Additionally, I will use the term religion defined as, "a set of beliefs concerning the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe...and often containing a moral code governing the conduct of human affairs.... something one believes in and follows devotedly; a point or matter of ethics or conscience."<sup>3</sup> Generally, when I refer to religion, I will be referring to what is known as supernatural religion;<sup>4</sup> however, the definition for religion fits non-supernatural religion

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<sup>1</sup> Charles C. Haynes, *Teaching about Religion in American Life: A First Amendment Guide*, ed. Natilee Dunning, (Cary, NC: Oxford University Press, 1998), <http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org/PDF/oxfordbooklet.PDF> 1/28/04, 2-3. The First Amendment Center at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn., is an independent operating program of The Freedom Forum.

<sup>2</sup> *Random House Webster's Unabridged Electronic Dictionary*, Electronic Version 2.0, s.v. "education."

<sup>3</sup> *Random House*, s.v. "religion."

<sup>4</sup> It is supernaturalism that I am arguing is not represented in schools, and naturalism, etc. is prevalent.

as well, such as humanism<sup>5</sup>, naturalism, secularism or atheism. Former Professor of Philosophy of Religion and Ethics, J. Clayton Feaver says, “Note that religion and philosophy serve the same psychological functions or purposes in human nature—they satisfy these two common needs of mankind. A religion gives a world view and a way of life, and a philosophy does the same.”<sup>6</sup> Defining religion is critical for considering the subject of ‘Religion, Education and The Role of Government’ since its definition makes clear how it may be impossible to completely separate religion from education. Feaver points out that, “While the word ‘religion’ is a single term, the various phenomena it supposedly describes are numerous and complex.”<sup>7</sup>

Even secular humanism is best defined as a religion and/or religious. The “Humanist Manifesto I” describes the adherents as “religious humanists”, and it argues a great need “to establish such a religion” referring to the tenets of naturalism spelled out in the manifesto.<sup>8</sup> The manifesto claims, “Religion consists of those actions, purposes, and experiences which are humanly significant. Nothing human is alien to the religious. It includes labor, art, science, philosophy, love, friendship, recreation—all that is in its degree expressive of intelligently satisfying human living. The distinction between the sacred and the secular can no longer be maintained.”<sup>9</sup> This religious view of naturalism is also expressed in the Humanist Manifesto II and III.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Humanism comes in many forms, but what they have in common is ‘a dependence upon man and nature is all there is’. The following is a quote of a spiritual humanist. A secular humanist will be considered in the next paragraph. “As Spiritual Humanists we believe that every person has innate right (sic) to make a spiritual connection to the rest of the cosmos. Our premise is simple: *We can solve the problems of society using a religion based on reason.*” <http://www.spiritualhumanism.org/>, dated 6/3/04.

In 1961, the U.S. Supreme Court acknowledged that Secular Humanism was a religion. For arguments why the mention in footnote 11 [of the Supreme Court decision] is considered by some more than just dicta, see the following information and corresponding website.

“In addition, Justice Scalia wrote: In *Torcaso v. Watkins*, 367 U.S. 488, 495, n. 11 (1961), we did indeed refer to “SECULAR HUMANISM” as a “religio[n].” *Edwards v. Aguillard*, 482 U.S. 578 (1987) note 6. Justice Harlan summed it all up: [Footnote 8] [of the Supreme Court decision] This Court has taken notice of the fact that recognized “religions” exist that “do not teach what would generally be considered a belief in the existence of God,” *Torcaso v. Watkins*, 367 U.S. 488, 495 n. 11, *e. g.*, “Buddhism, Taoism, Ethical Culture, SECULAR HUMANISM and others.” *Ibid.* See also *Washington Ethical Society v. District of Columbia*, 101 U.S. App. D.C. 371, 249 F.2d 127 (1957); 2 *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* 293; J. Archer, *Faiths Men Live By* 120-138, 254-313 (2d ed. revised by Purinton 1958); Stokes & Pfeffer, *supra*, n. 3, at 560.

*Welsh v. United States* 398 U.S. 333 (1970) note 8.”

“It seems that the conflicting rulings concerning whether Secular Humanism is a religion or not according to the Supreme Court may be understood by recognizing that Secular Humanism *is* a religion ‘**for free exercise clause purposes**,’ and it is *not* a religion ‘**for establishment clause purposes**.’” From the website [http://members.aol.com/Patriarchy/definitions/humanism\\_religion.htm](http://members.aol.com/Patriarchy/definitions/humanism_religion.htm), dated 6/3/04.

<sup>6</sup> J. Clayton Feaver and William Horosz, eds., *Religion in Philosophical and Cultural Perspective: A New Approach to the Philosophy of Religion Through Cross-Disciplinary Studies*, (Princeton, NJ: D.Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1967), 341.

<sup>7</sup> Feaver and Horosz, *Religion in Perspective*, 338.

<sup>8</sup> Introduction by Raymond B. Bragg, “Humanist Manifesto I,” *The New Humanist* 6:3 (May/June 1933). Quoted material references the first affirmation and the introduction.

<sup>9</sup> Humanist Manifesto I, seventh affirmation.

<sup>10</sup> The first affirmation of Humanist Manifesto II states, “In the best sense, religion may inspire dedication to the highest ethical ideals. The cultivation of moral devotion and creative imagination is an expression of genuine “spiritual” experience and aspiration.” Paul Kurtz and Edwin H. Wilson, eds., “Humanist

John Dewey, a signer of the Humanist Manifesto I and often called the father of progressive education, sought to mediate between supernatural religions and harsh atheism—between “religion, *a* religion and the religious.”<sup>11</sup> The religious idea that he believed accomplished this was “the religious aspect of experience.”<sup>12</sup> He said, “It is this *active* relation between ideal and actual to which I would give the name ‘God’.”<sup>13</sup> Additionally he said, “Whatever introduces genuine perspective is religious, not that religion is something that introduces it.”<sup>14</sup> His ‘common faith’ of man is religious faith in man, or man’s common experience without supernaturalism or dogma, but it is still religious.

Julian Huxley, said, “I disbelieve in a personal God in any sense in which that phrase is ordinarily used.”<sup>15</sup> However, he was religious. Huxley said, “I believe that it is necessary to believe something. Complete skepticism does not work.”<sup>16</sup> He defined the way to determine what to believe as “the method, which has proved effective, as a matter of actual fact, in providing a firm foundation for belief...usually called the scientific method.”<sup>17</sup>

Jonathan Rauch, a widely published author who personally has no place for the supernatural,<sup>18</sup> responds to the complaint “that the liberal scientific order (‘secular humanism’) is itself a form of faith” with the reply that “belief in liberal science is a faith...”<sup>19</sup> Albert Einstein once proposed that, “Science itself could serve as the religion of the devoted scientist.”<sup>20</sup>

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Manifesto II,” *The Humanist* 33:5 (September/October 1973). While the Humanist Manifesto III does not use the word ‘religion’ to describe itself, it does extol the virtues of scientific naturalism to a place of peerless supremacy over all other worldviews. Scientific naturalism is seen to hold the key to advancing “happiness and freedom” which is precisely what religion claims to do. Paul Kurtz, ed., “Humanist Manifesto 2000: A Call for a New Planetary Humanism,” *Free Inquiry* 19:4 (Fall 1999).

<sup>11</sup> John Dewey, *A Common Faith*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934), 3.

<sup>12</sup> Dewey, *A Common Faith*, 2.

<sup>13</sup> Dewey, *A Common Faith*, 51.

<sup>14</sup> Dewey, *A Common Faith*, 24.

<sup>15</sup> Julian Huxley, *Religion Without Revelation*, (New York: Mentor, 1957), 17-18. “*Life* magazine in an article on the Huxley brothers described Julian Huxley as an ‘atheist’ and ‘a materialist, denying the need for religion or God.’” *LIFE*, March 24, 1947 as quoted by Feaver and Horosz, *Religion in Perspective*, 340.

<sup>16</sup> Huxley, *Religion*, 13. “To prove that Julian Huxley is not opposed to religion, Dr. [Charles Francis] Potter quoted from Huxley’s *Man Stands Alone* a passage in which Sir Julian affirms that for ‘religion to continue as an element of first-rate importance in the life of the community, [it] must drop the idea of God.’” Feaver and Horosz, *Religion in Perspective*, 340.

<sup>17</sup> Huxley, *Religion*, 15.

<sup>18</sup> Jonathan Rauch, *Kindly Inquisitors: The New Attacks on Free Thought*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993) 80. He says, “Some of us—I am one—are so constituted as not to mind very much if the supernatural and the subjective are banished from our public knowledge base.”

<sup>19</sup> Rauch, *Kindly Inquisitors*, 77. His faith in liberal science is so strong that he claims Jesus’ words to Thomas “blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed” (John 20:27) have been “roundly repudiated” by liberal science, 79. This is indeed a faith statement.

<sup>20</sup> Albert Einstein, “Cosmic Religion” reprinted in Oliver L. Reiser and Blodwen Davies *Planetary Democracy*, as quoted by Feaver and Horosz, *Religion in Perspective*, 340.

The religious features of psychology are readily apparent. This is significant since psychological and counseling theories have such an enormous influence upon our educational system today. For example, Carl Jung said, “Patients force the psychotherapist into the role of priest, and expect and demand that he shall free them from distress. That is why we psychotherapists must occupy ourselves with problems which strictly speaking belong to the Theologian.”<sup>21</sup>

Abraham Maslow, speaking of the essential quality of self-actualization, said, “A few centuries ago these would all have been described as men who walk in the path of God or as godly men...if religion is defined only in social-behavioral terms, then these are all religious people, the atheist included. But if more conservatively we use the term religion so as to include and stress the supernatural element and institutional orthodoxy...then our answer must be quite different....”<sup>22</sup>

Carl Rogers, founder of client-centered counseling, “deeply believes that humans are innately good, trustworthy, and rational.”<sup>23</sup> This is why “the goal of client-centered counseling is a reorganization of the self.”<sup>24</sup> It should be clear that both of these ideas are philosophical or religious in nature since one must have a very clear idea of what that reorganization is to look like and act like. Prior to Rogers’ training at Columbia University under John Dewey, he had been heavily influenced by his Protestant upbringing, involvement in religious groups at the University of Wisconsin, and two years at Union Theological Seminary,<sup>25</sup> where he would have been exposed to liberal Christianity. Though he rejected the essence of Christianity, the liberal Christian ideas are still very present.<sup>26</sup> He even expanded the goal of his psychotherapy beyond a specialized activity to encompass all of life. When he spoke of becoming more of a person he said, “I believe this statement holds whether I am speaking of my relationship with a client, with a group of students or staff members, with my family or children. It seems to me that we have here a general hypothesis which offers exciting possibilities for the development of creative, adaptive, autonomous persons.”<sup>27</sup>

The religiousness is unmistakable in Albert Ellis’s rational emotive therapy, when he says “*Humans are only human*, and are neither angels, nor devils, nor ‘dumb’ animals....As far as is now known, all humans are mortal—we all die—and *there is no evidence of immortality or life after death*”<sup>28</sup> (italics added). He gives a disclaimer that he is not

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<sup>21</sup> Carl Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1933), 278 as quoted by Paul C. Vitz, *Psychology as Religion: The Cult of Self-Worship*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977, 1994), 2.

<sup>22</sup> Abraham Maslow, *Motivation and Personality*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Harper, 1970), Chapter 11 as quoted by Vitz, *Psychology*, 10-11.

<sup>23</sup> Louis E. Shilling, *Perspectives on Counseling Theories*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1984), 170.

<sup>24</sup> Shilling, *Perspectives*, 177.

<sup>25</sup> Shilling, *Perspectives*, 166-167.

<sup>26</sup> This would include concepts like humans being innately good, what it means to become more of a person, etc., although this is a characteristic of humanism as well.

<sup>27</sup> Carl R. Rogers, *On Becoming a Person* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), 37-38, as quoted by Vitz, *Psychology as Religion*, 7-8.

<sup>28</sup> Shilling, *Perspectives*, 95.

speaking as an atheist, but his religion of atheism is evident in his absolute declaration “Humans are only human” and “there is no evidence,” for many would beg to differ with that conclusion.<sup>29</sup> Richard Wessler elucidates this point very cogently. Wessler says that Ellis believes that it is irrational to hold to “the idea that one should be dependent on others and needs someone stronger than oneself on whom to rely”<sup>30</sup> and that Ellis said he only opposes religious beliefs when they are absolutistic.<sup>31</sup> Of course this virtually eliminates all supernatural religious beliefs since they are generally absolute.<sup>32</sup> Interestingly, Ellis seems religiously absolute in his anti-religious animus.

Many others hold similar views, but these are sufficient to demonstrate that our endeavors, regardless how secular, are still in some measure religious. This is important with regard to state schools, since it seems inevitable that religion will be taught. In fact, the very endeavor of education is endowed with religiousness. David Sant notes that, “All education is undergirded by presuppositions about the origin of the universe, the origin of man, the purpose of man, ethics of governing relationships between men, and the continuing existence of the universe in an orderly and predictable manner. It is an inescapable fact that all of these basic assumptions are fundamentally religious.”<sup>33</sup> Thus, the real question is not will state schools teach religion, but rather will they teach about religion accurately including supernatural religion because what seems to be lacking from state education is not religion, but more precisely supernatural religion.

## THE HISTORICAL BASIS FOR TEACHING RELIGION

In consideration of the history of the United States, teaching religion in government schools seems to be both constitutionally compatible and ethically demanded. Historically, teaching religion, connecting religion to education, or emphasizing its essential relationship to America and Americans was not viewed as violating the Constitution or First Amendment. In fact, the Founding Fathers of the United States<sup>34</sup> believed that morality was essential for a republic form of government and religion was

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<sup>29</sup> See books like Josh McDowell’s *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999). Ellis is in fact concluding there is no evidence, meaning there is no physical evidence. First, there is objective, empirical evidence for the claims of Christ. Second, regarding the ‘spirit’, this is a categorical fallacy since supernatural religions do not speak of the spirit as having a physical nature. Therefore, it is like concluding that there is no physical evidence of non-physical reality, which is absurd.

<sup>30</sup> Richard L. Wessler, “A Bridge Too Far: Incompatibilities of Rational Emotive Therapy and Pastoral Counseling” *The Personnel and Guidance Journal*, (n.p., 1984) 264, from the writing by Albert Ellis, “Reason and emotion in psychotherapy” (New York: Lyle Stuart, 1962).

<sup>31</sup> Wessler, “A Bridge Too Far”, 264.

<sup>32</sup> For more on the religious nature of modern psychological theories see Paul C. Vitz, *Psychology as Religion, The Cult of Self-Worship* (publishing details cited in earlier footnote).

<sup>33</sup> David Sant, “The Religious Nature of Education,” <http://www.patriarch.com/religedu.html>, 1/28/2004, 1.

<sup>34</sup> Barton refutes the claim that founders were deist-atheist and not Christians. He says, “None of the notable Founders fit this description,” and goes on to demonstrate this with source material about Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson, Washington, Franklin and many lesser known founders. David Barton, <http://www.wallbuilders.com/resources/search/detail.php?ResourceID=29>, 6/3/04.



essential for morality, so that education necessarily involved teaching both morals and religion.

### **It is constitutionally compatible**

President George Washington in his farewell address wrote, “Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. . . . And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. . . . Reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail to the exclusion of religious principle.”<sup>35</sup> Concerning government he said, “It is substantially true that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government.”<sup>36</sup>

Based on their belief that religion was an integral part of the ‘Great Experiment’ the founders wrote and adopted documents like The Northwest Ordinance<sup>37</sup> of 1787. Concerning its adoption, Dr. Skousen says, “The very year the Constitution was written by the Convention and approved by Congress, that same body of Congress passed the famous Northwest Ordinance.”<sup>38</sup> Article 3 dealt specifically with state education and religion, and said, “Religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.”<sup>39</sup> It is important to note that this was a governing document designed to assimilate the new states with the original states, and good government necessitated that religion, morality, and knowledge would be taught in schools.

Thomas Jefferson, concerning the need for virtue, morals, and truth to be a part of education, said, “[A] people [can become] so demoralized and depraved as to be incapable of exercising a wholesome control. . . . Their minds [are] to be informed by education what is right and what is wrong, to be encouraged in habits of virtue. . . in all cases, to follow truth as the only safe guide. . . . These are the inculcations necessary to render the people a sure basis for the structure of order and good government.”<sup>40</sup> In addition, we know that he held the moral teachings of Jesus Christ in the highest esteem.

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<sup>35</sup> Mortimer J. Adler, et al., eds. *The Annals of America*, 20 Volumes, vol.3, (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1968-), 612, as quoted by W. Cleon Skousen, *The Making of America: The Substance and Meaning of the Constitution*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, (Washington, D.C.: The National Center for Constitutional Studies, 1986), 676.

<sup>36</sup> Adler, *The Annals*, 612, as quoted by Skousen, *Making of America*, 676.

<sup>37</sup> This related to land west of states like Virginia, Connecticut, North and South Carolina, and others that they claimed as their land, which led to a delay in the ratification of the Articles of Confederation. Eventually, the land was freed up for redistribution. The Ordinance of 1785 provided that the area north of the Ohio River would be called the Northwest Territory. This land would be divided up and eventually become states with all the rights of the original thirteen states. Anticipating this, a land law based on Thomas Jefferson’s earlier proposal was adopted. Source: Henry F. Graff, *America the Glorious Republic*, Revised Edition, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1990), 162-165. This Northwest Ordinance “. . . established for the Northwest Territory a plan of government that would, in time, be applied to all the land included in the national domain.” Ibid., 165. This ordinance was a “compact between the original States and the people in the said territory. . . .” Ibid., 166.

<sup>38</sup> Skousen, *Making of America*, 676.

<sup>39</sup> Graff, *America*, 166.

<sup>40</sup> Thomas Jefferson, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Paul Leicester Ford, 10 volumes, vol. 10 (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1892-99), 152, as quoted in Skousen, *Making of America*, 234.

He said, “A more beautiful or precious morsel of ethics I have never seen; it is a document in proof that I am a *real Christian*, that is to say, a disciple of the doctrines of Jesus....”<sup>41</sup>

The founders took great precautions to preclude Congress from establishing a Church of the United States where membership, offerings, and beliefs were required by law like the Church of England. They were all too familiar with the suffering that would inevitably result when a government made tyrannical demands for religious support in violation of any citizen’s conscience. However, they did not desire to separate government from the influence of religion or religious people. Nor did they desire to separate religion from public life and education. On the contrary, they actually sought to accommodate and foster religion in public life and education.

To ensure that religion and morals drawn from religion were taught in public schools, the founders emphasized the commonalities they believed all religions and denominations believed. For example, Jefferson wrote a bill for Virginia schools that emphasized this point, which read, “No religious reading, instruction or exercise shall be prescribed or practiced inconsistent with the tenets of any religious sect or denomination.”<sup>42</sup> Samuel Adams referred to these unifying tenets of religion as “the religion of America [which is] the religion of all mankind.”<sup>43</sup> John Adams called these tenets the “general principles” on which the American civilization had been founded.<sup>44</sup> Jefferson identified them as the principles “in which God has united us all.”<sup>45</sup> These were what Benjamin Franklin considered the “fundamental points in all sound religion. He summarized them in a letter to Ezra Stiles, president of Yale University”<sup>46</sup>

1. Recognition and worship of a Creator who made all things.
2. That the Creator has revealed a moral code of behavior for happy living which distinguishes right from wrong.
3. That the Creator holds mankind responsible for the way they treat each other.
4. That all mankind live beyond this life.
5. That in the next life individuals are judged for their conduct in this one.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> In a letter to Charles Thompson in 1816, referring to The Jefferson Bible, compiled by Thomas Jefferson, (New York: Grosset and Dunlap), as quoted from the Copyright 1940 Wilfred Funk, Inc. edition foreword, viii. This is not to say that Jefferson was not also fond of the Classical Greek and Roman moral philosophers. Furthermore, this is not intended to define Jefferson as a Christian.

