

Holy Hullabaloo: Church, State, and The Constitution

Featured presenter: Jay Wexler, Professor of Law, Boston University

Professor Jay Wexler of Boston University Law School will discuss his recent book *Holy Hullabaloo: A Road Trip to the Battlegrounds of the Church-State Wars* and shed light on how the Supreme Court approaches the issue of religious expression in public life in their handling of First Amendment cases. Professor Wexler will present a case study and engage in conversation with students about how these issues appear in our daily lives.

Guiding Questions:

- What does the Constitution establish in terms of the relationship between church and state?
- How does the Supreme Court make decisions when faced with church/state conflicts?
- How do church/state conflicts appear in daily life for Americans -- and what are the deeper implications for our democracy?

This is the print preview: [Back to normal view](#) »

Jay Wexler

Author, *Holy Hullabaloo: A Road Trip to the Battlegrounds of the Church/State Wars*

Posted: September 16, 2009 11:22 AM

The Court's Cross to Bear

What's Your Reaction?

Separation of church and state takes center stage at the Supreme Court on October 7. That's when the Justices will hear oral argument in *Salazar v. Buono*, a case that pits veterans groups and the Department of the Interior against the ACLU and a former employee of the National Park Service. The question is whether a human-sized cross that was erected on public land seventy-five years ago as a memorial to World War I veterans violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. The case isn't an easy one, but ultimately, the Court should uphold the lower court decisions that found the cross unconstitutional.

The Obama administration advances two arguments for reversing the lower courts. First, it argues that because plaintiff Frank Buono -- the former Assistant Superintendent of the Mojave National Preserve where the cross sits -- objects not to the cross itself (he himself is Roman Catholic) but rather to the placement of the cross on public property unaccompanied by other religious symbols, he lacks the necessary injury to bring suit. The government suggests that Mr. Buono has suffered no harm to his spiritual beliefs but rather merely disagrees with the government's policy, an injury insufficient to give him so-called "standing" in federal court.

This argument, if accepted by the Justices, would do great damage to the First Amendment. It would make it nearly impossible for religious believers to challenge government support of their own religious beliefs. But, as James Madison and other drafters of the First Amendment realized, government support of religion is harmful not only to nonbelievers and the government, but also to religion itself. A visit to many of Europe's grand but empty churches, supported by government funds, lends contemporary support to this phenomenon that our constitution's framers understood so well.

Second, the government's lawyers argue that Congress remedied any constitutional problem when it authorized the Interior Secretary to transfer the one-acre of land on which the cross sits to the VFW, a private organization. The idea is that since the cross no longer would officially be located on public land, Buono can no longer claim that the government itself is endorsing religion in violation of the First Amendment.

Government entities transfer ownership of religious symbols to private groups to avoid Establishment Clause problems more often than you might think. These swaps can result in some really odd displays. For example, when I was doing a series of church/state road trips a couple of years ago for my recent book *Holy Hullabaloo: A Road Trip to the Battlegrounds of the Church/State Wars*, I found myself in La Crosse, Wisconsin. A few years prior to my visit, the city had transferred a tiny parcel of land within a small urban park to the Fraternal Order of Eagles, which had years before donated a Ten Commandments monument to the park. As part of the transfer, the city fenced the area and posted a sign that read: "THIS PROPERTY IS NOT OWNED OR MAINTAINED BY THE CITY OF LA CROSSE, NOR DOES THE CITY ENDORSE THE RELIGIOUS EXPRESSIONS THEREON." Inelegant, perhaps, but it solved the constitutional problem.

No such fence or sign exists in the *Salazar* case, however. Any person who sees the massive cross--and it's easily seen from nearby Cima Road, which passes through the preserve only a hundred yards away--would reasonably assume that the cross belongs to the government and is maintained by the Park Service. And indeed, the observer would be at least partially right. The statute that authorizes transfer of the property to the VFW

grants the government the right to access the land to install a memorial plaque as well as automatic re-ownership of the property if it determines that the area is no longer being used as a "war memorial." But even without these quirks, the government's proposed transfer does not alone (without prominent signs and a fence) solve the essential problem posed by the cross.

