

A New Age of Religious Discrimination

WorldNetDaily, Exclusive Commentary

Saturday August 7, 2010 Posted: August 03, 2010, 1:00 am Eastern

By John H. Calvert, © 2010

During our early history, religious discrimination was rampant among the 13 colonies. Except for ecumenical Pennsylvania, most of the colonies established "state" religions. Massachusetts was ruled by Congregationalists who drove Roger Williams into Rhode Island. Catholics fled England due to persecution by its Anglican state church. After they got settled in Maryland, they were once again treated as outsiders when that colony established the very same Anglican Church as its official religion.

Due to the different state religions the colonies put a provision in the new Constitution to make sure the Federal government would be religiously neutral. The Establishment and Free Exercise clauses of the First Amendment forbid Congress from passing any "law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

After the Civil War, the 14th Amendment was adopted to end race discrimination. It was subsequently interpreted by the Supreme Court to outlaw religious discrimination by making the First Amendment applicable to the states.

By 1971, the Supreme Court had concluded that federal, state and local "government activities [that] touch on the religious sphere ... must be secular in purpose, evenhanded in operation and neutral in primary impact." [Gillette v. U.S. (1971)]

These provisions have been effective in ending governmental preference for Christians over Jews and Catholics over Protestants. However, their misuse has generated a virulent new form of religious discrimination that is fundamentally changing the U.S. into a nontheistic socialist culture – one that denies that life is the gift of a creative God.

The new wave of governmental discrimination favors nontheistic religions like Religious/Secular Humanism and Atheism over Christianity and other traditional theistic religions.

Religious Humanism was proclaimed a religion in 1933 by John Dewey and others in the Humanist Manifesto. It denies God or the supernatural, claims that the universe is self-existing and that life has just arisen through unguided evolutionary processes. As life is an occurrence rather than a creation, these materialistic nontheists believe it ends on death and has no inherent purpose. Their credo holds that humans should find purpose for their lives through reason and naturalistic science, not from the "wisdom" of a mythical and nonexistent God.

Religious Humanists seek to replace traditional theistic religions in all institutions, including public schools. After the Supreme Court ruled in 1949 that religion could not be taught in public schools, many of its leaders changed the "religious" modifier to "secular," in an effort to remove the "new" religion from an unfavorable religious classification. Thus, Religious Humanism became "Secular" Humanism. However, the change of labels has not changed the minds of the Supreme Court and other federal courts that have found "Secular" Humanism to be a religion.

The courts have found a variety of nontheistic belief systems to be religions, because they address matters of "ultimate concern" that function in the lives of their adherents in the same manner as traditional theistic belief systems function in the lives of traditional theists.

Matters of "ultimate concern" are not clearly defined. However, the cases recognize that they include core questions like the cause of life (Where do we come from?), and the nature of life (Are we creations made for a purpose or just occurrences lacking purpose that end on death?). Answers to these foundational questions then generate other religious tenets regarding morality (right and wrong) and the purpose of life (What is the goal of life, if any, and how should it be lived?).

Religious/"Secular" Humanism is an organized religion that welcomes atheists, agnostics, freethinkers, pantheists, deists and a variety of other liberal theistic and nontheistic religious worldviews. In the U.S. it is worshiped in a variety of "churches," including particularly Unitarian Universalist Churches. It preaches a morality and set of ethics far different from that found in the Bible, the Torah and the Quran.

Although the number of its recognized members may be small, Religious/"Secular" Humanism is extraordinarily influential. It dominates institutions of science, education and much of the "mainstream" media. Its adherents have infiltrated mainstream Christian denominations and are causing them to change their tenets and morality to embrace modern evolutionary theory, sexual promiscuity and other concepts antagonistic to individual and family values historically shown to be so important to a strong, healthy and vibrant culture.

The membership of this stealth religion is growing exponentially as its tenets have been systematically embedded and promoted in public schools across the nation. This is reflected in polls that show significant increases in nontheistic beliefs in the 15-29 age group.

So, one asks, "Why?" How can government promote nontheistic religions and get away with it?

The strategy is actually pretty simple. The new religious discrimination is effected through governmental use of a popular but discriminatory definition of religion. The popular definition confines "religion" to just belief in God. This excludes Atheism and "Secular" Humanism from the religious classification. Since they are not classified as "religion" they wind up in a "secular" class. Anything that is not religious is by default "secular." This is because "secular" means not religious.

Since public schools can promote the secular but not the religious, it's a slam-dunk. Secular Humanists and Atheists go into the public schools demanding the exclusion of "religion" (defined as just belief in God) and any of its religious teachings such as those found in the Bible. Once God and His wisdom have been excluded, it's pretty simple to fill the vacuum with the tenets of the new stealth religion now dressed in the garb of secular health, science, history and social studies.

But is it legal? No. Generally, the federal courts, including the Supreme Court, the IRS and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission have moved in the last 60 years to define First Amendment religion broadly to include nontheistic religions. Secular Humanism, Atheism, Transcendental Meditation (like that practiced by Buddhists), Wicca, Scientology and the like have all been held to be religious. Hence, government may not legally endorse or prefer Atheism and Religious/"Secular" Humanism over traditional Theism.

If that is so, then how is it that Atheists are so successful in fooling us into accepting their key assumption that religion is confined to the theistic?

There are many reasons. However, I believe a key reason may be habit. For the first 300 years of our culture, religion was always linked with God, as nearly everyone was a Theist. Although the courts have adjusted to major changes in the religious mix over the last 60 years, our culture has not. We still incorrectly think of "religion" narrowly as just belief in God. In the process, our narrow view of religion has actually encouraged the new wave of religious discrimination.

Thus, by using a commonly accepted but illegal definition of religion, nontheists have successfully prevailed upon government to replace theistic views with nontheistic views about ultimate questions, such as the cause, nature and purpose of life.

The "Freedom From Religion Foundation" illustrates the strategy. It does not actually seek freedom from all religion. It seeks freedom from only Theistic religion, so that the State can promote exclusively the nontheistic varieties. Its name is a deception masking a hidden religious agenda.

When we agree with the Atheist that religion is confined to God, we give him the key to our public schools, to science, to our universities, the media and even our legislative and political venues.

We are entitled to be free from this new wave of religious discrimination. But we will achieve that freedom only by requiring government to use the inclusive nondiscriminatory definition of religion in its application of the First Amendment. Until we object to government favoring nontheistic religions, it will continue to vigorously discriminate against theistic varieties, particularly Christianity.

If the discrimination continues, the religious agenda of the Atheist to remove God from our money, from the Pledge and from sight and mind will eventually be realized. The country will be called a "secular" nation, when in fact it will be as religious as Iran. Instead of a government neutral as to religion, it will be one that commands adherence to its religious view as to how lives should be lived.

John H. Calvert, J.D., is the author of "Kitzmiller's Error: Using an Exclusive Rather Than Inclusive Definition of Religion, Liberty University Law Review" (Spring 2009). A summary of that 115-page article is available online.