<sup>42</sup> John William Randolph, *Early History of the University of Virginia, as Contained in the Letters of Thomas Jefferson and Joseph C. Cabell* (Richmond: 1856), 96-97, as quoted by Skousen, *Making of America*, 676.

<sup>43</sup> William V. Wells, *The Life and Public Services of Samuel Adams*, 3 Volumes, vol. 3, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1865), 23, as quoted by Skousen, *Making of America*, 677.

<sup>44</sup> Albert Ellery Bergh, ed., *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, 20 Volumes, vol. 13, (Washington: Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1907), 290-294 as quoted by Skousen, *Making of America*, 677.

<sup>45</sup> Bergh, *Writings of Jefferson*, vol. 14, 198, as quoted by Skousen, *Making of America*, 677.

<sup>46</sup> Benjamin Franklin, *The Writings of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Albert Henry Smyth, 10 Volumes, vol.10, (New York: Macmillan Co., 1905-7), 84, as quoted in Skousen, *Making of America*, 677.

<sup>47</sup> Skousen, *Making of America*, 677.

According to Dr. Cleon Skousen, “These are the beliefs which the Founders sometimes referred to as the ‘religion of America,’ and they felt these fundamentals were so important in providing ‘good government and the happiness of mankind’ that they wanted them taught in the public schools along with morality and knowledge.”<sup>48</sup>

Further evidence of the prominence of religion in education in the U.S. is seen in the use of the Bible as a textbook. In addition, the McGuffey’s Readers, which were overtly religious and moralistic texts from a Christian worldview, were widely used for over eighty years.<sup>49</sup>

Whether one agrees with the founders and the history of America mixing religion, morals and public education, it does seem that the founders and populace saw it as essential to good education and good government. They simply did not entertain the idea of teaching or advancing an atheistic or naturalistic view of life. Therefore, historically, the founders and citizens up to the latter half of the twentieth century interpreted the Constitution to endorse teaching religion in the public domain.<sup>50</sup>

### **It is ethically demanded**

Since the founders deemed religion to be so important to education and government, and since religion played such an important part in the history of America, and indeed in the world, it is essential that the role of religion in the development of ideas of man, cultures, behaviors, and progress be taught. To ignore or mention religion disproportionately is to revise rather than teach history. Following are a few facts that can demonstrate the profound and pervasive influence of religion in general, and specifically in this case, Christianity.

We have all heard of the Pilgrims, but many fail to grasp who they actually were. They were Puritans who eventually separated from the Anglican Church and became known as Separatists. Henry Graff says, “Some Puritans feared that the Anglican Church could never be ‘purified.’ Among them were a band of humble folk from Nottinghamshire, in central England, who called for a total break with the Anglicans. For that reason they

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<sup>48</sup> Skousen, *Making of America*, 677.

<sup>49</sup> “This series of schoolbooks teaching reading and moral precepts, originally prepared by William Holmes McGuffey in 1836, had a profound influence on public education in the United States. McGuffey was a professor at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, and a Presbyterian minister.... As a young schoolmaster, McGuffey had used the eighteenth-century Puritans' *New England Primer*, Noah Webster's *American Spelling Book*, and the Bible. His *Eclectic First Reader* and *Eclectic Second Reader* were published in 1836, the *Third* and *Fourth* in 1837. They contained stories of widely varied subject matter appealing to youngsters and taught religious, moral, and ethical principles that reflected both McGuffey's personality and society at the time.... The books passed through a series of seven owners while their content evolved during almost a hundred years of publication.... The revised texts issued in 1857...moved away from the Calvinist values of salvation, righteousness, and piety and reflected the morality and cultural values of a broader American society that had incorporated religion within the civil structure. The 1879 editions taught morality and good character to the emerging middle class and provided children with a common knowledge and worldview.... By 1879 more than 60 million had been sold, and by 1920 over 122 million. In 1978 they were still in use in some school systems.”

[http://college.hmco.com/history/readerscomp/rcah/html/ah\\_058200\\_mcguffeysrea.htm](http://college.hmco.com/history/readerscomp/rcah/html/ah_058200_mcguffeysrea.htm), dated 5-28-04.

<sup>50</sup> This is not to say that one cannot find individuals who wanted total separation, but rather I mean that it was the common sentiment and practice to blend them together.

were called Separatists.”<sup>51</sup> Puritans believed that the Church of England was corrupt, but she could be purified; however, Separatists believed that she had strayed too far from the Scripture to be purified and the only way for them to remain faithful to the Scripture was to separate from her. The Pilgrims took their name from the Bible, in 1 Peter 2:11, because they were sojourners, “wanderers in search of a new homeland.”<sup>52</sup>

In 1606 they organized themselves into a secret Separatist church in England. As soon as they organized themselves as a local congregation of believers set on following the teaching of Christ as they understood the Scripture:

They were persecuted by the Church and civil authorities. They had to hide and move from place to place; their homes were watched; they were thrown into jail. Robinson and his followers finally decided there was nothing else for them to do but leave England if they were to worship according to the Word of God.

They planned to cross the sea to Holland and religious liberty.... They arranged for an English captain to take them there, but when they got into the longboats to go out to the ship, he betrayed them. They were robbed of their money and possessions, brought back to the magistrates, and thrown into prison. They were finally released, and after facing many other difficulties, they finally arranged with a Dutch captain to sail to Amsterdam.<sup>53</sup>

The Pilgrims were humble farmers and trades people who left everything in search of religious freedom. In 1609 they moved to Leyden, Holland where they established the first congregational church.<sup>54</sup> After eleven years, they decided to leave Holland primarily because they believed that there was too much impiety and ungodliness among the Dutch, and this was corrupting their children. They became afraid of losing their church and the freedom to worship and live according to the Scripture; so they decided to head for the new world,<sup>55</sup> “After a fearful journey of sixty-six days, never coming up on the deck of the *Mayflower* because of the great gales and storms,”<sup>56</sup> they landed in New England. Since they landed outside of the jurisdiction of the Virginia Company, before disembarking, 41 of the 44 men aboard signed an agreement known as the Mayflower Compact. It was the first governing document for the new settlers in America, and the only one the Pilgrims would have. Therefore, it was their constitution—covenant as they called it. It says in part, “We, whose names are underwritten...having undertaken for the glory of God, and advancement of the Christian faith, and the honor of our King and country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the northern parts of Virginia; do by these presents, solemnly and mutually in the presence of God...covenant and combine

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<sup>51</sup> Graff, *America*, 72.

<sup>52</sup> Graff, *America*, 73.

<sup>53</sup> D. James Kennedy and Jerry Newcombe, *What if the Bible Had Never Been Written*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998), 82.

<sup>54</sup> John A. Schutz and Richard S. Kirkendall, *The American Republic*, (St. Louis, MO: Forum Press, 1978), 28.

<sup>55</sup> Kennedy and Newcombe, *What if the Bible*, 82-83

<sup>56</sup> Kennedy and Newcombe, *What if the Bible*, 83.

ourselves together into a civil body politic...”<sup>57</sup> This was a small group, insignificant in number, but all Americans are beneficiaries of their religious conviction and bravery. How can one understand the nature of our founding without understanding the Christian faith of the founders, without which there simply would have been no Pilgrims and no Americans?

Dr. M.E. Bradford demonstrates that the vast majority of those who signed the Constitution of the United States were professing Christians and were associated with orthodox churches. He identifies 28 as Episcopalians, 8 Presbyterians, 7 Congregationalists, 2 Lutherans, 2 Dutch Reformed, 2 Methodists, 2 Roman Catholics, and one whose religious affiliation is unknown today. He concludes that James Wilson of Pennsylvania, Hugh Williamson of North Carolina, and Benjamin Franklin were deists although he acknowledges Williamson’s deism is open to question.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Graff, *America*, 73.

<sup>58</sup> M.E. Bradford, *A Worthy Company* (Marlborough, New Hampshire: Plymouth Rock Foundation, 1982), v-vi as quoted by John Eidsmoe 1987 “The Framers of the Constitution: Christians or Deists?” *CWA Newsletter* (July): 3.

Furthermore the constituency of the United States in 1776 was composed accordingly:<sup>59</sup> “98 percent of Americans were Protestant Christians; 1.8 percent were Catholic Christians; .2 percent, or two-tenths of 1 percent, were Jewish. Therefore, 99.8 percent of the people in America in 1776 claimed to be Christians.”<sup>60</sup>

The writings of the time also demonstrate the influence of Christianity and the Bible upon their thinking. In a detailed study of the political writings of prominent Americans between 1760 and 1805 consisting of some 15,000 items, researchers identified “3,154

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<sup>59</sup> Isaac Kramnick and R. Laurence Moore dispute these statistics. The basis for their rejection is their claim that “the highest estimates for the late eighteenth century make only about 10-15 percent of the population church members.” They do not cite the reference for this statistic. Isaac Kramnick and R. Laurence Moore, *The Godless Constitution: The Case Against Religious Correctness*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996), 17. In response to their assertions, let me say; first, they mistakenly confuse statistics regarding ‘church membership’ with ‘claiming to be Christians’, which are two entirely different issues. Second, concerning the same basic time frame, Winthrop S. Hudson points out, “The American people were not as ‘unchurched’ in 1800 as the statistics would seem to imply.... The number of people attending Sunday morning worship in the 1830’s was usually three times the membership of a church. Furthermore, churches customarily computed their ‘constituency’ (those nominally related but not members) as approximately twice the number of attendants.” Winthrop S. Hudson, *Religion In America: An historical account of the development of American religious life*, 3rd edition, (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1981), 129-130. Another example of membership to attendees ratio can be found in the Danbury Baptist Association, who wrote Jefferson and “was an alliance of ‘twenty-six churches’ ... By the turn of the century [1800], William G. McLoughlin reported ‘a total of 1484 members, but this number could be multiplied by five to include all the nominal adherents of these churches.’” William G. McLoughlin, *New England Dissent, 1630-1883: The Baptists and the Separation of Church and State*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971) Vol. 2, 920,986, as quoted by Daniel L. Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson and the Wall of Separation between Church and State*, (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 21. “Religion...was an important element in the political strife of 1800.” James Parton, *Life of Thomas Jefferson: Third President of the United States*, (Boston: James R. Osgood, 1874), 570 as quoted by Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson*, 165, note 42. “The presidential election of 1800 was a major religious event.” Mark A. Noll, *One Nation under God?: Christian Faith and Political Action in America*, (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988), 75 as quoted by Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson*, 165-166, note 42. “The traditionally sensitive relation between religion and politics in the United States has rarely been more evident than in the presidential campaign of 1800.” Charles F. O’Brien, “The Religious Issue in the Presidential Campaign of 1800”, *Essex Institute Historical Collections* 107, No. 1 (1971): 82 as quoted by Dreisbach, , *Thomas Jefferson*, 166, note 42. Third, denominations like Baptists do not include the children of members as members until they personally profess their faith in Jesus Christ and are baptized. Fourth, in *Religion and The Founding of the American Republic*, a Library of Congress Exhibition, it says, “Against a prevailing view that eighteenth-century Americans had not perpetuated the first settlers’ passionate commitment to their faith, scholars now identify a high level of religious energy in colonies after 1700. According to one expert, religion was in the “ascension rather than the declension”; another sees a “rising vitality in religious life” from 1700 onward; a third finds religion in many parts of the colonies in a state of “feverish growth.” Figures on church attendance and church formation support these opinions. Between 1700 and 1740, an estimated 75 to 80 percent of the population attended churches, which were being built at a headlong pace.” See Section II “Religion in Eighteenth-Century America”, <http://lcweb.loc.gov/exhibits/religion/rel02.html>, dated 5-28-04. Finally, the first Great Awakening took place from about 1725-1770, right up to the time of drafting the Constitution, and one of the historical effects was a rise in church attendance and building new churches, see Hudson, *Religion in America*. Hudson says concerning the increase in members at this time, “The number in all denominations was large.” Hudson, *Religion in America*, 77.

<sup>60</sup> Benjamin Hart, “The Wall That Protestantism Built: The Religious Reasons for the Separation of Church and State, *Policy Review* (Fall 1988), 44 as quoted by D. James Kennedy and Jerry Newcombe in *What If Jesus Had never Been Born?*, revised edition (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001) 70.

quotations therein. The most widely quoted source of all was the Bible, accounting for 34% of all quotations....The contemporary writers most commonly quoted were Baronn Montesquieu of France and Sir William Blackstone of England, both orthodox Christians; third was John Locke, a Christian although not entirely orthodox.”<sup>61</sup>

My aim is not to prove that everyone in America at this time professed Christianity, that every founding father was a devoted born-again Christian, or that there were no deists, secularists, or unchurched, but rather to demonstrate that the influence of Christianity upon the forging of the United States of America was so profound that it is unethical to omit or marginalize its role, and therefore an accurate understanding of religion must be incorporated into state education.

Whether or not one agrees with the Christian worldview of the Pilgrims, Puritans, founders, or populace of the past generations should not be a factor in determining what is to be taught as history. State education has an ethical duty to teach about religion when religion is a part of the worldview of the men and women involved, the event being taught, or the genesis of the event. When religion is omitted, or presented disproportionately to its historical significance, then history is not taught and students are not educated. State education has a moral responsibility to present events as they were and as they are regardless if this requires mentioning religion, or a specific religion, disproportionately to the mention of other religions. Cultural equivalence or social engineering should not determine educational content; rather facts germane to the subject, in context, should determine curriculum. Therefore, it appears that the only way education can take place is to teach the religious nature of our history even if no one agrees with the religious ideas of history. Mentioning that people are religious is helpful, but for real understanding of how their religion influenced events or how their faith influenced their decisions requires exploration beyond merely acknowledging their faith.

In spite of the awe-inspiring, world changing contributions of religion in American history, religion is systematically omitted from state textbooks. Contrary to the reality of history, the importance of religion in the world, and the significant role of Christianity, in particular upon the founding and framing of America, Christianity and religion are often marginalized or ignored. Consequently, students are not taught history as it was, and the appreciation for the enormous contributions of religion to mankind is all but lost.

William J. Bennett, former U.S. Secretary of Education, states the current practice succinctly and poignantly: “In too many places in American public education, religion has been ignored, banned, or shunned in ways that serve neither knowledge, nor the Constitution, nor sound public policy. There is no good curricular or constitutional reason for textbooks to ignore, as many do, the role of religion in the founding of this country or its prominent place in the lives of many of its citizens. We should

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<sup>61</sup> Donald S. Lutz, “The Relative Influence of European Writers on Late Eighteenth-Century American Political Thought,” 78 *American Political Science Review* 189 (1984), 189-197 as quoted by Eidsmoe in “The Framers of the Constitution: Christians or Deists?,” 3, referring to research done by Professors Lutz and Charles S. Hyneman. John Eidsmoe is a constitutional law professor at Faulkner University in Montgomery, Alabama.

acknowledge that religion—from the Pilgrims to the civil rights struggle—is an important part of our history, civics, literature, art, music, poetry, and politics, and we should insist that our schools tell the truth about it.”<sup>62</sup>

The intentional omission of religion and the religious nature of the history of the United States, whether because of political correctness, multiculturalism, lack of interest or knowledge seems to be a well-recognized fact.<sup>63</sup> Ravitch says the result of bias guidelines used by various publishers is that “reading passages must not contain even an ‘incidental reference’ to anyone’s religion.”<sup>64</sup>

The extent of censorship of religion in state textbooks is borne out clearly by Dr. Paul Vitz, an educational psychologist, whose original research on this question is quoted extensively in books and articles on the subject. Dr. K. Alan Snyder summarizes his findings.

Dr. Vitz completed a study for the National Institute of Education to determine if public school textbooks were biased or censored. He concluded, “The answer to both is yes. And the nature of the bias is clear: Religion, traditional family values, and conservative political and economic positions have been reliably excluded from children's textbooks.”

In his study of 40 social studies texts for grades one through four, Vitz found that religion was usually treated as old-fashioned and unimportant to modern life. There was almost a total blackout on Christianity in America beyond the colonial period. He found it disturbing ‘that not one of the 40 books totaling 10,000 pages had one text reference to a primary religious activity occurring in representative contemporary American life.’

A significant instance of bias against religion was a text that had 30 pages on the Pilgrims, but not one word that even mentioned their religion.... The situation did not improve with fifth and sixth grade texts. Not one of the fifth grade books on American history mentioned the Great Awakening of the 18th century, the great revivals of the 19th century, or the Holiness and Pentecostal movements. Treatments of the 20th century showed profound neglect of anything religious.

The sixth grade world civilization texts were even worse. Mohammed's life gets considerably more coverage than the life of Jesus. Two texts talk about Mohammed, but never mention Jesus at all. In another, “The rise of Islam, Islamic culture, and Mohammed himself gets an 11-page section, plus other scattered coverage. The rise of Christianity gets almost nothing (a few lines on p. 116). In

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<sup>62</sup> William J. Bennett, *The De-Valuing of America: The Fight for our Culture and our Children*, (New York: Summit Books, 1992), 205.

<sup>63</sup> Diane Ravitch, *The Language Police: How Pressure Groups Restrict What Students Learn*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003) 99.

<sup>64</sup> Ravitch, *Language Police*, 22.



these books, then, it is not that great religious figures are totally avoided—it is that Jesus is avoided.<sup>65</sup>

This is indeed a long way from the moral and religious content of the New England Primer or the McGuffey's Readers used well into the twentieth century to educate millions of children. For politicians to demagogue revisionist history is shameful, but to find revisionist history in state education is unacceptable.

## **THE SOCIOLOGICAL BASIS FOR TEACHING RELIGION**

Contemporary society is unintelligible apart from past and present influences of religion. Therefore, it is essential to teach about religion in order for students to understand present-day society and the contributions from diverse cultures. However, as with history, the significance of religion in people's lives, national and world events, and its prevalence in culture is ignored or marginalized, and religious phenomena are often explained reductively by social scientists. Consider the following examples of contemporary hostility to religion.

### **Sociological deconstruction of religious faith**

Robert Bellah, a social scientist, spells out the predilection of social scientists toward a worldview that affords no real place for religion in the equation of cultural events. He delineates and explains the underlying assumptions of mainstream social sciences.

[By] positivism, reductionism, relativism, and determinism... I mean to refer only to, in the descriptive sense, their prejudices, their pre-judgments about the nature of reality. By positivism I mean no more than the assumption that the methods of natural science are the only approach to valid knowledge, and the corollary that social science differs from natural science only in maturity and that the two will become ever more alike. By reductionism I mean the tendency to explain the complex in terms of the simple and to find behind complex cultural forms biological, psychological or sociological drives, needs and interests. By relativism I mean the assumption that matters of morality and religion, being explicable by particular constellations of psychological and sociological conditions, cannot be judged true or false, valid or invalid, but simply vary with persons, cultures and societies. By determinism I do not mean any sophisticated philosophical view, but only the tendency to think that human actions are explained in terms of 'variables' that will account for them.