That problem, moreover, is a serious one. Though these religious display disputes are known to cause much snickering in certain circles, the Supreme Court has long understood the high stakes involved in these cases. When citizens perceive that the government is endorsing a particular religious belief, they feel -- as Justice Sandra Day O'Connor famously put it -- like "they are outsiders, not full members of the political community." The fact is that symbols matter. They matter sometimes more than almost anything. Why did Pittsburgh Steeler fans freak out when a Tennessee Titan player pretended to blow his nose in a terrible towel? Why do people become apoplectic when someone burns an American flag? Why do people like Buono risk derision, even violence, to challenge religious symbols on public property? On my road trip, I spoke with lawyers at the Freedom From Religion Foundation in Madison, Wisconsin, who told me that it is the cases involving religious symbols and displays -- not the ones involving government funding of religion or even religion and the public school curriculum -- that bring out real honest to goodness death threats. *Death threats!* The government should surely honor our fallen war heroes, but erecting a massive, stand-alone symbol of Christian faith is not the way to do it.

Jay Wexler is Professor of Law at Boston University. His book *Holy Hullabaloo: A Road Trip to the Battlegrounds of the Church/State Wars*, was recently published by Beacon Press.

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School Prayer and Senate Prayer Are Not the Same

By Jay Wexler
Professor of Law, Boston University

Readers of [On Faith](#) are likely familiar with the Pensacola prayer hullabaloo that has been going on for the past week. In January, a federal district court, responding to a pattern of first amendment violations, ordered officials at Pace High School to refrain from leading prayers at school functions. Shortly thereafter, the principal asked the athletic director to say a prayer before a meal at a luncheon honoring contributors to a new school athletic facility. That sent the case back to court, but the judge found the principal and athletic director **not guilty** (on a technicality) of violating her original order.

One curious piece of the whole Pensacola affair that might easily be missed is the letter sent to the two accused school officials by over 60 members of Congress, who suggested that the Pensacola government's actions might somehow be justified by the fact that the House of Representatives has long employed a chaplain who offers a daily prayer before the beginning of its sessions.

The letter concludes that the "tradition of offering prayer in America has become so interwoven into our nation's spiritual heritage, that to charge someone criminally for engaging in such an innocent practice would astonish the men who founded this country on religious liberty."

It is indeed remarkable that, in a country founded on principles of church-state separation, both houses of our national legislature start every day off with a prayer, sometimes to Jesus. If, like me, you find this bizarre (or at least interesting), you should check out the Web site of the [House Chaplain](#). There you can find the day's opening prayer, a prayer archive, the "Thought of the Day," and a

GEORGETOWN/ON FAITH: FAITH COMPLEX



'A President not a Prophet'
Sociologist **Michael Eric Dyson** tells Jacques Berlinerblau how race and religion motivate Obama's critics. 'He's JFK, not MLK.'

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schedule for Bible studies and other religious activities. You can learn, for example, that the topic of the staff Bible study on the day of the Pensacola hearing was "Are the Ten Commandments Still Relevant?" (it met in Room H2-637 Ford, from 12-1 pm).

The Senate Chaplain does not provide as much public information as the House Chaplain. When I was researching my recent church/state road trip book, however, I spent a week in Washington D.C. where I watched the Senate's daily prayer and talked at length with the Senate Chaplain Barry Black. Though I had expected the daily prayer to be kind of a bland and lifeless affair (these prayers sometimes ask for things like giving the Senators "a new delight for matters of drudgery" and a "zest for unfinished details") I actually found Chaplain Black's prayers to be quite powerful. The Chaplain himself is incredibly learned and charismatic.