Religion, being unscientific, could have no reality claim in any case, though as a private belief or practice it may by some be admitted to be psychologically helpful for certain people.... There is, of course no God....the social scientist says a lot about the 'self,' he has nothing to say about the soul. The very notion of soul entails a divine or cosmological context that is missing in modern thought....The

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<sup>65</sup>K. Alan Snyder, "Who is Censoring Whom in Schools? Christians should be concerned about what's in textbooks today", published in the editorial and opinion page of the *Chronicle-Tribune*, Marion, IN (5 Sep 1993), as found on <http://www.snyders.ws/alan/writing/censor.htm>, 5-28-04.

traditional religious view found the world intrinsically meaningful...the modern view finds the world intrinsically meaningless, endowed with meaning only by individual actors, and the societies they construct, for their own ends.<sup>66</sup>

Patrick McNamara, professor of sociology at the University of New Mexico, offers an insight into why social scientists give so little attention to religion. “Sociologists tend to see concern for personal challenge—e.g. to get one’s own moral life in order—as somehow secondary to social challenge or the effort to identify and criticize those socioeconomic structures that inhibit the individual’s own group from attaining a fuller human existence.... In [the] typical social science analysis, the demands of the inner life are neglected and personal agency and autonomy exercised in the choice to examine one’s own life and put it in order according to an internalized ethic of repentance...is not acknowledged.”<sup>67</sup>

Edward O. Wilson, Pulitzer prize-winning world authority on ants, sums up the naturalistic view well. “Religion itself is subject to the explanations of the natural sciences...The final decisive edge enjoyed by scientific naturalism will come from its capacity to explain traditional religion, its chief competitor, as a wholly material phenomena.”<sup>68</sup>

Because of these biases, social scientists, naturalists, and those they influence often view religion as nothing more than a human construct. Therefore, they do not give due consideration to the truthfulness or reality of religious beliefs and the importance of them in the human experience. They seek to explain shifts in society from merely or primarily natural external determinants. According to *Sociology and the Human Experience*, “Sociology is the scientific study of social interaction among human beings.”<sup>69</sup> However, in its study, sociology seems unwilling to allow for the validity of the immaterial world, the religious genesis of much of the material or social phenomena, and all of the empirical evidence that might suggest the probability of the supernatural.

### **State school’s hostility toward religious faith**

G. Stanley Hall, former professor of Psychology at John Hopkins University, said, “We must overcome the fetichism of the alphabet, of the multiplication table, of grammars, of scales, and of bibliolatry.”<sup>70</sup> In 1901, sociologist Edward A. Ross called the free public

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<sup>66</sup> Huston Smith, *Why Religion Matters: The Fate of the Human Spirit in an Age of Disbelief*, (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 2001) 84-86.

<sup>67</sup> Patrick McNamara, “The New Rights View of the Family and Its Social Science Critics: A Study in Differing Presuppositions,” *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, Vol.47 (1985), 449-458, as quoted by Patrick F. Fagan, “Why Religion Matters: The Impact of Religious Practice on Social Stability”, *The Heritage Foundation*, No. 1064, January 25, 1996, <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Religion/BG1064.cfm>, 1/28/04, 23.

<sup>68</sup> Edward O. Wilson, *On Human Nature*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), 192 as quoted by Dan Blazer in *Freud vs. God*, (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1998) 114.

<sup>69</sup> Donald A. Hobbs and Stuart J. Blank, *Sociology and The Human Experience*, Third Edition, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 1982), 6-7.

<sup>70</sup>G. Stanley Hall, “The Ideal School As Based on Child Study,” in *Health, Growth, and Heredity: G. Stanley Hall on Natural Education*, eds. Strickland and Burgess, 115-116, delivered in a speech by Hall to

school “an engine of social control.”<sup>71</sup> In other words, the purpose of state schools was to conform the people to the needs of society—today known as social engineering. He was well aware of the ultimate displacement of religion and predicted “that the disestablishment of religion would be followed by the establishment of the school as the guarantor of social order.”<sup>72</sup> Such were the thoughts of the progressives concerning education at the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>73</sup>

While primary and secondary schools often fail to represent religion appropriately, and even shun the subject for fear of being sued,<sup>74</sup> many state colleges and universities are openly antagonistic toward and denigrating of religion. Their focus is particularly directed at Christianity, specifically those within Christianity known as fundamental, conservative, or evangelicals—which are often indiscriminately and pejoratively lumped together as the ‘Religious Right’.

Following are examples of the seriousness of the problem. Stephen L. Carter, William Nelson Cromwell Professor of Law at Yale University, said, “On America’s elite campuses, today, it is perfectly acceptable for professors to use their classrooms to attack religion, to mock it, to trivialize it, and to refer to those to whom faith truly matters as dupes, and dangerous fanatics on top of it.”<sup>75</sup>

Huston Smith, who has taught for thirty years at several prestigious universities including Berkley, in reference to the attitude of some prominent scientists who are unwilling to limit the scientific method in determining truth, said, “This is the kind of misreading of science that got us into the tunnel in the first place, for it belittles art, religion, love, and the bulk of the life we directly live by denying that those elements yield insights that are needed to complement what science tells us.”<sup>76</sup> He also states very candidly, “The modern university is not agnostic toward religion; it is actively *hostile* to it”<sup>77</sup> (italics added).

The NEA’s disregard of Judeo-Christian values is well documented, be it their equation of sexual orientation with race, representing homophobia as the only alternative to

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the NEA in 1901, as quoted by Diane Ravitch, *Left Back: A Century of Failed School Reforms*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000) 73.

<sup>71</sup> Ravitch, *Left Back*, 80.

<sup>72</sup> Ravitch, *Left Back*, 80.

<sup>73</sup> To see more of the thinking behind the Progressive Education Movement in the U.S. read Diane Ravitch, *Left Back*.

<sup>74</sup> Often the fear of being sued and losing are without warrant, but the potential of costly litigation has led to an inordinate fear of teaching religion in public schools, often infringing on student’s First Amendment rights. The <http://www.aclj.org/resources/studrts/curriculum/index.asp> has information on abuses and what can be done.

<sup>75</sup> Stephen L. Carter, *God’s Name in Vain: The Wrongs and Rights of Religion in Politics*, (New York: Basic Books, 2000) 187.

<sup>76</sup> Smith, *Religion Matters*, 187.

<sup>77</sup> Smith, *Religion Matters*, 96.

endorsing the homosexual lifestyle, opposing a moment of silence in schools, as well as promoting things like biological sex education and values clarification.<sup>78</sup>

Concerning the deleterious impact of diversity and multiculturalism on the value of Christianity, Alvin J Schmidt, professor of sociology at Illinois College, says, “Most diversity is considered diverse only insofar as it departs from Judeo-Christian principles and morality.”<sup>79</sup>

Sociologist Allan Wolfe, Director of Bois Center for Religion and American Life at Boston College, says of himself, “I am not, and never have been, a person of faith.”<sup>80</sup> However, he is quite candid about the hostility of academicians toward religion, when he says, concerning his book, “Yet nor do I write out of the kind of hostility to religion that has characterized so many academics, especially in the humanities and social sciences, who feel that they have an obligation, evangelical in its own way, to dismiss any kind of faith as hopelessly wrongheaded and anachronistic in a skeptical age.”<sup>81</sup>

When sociology views religion through the lens of naturalism, it will always seek to explain it as a social or psychological construct; merely the “product of individual choices.”<sup>82</sup> If religion is viewed as having no reality beyond a person’s choice then it will never be treated with the same respect as humanism or naturalism; thus, social scientists, educators, and others of the same mindset will never fully understand the driving force and importance of religion in the lives of people that results in the changing of cultures and the world. They will preclude themselves from understanding or correctly representing people of faith, and thereby consign their students to a mediocre understanding of the human experience.

Once in our political and legal cultures, deep devotional faith was seen as a valuable character trait. According to Stephen L Carter that has changed. He says that, “One sees a trend in our political and legal cultures toward treating religious beliefs as arbitrary and unimportant, a trend supported by a rhetoric that implies that there is something wrong with religious devotion. More and more, our culture seems to take the position that believing deeply in the tenets of one’s faith represents a kind of mystical irrationality, something that thoughtful, public-spirited American citizens would do better to avoid.”<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> *Education Reporter: The Newspaper of Education Rights*, 199: August 2002, <http://www.eagleforum.org/educate/2002/aug02/NEA-Resolutions.shtml>. These and other ideas are found in the article “Some NEA Resolutions Passed at 2002 Convention in Dallas”.

<sup>79</sup> Alvin J. Schmidt, *The Menace of Multiculturalism: Trojan Horse in America*, (Westport, Conn., Praeger Publishers, 1997), 6. Schmidt is Professor of Sociology at Illinois College in Jacksonville.

<sup>80</sup> Alan Wolfe, *The Transformation of American Religion, How We Actually Live Our Faith*, (New York: Free Press, 2003), vii.

<sup>81</sup> Wolfe, *Transformation*, viii.

<sup>82</sup> Wolfe, *Transformation*, 246.

<sup>83</sup> Stephen L. Carter, *The Culture of Disbelief: How American Law and Politics Trivialize Religious Devotion*, (New York: BasicBooks 1993), 6-7.

### **Psychological misdiagnosis of religious faith**

Not only is this found in education and sociology, but in the medical field as well. Professor David Larson of Duke University Medical School draws attention to similar biases in the mental health professions. “Consider *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*, the standard reference manual for the classification of mental illnesses, which essentially defines the practice of psychiatrists, clinical psychology, and clinical social work and is central to the practice, research, and financing of these professions. In the third edition, *religious examples were used only as illustrations in discussions of mental illness, such as delusions, incoherence, and illogical thinking*. The latest edition has corrected this bias”<sup>84</sup> (italics added). The fourth edition was right to correct this misrepresentation, but it did not correct the bias of the community that placed it there and allowed it to stand for so many years.

Another example is the *Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory* “one of the most widely used of all psychological tests...all the positive religion-connected traits—self-discipline, altruism, humility, obedience to authority, conventional morality—are weighted negatively...Conversely, several traits that religious people would regard as diminishing themselves, at least in some situations—self-assertion, self-expression, and a high opinion of oneself—are weighted positively.”<sup>85</sup>

Albert Ellis, Executive Director of the Institute for Rational-Emotive Therapy says concerning “devout or pious religionists, or devotees of religiosity.... It is my contention that both pietistic theists and dogmatic secular religionists—like virtually all people imbued with intense religiosity and fanaticism—are emotionally disturbed.”<sup>86</sup> In addition, if a person, with strong religious beliefs takes the RET Beliefs Inventory, the test results will indicate that the believer has some irrational beliefs, which in RET is a problem to be corrected.<sup>87</sup>

It seems that *many* state educators conceive of religion as archaic or inconsequential. Sociologists presume religion to be the result of human choices and societal variables, while psychology deems its value to be found at best therapeutic for some, and at worst leading to irrational beliefs, or illustrative of disorders. Moreover, it appears that these opinions are, at least in part, a consequence of state education’s unconditional acceptance of naturalism as the determiner of ‘real knowledge’, which cultivated an environment conducive to normalizing the obfuscation of the positive role and traits of religion and

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<sup>84</sup> David B. Larson and Susan S. Larson, “The Forgotten Factor in Physical and Mental Health: What Does the Research Show?” (Rockville, Md.: National Institute for Healthcare Research, 1994), as quoted by Fagan, “Why Religion Matters”, 22.

<sup>85</sup> Larson and Larson, “The Forgotten Factor” as quoted by Fagan, “Why Religion Matters”, 22.

<sup>86</sup> Albert Ellis (1983), *The case against religiosity* (New York: Institute for Rational-Emotive Therapy) 12-13, quoting himself (1984) “Rational-Emotive therapy (RET) and Pastoral Counseling: A Reply to Richard Wessler,” *The Personnel and Guidance Journal*, (January) 266.

<sup>87</sup> This is based on the RET “Beliefs Inventory” I have from Henderson State University, where I attended Graduate School from 1986-1988 to obtain a Masters Degree in Counseling. Ellis teaches that the concepts “certain people are evil, wicked and villainous, and should be punished” and “you need something other or stronger or greater than yourself to rely on” are irrational beliefs. This conclusion makes anyone who takes his faith seriously to be irrational because these kind of beliefs are essential to orthodox Christianity and many other supernatural religions.

magnification of the negative, thus leaving in its wake a privatized religion, having no public, educational, cultural, or legal value as a source of answers, knowledge, or morals, and thereby banished from the public and legal culture.<sup>88</sup>

The members of my immediate family have attended a total of seven state colleges and universities in four states. We have found the denigration of religion to be, with few exceptions, universal. My wife will graduate in December 2004 from a state university with a degree in secondary education. Additionally, I have approximately 150-200 college students in my church who attend a state university, and without exception, regardless of the subject—history, sociology, psychology, religion, geology, biology, etc., their faith is undermined and marginalized.

### **Legal curtailments of religious expression**

This is not meant to present a full look at the all the different cases of the twentieth century that have resulted in removing religious influence from where it once flourished, but rather simply to give the following as one of the most significant Supreme Court cases as an example.

In the 1947 *Everson v. Board of Education* case (1947 - 330 U.S.1), the Supreme Court applied the establishment clause to the states for the first time. It also imbued this guarantee with a firm separationist reading. Justice Hugo Black's words for the *Everson* majority proved a prophetic distillation of the establishment cases for the next four decades: "The 'establishment of religion' clause of the First Amendment means at least this: Neither *a state* nor the Federal Government can set up a church. Neither can pass laws which aid one religion, *aid all religions*, or prefer one religion over another....In the words of Jefferson, the clause against establishment of religion by law was intended to erect "a wall of separation between church and state"<sup>89</sup> (italics added).

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<sup>88</sup> The following text was from [http://www.aclj.org/news/040607\\_reagan\\_speech\\_religion.asp](http://www.aclj.org/news/040607_reagan_speech_religion.asp), 6/7/04.

President Reagan Addresses Ecumenical Prayer Breakfast in Dallas, Texas. August 23, 1984

I believe that faith and religion play a critical role in the political life of our nation – and always has....And this has worked to our benefit as a nation. ... Those who are attacking religion claim they are doing it in the name of tolerance, freedom, and open-mindedness. Question: Isn't the real truth that they are intolerant of religion?... They refuse to tolerate its importance in our lives. If all the children of our country studied together all of the many religions in our country, wouldn't they learn greater tolerance of each other's beliefs? We establish no religion in this country, nor will we ever. We command no worship. We mandate no belief. But we poison our society when we remove its theological underpinnings. We court corruption when we leave it bereft of belief. All are free to believe or not believe; all are free to practice a faith or not. But those who believe must be free to speak of and act on their belief, to apply moral teaching to public questions.

<sup>89</sup> John Witte Jr., Professor of Law, Emory University, Religious Liberty-Overview, First Amendment Center [http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org/rel\\_liberty/index.aspx](http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org/rel_liberty/index.aspx), 1/28/04, 9 of 12. Although Black referred to Jefferson's 'wall', he actually modified Jefferson's 'wall', which prohibited the federal government from restricting freedom of conscience in religion by prohibiting the "Congress" from making any laws that established a national church, or in any way limited free exercise of religious opinions or infringed upon the states right to determine these things. Black's modification encroaches upon state rights and limits free exercise. The difference between Black's and Jefferson's 'wall' is clear when one compares Black's words to Jefferson's 2nd inaugural address March 4, 1805, and the fact that as Governor of Virginia he gave a proclamation appointing a day of "publick and solemn thanksgiving and prayer" in November

Justice Hugo Black<sup>90</sup> elevated Jefferson's 'wall of separation' "to [an] authoritative gloss on the First Amendment religion provisions."<sup>91</sup> This ruling opened the door for a host of lawsuits against states and provided legal recourse for excessively delimiting the theretofore freedom and influence of religion in our culture. The problem with the metaphor is threefold. First, it is inadequate to completely and accurately capture the language of the First Amendment. Second, Black de-historicized the phrase and thereby distorted its original meaning; third, while he relied upon Jefferson's metaphor, he expanded the applicability of it and the First Amendment beyond what Jefferson intended and thereby reconceptualized the First Amendment. It is important to recognize that the phrase 'a wall of separation' does not appear in the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution, but as quoted by Justice Black, came from a letter that Thomas Jefferson had written to a group of Baptists in Danbury, Connecticut.<sup>92</sup>

However, Roger Williams, a clergyman, a staunch advocate of religious freedom, and the "founder of Rhode Island"<sup>93</sup> used the phrase before Jefferson. Therefore, before looking at Jefferson's use of the phrase, one needs to be familiar with how Williams used it. In order to understand the metaphor, one has to understand the man and the times. Williams

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1779, Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson*, 137, Appendix 4. Black separates religion and all civil government "by incorporating the First Amendment nonestablishment provision into the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, Black's wall separates religion and civil government at all levels—federal, state, and local. Thus, a barrier originally designed, as a matter of federalism, to separate the national and state governments, and thereby to preserve state jurisdiction in matters pertaining to religion, was transformed into an instrument of the federal judiciary to invalidate policies and programs of state and local authorities. By extending its prohibitions to state and local jurisdictions, Black turned the First Amendment, as ratified in 1791, on its head." Dreisbach *Thomas Jefferson*, 125-126. Black also used the words "high and impregnable" (see *Everson*, 330 U.S. at 18), which Jefferson did not use. Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson*, 125. Fences were a common sight in New England, but they were not 'high and impregnable'. Black's wall has been called an iron curtain, when it should have been seen as a line or a wall between neighbors. Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson*, 92. The Supreme Court has de-historicized the phrase and thereby made it merely mechanical rather than organic. Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson*, 123. The First Amendment clearly restricted government, since it explicitly forbids making laws—"congress shall make no law"—which only government, and in this case federal government, can do. The wall metaphor restricts both religion and government, which is not what the First Amendment was intended to do. Even the use of Jefferson's 'wall' is inherently flawed; since, one may rightly ask why use Jefferson as the sole interpreter of the First Amendment? His 'wall' metaphor was not used until 10 years after the adoption of the First Amendment; consequently, Jefferson's 'wall' was not even considered in making or ratifying the First Amendment. Additionally, why should any one citizen's opinion or words replace the opinion and words adopted by all of the people, and why someone's words who was not at the Constitutional Convention or in the country when the First Amendment was adopted? Finally, why allow a metaphor to displace the wording of the First Amendment, especially when the metaphor is inadequate to capture the full breadth of the First Amendment? Therefore, it is crucial when discussing the First Amendment to use First Amendment wording rather than a flawed metaphor.

<sup>90</sup> The first time Jefferson was quoted in a Supreme Court case was in the 1878 case of *Reynolds v. United States*, stating that Jefferson's term 'wall of separation between church and state' may be accepted almost as an authoritative declaration of the scope and effect of the [First] Amendment. However, this was the first time it was applied to states and expanded by the wording of the decision.

<sup>91</sup> Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson*, 4.

<sup>92</sup> Kennedy and Newcombe, *What if Jesus*, 75.

<sup>93</sup> Stow Persons, *American Minds: A History of Ideas*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1958), 53.

was a Puritan who eventually separated from the Church of England, then became a Baptist in 1639 for a short time, and later became a seeker.<sup>94</sup> Williams adamantly rejected the idea that the civil authorities had any jurisdiction over the church or spiritual matters, unlike his Puritan brothers in Massachusetts. “Therefore he declared that the state should not undertake to punish such purely religious offenses as idolatry, blasphemy, heresy, or sabbath-breaking. No attempt should be made to maintain religious conformity by law; nor should civil penalties be imposed on sinful persons. The entire religious realm should be removed from the sphere of competence of the state.”<sup>95</sup> These views kept him in constant conflict with the Puritan leaders, and Williams was banished in 1635 from the jurisdiction of the Bay colony.<sup>96</sup>

The theological basis for ‘a wall of separation’ grew out of Williams’s understanding of the church being based on the New Testament model instead of the Old Testament with theocratic Israel as the model. “Drawing upon the analogy of Eden, he spoke of the church or community of the faithful as a garden. Beyond its bounds lay the wilderness of the sinful world from which the garden was preserved by a *wall of separation*. Should the *wall be breached, weeds from the wilderness would invade the garden and choke off its flowers*”<sup>97</sup> (italics added).

Notice that a breach in the wall allowed the wilderness—government—into the garden—church, and not the other way around. Because Williams believed in the corruption of man, he did not believe in government coercion of the unregenerate to belief in the teachings of Christ, declaration of an official state church, taxation of citizens to pay ministers, use of civil power to assure religious conformity or preserve the church from doctrinal error. Williams said, “So far as the natural man was corrupt and sinful, the power of the magistrate must be the power of Satan. How could the protection of the church safely be entrusted to such a power?”<sup>98</sup> Therefore, the wall of separation was a separation of institutions, so that the government or world, ‘wilderness’ would, not corrupt the church, ‘garden’.

Stow Persons sums up Williams’s influence. “In later times, when it became the fashion to extol Williams for his principles of liberty of conscience and the separation of church and state, his fame was celebrated by liberals who would break the remaining shackles of official religious power over the state. But it was *precisely the opposite situation* that had concerned Williams. *It was the release of religion from the incubus of state control for which he contended*. Why? Because the state was the instrument of natural men. It was the wilderness, evil, and the domain of the devil. It tended, therefore, in the nature of things to be corrupt. It was the corruption of the church by the world that stood out in Williams’s mind as the great fact of modern history”<sup>99</sup> (italics added).

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<sup>94</sup> Persons, *American Minds*, 53.

<sup>95</sup> Persons, *American Minds*, 52.

<sup>96</sup> Persons, *American Minds*, 52.

<sup>97</sup> Persons, *American Minds*, 54.

<sup>98</sup> Persons, *American Minds*, 57.

<sup>99</sup> Persons, *American Minds*, 59.



Therefore, in Williams' original figurative expression, the wall was not to protect the wilderness—government and world—from the garden—church—but the very opposite<sup>100</sup>. This fact is demonstrated by Williams's service as the President of Rhode Island for three years beginning in 1654,<sup>101</sup> along with his public ridicule of the Quakers' beliefs and practices, finding them unfit for certain public offices because of their religious beliefs like pacifism, which would, in his estimation, make them poor governors.<sup>102</sup> "Williams himself linked religion to morals, and he expected magistrates in Rhode Island to enforce the second table of the Ten Commandments."<sup>103</sup> Since Williams believed that the second table<sup>104</sup> of the Ten Commandments was appropriate for civil law,

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<sup>100</sup> The following quotations are from Roger Williams, *The Bloody [Bloody] Tenent of Persecution for Cause of Conscience*, Richard Groves, ed., (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 2001), 3-4. Williams gives 12 theses, which are developed in the book as he engages John Cotton concerning the freedom of conscience. To summarize them, numbers 1-4 are against people being persecuted by the government because of their religious faith, or as he puts it, 'persecution for conscience sake' "is not required nor accepted by Jesus Christ the Prince of Peace." Numbers 5 and 8-11 address specifically the role of states, which is civil not spiritual, in Williams' words, over 'bodies and goods, not souls and spirits.' Numbers 8-10 use the phrase 'enforced uniformity of religion' to argue against the civil state forcing people to embrace a certain religion that "is the greatest occasion of...ravishing of conscience...and destruction of millions of souls. Number 11 argues that freedom of conscience to worship contrary to the state results in the good of the civil state through "uniformity of civil obedience". Numbers 6-7 give the theological basis for his position, which is that the Old Testament state of Israel is not the pattern to be followed since the coming of Jesus Christ. The pattern is "permission of the most paganish, Jewish, Turkish, or anti-Christian consciences and worships be granted to all...and they are only to be fought against with...the sword of God's Spirit, the word of God." Number 12 declares, "True civility and Christianity may both flourish in a state or kingdom, notwithstanding the permission of divers and contrary consciences, either of Jew or Gentile." In summary, Williams argued about just laws "concerning only the bodies and goods of such and such religious persons, I confess are merely civil." 156. State laws of religion that require obedience in areas such as worship, belief, church governance, etc., are "far from reason." 156-157. Sometimes he referred to the domain of the church as the first tablet, and the government as the second tablet – referring to the first four and the last six, respectively, of the Ten Commandments. The real issue today concerning the 'wall of separation' is obscured when it is forgotten that Williams argued against the government passing laws that required obedience in areas covered by the first tablet. It was not merely the government doing something like allowing prayers at school games, but rather that they would require everyone to pray or suffer due penalty. The loss of historical context is seen clearly in the words that are used. Today, when religious symbols or words are used in public forums, people claim a violation of church and state because: someone is embarrassed, doesn't agree, potentially influenced, feel peer pressure, uncomfortable, inconvenienced, asked or called upon. In contrast, Williams used words like persecution, 11; forced, 146; violated, 6; constrained, 6; bloody act of violence, 7; rape, 7; commander, 14; violent, 14; imprisonment, 15; banishment, 15; compel, 15; molest, 14; kill, 17; devour, 17; etc. Note the words in the title of his book, 'Bloody' [Bloody] and 'Persecution', and he wrote another book, *The Bloody Tenent Yet More Bloody*. He and the Baptists fought so that everyone could worship according to the dictates of their own conscience without being prosecuted by the government for violation of the law. They were not fighting to remove every vestige of religion from government or public life, regardless how inconvenient it is for citizens. They fought for freedom of conscience, not freedom of comfort.

<sup>101</sup> Kramnick and Moore, *Godless Constitution*, 53.

<sup>102</sup> Kramnick and Moore, *Godless Constitution*, 58. Although Williams adamantly disagreed with the Quakers' teaching and did not see them fit for certain public offices because of it, he would not allow government to punish them for their beliefs. They were free to worship according to their conscience.

<sup>103</sup> Kramnick and Moore, *Godless Constitution*, 60.

<sup>104</sup> Williams referred to the second table as "the doctrine of the civil state" and the first table as "the spiritual doctrine of Christianity." Williams, *Bloody Tenent*, 146. Therefore, the commandments dealing with men's bodies, relationships, and things, e.g. adultery, lying, stealing, could become civil laws, but the first four commandments dealing with a person's relationship and worship of God or no worship of God or

but the first table was not, it seems that his message could be summarized as: the ‘wall of separation’ would be breached if the church and state were to become so intertwined that the state passes laws regarding the first tablet, which required observance or punishment by the state. For Williams, this would be the bloody persecution of conscience. This reminds us that just because a belief is religious does not mean that it has no place in the public square.<sup>105</sup>

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worship of a different God than the state or everyone else could not become civil law, which required citizens to obey or be punished. This division between the first and second tablet can be seen in John Leland, a Baptist preacher, who “emerged a leader among the Commonwealth’s Baptists. He was instrumental in allying the Baptists with Jefferson and Madison in the bitter Virginia struggle to disestablish the Anglican Church and to secure *freedom for religious dissenters*.” Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson*, 13 (italics added). According to L.H. Butterfield, Leland “was as courageous and resourceful a champion of the rights of *conscience* as America has produced.” L.H. Butterfield, “Elder John Leland, Jeffersonian Itinerant,” *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 62 (1952): 157, as quoted by Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson*, 13 (italics added). Leland, who allied with the Baptists, supported Jefferson because of his commitment to “the rights of *conscience*.” Herbert M. Morais, “Life and Words of Elder John Leland” (M.A. thesis, Columbia University, 1928), 44-50 as quoted by Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson*, 13, (italics added). This did not refer to separating religious beliefs from politics, but rather allowed one to be able to believe according to his own conscience without government interference. Leland celebrated Jefferson’s election from his pulpit. Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson*, 10. He preached in a congressional church service 1/3/1802, and Jefferson attended. By conscience, they referred to the first table of the Ten Commandments as Williams did. Conscience refers to ‘opinions’ referred to by Jefferson and the Danbury Baptists in their correspondence. Jefferson said, “The legitimate powers of government reach actions only and not opinions.” The Baptists said, “The legitimate power of civil government extends no further than to punish the man who works ill to his neighbor.” These are the same as the second tablet. Jefferson. “The legitimate powers of government extend to such acts only as are injurious to others...that the opinions of men are not the object of civil government nor under its jurisdiction.” From Jefferson’s writings, as quoted by Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson*, 182; see also the complete bill for establishing religious freedom in Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson*, 133-135. Tablet one dealt with worship and opinions, and the second with relations toward other men, which was appropriate for civil law as distinguished by Williams. Leland said, “Government has no more to do with the religious opinions of men, than it has with the principles of mathematics. Let every man speak freely without fear, maintain the principles that he believes, worship according to this own faith, either one God, three Gods, no God or twenty Gods; and let government protect him in so doing, i.e., see that he meets with no personal abuse, or loss of property, for his religious opinions.” John Leland, *The Rights of Conscience Inalienable* (New-London, Conn.: 1791) in *The Writings of the Late Elder John Leland*, 184 as quoted by Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson*, 167, note 47.

<sup>105</sup> Other evidence that Williams did not intend to create a secular public square are: “In pursuit of his political aims, Williams spent much of his time lobbying members of Parliament.” Richard Groves, preface of *Bloudy Tenent*, vii. Roger Williams’s religious views formed his political views and actions, like establishing Rhode Island “with the famous guarantee of religious liberty.” Robert G. Torbet, *A History of the Baptists*, third ed., (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1963), 202. Williams named the place where he purchased the land from the Indians, Providence, “in a sense of God’s merciful Providence to me in my distress.” Williams, *Bloudy Tenent*, xxiii. He said of oaths, “an oath may be spiritual though taken about earthly business.” Williams, *Bloudy Tenent*, 157. “Civil government is an ordinance of God, to conserve the civil peace of people so far as concerns their bodies and goods...and foundation of civil power lies in the people.” Williams, *Bloudy Tenent*, 154. One cannot use the argument of ‘separation of church and state’ to exclude or limit religious involvement in public life since the argument is based on a religious argument from Roger Williams. See the responses to John Cotton in the *Bloudy Tenent*.

Actually, all of this is quite understandable,<sup>106</sup> because Williams never believed that a Christian left his morals or Christianity in the garden when he went into the wilderness. He knew the church had to go in the world in order to follow Christ (Matthew 5:13-16; 28:18-20). Those that seek to exclude religious views from public debate assert that religion is exclusively private; however, while religion in general and Christianity in particular is very personal, but it is not merely private. In fact, it is actually very public. The New Testament calls on Christians to follow Christ in private and public (Matthew 10:16). Williams's chief priority was the purity of the church, and his concern for government was a derivative of that priority. However, when he did concern himself with the government, he did so as a Christian.

Now concerning Jefferson's<sup>107</sup> use of the phrase, 'the wall of separation.' Daniel L. Dreisbach comments that one cannot begin to understand the phrase "apart from the extraordinary political milieu in which Jefferson wrote it."<sup>108</sup> At the time of the elections,

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<sup>106</sup> Kramnick and Moore, *Godless Constitution*, 60-61. Williams bringing his religious views into the political arena seems to confuse the authors, but their confusion actually arises out of erroneously concluding that Williams gave a "prescription for a godless politics." This is a misreading of Williams. He did not seek to create a secular square where religious input, morals, ideas, and accommodation were not welcome. They do acknowledge that when people take religion seriously "religion can never be private, in the sense of irrelevant to public issues". Williams clearly did bring his religious views into the public square. There is a categorical difference in having the government establish official required religious obedience and government being influenced by the views of the people whether religious or non-religious. There are some beliefs that religions hold to that they believe are good for society, and they should vote and encourage others to vote accordingly e.g. marriage between a man and a woman, against murder and stealing, etc. This is not promoting religion, but rather recognizing the right to allow religious people the same public right as non-religious people. Even if a person will only vote for a person of a certain religious or non-religious persuasion, that has no bearing on violating the principle of the church and state being separate. Williams believed that the second tablet could become civil law, but not the first tablet. See Williams, *Bloudy Tenent*. Free exercise of religion must include the freedom for a Christian to pray in public, and an atheist the freedom not to pray; a Christian official to speak about his faith and an atheist the freedom to speak about his atheism. It is not freedom of religion when the public square is silent about religion, for then the voice of the secularist mutes the First Amendment.

<sup>107</sup> Dreisbach quoting others in pages 208-209 demonstrates that many like Perry Miller and William G. McLoughlin in Dreisbach's footnote 44 have concluded that Williams's works had no influence upon the founders. However, Loren P. Beth, in *The American Theory of Church and State*, 65, said, "It is probably true that Madison and Jefferson were not familiar with the writings of Roger Williams, yet it does not follow that they did not know his doctrines. They were exceedingly familiar with Baptist views on religious liberty which had been expressed in hundreds of petitions and memorials presented to the state legislature. It is perfectly possible that some of their ideas stemmed thus indirectly from Williams." as quoted by Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson*, 208-209, note 44. David Little, in "Roger Williams and the Separation of Church and State," *Religion and the State: Essays in Honor of Leo Pfeffer*, 7-16, argues "Williams indirectly influenced the American struggle for religious liberty in the founding era through John Locke and Isaac Backus." as quoted by Dreisbach, 209, note 44. In addition, Williams was the first on American soil to argue for total freedom of conscience; he founded Rhode Island on this basis. Jefferson was well aware of the Baptist's same belief in freedom of conscience; they fought with him in the disestablishment of the church of Virginia, and supported his religious freedom views without which he may well not have been elected. Often we are influenced by people's views indirectly and only learn later who that person was. Moreover, if one takes into consideration the Christian milieu of the time, it makes perfect sense that Jefferson was aware of Baptist teachings in this area, of course many seek to marginalize the influence of Christianity upon our founding, in spite of the evidence.

<sup>108</sup> Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson*, 42.

“religion ...was an important element in the political strife.”<sup>109</sup> The phrase appears in

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<sup>109</sup> James Parton, *Life of Thomas Jefferson: Third President of the United States*, (Boston: James R. Osgood, 1874), 570 as quoted by Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson*, 165, note 42.

Jefferson's response<sup>110</sup> to a congratulatory letter<sup>111</sup> he received<sup>112</sup> from the Danbury

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<sup>110</sup> Jefferson's Reply to the Danbury Baptist Association:

Messrs. Nehemiah Dodge, Ephraim Robbins, and Stephen s. Nelson  
A Committee of the Danbury Baptist Association, in the State of Connecticut.  
Washington, January 1, 1802

Gentlemen,--The affectionate sentiment of esteem and approbation which you are so good as to express towards me, on behalf of the Danbury Baptist Association, give me the highest satisfaction. My duties dictate a faithful and zealous pursuit of the interests of my constituents, and in proportion as they are persuaded of my fidelity to those duties, the discharge of them becomes more and more pleasing. Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between man and his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legislative powers of government reach actions only, and not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature would "make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," thus building a wall of separation between Church and State. Adhering to this expression of the supreme will of the nation in behalf of the rights of conscience, I shall see with sincere satisfaction the progress of those sentiments which tend to restore to man all his natural rights, convinced he has no natural right in opposition to his social duties.

I reciprocate your kind prayers for the protection and blessing of the common Father and Creator of man, and tender you for yourselves and your religious association, assurances of my high respect and esteem. Thomas Jefferson, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Albert E. Bergh, ed. (Washington, D. C.: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association of the United States, 1904), Vol. XVI, 281-282.

<sup>111</sup> The following is the complete letter of the Danbury Baptists to Thomas Jefferson.

The address of the Danbury Baptist Association in the State of Connecticut, assembled October 7, 1801.  
To Thomas Jefferson, Esq., President of the United States of America  
Sir,

Among the many millions in America and Europe who rejoice in your election to office, we embrace the first opportunity which we have enjoyed in our collective capacity, since your inauguration, to express our great satisfaction in your appointment to the Chief Magistracy in the United States. And though the mode of expression may be less courtly and pompous than what many others clothe their addresses with, we beg you, sir, to believe, that none is more sincere.

Our sentiments are uniformly on the side of religious liberty: that Religion is at all times and places a matter between God and individuals, that no man ought to suffer in name, person, or effects on account of his religious opinions, [and] that the legitimate power of civil government extends no further than to punish the man who works ill to his neighbor. But sir, our constitution of government is not specific. Our ancient charter, together with the laws made coincident therewith, were adapted as the basis of our government at the time of our revolution. And such has been our laws and usages, and such still are, [so] that Religion is considered as the first object of Legislation, and therefore what religious privileges we enjoy (as a minor part of the State) we enjoy as favors granted, and not as inalienable rights. And these favors we receive at the expense of such degrading acknowledgments, as are inconsistent with the rights of freemen. It is not to be wondered at therefore, if those who seek after power and gain, under the pretense of government and Religion, should reproach their fellow men, [or] should reproach their Chief Magistrate, as an enemy of religion, law, and good order, because he will not, dares not, assume the prerogative of Jehovah and make laws to govern the Kingdom of Christ.

Sir, we are sensible that the President of the United States is not the National Legislator and also sensible that the national government cannot destroy the laws of each State, but our hopes are strong that the sentiment of our beloved President, which have had such genial effect already, like the radiant beams of the sun, will shine and prevail through all these States--and all the world--until hierarchy and tyranny be destroyed from the earth. Sir, when we reflect on your past services, and see a glow of philanthropy and goodwill shining forth in a course of more than thirty years, we have reason to believe that America's God has raised you up to fill the Chair of State out of that goodwill which he bears to the millions which you preside over. May God strengthen you for the arduous task which providence and the voice of the people have called you--to sustain and support you and your Administration against all the predetermined opposition of those who wish to rise to wealth and importance on the poverty and subjection of the people. And may the Lord preserve you safe from every evil and bring you at last to his Heavenly Kingdom through Jesus Christ our Glorious Mediator.

Baptists.<sup>113</sup> He used the occasion of the missive “first, to broadcast a ‘condemnation of

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Signed in behalf of the Association,  
Neh, h Dodge }  
Eph' m Robbins } The Committee  
Stephen S. Nelson }

Letter of Oct. 7, 1801 from Danbury (CT) Baptist Assoc. to Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Jefferson Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>112</sup> Fig. 3.3 “Comparison of Four Texts”, Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson*, 49.

Jefferson’s “Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom” (1779)  
Jefferson’s *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Query XVII (1780s)  
Danbury Baptist Association’s letter to Jefferson (Oct. 1801)  
Jefferson’s letter to Danbury Baptist Association (Jan. 1802)

But our rulers can have authority over such natural rights only as we have submitted to them. The rights of conscience we never submitted, we could not submit. We are answerable for them to our God.

Religion is at all times and places a Matter between God and Individuals

religion is a matter which lies solely between Man & his God

no man... shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer, on account of his religious opinions or belief

no man ought to suffer in Name, person or effects on account of his religious Opinions

that the opinions of men are not the object of civil government, nor under its jurisdiction; that to suffer the civil magistrate to intrude his powers into the field of opinion and to restrain the profession or propagation of principles... is a dangerous falacy, which at once destroys all religious liberty...; that it is time enough for the rightful purposes of civil government for its officers to interfere when principles break out into overt acts against peace and good order...