But the existence of the congressional Chaplains lends no support to the constitutionality or appropriateness of school prayer. For one thing, the Supreme Court's decision upholding legislative prayer, [Marsh v. Chambers](#), rests almost entirely on the unique history of the practice of legislative prayer, which predated the First Amendment itself. Public schools, by contrast, didn't even exist in the United States until long after the First Amendment was ratified. More important, though, legislative chaplains are not responsible for the teaching of students and do not lead prayers where children are present. Public school officials, on the other hand, are trusted with the care and supervision of our children. They have no right to tell those children what they should or should not believe.

To the extent that the decisions of the Supreme Court on legislative prayer and school prayer differ, moreover, it is the Court's upholding of legislative prayer that is problematic. Why should anyone in the government be able to proclaim through prayer its belief in god (and only ever, by the way, one god, and sometimes explicitly the Christian one) when not everyone in the country shares this belief? It's for this reason that I think the power of Chaplain Black's prayers makes them more frightening, from a constitutional perspective, rather than less. But in any event, the fact that Chaplain Black may offer a prayer before a group of Senators says nothing about whether the principal of a school district may offer a prayer before a group of students.

[Jay Wexler](#) is Professor of Law at Boston University. His book [Holy Hullabaloo: A Road Trip to the Battlegrounds of the Church/State Wars](#), was published in June by Beacon Press.

[Read an Excerpt.](#)

BY JAY WEXLER | SEPTEMBER 24, 2009; 11:23 AM ET
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Comments

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Yes, chaplain please include a prayer to the Wiccan Goddess (traditionally the Triple Goddess) and the Horned God.

And please follow this with a rain dance, and a hex on unbalanced budgets, illicit affairs, pork barrels, excessive campaign spending and the nonprofit status for religious institutions i.e. all those churches, mosques and synagogues applying for federal grants under BO's faith sharing plan.

POSTED BY: CCNL1 | SEPTEMBER 28, 2009 3:55 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

"Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence upon Thee, and we beg Thy blessings upon us, our parents, our teachers and our Country.
This is a simple and vague prayer naming no one god or religion, only prayer asking for God's assistance and protection... No one has the right to rob our children of that..."

It is implied that you are talking about the Abramic God of the Talmud, Bible, and Koran. What about children whose families do not follow an Abramic religion, i.e. Hindus or Buddhists? Which God are they going to pray to? Would you like a Buddhist teacher to lead your child in a chant to the Dharma? Or a Hindu teacher to lead a puja to Ganesh or Vishnu?

I didn't think so.

POSTED BY: ATHENA4 | SEPTEMBER 28, 2009 2:56 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

"After all, isn't that what every religion calls their God, 'Almighty god' ?"

That might be true if one is looking only at the various Christian denominations. But there are numerous religions other than Christianity - some with many gods, some with spirits other than gods, and some with no gods or spirits.

POSTED BY: CARSTONIO | SEPTEMBER 28, 2009 10:00 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Fortunately, ccnl, the only self-professed Catholic atheist in the known world, will never be a chaplain in Congress.

I, myself, have no interest in the position. Am only recommending a more hopeful alternative to the as yet unanswered prayer which our elected representatives recite.

POSTED BY: FARNAZ1MANSOURI1 | SEPTEMBER 28, 2009 3:47 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Unfortunately, Farnaz and other professed atheists will never qualify as chaplains for the USA Senate or House of Representatives.

POSTED BY: CCNL1 | SEPTEMBER 28, 2009 12:58 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

PROPOSED NEW DAILY PRAYER FOR BOTH HOUSES
OF CONGRESS

Oh, Selves:

Please let us eliminate from our midst all those who have engaged in shady dealings, via property taxes and the proposed health care bill, just to give two examples.

Let us end pork barrels, once and for all.

Let us pass legislation making ourselves fully accountable to the American people.

Let us set much lower limits on campaign financing.

Let us end nonprofit status for religious institutions.

More to come....

Thanks in advance.

Amen

POSTED BY: FARNAZ1MANSOUR11 | SEPTEMBER 27, 2009 3:51 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Opening Prayer in the House of Representatives

09/11/2001

Reverend Gerard Creedon

God of peace and life,
send your spirit to heal our country.
Bring consolation to all injured in today's tragedy
in New York and Washington.
Protect us and help our leaders
to lead us out of this moment of crisis
to a new day of peace.