The legitimate powers of government extend to such acts only as are injurious to others. But it does me no injury for my neighbour to say there are twenty gods, or no god. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg.

the legitimate Power of civil Government extends no further than to punish the man who works ill to his neighbour

the legitimate powers of government reach actions only, & not opinions

[man] has no natural right in opposition to his social duties

<sup>113</sup> One cannot understand the phrase ‘wall of separation’ unless one understands, along with Roger Williams, the Baptists and their insistence on “the voluntary principle in religion” which means “that for faith to be valid, it must be free.” Williams, *Bloudy Tenent*, xiii-xiv. They suffered and fought for the freedom to worship according to the dictates of one’s own conscience. They suffered abroad and in New England because they refused to baptize babies. They “insisted upon their right to worship in their own way and in their own churches”, and were “haled before the Salem Court.” Torbet, *History*, 203. “Henry Dunster, first president of Harvard College, was compelled to resign his office in 1654, after twelve years of service, because he had accepted Baptist views and refused to remain silent on the subject of baptism... Dr. John Clarke, the founder of the Baptist church at Newport, was fined; and Obadiah Holmes... was imprisoned and whipped in Boston for having preached against infant baptism.” Torbet, *History*, 203-204 The Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1691 had religious toleration and not freedom, consequently, Baptists were not exempted from support of state churches with their taxes, and they thought this unconscionable, and fought it for years, experiencing both victories and setbacks. Torbet, *History*, 234-235. Beginning in 1768 in Virginia, until the outbreak of the Revolution, initiated by irate clergymen of

the alliance between church and state, under the authority of the Constitution' and, second, to explain why he declined to follow his presidential predecessors in issuing proclamations for public fastings and thanksgivings."<sup>114</sup> Generally, Baptists, dissenters,

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the established church, some "thirty-four ministers were imprisoned, some on several occasions." Wesley M. Gewehr, *The Great Awakening in Virginia, 1740-1790*, (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1930), 122, as quoted by Torbet, *History*, 240. "There is one case at least where a sheriff whipped a minister, John Waller, so severely that he carried the scars to his grave; but there is no proof that he was carrying out an order of the court." Lewis P. Little, *Imprisoned Preachers and Religious Liberty in Virginia; A Narrative Drawn Largely from the Official Records of Virginia Counties, Unpublished Manuscripts, Letters, and Other Original Sources*, (Lynchburg, Va., J.P. Bell, Co., 1938), 180-181 as quoted by Torbet, *History*, 240. "The established Congregational ministry...continued to dominate the institutions of politics and public policy in Connecticut at the start of the nineteenth century. The Baptists...reported...their 'religious privileges' were not recognized as 'inalienable rights.' They bitterly resented policies that required them to petition the established powers for modest religious privileges extended to them...The congregationalists and 'the Federalists...were so closely allied that the party of the government and the party of the [ecclesiastical] Establishment were familiarly and collectively known as 'the Standing Order'. Congregationalists enjoyed many privileges, and dissenters suffered many disabilities, both social and legal, under this regime. ...All citizens, Congregationalists and dissenters alike, had to pay taxes for the support of the established church, civil authorities imposed penalties for failure to attend church on Sunday or to observe public fasts and thanksgivings, and positions of influence in public life were reserved for Congregationalists. Dissenters were often denied access to meetinghouses, their clergy were not authorized to perform marriages, and dissenting itinerant preachers faced numerous restrictions and harassment by public officials. In the 1770s,...the legislature had begun to dismantle elements of the standing order. This development signaled...a growing spirit of toleration. Dissenters were permitted to worship in congregations of their own choosing, tax exemption was extended to the estates of clergymen from all denominations, and the Toleration Act of 1784 exempted dissenters from the tax for the Congregational Church upon certification that they were active members of another religious body. These modest concessions did not fully satisfy the Baptists...who were agitating for disestablishment and religious liberty. By the turn of the century, the standing order was beginning to unravel, although the Congregational Church was not formally disestablished until 1818. When they wrote to Jefferson in 1801, the Danbury Baptists understood that, as a matter of federalism, the national government had little authority to 'destroy' the odious 'Laws of each State.' Nevertheless, they hoped the new president's liberal sentiments on religious liberty would 'shine & prevail through all these States...till Hierarchy and tyranny be destroyed...The issue...to the Baptists was whether 'religious privileges' (and the rights of conscience) are rightly regarded as 'inalienable rights' or merely 'favors granted' and subject to withdrawal by the civil state. The Baptists, of course, believed that religious liberty was an inalienable right, and they were deeply offended that the religious privileges of dissenters in Connecticut were treated as favors that could be granted or denied by the political authorities. ...The Baptists described religion as an essentially private matter between an individual and his God. No citizen, they reasoned, ought to suffer civil disability on account of his religious opinions. The legitimate powers of civil government reach actions, but not opinions. These were principles Jefferson embraced, and he reaffirmed them in his reply to the Baptists." Selected text from Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson*, 32-34. These experiences provide the context of thoughts in the letter to President Jefferson

<sup>114</sup> Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson*, 43. The Congregationalists and Federalists had been railing Jefferson as an atheist because he did not proclaim days of fasting as his predecessors had. Even though this was part of the reason Jefferson responded, he eventually omitted the words that dealt specifically with this based on counsel from Attorney General Levi Lincoln. Actually Lincoln recommended modifying it, but Jefferson deleted the words, possibly fearing it would offend some of his Republican supporters in New England, Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson*, 46; or Jefferson may have abandoned it as one of his purposes in the letter as suggested by Henry S. Randall, *The Life of Thomas Jefferson*, 3 vols. (New York: Derby and Jackson, 1857), 3.2, as quoted by Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson*, 186, note 11. That this was one of Jefferson's objectives can be seen in his letter to Lincoln, Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson*, 43. Additionally, it is often erroneously stated that the Baptists had asked him to proclaim fast days, etc., but actually they did not. Jefferson says to Lincoln concerning the letter from the Danbury Baptists, "It furnishes an occasion...of

and Republicans were supporters of Jeffersonian Republicanism because of the emphasis of ‘religious freedom’ and the New England Congregationalists, establishment clergy, and Federalists were not because of their belief in a stronger relationship between state and church. In the letter he said, “believing with you that religion is a matter which lies *solely* between man and his God, *that he owes account to none other for his faith or worship*, that the legislative powers of government reach actions only and not options, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; thus building a wall of separation between church and state”<sup>115</sup> (italics added). Note that the wall protected the reality that a person’s faith and worship was between God and him alone. The wall protected man from having to give account for his faith to the government. Baptists had fought alongside Jefferson for the disestablishment of the established church in Virginia. The First Amendment phrase ‘Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion...’ was in that historical context.<sup>116</sup>

That this is Jefferson’s emphasis is even clearer in his second inaugural address when he said, “In matters of religion I have considered that its free exercise is placed by the Constitution *independent* of the power of the *General Government*. I have therefore *undertaken on no occasion to prescribe the religious exercises* suited to it, but have left them, as the Constitution found them, *under the direction and discipline of the church or state authorities acknowledged by the several religious societies*”<sup>117</sup> (italics added). Therefore, the phrase, along with the First Amendment, actually has for its purpose, providing for the freedom *of* religion not freedom *from* religion.<sup>118</sup> Therefore, in light of

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saying why I do not proclaim fastings and thanksgivings...the address to be sure does not point at this, and it’s [sic] introduction is awkward. But I foresee no opportunity of doing it more pertinently.” Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson*, 43. Further, Dreisbach says some scholars understand the desire he stated to Lincoln about using this occasion “of sowing useful truths & principles among the people” as an admission that the strong Separationist ideas in the missive were not widely held. Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson*, 44. In this same book in chapter 3, Dreisbach gives a full discussion and has photocopies of the original drafts of Jefferson’s missive.

<sup>115</sup> Church and State in Your Community (Philadelphia: WestMinister Press, 1964), 22.

<sup>116</sup> Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson*, 51-53. New England Baptists did not support Jefferson’s use of ‘wall of separation’ or his deism. No New England Baptists ever used the phrase.

<sup>117</sup> Plymouth Rock Foundation, *Biblical Principles concerning issues of importance to Godly Christians*, (Plymouth, Mass.: Plymouth Rock Foundation, 1984) 226. Constitutional law authority Edward S. Corwin says of this statement, “In short, the principal importance of the amendment lay in separation which it effected between the jurisdiction of state and nation regarding religion, rather than on its bearing on the question of the separation of church and state.” 227. “Jefferson’s ‘wall,’ strictly speaking, was a metaphoric construction of the First Amendment, which governed relations between religion and the *national* government. His ‘wall,’ therefore, did not specifically address relations between religion and *state* authorities. Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson*, 50. Dreisbach, commenting on this, says clearly, “Jefferson’s ‘wall,’ like the First Amendment, affirmed the policy of federalism. This policy emphasized that all governmental authority over religious matters was allocated to the states. The metaphor’s principal function was to delineate the legitimate jurisdictions of state and nation on religious issues. Insofar as Jefferson’s ‘wall,’ like the First Amendment, was primarily jurisdictional (or structural) in nature, it offered little in the way of a substantive right or universal principle of religious liberty. Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson*, 69.

<sup>118</sup> Further confirming that this was Jefferson’s understanding, he sent a letter to the Danbury Baptists on the same day, 1/1/1802, that Baptist Pastor John Leland brought him the Cheshire cheese as a betokening of



## Jefferson's practice as governor, communication with the Baptists, and his second

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celebration of his election as president. Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson*, 17. Leland accepted an invitation to preach in the House of Representatives 1/3/1802, which Jefferson attended, Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson*, 21, just 2 days after Jefferson used 'wall of separation' in his letter. Jefferson asked for prayer in his second inaugural address, Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson*, 174, note 11. In addition, "so far as the extant evidence indicates, he never again used the 'wall' metaphor," Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson*, 54. Notice that Jefferson concludes the Danbury letter with prayer as an official presidential act. "Yet, as president, he employed rhetoric in official utterances that, in terms of religious content, was virtually indistinguishable from the traditional thanksgiving day proclamations issued by his presidential predecessors.... In his first inaugural address... gratefully acknowledging 'an overruling Providence,' Jefferson wrote: 'And may that Infinite Power which rules the destinies of the universe, lead our councils to what is best, and give them a favorable issue for your peace and prosperity.' His first annual message to Congress brims with thanksgiving: 'While we devoutly return thanks to the beneficent Being who has been pleased to breathe into them the spirit of conciliation and forgiveness, we are bound with peculiar gratitude to be thankful to him that our own peace has been preserved through so perilous a season, and ourselves permitted quietly to cultivate the earth and to practice and improve those arts which tend to increase our comforts.' His second annual message opened with the following thanksgiving: 'When we assemble together, fellow citizens, to consider the state of our beloved country, our just attentions are first drawn to those pleasing circumstances which mark the goodness of that Being from whose favor they flow, and the large measure of thankfulness we owe for his bounty.' Jefferson concluded his second inaugural address by asking Americans to join with him in prayer that the 'Being in whose hands we are... will so enlighten the minds of your servants, guide their councils, and prosper their measures, that whatsoever they do, shall result in your good, and shall secure to you the peace, friendship, and approbation of all nations.' His public papers are replete with expressions of thanksgiving and devotion.... In marked contrast to the separationist message of the Danbury letter, Jefferson demonstrated a willingness to issue religious proclamations in colonial and state government settings. For example, as a member of the House of Burgesses, on May 24, 1774, he participated in drafting and enacting a resolution designating a 'Day of Fasting, Humiliation, and Prayer.' Jefferson recounted in his *Autobiography*: 'We were under conviction of the necessity of arousing our people from the lethargy into which they had fallen, as to passing events [the Boston port bill]; and thought that the appointment of a day of general fasting and prayer would be most likely to call up and alarm their attention.... [W]e cooked up a resolution... for appointing the 1<sup>st</sup> day of June, on which the portbill was to commence, for a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer to implore Heaven to avert from us the evils of civil war, to inspire us with firmness in support of our rights, and to run the hearts of the King and Parliament to moderation and justice.' .... In 1779, when Jefferson was governor of Virginia, he issued a proclamation appointing a 'day of publick and solemn thanksgiving and prayer to Almighty God.' (This proclamation was issued after Jefferson had penned his famous 'Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom.' Also, in the late 1770s, as chair of the Virginia Committee of Revisors, he was chief architect of a revised code that included a measure entitled, 'A Bill for Appointing Days of Public Fasting and Thanksgiving.'... The bill authorized 'the Governor, or Chief Magistrate [of the Commonwealth], with the advice of the Council,' to designate days for thanksgiving and fasting and to notify the public by proclamation.... 'Every minister of the gospel shall on each day so to be appointed, attend and perform divine service and preach a sermon, or discourse, suited to the occasion, in his church, on pain of forfeiting fifty pounds for every failure, not having a reasonable excuse.' Although the measure was never enacted, it was sponsored by Madison.... The final disposition of this legislation is unimportant to the present discussion. The relevant consideration here is that Jefferson and Madison jointly sponsored a bill that authorized Virginia's chief executive to designate days in the public calendar for fasting and thanksgiving." Selected texts from Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson*, 57-59. In light of these events, and that Jefferson did not draft the First Amendment, the 'wall' phrase should not be given the final word on the First Amendment. He was minister to France and was out of the country when the Bill of Rights was adopted. He neither participated in the Constitutional Convention, nor the First Federal Congress, which in the summer of 1789 debated the content of a provision which came to be known as the First Amendment that was later approved in September. Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson*, 98. In addition, "it is obviously incorrect to substitute this private opinion for the First Amendment." Joseph H. Brady, *Confusion Twice Confounded: The First Amendment and the Supreme Court: An Historical Study* (South Orange, N.J.: Seton Hall University Press, 1954), 74, as quoted by Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson*, 224.

inaugural address as president, it is clear that he emphasized a jurisdictional understanding of the First Amendment based on federalism and freedom of conscience. Thus, whether one looks at Williams, the Baptists, or Jefferson, the theist is free to follow God both privately and publicly, and the atheist is free not to.

Even the Supreme Court has noted the enormous influence of Christianity upon America.

In the Trinity Decision of 1892, the Supreme Court examined literally thousands of documents that had anything to do with the founding of this country—every state constitution, all of the compacts that led up to 1776, all of the various decisions of the courts. Finally, they said: “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 others which might be noticed, add a volume of unofficial declarations to the mass of organic utterances that this is a Christian nation.”<sup>119</sup>

Similar affirmations of Christianity’s influence on America can be found in speeches and writings of Supreme Court Justices like Earl Warren, Joseph Story,<sup>120</sup> and John Marshall as well as other significant historical persons.<sup>121</sup>

Maybe this is why Congress, in 1983, declared, “The Bible, the Word of God, has made a unique contribution <sup>122</sup>in shaping the United States as a distinctive and blessed

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<sup>119</sup> *Church of the Holy Trinity v. U.S.*; 143 U.S. 457, 465, 470-471 (1892) as quoted by Kennedy and Newcombe in *What if Jesus*, 73-74. “In 1931, US Supreme Court Justice George Sutherland reviews the 1892 decision and reiterates that Americans are a ‘Christian people’.” *Biblical Principles*, 365.

<sup>120</sup> Kennedy and Newcombe, *What if Jesus*, 57-58 & 75 respectively.

<sup>121</sup> Kennedy and Newcombe, *What if the Bible*, 99; also *Biblical Principles*, 353-368.

<sup>122</sup> Jim Allison, “A Big Fuss Over Nothing” as viewed on <http://candst.tripod.com/bigfuss.htm> 6/3/04, seeks to minimize the influence of religion or Christianity upon the founding of the United States by noting the paucity of references to God, religion, or Christianity in our founding documents. However, he makes several unfortunate mistakes; *first, he fails to understand the nature of the time*- It was their belief in God that led them to say what they said and omit what they did; thereby leaving religion to the domain of conscience and the individual states; *second, he supposes that Christianity would have to be specifically mentioned, and religion and God to be mentioned more for them to be significant*. Concerning God and religion, although he notes their mention, he quickly minimizes their significance based on the number of times they are mentioned. One wonders how many times does one have to mention God or religion before it is important. He deduces that the absence of the word ‘Christianity’ proves this was not a Christian nation. In response, no one ever said the term ‘Christian’ appeared in the Constitution, but rather the milieu of that day was religious and most prominently Christian, which is a fact of history. Only by de-historicizing the Constitution can one conclude that a nation, where the predominant worldview was Christian, would adopt a governing document contrary to that. In addition, to imply that because Christianity was not mentioned in the Constitution, it was not important to them is an argument from silence. For example, the Southern Baptist Convention did not incorporate Article III (1), which precludes membership to churches “which act to affirm, approve, or endorse homosexual behavior” (wording from Southern Baptist Convention Constitution) in their constitution until about 2000. However, to interpret its absence from the SBC Constitution as a prior endorsement of homosexuality would be a grave error indeed. Its absence was because historically there was no need to mention churches which act to affirm, approve, or endorse homosexual behavior since there was no such thing. Moreover, that a church which condoned

nation...Deeply held religious convictions springing from the Holy Scriptures led to the early settlement of our Nation...Biblical teaching inspired concepts of civil government

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homosexuality would not be accepted—if it did exist— was a given. *Lastly, his opinion that the overriding determiner that God, religion and/or Christianity were insignificant to the time or to the design of the founding documents because of the paucity of times they appear is misguided.* However, the significance of concepts or words in documents is better determined by weighing how they were used rather than by how many times they were used. By his method of counting, one must conclude that neither independence nor a declaration about independence is significant in the Declaration of Independence since the word declaration only appears once in the body and the word independence is absent. Furthermore, the Constitution would not have anything to do with liberty since it only appears once in the entire Constitution.

that are contained in our Declaration of Independence and the Constitution<sup>123</sup> of the United States.”<sup>124</sup>

## Cultural hostility is unwarranted

### Society

The empirical evidence attests to the importance of religion in people’s lives today. Gallup polls indicate that 83% of Americans identify themselves as Christian, 2% as

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<sup>123</sup> The following are phrases that relate to God or religion in our five most significant founding documents. **Excerpts from the Declaration of Independence (1776)** “When in the Course of human Events, it becomes necessary for one People to dissolve the Political Bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the Earth, the separate and equal Station to *which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God* entitle them, a decent Respect to the Opinions of Mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the Separation.

We hold these Truths to be self-evident, *that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator* with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness – That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed ...

We, therefore, the Representatives of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, in GENERAL CONGRESS, Assembled, appealing to the *Supreme Judge of the World* for the Rectitude of our Intentions.... And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm Reliance on the Protection of *divine Providence*, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor (italics added).

**Excerpt From Articles of Confederation (1777)** ARTICLE III & Conclusion. The said States hereby severally enter into a firm league of friendship with each other, for their common defense, the security of their liberties, and their mutual and general welfare, binding themselves to assist each other, against all force offered to, or attacks made upon them, or any of them, on account of *religion, sovereignty, trade, or any other pretense whatever*. And Whereas it hath pleased the *Great Governor of the World* to incline the hearts of the legislatures we respectively represent in Congress, to approve of, and to authorize us to ratify the said Articles of Confederation and perpetual Union....In Witness whereof we have hereunto set our hands in Congress. Done at Philadelphia in the State of Pennsylvania the ninth day of July in the *Year of our Lord* One Thousand Seven Hundred and Seventy-Eight, and in the Third Year of the independence of America (italics added).

**Excerpts from the Northwest Ordinance (1787)** Article 1. No person, demeaning himself in a peaceable and orderly manner, shall ever be molested on account of his mode of worship or religious sentiments, in the said territory. Art. 3. *Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged* (italics added).

**Excerpts from the Constitution of the United States (1787, 1791)** ARTICLE I, Section 7, Clause 2. If any Bill shall not be returned by the President within ten Days (*Sundays excepted*) after it shall have been presented to him, the Same shall be a Law, in like Manner as if he had signed it, unless the Congress by their Adjournment prevent its Return, in which Case it shall not be a Law. ARTICLE VI, Clause 3. The Senators and Representatives before mentioned, and the Members of the several State Legislatures, and all executive and judicial Officers, both of the United States and of the several States, shall be bound by Oath or Affirmation, to support this Constitution; but *no religious Test* shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States (italics added).

At the end of the document before the list of signers: Done in Convention by the Unanimous Consent of the States present the Seventeenth Day of September in the *Year of our Lord* one thousand seven hundred and Eighty seven and of the Independence of the United States of America the Twelfth (italics added).

**Bill of Rights, Added December 15, 1791:** AMENDMENT I. Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of *religion* or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...

<sup>124</sup> Public Law 97-280, 96 Stat. 1211, approved 4 October 1982, quoted in DeMar, *America's Christian History*, 121, as quoted in Kennedy and Newcombe, *What if the Bible*, 99.

Jewish and only 10% say “they have no specific religious preference.”<sup>125</sup> This makes the religious viewpoint in general and Christianity in particular the dominant worldview of the United States. The poll says, “roughly 6 in 10 Americans say that religion is very important in their personal lives.”<sup>126</sup> Patrick F. Fagan notes, “The overall impact of religious practice is illustrated dramatically in the three most comprehensive systematic reviews of the field. Some 81 percent of the studies showed the positive benefit of religious practice, 15 percent showed neutral effects, and only 4 percent showed harm”<sup>127</sup>

Even the harm can be explained in part by what many Christians have known for a long time. Faith that is not serious or directed at knowing and following God is of no spiritual value (James 2:18) and has limited social value. Now social scientists are distinguishing between ‘intrinsic’ and ‘extrinsic’ religion. “Intrinsic practice is God-oriented and based on beliefs which transcend the person’s own existence. Research shows this form of religious practice to be beneficial. Extrinsic practice is self-oriented and characterized by outward observance, not internalized as a guide to behavior or attitudes. The evidence suggests this form of religious practice is actually more harmful than no religion.”<sup>128</sup> Some of the positive psychological effects of intrinsic religion are characteristics like greater sense of responsibility, self-motivation, better performance in their studies, greater sensitivity to others; in contrast to ‘extrinsics’ who are more likely to be dogmatic, authoritarian, less responsible, inferior in their studies, more self-indulgent, indolent and less dependable, more prejudiced.<sup>129</sup>

Religion has positive results in the areas of happiness, sense of well-being, lowering stress, better personal relationships, greater sexual satisfaction for women, lower risk of cardiovascular diseases, longer life for the poor; it affects blood pressure and different cancers; decreases illegitimacy, crime, delinquency, welfare dependency, alcohol and drug abuse, depression, suicide and enhances general overall mental, physical and social well-being.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Joseph Carroll, “American Public Opinion About Religion”, Tuesday March 2, 2004 copyright 2004, The Gallup Organization, Princeton, NJ., <http://www.gallup.com/poll/focus/sr040302.asp>

<sup>126</sup>Carroll, *American Public Opinion*. An additional 24% say that religion is fairly important, and 15% say it is not very important. The importance of religion to Americans has remained quite stable over the past decade, with a low of 57% saying religion was very important in 1996 and a high of 61% saying it was very important in 1998.” The younger the population, the less important religion is to their lives, which I would attribute much to the influence of secular education.

<sup>127</sup> Fagan, “Why Religion Matters”, 2-3.

<sup>128</sup> Fagan, “Why Religion Matters”, 20.

<sup>129</sup> From articles by Ken F. Wiebe and J. Roland Fleck, “Personality Correlates of Intrinsic, Extrinsic and Non-Religious Orientations,” *Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 105 (1980), 111-117 and Michael J. Donahue, “Intrinsic and Extrinsic Religiousness: Review and Meta-Analysis,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 48 (1985), 400-419 as quoted by Fagan, “Why Religion Matters”, 20-21.

<sup>130</sup> Fagan, “Why Religion Matters,” 5-20. Fagan sources numerous studies that corroborate the benefit of religion in a person’s life. Some of them deal specifically with the positive impact on areas of life from church attendance.

“The American Medical Association says the growth in health-care expenses today can be traced largely to ‘lifestyle factors and social problems.’ Some studies indicate that up to 70 percent of all diseases result from lifestyle choices.”<sup>131</sup>

Harvard professor Herbert Benson, “though not a professing Christian himself, admits that humans are ‘engineered for religious faith.’ We are ‘wired for God....Our genetic blueprint has made believing in an Infinite Absolute part of our nature.”<sup>132</sup>

The field of psychiatry, strongly influenced by Freud, has been predisposed until recently to ignore the spiritual dimension of a person, or to view it reductively, and dismiss all faith as ‘neurotically determined,’ ‘an illusion,’ ‘a projection of childhood wishes,’ or ‘a hallucinatory psychosis,’ etc.<sup>133</sup>

According to Armand M. Nicholi, Jr., associate clinical professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, things are changing. “During the past several years, however, physicians increasingly recognize the importance of understanding the spiritual dimension of their patients. At the Annual Meeting of the American Psychiatric Association held in May of 2000, no less than thirteen of the proceedings focused on spiritual issues, the highest number of such events in the history of the organization.”<sup>134</sup> He tells of research he conducted with Harvard University students who experienced religious conversions while undergrads and experienced positive changes in lifestyle including the immediate cessation of the use of drugs, alcohol, and cigarettes along with academic improvement and enhanced self-image.<sup>135</sup>

In light of the prevalence of religious beliefs, its demonstrable contributions to personal and cultural health, and the goals of education, it is socially irresponsible not to give religion its proportionate place in state education. However, care must be exercised so that social scientists do not reduce it to merely a product of human choice. Statements by social scientists like, “above all, people are social beings,”<sup>136</sup> need to be balanced with the non-secular view that ‘above all, people are religious beings.’ There seems to be plenty of empirical evidence to at least present this view as a plausible alternative or rival to the previous statement. Many religions maintain that man is a spiritual being, and he will worship someone or something, be it God, ancestors, nature, science, or self.

## Science

It is odd indeed that modern science, which was originated by men, many of whom were Christians, like Isaac Newton, Michael Faraday, Johannes Kepler, Galileo Galilei, Blaise

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<sup>131</sup> Louis W. Sullivan, “Foundation for Reform,” (Washington, D.C.: Department of Health and Human Services, 1991) 15, as quoted by Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey, *How Now Shall We Live?*, (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1999), 309.

<sup>132</sup> Herbert Benson, *Timeless Healing*, (New York: Scribner, 1996), 197, 208, as quoted by Colson and Pearcey, *How Now*, 314.

<sup>133</sup> Armand M. Nicholi, Jr., *The Question of God: C.S. Lewis and Sigmund Freud Debate God, Love, Sex, and the Meaning of Life*, (New York: Free Press, 2002), 80.

<sup>134</sup> Nicholi, *The Question*, 80.

<sup>135</sup> Nicholi, *The Question*, 80.

<sup>136</sup> Hobbs and Blank, *Sociology*, preface.

Pascal and Copernicus, now sees Christianity as an enemy of science.<sup>137</sup> Even men like J. Robert Oppenheimer—one of the physicists responsible for splitting the atom and developing nuclear power, points this out with regard to the origins of the scientific revolution. “It took something that was not present in Chinese civilization, that was wholly absent in Indian civilization, and absent from Greco-Roman civilization. It needed an idea of progress, not limited to better understanding for this idea the Greeks had. It took an idea of progress which has more to do with the human condition, which is well expressed by the second half of the famous Christian dichotomy—faith and works.”<sup>138</sup>

Francis Bacon, the “father of the scientific method,” once put it; “There are two books laid before us to study, to prevent our falling into error; first, the volume of the Scriptures which reveal the will of God; then, the volume of the Creatures, which express His Power.”<sup>139</sup> This does not mean that a scientist has to be a Christian or even believe in God, but it does demonstrate the weakness of the claim by naturalists that belief in God stifles scientific inquiry.

Now, the very possibility of design is banished from scientific inquiry in areas such as biology and geology. Scientists like Richard Dawkins and Francis Crick remind themselves and their readers that the appearance of design in things must be ignored.<sup>140</sup> William A. Dembski says, “By dogmatically excluding design from science, scientists are themselves stifling scientific inquiry.”<sup>141</sup> In addition, he says, the fear that allowing design as a possible answer will stifle scientific inquiry or result in natural effects being attributed to intelligence is unwarranted.<sup>142</sup> He defines intelligent design as “a theory of biological origins and development. Its fundamental claim is that intelligent causes are necessary to explain the complex, information-rich structures of biology and that these causes are *empirically* detectable....It is the *empirical detectability* of intelligent causes that renders intelligent design a fully scientific theory...”<sup>143</sup> (italics added). For scientists to a priori preclude the possibility that the empirical evidence might be best explained by intelligence, is naturalism not science.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Kennedy and Newcombe, *What if The Bible*, 102-118.

<sup>138</sup> J. Robert Oppenheimer, “On Science and Culture”, *Encounter*, October 1962, 5, as quoted by Kennedy and Newcombe, *What If the Bible*, 102-103. Francois Jacob makes a similar observation in his book, *Of Flies, Mice and Men*, translated by Giselle Weiss (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998), 128-129.

<sup>139</sup> Quoted in Henry Morris, *Men of Science—Men of God*, (San Diego: Master Books, 1984), 35 as quoted by Kennedy and Newcombe, *What If the Bible*, 103.

<sup>140</sup> William A. Dembski, *Intelligent Design: The Bridge Between Science and Theology*, (Downers Grove, IL, 1999), 125.

<sup>141</sup> Dembski, *Intelligent Design*, 125.

<sup>142</sup> Dembski, *Intelligent Design*, 106. This refers to Kepler’s mistake of wrongly inferring design of craters on the moon; inferring design leaves open the question of the designer, the purpose and the how, or moral character of the designer, 106-107. I would add, it also leaves open the possibility of displacing the design theory with a non-design theory.

<sup>143</sup> Dembski, *Intelligent Design*, 106-107

<sup>144</sup> Francois Jacob, *Of Flies*, argues that we cannot stop the quest for knowledge or pursue only what will turn out as ‘good’ science when he said, “We have nothing to fear from the truth, whether it comes from genetics or elsewhere. What we have to fear is misrepresentation of findings and the distorted meaning that

When one considers the influence of Christianity and the Bible upon the founding of America, her founding documents, laws, system of government, science, systems of education, contemporary culture, medicine and health, art, music, morality, society, and everyday things,<sup>145</sup> it seems that the evidence supports the contention that it is good social policy to foster religion. This is not a violation of the First Amendment, which guarantees freedom to practice one's religion, and therefore forbids Congress from establishing a national religion. History is clear that religion has not only been tolerated but also fostered in the public domain. "Federal policies encourage many other institutions: the marketplace, education, medicine, science, and the arts. Even religion itself is explicitly encouraged by the tax treatment of contributions to religious institutions. It makes no sense, therefore, not to encourage the resource that most powerfully addresses the major social problems confronting the nation."<sup>146</sup>

To fail to present religion, both its positive and negative contributions, does not prepare students for life. Further, it misrepresents many events and de-contextualizes many ideas, statements, and values.

## **THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL BASIS FOR TEACHING RELIGION**

Epistemology is an "enquiry into the nature and ground of experience, belief and knowledge. 'What can we know, and how do we know it?'..."<sup>147</sup> Basically, epistemology answers the questions of what is the nature of knowledge, what can we know, and how can we know that we know. Although epistemology is often thought of in terms of relating only to philosophy, it is actually something that everyone is engaged in every day. For example, when a person plans to fly somewhere, he seeks to find out when the planes are leaving and arriving, the cost, and whether the pilots are qualified, to name a few things.

This is everyday epistemology, in which several forms of knowing are combined in just one activity. Since education is predominately teaching knowledge or how to acquire knowledge, the answer to the question of what we can know and how we can know will determine the type of education the state will offer. If the epistemic approach is unnecessarily limited, it will result in limiting knowledge, and if limited severely enough, it can become propaganda, social engineering or state religion as opposed to genuine education. State education is for everyone; therefore, it should not be guided by social engineering, which is built upon an unnecessarily limited view of knowledge. However, this is exactly what has happened in the American public education system. Following are several ideas that have negatively impacted teaching religion in state schools.

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people give them."<sup>150</sup> This is true science, which accepts answers from non-intelligence or 'elsewhere' intelligence.

<sup>145</sup> See Kennedy and Newcombe's books, *What If the Bible had Never Been Written?* and *What if Jesus Had Never Been Born?*

<sup>146</sup> Fagan, "Why Religion Matters", 25.

<sup>147</sup> A.R. Lacey, *A Dictionary of Philosophy*, (London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976), 56-57.



### **First, emphasizing pedagogy more than content.**

When the emphasis in education focuses on social engineering and pedagogy more than learning facts, history, standards and intellectual development,<sup>148</sup> the place of religion is necessarily minimized, and there is a deleterious effect upon education in general. Consider the following: “in a ranking of students in 21 industrialized countries, American 12<sup>th</sup> graders ranked 19<sup>th</sup> in math and 16<sup>th</sup> in science in 1995. In physics, American students ranked dead last in the industrialized world....On a test of general knowledge, 2002 college seniors scored 17.5 percent lower than college seniors in 1955, while outscoring high school seniors from 1955 by a mere 3.2 percent....Nearly two out of every three black children (60 percent) in the fourth grade scored ‘below basic’ in reading on the 2002 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).”<sup>149</sup>

This seems to correlate directly to a study showing that “the percentage of teachers with an undergraduate degree in a subject area fell from 28 percent to 23 percent between 1983 and 2003....According to a survey released in 2002, slightly more than half (56 percent) of fourth- and eighth-grade teachers thought that class content should be teacher-directed; 40 percent of fourth-grade and 37 percent of eighth-grade teachers felt class should be student-directed....Only 16 percent of eighth-grade teachers in their first ten years of teaching say they evaluate students on whether or not the student gets the right answer; nearly half—46 percent—grade the student on their creativity.”<sup>150</sup>

The decline in teachers being degreed in a subject is consistent with the proposal of “Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner [who] recommended a series of steps that would have disrupted the transfer of knowledge from generation to generation. Every class should be an elective, they proposed, and all subjects and requirements should be abolished. They recommended that teachers should be assigned to teach subjects they had never studied (‘Have ‘English’ teachers ‘teach’ Math, Math teachers English, Social Studies teachers Science, Science teachers Art and so on’)...Postman and Weingartner complained that the biggest obstacle to good education was teachers’ desire to ‘get something they think they know into the heads of people who don’t know it.’”<sup>151</sup> Although Postman recanted these views 10 years later, state education still seems to find merit in them.<sup>152</sup>

Similarly, based on a rapidly changing world, Carl Rogers said students only needed to learn “the processes by which new problems are met’....He asserted that students needed to learn how to solve problems but did not need to study the origins of problems or how people had solved them in the past. In his ideal system, teachers would not teach but

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<sup>148</sup> Ravitch, *Left Back*, 459-462.

<sup>149</sup> William J. Bennett, “Twenty Facts about American Education (2003)”, March 2003, <http://www.empower.org/docs/ea/20facts062503.pdf>, 1/28/2004, 1. Quotation is from items 1, 3 and 4 in his list on Student Performance.

<sup>150</sup> Bennett, “Twenty Facts”, 3. Quotation is from items 17, 18, and 19 in his list on Teacher Quality.

<sup>151</sup> Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner, *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*, (New York; Delacorte 1969) 137-139, as quoted by Ravitch, *Left Back*, 391-392.

<sup>152</sup> Ravitch, *Left Back*, 514, footnote 37, says Postman recanted these views a decade later in his book, *Teaching a Conserving Activity*, (New York: Delacorte Press, 1979).

would be ‘facilitators’ of ‘self-directed learning’.<sup>153</sup> In other words, gathering all the facts, or knowledge about the facts, and engaging the great minds of the past concerning perennial issues was of little value.<sup>154</sup>

Rousseau provided the genesis of child centered education, which he illustrated by educating a fictitious pupil named Emile.<sup>155</sup> He transformed the teacher into a facilitator, concerning which he said, “I prefer to call the man who has this knowledge master rather than teacher, since it is a question of guidance rather than instruction. He must not give precepts, he must let the scholar find them out for himself.”<sup>156</sup> Content is determined by the child’s experience. This book influenced child-centered educational proponents and progressives like John Dewey.<sup>157</sup>

Diane Ravitch, in her book *The Language Police*, goes into great detail demonstrating how political correctness from the right, the left, and multiculturalism<sup>158</sup> are distorting history and undermining the education children are receiving. She says, “The textbooks sugarcoat practices in non-Western cultures that they would condemn if done by Europeans or Americans.”<sup>159</sup> In reference to bias guidelines imposed on publishers she notes, “So long as books and stories continue to be strained through a sieve of political correctness, fashioned by partisans of both left and right, all that is left for students to read will be thin gruel.”<sup>160</sup> Ravitch succinctly spells out the loss from such non-academic education.

The flight from knowledge and content in the past generation has harmed our children and diminished our culture....We do not know how these trends may yet affect the quality of our politics, our civic life, and our ability to communicate with one another somewhere above the level of the lowest common denominator. The consequences can’t be good....Intelligence and reason cannot be achieved merely by skill-building and immersion in new technologies....Not only does censorship diminish the intellectual vitality of the curriculum, it also erodes our commitment to a common culture....We are not strangers, and we do not begin our national life anew in every generation. Our nation has a history and a literature, to which we contribute. We must build on that common culture, not demolish it.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Carl Rogers, *Freedom to Learn*, (Columbus, Ohio: Merrill, 1969), 303-307 as quoted by Ravitch, *Left Back*, 392.

<sup>154</sup> According to Ravitch, *Left Back*, this is a continuation of the failed child-centered education of the past century, see pages 59, 71-74, 175-179, 310, and 392. Among other things, the book actually chronicles the child-centered movement in America, and to some degree abroad, demonstrating the deleterious impact it has had on learning.

<sup>155</sup> Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Emile*, (London, University Printing House for J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., Everyman’s Library, reprinted 1966). Rousseau (1712-1778), his book *Emile* was published in 1762, which is his theory of education.

<sup>156</sup> Rousseau, *Emile*, 19.

<sup>157</sup> *Left Back*, 70, 169-171

<sup>158</sup> Ravitch, *Language Police*, shows how publishers favor the left more than the right, 87, 92.

<sup>159</sup> Ravitch, *Language Police*, 142.

<sup>160</sup> Ravitch, *Language Police*, 96.

<sup>161</sup> Ravitch, *Language Police*, 164-165.

In the educational transformation of the last one hundred years, the reality of religion was displaced along with other facts of history and life.

**Second, expanding science beyond its domanical authority.**

Science is the study of the natural world, the empirical data. In this realm, the scientific method provides a process for separating the true hypothesis from the false one. Science's domanical value is significant and has benefited humanity enormously. However, when scientists conclude or teach that the material world is all there is, it is all that we can know about, or they expand science to be the final arbitrator of truth or knowledge in all areas of life, then science is stealthily transformed into the philosophy of naturalism. Once that happens, any talk of the supernatural, or life outside the natural, is a priori, categorically rejected since naturalism by definition excludes the supernatural. Therefore, 'scientism' does not eliminate religion in state schools, but rather it replaces supernatural religion with non-supernatural religion—philosophical naturalism.

Huston Smith cogently distinguishes between scientism and science when he says, "Scientism adds to science two corollaries: first, that the scientific method is, if not the *only* reliable method of getting at truth, then at least the *most* reliable method; and second, that the things science deals with—material entities—are the most fundamental things that exist.... Unsupported by facts, they are at best philosophical assumptions and at worst merely opinions."<sup>162</sup>

The consequence of scientism being accepted as science is monumental. Dembski elucidates how the Darwinists have defined science to definitionally exclude anything but naturalism. "The Darwinian establishment, by definition excludes everything except the material and the natural.... By defining science as a form of inquiry restricted solely to what can be explained in terms of undirected natural processes, the Darwinian establishment has ruled intelligent design outside of science."<sup>163</sup>

Concerning this artificially restricted definition of science, Dembski says, "The view that science must be restricted solely to undirected natural processes...[is] called *methodological naturalism*..."<sup>164</sup> Alvin Plantinga cogently declares the outcome of such a restriction in science: "If one accepts methodological naturalism then naturalistic evolution is the only game in town."<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> Smith, *Religion Matters*, 59-60. He gives as an example Freud's statement, "Our science is not illusion, but an illusion it would be to suppose that what science cannot give us we can get elsewhere." This goes far beyond the realm of science into 'epistemic naturalism' or 'scientism'. Smith notes on page 62 that not all scientists accept the "epistemological privilege of science", like the French microbiologist Francois Jacob and others. Scientism is not the belief that science will be able to "predict everything" page 63, which would make it held by only a few.

<sup>163</sup> Dembski, *Intelligent Design*, 117.

<sup>164</sup> Dembski, *Intelligent Design*, 119. Some evolutionists emphasize a distinction between 'methodological' and 'ontological' naturalism, but Dembski's point is clearly true

<sup>165</sup> Phillip Johnson, *Reason in the Balance*, and Alvin Plantinga, "Methodological Naturalism," pts. 1 and 2 *Origins and Design* 18, no. 1 (1997): 18-27, and 18, no.2 (1997): 22-34 as quoted by Dembski, *Intelligent Design*, 119.

The significance of this epistemological leap from science to methodological naturalism cannot be overstated. Phillip Johnson summarizes the accepted status of science in our society when he says, “Science is the only universally valid form of knowledge within our culture. This is not to say that scientific knowledge is true or infallible. But within our culture, whatever is purportedly the best scientific account of a given phenomenon demands our immediate and unconditional assent.”<sup>166</sup> This consigns the possibility of God, or any explanation that includes non-natural intelligent causes, to the distant realm of the possible, but excludes it from the knowable or culturally meaningful.