Amen."

First Prayer of the Continental Congress, 1774

O Lord our Heavenly Father, high and mighty King of kings, and Lord of lords, who dost from thy throne behold all the dwellers on earth and reignest with power supreme and uncontrolled over all the Kingdoms, Empires and Governments; look down in mercy, we beseech Thee, on these our American States, who have fled to Thee from the rod of the oppressor and thrown themselves on Thy gracious protection, desiring to be henceforth dependent only on Thee.

To Thee have they appealed for the righteousness of their cause; to Thee do they now look up for that countenance and support, which Thou alone canst give. Take them, therefore, Heavenly Father, under

Thy nurturing care; give them wisdom in Council and valor in the field; defeat the malicious designs of our cruel adversaries; convince them of the unrighteousness of their Cause and if they persist in their sanguinary purposes, of own unerring justice, sounding in their hearts, constrain

them to drop the weapons of war from their unnerved hands in the day of battle!

Be Thou present, O God of wisdom, and direct the councils of this honorable assembly; enable them to settle things on the best and surest foundation. That the scene of blood may be speedily closed; that order, harmony and peace may be effectually restored, and truth and justice, religion and piety, prevail and flourish amongst the people. Preserve the health of their bodies and vigor of their minds; shower down on them and the millions they here represent, such temporal blessings as Thou seest expedient for them in this world and crown them with everlasting glory in the world to come. All this we ask in the name and through the merits of Jesus Christ, Thy Son and our Savior.

Amen."

Reverend Jacob Duché
Rector of Christ Church of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
September 7, 1774, 9 o'clock a.m.

POSTED BY: CCNL1 | SEPTEMBER 27, 2009 8:41 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Citizen's Joe & Jane are saying, "Our way or the Highway."

To 'pray' means to "talk" to god(s).

So WHO are these Senators 'talking to' when they are orally debating or dueling it-out w/ on the-peoples-floor; god? Is god their Fan?

Besides wasting & squandering precious tax-payers-time (money) while 'talking' to a Wall (praying & getting paid for such usurpation), as if hath cosmic ears, on the Job, at gods expense as if godly dividends will commeth them (not Us) via their [Abrahamic.. & Vedic..] godly blessing??

So; like the Author, of their [un-holy] Jealous TEN-COMMANDMENTS whom had used a "COSMIC-PEN" to biblically write/etch such Tablet/stone; THAT

this also is analogous to All 'Legislation' (passed or not) , ay'd or Nay'd that got the Vote, such that;

like Mr. Moses that Human COMMANDMENTS (Laws/codes etc..) was authorized by Humane intervention via real Pens (Oaths & or Affirmations), but hand written on Parchment/paper instead; or Chiseled (by Hand) into Stone!?!? Soo,

Aren't "THE-PEOPLE" , under OUR "REPUBLIC" (not a DEMOCRACY?) supposed to be the ones that ALL Congress as well as ALL Senate folks (whom actually think/believe they are gods or goddesses), aka the PLUTOCRATS

(Gov run by the Wealthy) should be pray'd To & Blessed too INSTEAD? instead OF [IMPORTED god via NOT-MADE-IN-AMERICA competing Religion(s)] to their gods, while on the Job; not our innate G-D??

POSTED BY: BLOGLADY | SEPTEMBER 26, 2009 11:14 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Ah, alas, I am no princess, and here is no great matter. :(

POSTED BY: FARNAZ1MANSOURI1 | SEPTEMBER 26, 2009 9:24 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Ahhhh Haaa;

How about "PRINCESS FARNAZ HIGHWAY", me dear aye?

POSTED BY: CYBER-MAN | SEPTEMBER 26, 2009 8:41 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

I meant:

The British would "Embark & Disembark their Ships right off Sheepshead-Bay, ManhattanBeach Brooklyn, Queens etc.. "

SPUTNIK-race ...