This clearly misdefines and misjudges the proper role of science, which is the study of empirical data that is formulated into a hypothesis, and then becomes a theory, which can be challenged and debated within the scientific community. A theory concerning the data should give the most plausible answer for the data regardless if the best answer involves natural, purposeless non-intelligent antecedents, or intelligent antecedents. If any category of possible answers is excluded prior to the study of the data or the debate, then science has succumbed to the bias of naturalism.

Concerning liberal science, Rauch heartily proclaims, “No Final Say and No Personal Authority are not just operational procedures for professional intellectuals. Socially speaking, they are also moral *commandments, ethical ideas*. They are a liberal society’s epistemological constitution”<sup>167</sup> (*italics added*). Of course, if science is the only game in town, and science only allows natural processes, then contrary to Rauch and like-minded individual’s espousals otherwise, science becomes the final arbiter of ‘truth’.

Therefore, if science can explain everything, then everything is necessarily reduced to matter and all other answers are either false or unknowable. If science can only give answers consistent with methodological naturalism, and science is the universal knowledge, then you have what Johnson refers to as “epistemic naturalism,”<sup>168</sup> and like scientism, limits epistemology—what we can know—to nature. Based on naturalism, nature is all there is and is sufficient to explain everything; hence, the supernatural world is an illusion.

Imagine a murder trial where the judge says we will not consider evidence that would suggest that Mr. Davis committed the murder, but only evidence that Mrs. Davis committed the murder. That is not letting the evidence speak for itself, but rather speaking before and for the evidence. This is not the same as excluding kinds of evidence that may not be permissible in science or law, but rather it is the problem of excluding possible answers based on the empirical evidence allowed.

Huston Smith distinguishes between materialism and naturalism thusly; “Materialism holds that only matter exists. Naturalism grants that subjective experiences—thoughts

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<sup>166</sup> Dembski, *Intelligent Design*, 118.

<sup>167</sup> Rauch, *Kindly Inquisitors*, 75-76.

<sup>168</sup> Phillip E. Johnson, *The Right Questions: Truth, Meaning & Public Debate*, (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2002) 82.

and feelings—are different from matter and cannot be reduced to it, while insisting that they are totally dependent on it. No brains, no minds; no organisms, no sentience.”<sup>169</sup> The important thing to note is that in each theory, nature is the genesis and ontology of everything.

### **Third, discounting the place of faith in education.**

Most scientists overtly reject the place for faith in education, but actually they merely replace supernatural faith with faith in ‘epistemic naturalism’ under the guise of science. This faith is seen each time the scientific community expresses views that are outside the sphere of science proper. For example, the 1995 U.S. National Association of Biology Teachers ‘Statement on teaching Evolution’ to guide high-school teachers demonstrates, “the diversity of life on earth is the outcome of evolution: an *unsupervised, impersonal*, unpredictable and natural process of temporal descent with genetic modification that is affected by natural selection, chance, historical contingencies and changing environments”<sup>170</sup> (italics added).

Of course it is impossible for ‘true science’ to declare that evolution is *unsupervised* and *impersonal* since it is obviously beyond the pale of empirical inquiry. Science and religious faith are not in conflict nor mutually exclusive, but naturalism and supernaturalism are. It is naturalism, not science, that has created an educational milieu that trivializes faith in God, excludes any non-material answers to life’s questions, and summarily dismisses ‘religious truth’ from state education as though there are two kinds of truth.

Although some are not so blunt as Richard Dawkins, he expressed the sentiment of naturalism quite candidly when he stated, “It is absolutely safe to say that if you meet somebody who claims not to believe in evolution, that person is ignorant, stupid, or insane (or wicked, but I’d rather not consider that).”<sup>171</sup> In other words, a natural explanation of reality is the only real explanation. Of course, it is a faith statement to conclude that nature is all there is or can be known.<sup>172</sup>

It is important to remember that every individual operates by faith on a daily basis. Almost all learning is by faith. Until one has stood at the foot of the Eiffel tower, he accepts its existence by faith, regardless how many pictures he has seen or how many people say it exists. To discount faith is disingenuous at best. Phillip Johnson observes that even “the rationalist also has a first premise: the relativity of the autonomous mind and its powers of reasoning, powers that, according to scientific materialism, amount to

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<sup>169</sup> Smith, *Religion Matters*, 83. For simplicity, I use them interchangeably since they both ultimately say that matter is all or the source of all.

<sup>170</sup> Phillip Johnson, *Objections Sustained: Subversive Essays on Evolution, Law & Culture*, (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1998, 85. Later the words “unsupervised” and “impersonal” were removed after considerable pressure, see pages 85-90.

<sup>171</sup> Richard Dawkins, review of *Blueprints* by Donald Johanson and Maitland Edey, *New York Times*, April 9, 1989, sec. 7, p.34 as quoted in Dembski’s *Intelligent Design*, 118, 289.

<sup>172</sup> Dawkins is clearly using evolution to mean more than micro-evolution.

nothing more than so many neurons firing in the physical brain. I wonder if anyone has ever held on to such a faith in the aftermath of a stroke.”<sup>173</sup>

Robert Bork points out that science is no different. “A belief that science will ultimately explain everything, however, also requires a leap of faith. Faith in science requires the unproven assumption that all reality is material, that there is nothing beyond or outside the material universe. Perhaps that is right...but it cannot be proven and therefore rests on an untested and untestable assumption. That being the case, there is no logical reason why science should be hostile to or displace religion.”<sup>174</sup>

#### **Fourth, overestimating the possibility of value-neutral education.**

State education often purports to be ‘value neutral.’ However, many are of the opinion that education cannot separate itself from religion since education is itself a religious endeavor. Ronald Nash says, “There is a sense in which education is an activity that is religious at its roots. Any effort to remove religion from education is merely the substitution of one set of ultimate religious commitments for another.”<sup>175</sup>

As quoted earlier, David Sant says, “All education is undergirded by presuppositions about the origin of the universe, the origin of man, the purpose of man, ethics of governing relationships between men, and the continuing existence of the universe in an orderly and predictable manner. It is an inescapable fact that all of these basic assumptions are fundamentally religious.”<sup>176</sup>

Dr. Schmidt argues that multiculturalists are determined to change the educational experience when he notes, “Once the purpose of college/university education was to teach students to examine, think, analyze, and understand the accumulated knowledge of the past and present. Today, education is being redefined by multiculturalists who see themselves as missionaries who have to convert their students to their leftist perspective.”<sup>177</sup>

Paul C. Vitz makes the point well when he says, “The actual moral position of values clarification is usually personal relativism: something is good or bad only for a given person. At other times the model seems to assume the still more drastic position that values don’t actually exist—there are only things that one likes or dislikes.”<sup>178</sup> He then points out the contradiction that while the theorists do not allow for one value to be better than another, they certainly believe their way of determining values is better than others, “that is, relativity aside, students *should* prize their model of how to clarify values.”<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Johnson, *Right Questions*, 91.

<sup>174</sup> Robert Bork, *Slouching Toward Gomorrah: Modern Liberalism and American Decline*, (New York: Regan books, 1996), 281-282.

<sup>175</sup> Dr. Ronald H. Nash, “The Myth of a Value-Free Education”, Vol. 1, Num. 4, Jul/Aug 1991 *Religion & Liberty*, Acton Institute, <http://www.acton.org/publicat/randl/article.php?id=185/5/04>, 2.

<sup>176</sup> David Sant, “The Religious Nature of Education”, Online Patriarch Magazine, [www.patriarch.com/religedu.html](http://www.patriarch.com/religedu.html), 1/28/04, 1.

<sup>177</sup> Schmidt, *The Menace*, 165.

<sup>178</sup> Vitz, *Psychology*, 72.

<sup>179</sup> Vitz, *Psychology*, 72.

They attack teaching traditional values while urging teachers to “inculcate values clarification...[but] when values clarification brings up the question of whether children in the classroom should be allowed to choose anything they wish, the answer is ‘No’”<sup>180</sup>.

Vitz sums up the seriousness of the issue, “The public schools in recent years have given values clarification much support, and in so doing the schools have given the morality of personal relativism a privileged position. That is, the public schools have used tax money systematically to attack the values of those students and parents who believe that certain values are true, especially those who have a traditional religious position. Such a policy is a serious injustice to those taxpayers who expect that in the public school classroom their values will be treated with respect or a least will be left alone.”<sup>181</sup> He further warns, “Be on your guard against programs that focus on ‘deciding,’ ‘choosing,’ ‘decision making,’ etc. Programs that emphasize the *process* of deciding, and ignore the *content* of what is chosen, are almost always relativistic.”<sup>182</sup>

#### **Fifth, underestimating the biases in science.**

Science is often presented as, or understood to be presented as, being so objective that there is very little if any bias, and if there is any it will soon be found out. The objectivity of science is portrayed as towering above other means of knowing. However, while science, particularly the scientific method, is an excellent way of studying and hypothesizing about empirical data, it is not without biases which can result in breaches of ethics. Alexander Kohn, Professor of Virology at Tel Aviv Medical School points out, “Breaches of ethics as encountered in scientific research cover a whole spectrum ranging from outright fraud and conscious falsification, through plagiarism and concealment of information, to minor infractions such as ‘grantsmanship’ and negligence.”<sup>183</sup> He further mentions “...many a research project, especially in the field of psychology, is burdened by so-called ‘experimenter bias’.”<sup>184</sup> Ruth Hubbard states, “The pretense that science is objective, apolitical and value-neutral is profoundly political.”<sup>185</sup> She explains her position thusly, “The scientific method ‘rests on a particular definition of objectivity that we feminists must call into question’—a definition very much a culprit in the social exclusion of women, nonwhites, and other minorities.”<sup>186</sup> (She might have added fundamentalist Christians, but did not). Kohn, a scientist, acknowledges that studies “would indicate that the prevalence of misconduct in science is greater than the scientific community is willing to admit.”<sup>187</sup> Some fraudulent theories like German biologist Ernst

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<sup>180</sup> Vitz, *Psychology*, 72-73. He notes that they may explain that as not being wrong but intolerable for the teacher, then he reminds us that is similar to saying it is wrong to rob my grocery store but you may steal in other stores, or “you are not to be a racist—or a rapist—in my class, but elsewhere that is up to you.” 74.

<sup>181</sup> Vitz, *Psychology*, 74. He says on page 83 that the name “values clarification” is gone but the same self-oriented moral relativism...continues...

<sup>182</sup> Vitz, *Psychology*, 83.

<sup>183</sup> Alexander Kohn, *False Prophets: Fraud and Error in Science and Medicine*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1989), vii.

<sup>184</sup> Kohn, *False Prophets*, 6.

<sup>185</sup> “Science, Facts and Feminism”, in *Feminism & Science*, ed. Nancy Tuana (Indiana University Press, 1989), 125, 126, 128, as quoted by Rauch, *Kindly Inquisitors*, 12.

<sup>186</sup> Rauch, *Kindly Inquisitors*, 12.

<sup>187</sup> Kohn, *False Prophets*, 8. He does say more research would need to be done and that the studies he refers to should not be used for extrapolation because they do not cover a wide enough range of scientific

Haeckel's 'Ontogeny and Phylogeny' and doctored drawings remain in textbooks for years as illustrative of evolutionary themes or truths even after they are determined to be fraudulent.<sup>188</sup>

Kohn explains what prevented scientists from discovering or correcting the Piltdown hoax sooner, even though the true explanation was available, was "hope, cultural bias and prejudice...."<sup>189</sup> In response to creationists' charge that evolutionists are biased, Rauch says, "*Of course* evolutionists ... are biased."<sup>190</sup> Concerning why English paleontologists accepted the Piltdown man so easily, Kohn notes, "Scientists, contrary to lay belief, do not work by collecting only 'hard' facts and fitting together information based on them. Scientific investigation is also motivated by pursuit of recognition and fame, by hope and by prejudice. Dubious evidence is strengthened by strong hope: anomalies are fitted into a coherent picture with the help of cultural bias."<sup>191</sup>

My point is not to bash science or diminish its rightful place in education and society, but rather to make sure that our view of science is not overly naive or 'prejudiced'. In other words, because science says it does not make it true. This is in addition to the previously mentioned innate limitations of science. If we are unaware of the domainal limits and biases of science, then naturalism, posing as science, is allowed to define realities beyond the scope of science as science. Thus, scientism determines what answers are off limits a priori—regardless what the evidence may suggest—like the theory of intelligent design, thereby eliminating all other biases and challenges to what are purportedly scientific answers. The elimination of other biases is a dangerous road to travel. Even Rauch argues for liberal democracy and against seeking to eliminate all prejudices, which he maintains is impossible, and it also eliminates competing ideas. "For not only is wiping out bias and hate impossible in principle, in practice eliminating prejudice through central authority means eliminating all but one prejudice—that of whoever is most politically powerful."<sup>192</sup>

The harsh reality is that we are all biased. Our goal should be to be as objective and unbiased as possible, but if we endeavor to be objective while having failed to see our own lack of objectivity, we are doomed to blinding bias. The easiest path to unbridled biases being accepted, as objective, is to eliminate other biases a priori.

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activities. This book covers several frauds, misrepresentations, cheatings, and biases of scientists and science. Some of these are well-known frauds like the so-called 'Piltdown Man' on page 133; others are basically unknown to people outside of the scientific community.

<sup>188</sup> Hank Hanegraaff, *The Face that Demonstrates the Farce of Evolution*, (Nashville, Word publishing, 1998), 93-96. He quotes Stephen J. Gould as recognizing the fraudulence of the drawings, but then quotes Gould as referring to it "Properly restructured, it stands as a central theme in evolutionary biology..." Stephen Jay Gould, *Ontogeny and Phylogeny*, (Cambridge, MA: Bellknapp Press, 1977), 1-2, as quoted by Hanegraaff, *The Face*, 201. This very drawing was in my oldest daughter's college science book at the University of Oklahoma in the 1999 spring semester. When a student mentioned the inauthentic nature of the drawing, the professor said it was still illustrative of the truth.

<sup>189</sup> Kohn, *False Prophets*, 140.

<sup>190</sup> Rauch, *Kindly Inquisitors*, 67.

<sup>191</sup> Kohn, *False Prophets*, 140.

<sup>192</sup> Rauch, *Kindly Inquisitors*, 68.



In order for education to take place, as needs to in state schools, the strengths and weaknesses of religion and science need to be taught. The 1967 “Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students” adopted by the American Association of University Professors clearly states that the “‘freedom to teach and freedom to learn’ are inseparable.”<sup>193</sup> In response to a controversy concerning a course at UC Berkeley in the spring of 2002, UC Chancellor Robert Berdaho said, “‘It is imperative that our classrooms be free of indoctrination—indoctrination is not education.’”<sup>194</sup>

## **SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR TEACHING RELIGION IN STATE SCHOOLS**

Since educational neutrality is theoretically possible but not actually achievable, and the nature of education makes teaching about religion ethically demanding, I suggest the following guidelines:

### **The emphasis should be to teach the *facts of religion* not *faith in religion*.**

The following is language used in related literature in order to emphasize the appropriate teaching of religion: academic, not devotional; awareness of, not acceptance of; exposure to, not impositions on; educate about all religions, not just one; inform about, not conform to; not promote or denigrate any religion.<sup>195</sup> In order for state education to be complete, it has to teach students about the role of religion in the past and present because “omitting study about religions gives students the impression that religions have not been and are not now part of the human experience.”<sup>196</sup> This leads not only to an erroneous idea about religion but also about people and the world.

There seems to be widespread agreement on the need to adequately teach religion in state schools. A joint statement by a diverse group including the National Education Association (NEA), the Christian Coalition and 22 other education associations and religious groups stated, “Public schools may not inculcate nor inhibit religion... They must be places where religion and religious conviction are treated with fairness and respect. Public schools uphold the First Amendment when they protect the religious liberty rights of students of all faiths or none. Schools demonstrate fairness when they ensure that the curriculum includes study about religion, where appropriate, as an important part of a complete education.”<sup>197</sup>

Religion must be taught accurately in order not to misrepresent it. This is stated by NEA Resolution E-7, which says, “The National Education Association believes that

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<sup>193</sup>William Van Alstyne, *Freedom and Tenure in the University*, Duke 1993 Appendix C, 411-418, as quoted by David Horowitz, *You Can't Get A Good Education If They're Only Telling You Half The Story*, (Los Angeles, Center for the Study of Popular Culture), 7.

<sup>194</sup> Horowitz, *Good Education*, 7.

<sup>195</sup> Haynes, “Teaching about Religion”, 8, from guidelines issued by 17 religious and educational organizations to distinguish between teaching about religion and religious indoctrination.

<sup>196</sup> From the article “Teaching About Religion”, the statement is from “Position Statement and Guidelines of the National Council for the Social Studies” as found on [http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org/rel\\_liberty/publicschools/topic.aspx?topic=teaching\\_about\\_religion&SearchString=omitting\\_study\\_about\\_religion](http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org/rel_liberty/publicschools/topic.aspx?topic=teaching_about_religion&SearchString=omitting_study_about_religion), 1/28/04.

<sup>197</sup> Krista Kafer, “How To Teach Religion in Public Schools”, August 31, 2002, *The Heritage Foundation*, 2, as found on <http://www.heritage.org/Press/Commentary/ed083102.cfm>, 1/28/04.

educational materials should accurately portray the influence of religion in our nation and throughout the world.”<sup>198</sup> Furthermore, religion must be dealt with as substantively as possible in order not to trivialize what is for many the essence of existence.

In addition, while all religions do have shared traits, and it is quite appropriate to teach about these, but they also have substantial differences. It is a disservice to the student and democracy to teach only about the similarities. This will handicap students when life confronts them with a host of significant and diverse beliefs in their culture and the larger world. The importance of these differences is communicated by dealing with the reality of those diverse beliefs. The National Council for the Social Studies Curriculum Standards declares: “Knowledge about religions is not only a characteristic of an educated person but is absolutely necessary for understanding and living in a world of diversity. Knowledge of religious *differences* and the role of religion in the contemporary world can help promote understanding and alleviate prejudice”<sup>199</sup> (italics added).

In order for teachers to teach religion accurately, legally, and substantively, they will need to be trained in the subject matter of religion, and they must be taught how to teach it in a constitutionally compatible manner. California is one state seeking to prepare teachers. The Modesto, California, public school district has offered workshops on the First Amendment in order to equip teachers to teach religion in class.<sup>200</sup>

“The California County Superintendents Educational Services Association and the First Amendment Center sponsor a statewide program called the California 3Rs Project, which conducts seminars, forums, and workshops on teaching about religions and student religious liberties. The project supports constitutional and educationally beneficial practices and promotes the ‘three Rs’: rights, responsibilities, and respect in California’s diverse school environments.”<sup>201</sup>

*The Bible & Public Schools: A First Amendment Guide* has also been widely endorsed by diverse groups for teaching about the Bible in public schools.<sup>202</sup> The legality of teaching about religion, the Bible, or other sacred Scriptures is well established as long as the teaching is “presented objectively as part of a secular program of education.”<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> Kafer, “How To Teach”, 3.

<sup>199</sup> Kafer, “How To Teach”, 3.

<sup>200</sup> Kafer, “How To Teach”, 3.

<sup>201</sup> Kafer, “How To Teach”, 3. “The program has been introduced in all of California’s 58 counties. It has been endorsed by groups as diverse as the Anti-Defamation League, the American Civil Liberties Union, the Christian Educators Association International, and the California teachers association. And a growing number of states—including Georgia, Pennsylvania, New Mexico, New York, Texas and Utah—are moving ahead with the initiative.”

<sup>202</sup> *The Bible & Public Schools-A First Amendment Guide*, published by National Bible Association and First Amendment Center, [www.teachaboutthebible.org/\\_vti\\_bin/shtml.exe/bps/bpsfagpr01.htm](http://www.teachaboutthebible.org/_vti_bin/shtml.exe/bps/bpsfagpr01.htm), 1. Some of the groups are American Association of School Administrators, American Federation of Teachers, Anti-Defamation League, Christian Educators Association International, Council on Islamic Education, National Association of Evangelicals, National Education Association, etc. See article for a full list of endorsers.