PS: EURICKA! Man has this Month found ICE-H2O/HOH ("Water" mixed in silicate/glass) on the MOON of which EVERY Mammal's hath SEEN'd, Felt or experienced under the SUN via OUR HOLY Cosmic NEUTRINO's" [The Holy-No-Man's, aka "IT"s, Messengers touching us , relaying our "DECAY-MOMENT"s to "IT" (G-D by ANYname), a holy-cosmic-Feeling; a Religious experience, by the nano-seconds].

"So HOPE is for All, Every & Any "Automatic Citizen/Denizen" borneth on this Blesseth but miraculous NEBULA-BUILT holyi S.pace S.hip EARTH, of many (not GENESIS via man-made storys) a/k/a S.S. GAIA, S.S. GEOID, S.S. TELLUSng something."

Praise "IT" [Not a HE nor a SHE]. HALLALUYA!

POSTED BY: CYBER-MAN | SEPTEMBER 26, 2009 8:09 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Interesting: I Remember; Oppps; I heard that the-BRITISH, whom used to chase Poppa G. Washington [May xtra-photons shine with him] around this town [NYC] also would march up-n-down KINGSHIGHWAY singing "god bless the Queen" lalala; and would embark & Diembark their Ships off Sheepshead-Bay, ManhattanBeach etc.

 But then shouldn't it have been called Queens Highway? ;}

George 3, no? May two less photons shine upon him.

POSTED BY: FARNAZ1MANSOURI1 | SEPTEMBER 26, 2009 8:08 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Correction: We A

FARNAZ1MANSOURI1:

Interesting: I Remember; Oppps; I heard that the-BRITISH, whom used to chase Poppa G. Washington [May xtra-photons shine with him] around this town [NYC] also

would march up-n-down KINGSHIGHWAY singing "god bless the Queen" lalala; and would embark & Diembark their Ships off Sheepshead-Bay, ManhattanBeach etc..

The-LION:

I'm honored to Cyber-Chat with one whom was raised with the likes of our Father/Prophet Hir ALBERT EINSTEIN [pbuh et al], EISENHOWER et al; And one whom attended AMherst College during the Spoonik race!:

PS: EURICKA! Man has this Month found ICE-H2O/HOH (Water mixed in silicate/glass) and the bible is getting futher, further, further ... away from our Miracle as REALITY and their SINS as MYTH (oposite TRUTH)!

Amazing how fully Grown? Men & Ladys of the Congress or Senate et al; act like little kids whom must pray at their BED's side before going to Sleep & when they awake, if any; (not on Schools time, not Secular Gov Institution time...).

BEHOLD dear LION; "H-O-P-E is KiNG"! And "IT" is a Gift from the PAST, a/k/a our (not only their) HISTORY's; a/k/a Jury, Judge & Witness.

So HOPE is for All, Every & Any "Automatic Citizen/Denizen" borneth on this Blesseth (zero Curseth nor Sineth bible storys; to be BORN from within/on heading out):

HOPE is especially for the "NON-THEiST," the ATHEIST; the AGNOSTIC, CULTural-Believer/FEELER, the SECULARist; and not only the Superstupidstitious believer/faiher/religionista & CO.

Oppps: HISTORY = QUEEN & HOPE = KING. Human "APATHY" is OUR Fight; not only their Fight, next to Economi STAG/INFLATION!

Happy Every-day!

POSTED BY: CYBER-MAN | SEPTEMBER 26, 2009 7:45 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Norrie,

"Neat, eh?"

Neat, indeed. I have learned that here in New York City, the Lord's prayer, along with Christian hymns like "Come Thou Almighty King," were sung throughout the boroughs, regardless of prevailing religious beliefs.

Hence, Jews and Buddhists, for example, who were clueless about the prayer and hymns were mindlessly intoning.

Creepy.

POSTED BY: FARNAZ1MANSOURI1 | SEPTEMBER 26, 2009 7:07 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Those naughty public school teachers in Massachusetts, how could they do that in a state led by the leaders of the Immoral Majority i.e. the Kennedy's :))

Well a Wiccan hex on all of them!!! And a few needles in a voodoo doll should teach them a lesson!!! :))))))

POSTED BY: CCNL1 | SEPTEMBER 26, 2009 6:57 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Those who favor school prayer may be interested in how the practice actually worked when I was (involuntarily) subjected to it in the early 1940's.

I attended elementary school in Arlington, Massachusetts, a town which abuts Cambridge, which in turn abuts Boston.

The laws of the Commonwealth then provided that at the start of every school day, the teacher in every classroom was required to lead all of the students, including Jewish and other non-Christian students, in the recitation of the Lord's Prayer.

I've always wondered how the Jewish and other non-Christian teachers felt about taking on this task.

At that time Massachusetts was an active battleground in the ethno-religious wars: Catholic vs. Protestant and Anglo-WASP vs. Irish/Italian.

My ancestry was Scots-English and my parents attended a Congregational church, so you know which side of the battle I was on in the first grade.

There are two versions of the Lord's prayer: the Catholic version is shorter and omits the closing Protestant phrase: "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen"

How to handle this discrepancy in the text of the prayer in my first-grade class which contained Catholic, Protestant and Jewish students?

Our Catholic teacher had the answer: When the class reached the end of the Catholic version, she banged a ruler down on her desk and kept banging away until we Protesant kids abandoned our attempt to recite the version we'd been taught.

Neat, eh?

POSTED BY: NORRIHOYT | SEPTEMBER 26, 2009 4:03 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Yes, Thomas "the talker to god and trinity" and the "Moses of the NT" Baum, we know you talk to god every day. Strange that said god had not told you where the center of the Universe is. Please ask and get back to us ASAP.

POSTED BY: CCNL1 | SEPTEMBER 26, 2009 12:39 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

ccnl1

You wrote, "From two historical Jesus exegetes:"

Have either of these met God?

Have either of these met satan?

If not, then these two are just giving their "opinion" even if it be "learned", it is still just their "opinion", considering the FACT that they were not alive at the times that they are giving their "opinions" about concerning what happened or did not happen, were they?

It does not matter what anyone believes because Truth is Truth and Truth does not depend on polls or opinions.

See you and the rest of humanity in The Kingdom.

Take care, be ready.

Sincerely, Thomas Paul Moses Baum.

POSTED BY: THOMASBAUM | SEPTEMBER 26, 2009 10:49 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

I think young boys in middle and high school should have the right to masturbate in class. After all, God gave them the hormonal imbalances that make sitting all day with an erection very uncomfortable. In my religion, for which I demand equal time in schools, it's only natural to masturbate - it's the gift of a loving God and, in a free country, these rights should be extended to the classroom as well.

Why can't the people vote on this since it involves our lives and our children's.... We pay taxes to keep the schools running, but we can't make this possible in our schools? Why can't the students have 5 minutes to enjoy this gift from their God?

Vote for the right to masturbate...
Since masturbation has been taken out of schools, it's been replaced with guns, violence and security guards...
Hello nation... Wake up!

POSTED BY: COLORADODOG | SEPTEMBER 26, 2009 10:22 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

IF THERE IS PRAYER, IT SHOULD ONLY BE TO "GOD", NOT TO ANY OTHER PERSON OF THE TRINITY ACCOUNT IT CAN ONLY APPLY TO MOST RELIGIONS AND MOST OF THE PEOPLES OF THE WORLD RELIGION BELIEF. U.S.A. GOVERNMENT SHOULD STAY CLEAR OF ANY RELIGION AND SEE THAT ALL RELIGIONS DO THE SAME TO GOVERNMENT. CONGRESS MUST UPDATE THE 1913 501 (c) (3) LAW SO THAT ALL RELIGIONS STAY OUT OUR GOVERNMENT ON ALL POLITICAL ISSUES AND CANDIDATES IF THEY FILE TAX EXAMPT.