<sup>203</sup> *School District of Abington Twp v. Schempp*, 374 U.S. 203, 225 (1963), as quoted by *The Bible & Public Schools*, 5.

To teach the facts of different religions, textbooks and teachers will be well served by utilizing scholarly information that makes appropriate distinctions between different religions, including diversity within particular religions. I do not believe this can be accomplished unless the sources for such information come from within the different religions and subgroups within particular religions. For example, when teaching on the differences of Islam and Christianity, material should come from scholars of the Islamic faith and scholars of the Christian faith. In addition, when religions are compared, and/or a particular religion is studied, the teachings of the major groups within the religion need to be represented. In Islam this would include, at least, Sunni, Shiite, and maybe Sufi. In Christianity this would include Catholic/Orthodox, Evangelical/Conservative, and Neo-orthodox/Liberal. If a major religion is defined by scholars of another religion, or by a particular group within the major divisions of the religion, the explanation becomes so reductionistic or skewed it may inadvertently misrepresent a significant diversity of beliefs or distort the true beliefs. In order to portray religious beliefs substantively and accurately, educators must be sure to appropriately source the groups.

**The amount of teaching on religion should be based on *proportionality* not *equality*.**

This guideline means that the coverage of religions and subgroups should be proportionate to the significance of their role in the event or in the lives of people under consideration, the need for the specific subject being taught, and the grade level of the students.

The present model based on multiculturalism<sup>204</sup> and political correctness places more emphasis on equal portrayal rather than factual proportionality. This tends toward distorting the beliefs and ‘proportionate’ contributions of religions by denigrating or minimizing the significance of the dominant religion, and magnifying the contributions of minority religions—regardless of their historical significance. This is particularly true with regard to downplaying the significance of Christianity’s positive influence upon the western world—as demonstrated earlier in this paper. Moreover, many teachers, who may be well aware of the actual facts concerning religion’s role in cultural shaping, fear explaining a particular religion’s influence upon cultural changes for fear of leaving out a minor contribution of another religion and thereby being accused of promoting a particular religion. Therefore they ignore the proportional contributions of a religion or religion’s contribution all together.

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<sup>204</sup> I am not using the term ‘multiculturalism’ to mean multicultural education which evaluates and highlights the practices and contributions of different cultures in a factual way, but rather I use it to refer to the ideology that “sees all cultures, their mores and institutions, as essentially equal.” Of course this usually excludes Euro-American cultures with Judeo-Christian underpinnings, which are often condemned. In addition, they seek to highlight and maintain cultural differences and therefore destroy our shared story and unity. In addition I mean the multicultural methods which emphasize the sins of Euro-Americans and magnify any contribution from minority groups, see Schmidt, *The Menace*, 3, 11, 57. See also the *Multicultural Guidelines* published by Scott Foresman-Addison Wesley as quoted by Ravitch, *Language Police*, 34-49. Ethnocentrism includes avoiding contributions by Judeo Christian culture to art or literature, and cultural equivalence, Ravitch, *Language Police*, 141. See also Ravitch, *Left Back* on multiculturalism being ethnocentric or particularistic—focusing on accomplishments of one’s own ethnic group, which Ravitch says is actually “inverted racism” 421.

The practice of seeking cultural equivalence is pervasive. Ravitch says concerning this trend, “The textbooks published in the late 1990s do, however, contain a coherent narrative. It is a story of cultural equivalence.”<sup>205</sup> This leaves students with a distorted idea that religion played a very minor or no role, or that many religions played an equal role in events and cultural developments. Thus, the end result is a distortion of the facts, marginalizing of religion, and trivializing the religious genesis of the ideas behind many cultural phenomena.<sup>206</sup>

This equality model based on cultural equivalence actually impedes one culture learning from another. If all religions or cultures are the same, then why spend any time learning about others, for to learn about your own culture or religion is to know about all cultures. It is our differences and proportionate influences in different parts of the world that enhance learning, resulting in true education.

Therefore, rather than equalizing all religions to the lowest common denominator based on the ‘equality’ model, educators should teach about religion based on proportionality. The following approach can assist in applying the principle of proportionality.

First, the particular topic in a course or course subject would influence how much time and content was devoted to religion. An example of how this would look can be summarized thusly: “The academic needs of the course determine which religions are studied. In a U.S. history curriculum, for example, some faiths may be given more time than others but only because of their predominant influence on the development of the American nation. In world history, a variety of faiths are studied in each region of the world in order to understand the various civilizations and cultures that have shaped history and society. The overall curriculum should include all of the major voices and some of the minor ones in an effort to provide the best possible education. Fair and balanced study about religion on the secondary level includes critical thinking about historical events involving religious traditions.”<sup>207</sup>

The same principle would be true in studying a contemporary event. If the United States’ population is 90% Christian, and that percentage holds true in influencing a poll, vote, and/or direction, Christianity’s influence or significance can be legitimately referred to more than Buddhism’s influence, although Buddhism’s influence can also be taught in a way proportionate to the situation, and so on, without fear of hurting any group’s

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<sup>205</sup> Ravitch, in *The Language Police*, 140, says the result of this equivalence is “the once traditional emphasis...on the growth of democratic institutions has nearly vanished.”

<sup>206</sup> Consider these examples: two-thirds of the abolition movement in the U.S. were Christian ministers, not counting all of the lay-Christians involved, *Liberty* (Sept/Oct 1984) as quoted by Kennedy and Newcombe, in *What If Jesus*, 22; the influence of Christianity in eliminating slavery from the ancient world, *Ibid.*, 18-22; men like John Newton who became Christians and turned from slave trading in order to help slaves, *Ibid.*, 193-194, or William Wilberforce’s Christianity which caused him to lead the battle for 45 years in England to abolish slavery and free all slaves, Kennedy and Newcombe, *What If The Bible*, 72-77. The Civil Rights movement was spawned out of religious faith. It is true that religious people were on both sides of each issue; however, that in no way minimizes the Christian influence upon the changing culture.

<sup>207</sup> Religious Liberty in Public Schools, teaching about Religion, FAQs – Which religions should be taught and how much should be said?

[http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org/rel\\_liberty/publicschools/faqs.aspx?id=593](http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org/rel_liberty/publicschools/faqs.aspx?id=593), 1/28/04, 4.

self-image or self-esteem. The proportionality principle teaches the facts based on reality rather than a desired outcome.

This very format is followed in other lessons: for example, if one were talking about one person's invention, one need not feel compelled to mention every other inventor. However, the inventor's faith may very well be germane to his success, and if he so attributes it, it should be mentioned. If one were studying Saudi Arabia, it would be quite ludicrous to mention Christianity or Buddhism each time the influence of Islam upon the culture of Saudi Arabia was mentioned. This neither ignores, minimizes, nor promotes some religions, but rather it portrays their presence and influence, proportionately, which enables educators to teach without trivializing religion. Moreover, this does not mean that minor religions or their contributions are not mentioned, but rather they are mentioned in proportion to their influence on the subject being studied.

Second, instruction about religion can be taught proportionately in a developmentally appropriate manner. This can be "determined by the grade level of the students and the academic requirements of the course being taught. Elementary students are introduced to the basic ideas and practices of the world's major religions by focusing on the generally agreed-upon meanings of religious faiths—the core beliefs and symbols as well as important figures and events."<sup>208</sup>

At the secondary level, social studies and history provide great opportunities for teaching about religion. "The full historical record (and various interpretations of it) should be available for analysis and discussion. . . . Teachers will need scholarly supplemental resources that enable them to cover the required material within the allotted time, while simultaneously enriching the discussion with study about religion. Some schools now offer electives in religious studies in order to provide additional opportunities for students to study about the major faiths in greater depth."<sup>209</sup>

Therefore, whenever the subject of religion, or a particular religion, naturally arises, it should be explained in a substantive, proportional, and age-appropriate manner, whether it is in history, philosophy, science, or contemporary society, in order to better understand the views of the person(s) being discussed or their contributions. For example, a study of the First Amendment necessitates understanding the religious milieu of the people prior to and during the drafting of the Constitution. In addition, even when some operate on the extremes of a religion, whether they are David Koresch and Christianity or Osama Bin Laden and Islam, the religious prominence must not be trivialized, obscured, or dismissed by the baffled look of the secularist.<sup>210</sup> To refer to Osama Bin Laden as

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<sup>208</sup> Religious Liberty in Public Schools— Which religions should be taught, 4.

<sup>209</sup> Religious Liberty in Public Schools— Which religions should be taught, 4.

<sup>210</sup> This is not to say that these extremists represent the truths of these religions. That must be determined by looking at the primary documents of the respective faiths. That is what determines if the person is truly reflecting the faith. When anyone operating from a faith in God is handled as though that faith is merely a mental construct or delusion, it actually exacerbates the anger of the followers and obscures a valuable approach to dealing with the problem, which is taking their religious beliefs seriously and seeking to communicate with them from that premise.

‘irrational’ as is often done by the secularist demonstrates their dangerously narrow view of human behavior.

**The context for teaching religion should be one of *accommodation not separation*.**

As has been demonstrated, there is simply no historical, legal, or educational reason to seek to separate religion from state education. As a matter of fact, separating religion from teaching is equivalent to turning state education into state propaganda—although I do not believe that most teachers desire that end. The question of teaching about religion is no longer “Should I teach about religion” but rather “How do I teach about religion?”

Unfortunately for students, since *Everson vs. Board of Education*, the trend has been to separate religion from education. My proposal seeks to replace the tendency toward separation with a conscious desire to accommodate the teaching of religion in public education. One need not fear that accommodation will result in promotion of religion, for these are two very different ideas. This can be illustrated by seeing how many churches, synagogues, or mosques would be content to merely seek to ‘accommodate’ their respective faiths instead of promoting them. By accommodating, state schools provide appropriate places for teaching about religion without promoting a particular religion.

If students are going to value the Constitution, the First Amendment, cultural differences and the ebb and flow of history, they must study the history and importance of religion. This is essential to democracy.

**The approach should be one of *constructiveness not destructiveness*.**

This does not mean teaching only the positive aspects or contributions of religion, and glossing over troublesome aspects or influence, but it does mean putting things into proper perspective. For example, to point out how many wars have been fought in history because of religion intentionally distorts the good of religion, since almost everyone in the history of man has believed in some kind of religion, and therefore all wars were religious because basically all people were religious. In other words, that is like pointing out that in antiquity men killed other men with swords rather than machine guns. The reason history is not peppered with wars of atheistic nations is because the history of man is religious. However, the twentieth century, with the rise of atheism, along with communism and Nazism, has been bloodiest century in the history of man. Auschwitz survivor Hugo Gryn said, “It was a denial of God. It was a denial of man.”<sup>211</sup> The mammoth consequences were the result of a relatively small number of atheists. In addition, if one is required to teach the positive features of religions—beliefs, values, contributions, and believability—without promoting faith in the religion, one should also be able to teach the negative without promoting antipathy or indifference toward religion.

Examples of destructive teaching about religion would include teaching or suggesting that religion is a cultural or psychological construct that originates in man; viewing all faith events reductively; describing faith as a delusion, illusion, or weakness; and portraying religion as something that is antiquated, becoming irrelevant to modern man,

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<sup>211</sup> John Roth, *The Holocaust Chronicle: A History in Words and Pictures*, (Lincolnwood, Ill.: Publications International, Ltd., 2001), quote taken from the back cover.

or invalidated by science. These destructive ideas are naturally biased; they are counterfactual. Moreover, to use scientific naturalism to determine the validity of religion is like determining the reality of music based on the color of the notes, or like supernaturalism rejecting the value of nature because it can be seen.<sup>212</sup>

Another example of deconstructive teaching is role-playing. “The California 3Rs project cautioned educators that “role-playing religious practices runs the risk of trivializing and caricaturing the religion that is being studied. It’s more respectful and educationally sound to view a video of real Muslims practicing their faith than having a group of seventh-graders pretend to be Muslims. ... Role playing runs the risk of putting students in the position of participating in activities that may violate their (or their parents’) consciences. Such an issue doesn’t arise when teachers teach about religion by assigning research, viewing videos, and through class instruction rather than organizing activities that may be easily perceived, rightly or wrongly, as promoting students’ participation in a religious practice. They can also invite guest speakers to lecture or answer questions regarding their specific faith.”<sup>213</sup>

The current hostility in state education toward religion in general, and Christianity in particular, in the United States, along with a disproportionate emphasis on pedagogy vs. facts exacerbates the present problem, and is, in large measure, fueling the drive for more private schools, vouchers, or tax credits. The concern is both religious and academic, and these cannot be totally separated for most religious people. The significant degree of dissatisfaction is illustrated by resolutions at the Southern Baptist Convention over the past few years and one that was proposed for the 2004 Convention, which actually calls for people to remove their children from state schools. This is the most serious proposal concerning the state of public education proposed for consideration by the convention, which is the largest non-catholic Christian denomination in the world.<sup>214</sup> My experience

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<sup>212</sup> This is called a categorical fallacy in logic

<sup>213</sup> Krista Kafer, “How to Teach Religion, *The World and I*, <http://www.worldandi.com/public/2002/august/cipub.html>, 6/10/04. “In January, Excelsior School in the Byron Union School District near Oakland, California, drew criticism for its three-week course on Islam. Seventh-graders adopted Muslim names, read verses from the Qur’an, learned to write Islamic proverbs in Arabic, and organized a pretend hajj, or journey to Mecca. The course handout read, “From the beginning, you and your classmates will become Muslims.”

<sup>214</sup> Resolution on education among submissions to SBC committee By Art Toalston, *Baptist Press* Wednesday 5/12/04

The resolution being promoted by Pinckney and Shortt for 2004, The initial "Be it resolved" clause proposes that messengers to the June 15-16 SBC annual meeting declare that the Southern Baptist Convention "encourages all officers and members of the Southern Baptist Convention and the churches associated with it to remove their children from the government schools and see to it that they receive a thoroughly Christian education, for the glory of God, the good of Christ's church, and the strength of their own commitment to Jesus...."

The resolution was declined by the Resolutions Committee along with five other proposals on education. Consequently Pinckney offered a modified version from the floor which was soundly defeated. However, the defeat was not an endorsement of the convention of a particular form of education or an exoneration of public schools increasing secularism, but rather it was an endorsement of parental choice in the matter of education. Calvin Whittman, Resolutions Committee chairman said concerning the committee’s position, the committee believes “This is a responsibility that God has given to the parents of each individual child,

over the past twenty-three years of dealing with Christian students, families, public school teachers, and administrators would confirm this dissatisfaction. The considerable level of dissatisfaction with the present system will become glaringly apparent if parents are given financial freedom to choose the kind of education they want for their children. However, if state education moves back toward education and away from social engineering, epistemic naturalism, and undermining faith, the present frustration may measurably subside.

Using the constructive approach would mean that the supernatural aspects of religion would be portrayed in a manner that is respectful to the beliefs of its adherents. This would involve including reasons that the followers give for their major beliefs, even noting empirical evidence<sup>215</sup>—if there is any—for their belief and then letting the students decide for themselves. I do not believe people not believing in its tenets as long as it is described in a constructive manner trouble any religion.

The answer to the concern about so many different religions in the marketplace is, do not be concerned. Teach and honor the ‘free exercise’ of all of them. The answer is not to banish them from education and keep only naturalism.

The constructive model shows appreciation for what its supporters believe their religion to be. This does not mean that weakness or abuses are not dealt with, but rather that they are dealt with in a manner befitting of education without being used to reduce religion to a man-made or antiquated belief superceded by scientific naturalism. In addition, the problems associated with a religion are dealt with in proportion to the history of the religion and in light of their primary documents.

For example, using the constructive model, if a teacher was dealing with Christianity and the Crusades, or with Islam and modern Islamic terrorism, the teaching should be proportionate and consider whether or not it is a true representation of the religion by evaluating their teachings and actions in light of their primary documents—the New Testament and the Quran and Hadith, respectively. Religious issues should be taught and dealt with substantively; to do otherwise is to trivialize them. In handling them

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and we encourage parents to exercise that God-given responsibility over their children.” Tom Strode, “SBC calls for cultural engagement; education resolution declined” *Baptist Press* 6/16/04  
The Southern Baptist Convention adopted resolutions on education in 1999, 1997 and 1996.

In the '99 resolution, messengers made an appeal "to all Southern Baptist churches to consider carefully ... supporting educational programs that follow biblical principles, whether they are implemented in Christian, private, public, or home schools...."

In the '97 resolution, messengers affirmed "the right of all parents ... to teach their children at home," while also affirming "the godly teachers in public schools who stand on the front lines to teach and train children who cannot be, or whose parents choose not to home-school."

In the '96 resolution, messengers affirmed "the thousands of excellent Southern Baptist public, private and home-oriented educators," while encouraging legislators in all levels of government "to develop the means and methods of returning education and funding choices to parents." John Revell, at the SBC executive committee said the SBC is “the largest non-Catholic Christian denomination in the world with over 16 million members”, 8/25/04 by phone call.

<sup>215</sup> This might include empirical evidence concerning truth claims, historicity of primary documents, etc.



substantively, one will surely find areas of disagreement, and these areas should be given the same degree of respect afforded other disciplines where disagreement occurs.

Additionally, these events should be placed in context by considering valor, truth, the view of human life, and religion as vital and pervasive aspects of human thinking and existence. To marginalize the role of religion actually undermines state education and precludes it from fulfilling its lofty potential.

Illustrative of this point, sociologist David Dressler notes the significance of Protestantism's teachings. "The humanitarianism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century stemmed from Protestant teachings in England and the United States. These teachings fostered attitudes that led to the abolition of slavery, better treatment of the indigent, prison reform, the introduction of probation and parole, factory legislation, the growth of the charities movement and other programs for human welfare."<sup>216</sup>

In education and school life, students must be allowed maximum freedom to express their views. "In 2000, the U.S. Department of Education sent out a series of religious-liberty guidelines to every public school in the nation. These guidelines state: 'Students may express their beliefs about religion in the form of homework, artwork and other written and oral assignments free of discrimination based on the religious content of their submissions. Such home and classroom work should be judged by ordinary academic standards of substance and relevance and against other legitimate pedagogical concerns identified by the school.'<sup>217</sup>

There is not only widespread consensus concerning the need to incorporate more religion, there are also some excellent resources available. *Religion in American Life* is a 17-volume series written by leading scholars for young readers, the first work of this nature and magnitude for young readers. Published by Oxford University Press, "The series includes three chronological volumes of the religious history of the U.S., nine volumes covering significant religious groups (Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Orthodox Christians, Mormons, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Native Americans and others), and four volumes addressing specific topics of special importance for understanding the role of religion in American life (women and religion, church-state issues, African-American religion, and immigration)."<sup>218</sup> Local school boards working with parents and citizens can adopt policies based on some of the resources available.

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<sup>216</sup> David Dressler, *Sociology; the Study of Human Interaction*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969) as quoted by Hobbs and Blank, *The Human Experience*, 320.

<sup>217</sup> Religious Liberty in Public Schools, teaching about Religion, topic FAQs, Religious Liberty in Public Schools, teaching about Religion, FAQs – May students include religion in their assignments? [http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org/rel\\_liberty/publicschools/faqs.aspx?id=593](http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org/rel_liberty/publicschools/faqs.aspx?id=593), 1/28/04, 6.

<sup>218</sup> Religious Liberty in Public Schools, teaching about Religion, topic FAQs, Religious Liberty in Public Schools, teaching about Religion, FAQs – What are good classroom resources for teaching about religion? [http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org/rel\\_liberty/publicschools/faqs.aspx?id=593](http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org/rel_liberty/publicschools/faqs.aspx?id=593), 1/28/04, 5-6. For more information on the series, call 800-451-7556. Columbia University Press has published a CD-ROM called "On Common Ground: World Religions in America." Fifteen religions in various regions of America are represented.

Therefore unless the state takes seriously its professional and ethical obligation to teach about religion in state schools, it will fail to provide the citizens an objective, first-class education and thereby forfeit the lofty potential of state education.