POSTED BY: USAPDX | SEPTEMBER 26, 2009 9:32 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Becky:

Yes, your prayer is plain and non-threatening...but unacceptable to many fundamentalist "Christians" who are demanding that ALL Prayers end explicitly with "In Jesus name we pray." So, they won't be happy. So then what?

There is simply, in our modern, very diverse society to craft a prayer that is acceptable to all (leaving out atheists who object to ANY prayer, for a moment). If a teacher writes it, he/she is under pressure to be non-offensive, and still, someone would object. If children lead it, which prayer? Because children, not being exposed to the nuances of the whole issue, are going to pray as they were taught. Hail, Mary, for example, or "Hear o Israel..." or "Allah is God..." or ... you get my drift?

But at the bottom of all this: Every child can pray in schools, and many do. There's no reason why a child cannot ask a blessing over food, or give thanks at the beginning of the day. But teaching that should be the parents' responsibility, not the schools'. And the children can pray, but they do not have the right to make other listen. And for me, as a minister, there's a tremendous pressure and the possibility of bullying kids, depending on their faith (or lack of it) in having school prayer. How does a 3rd grade student decide not to participate? When I was growing up, a Jehovah's Witness classmate (which does not normally participate in the pledge of allegiance) was caused a lot of grief on this issue.

The best way in our society is for family and churches and other religious institutions teach prayer, and the children practice what they are taught; while in school, that means silently, and without dramatics. And no power on earth can prevent a child from so praying.

One last thought: Too often the reasons behind the push for prayer in the schools is somehow the idea that kids will somehow be "fixed" behaviorly, if we have prayer in schools. But a one minute prayer cannot change kids who are abused, or are abusive, cannot take the place of adequate food, and good teachers. Let's as adults who care about our schools by all means pray for them as part of OUR prayer, just as we pray for all institutions of society. And most importantly, teach our children the faith that we believe, so that THEY are models for good behavior. That's the best way to "fix" other kids: by being friends with them, by caring for them, and by helping them as their friends. Otherwise, the schools have enough to do.

Pr Chris

POSTED BY: CALSAILOR | SEPTEMBER 26, 2009 1:07 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Opening Prayer

09/25/2009

Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, Chaplin of the USA House of Representatives

"Let us rejoice in the Lord,
In His beauty we trace our creation.

In His compassion and mercy we claim our salvation,

In profound humility we offer our works of justice and our public service on behalf of others and so we find fulfillment.

To the Lord we commend this nation, its people, its resources and its leadership.

May all give You, Lord God,
glory, praise, honor and thanksgiving
both now and forever. Amen"

And does said chaplin pay Federal taxes on his salary??
Yes he/she does.

e.g.

http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_is_the_salary_of_a_Catholic_priest

POSTED BY: CCNL1 | SEPTEMBER 26, 2009 12:35 AM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Insane from beginning to end, this prayer business. I might meet the logic used to argue for preserving prayer in the legislature by advocating suppression of "heresy" since it pre-dates the First Amendment.

One way or another this religionism must end. The best way to make it go away is for us to revoke the nonprofit status of religious institutions, thus preserving our desire for separation of church and state, which also predates the First Amendment.

As did protests against taxation without representation....

POSTED BY: FARNAZ1MANSOURI1 | SEPTEMBER 25, 2009 6:52 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

And Thomas "the Moses of the NT" Baum gives the specifics of his hallucinations previously as below:

"Jesus, God-Incarnate, became One of us when Mary said YES and that is when He became the Son of God and the Son of Man until then He was God.

I have met the Trinity and I know that God is a Trinity but I can't explain it and I don't have to, I could give an analogy but that is all that it would be, an analogy."

From two historical Jesus exegetes:

"Gerd Lüdemann

Lüdemann (Jesus, 280f) finds the genealogies in both Matthew and Luke to be theological creations with no historical basis. In similar vein he finds no historical value in the dispute over the davidic lineage of the Messiah (Mark 12:35-37 and parallels), finding it instead to be the product of "a learned scribal" effort to demonstrate that Jesus is "more than son of David, namely son of God." (Jesus, 87)

Gerd Lüdemann

Lüdemann [Jesus, 122-24] presents four (4) reasons for regarding the miraculous conception of Jesus as unhistorical: (1) Numerous parallels in the history of religion; (2) it represents a rare and late NT tradition; (3) Synoptic descriptions of Jesus' relations with his family are inconsistent with such an event; and (4) scientific considerations.

More positively, Lüdemann concludes that we can extract

as a historical fact behind Matt 1.18-25 the existence of a hostile rumor about the illegitimacy of Jesus. Lüdemann suggests that rape by an unnamed man, possibly even a Roman soldier, is the most likely explanation. He notes that while such an event would have disqualified Mary from marriage to a priest, it would not have prevented from marrying and have other children.

Lüdemann [Jesus, 261-63] discounts Luke's account as a legend deriving from Jewish Hellenistic circles that were concerned to hold together the procreation of the Spirit, the authentic sonship of the Messiah and the virginal conception. "

John P. Meier

Meier [Marginal Jew I,216-219] notes that the "affirmation of Jesus' descent from David might easily be placed alongside his birth at Bethlehem as a theologoumenon (a theological insight narrated as a historical event) if it were not for the fact that numerous and diverse streams of NT tradition also affirm Jesus' Davidic lineage." Meier suggests that the belief that Jesus was "son of David" may have been held by Jesus' followers prior to his death, with his resurrection then being understood as a form of enthronement. However, he notes that such messianic views, whatever their provenance, cannot prove Jesus was "literally, biologically of Davidic stock."

Retrieved from
["http://wiki.faithfutures.org/index.php/007_Of_Davids_Lineage"](http://wiki.faithfutures.org/index.php/007_Of_Davids_Lineage)

POSTED BY: CCNL1 | SEPTEMBER 25, 2009 6:49 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Becky, are you saying that you want to take guns out of schools? What happened to my right to bear arms? Are you trying to rob my children of that right?

POSTED BY: AJUDE4 | SEPTEMBER 25, 2009 4:49 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

When Jesus, God-Incarnate, was chatting with us, humanity, in person, so to speak, He said, "When you pray, go into your closet and your Heavenly Father will hear you", or words to that effect.

God-Incarnate also said something to the effect, "Do not pray as the hypocrites pray, calling ATTENTION to yourself...".

Anyone can pray at anytime and our "closet" can be anywhere, we do not have to make a "performance" out of it.

Isn't it nice that God-Incarnate let us know that our relationship with God can be both very personal and also public but not public in the sense of forcing it on others.

Forced prayer is not prayer.

Some seem to think that prayer is just words whereas prayer can also take the form of actions.

Take care, be ready.

Sincerely, Thomas Paul Moses Baum.

POSTED BY: THOMASBAUM | SEPTEMBER 25, 2009 3:54 PM
[REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT](#)

Why can't we put prayer back in our public schools? Why can't we allow the teacher and students to recite this prayer? It should not offend anyone or any religion since nothing is mentioned but Almighty God and our dependence and our need for Him to watch over us. After all, isn't that what every religion calls their God, "Almighty god" ?
"Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence upon Thee, and we beg Thy blessings upon us, our parents, our teachers and our Country.
This is a simple and vague prayer naming no one god or religion, only prayer asking for God's assistance and protection... No one has the right to rob our children of that...

What happen to freedom of speech and religion... Gone with the wind?
Regardless of what religion one confesses, they should be allowed to pray to them in school... Why can't the people vote on this since it involves our lives and our children's.... We pay taxes to keep the schools running, but we can't make this possible in our schools? Why can't the students have 5 minutes to bow their heads and pray to their God? Vote for the right to pray...
Since prayer has been taken out of schools, it's been replaced with guns, violence and security guards... Hello nation... Wake up!

Many Blessings
Becky G.





POSTED BY: MYBARGINHOUSE | SEPTEMBER 25, 2009 12:42 PM
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