

PANTHEISM AND SOCIETY

At the same time that Christians in Indiana and Arkansas are being told that it's illegal for them to discriminate against homosexuals and the transgendered, atheists in Madison, Wisconsin, have been made a protected or privileged class. The Madison city council recently voted to grant them legal protections against discrimination in housing, employment, and the use of public facilities. There's a movement in America to grant gays, lesbians, and now also atheists and agnostics official, legal protections from discrimination – but such protections don't extend to Christians. The courts in America have regularly been finding that Christian business people who refuse to serve homosexuals for reasons of conscience or because of religious conviction are in the wrong. The massive and immediate outcry by large corporations (including Apple and WalMart), by rock stars and celebrities, by the mayors of Seattle and San Francisco, by the ACLU, and by the NCAA, Hillary Clinton and even the spokesman for the White House, over Indiana's Religious Freedom Restoration Act resulted in that state legislature promptly amending their law so that it states the exact opposite of what it at first was intended to do. It's now illegal in Indiana for Christians to obey their consciences, illegal to put their religion into practice. A Christian wedding photographer must participate in something he or she believes to be morally wrong, as if there wouldn't be another wedding photographer down the block who'd be willing to take the pictures.

A decade ago, the issue was whether Christian OB/Gyn specialists should be compelled to perform abortions against their conscience and against their religion. But how many Christian OB/Gyn's are there in America? Now the spear is pointing at every Christians who is trying to earn a livelihood. Whatever it is that's going on, it's escalating!

The issue here is widely perceived to be one of social justice. In other words, social justice now trumps free exercise of religion. Homosexuals, atheists and agnostics have a newly created civil right not to be discriminated against, and that right has a higher priority than First Amendment rights. Tolerance must be extended to all, except to Christians. But does that really explain what's going on? Could it just be a matter of power? Power is forcing another to do something that he or she would not want to do. Is that it? Atheists and homosexuals are showing what power they have? What is going on?

The culture wars in America are not about power-seeking, political correctness, civil rights, nor the promotion of socialism – although these components doubtless play a part. The war is religious. The issue, at its core, is a religious war. Secularists, ie, those who are not Christians (which would include the overwhelming majority of homosexuals as well as atheists), are secretly or unconsciously pantheists. Secularists would never admit it, but they certainly have a religion, because *everyone* does. And their religion is pantheism. If a statement of faith summarizing pantheism could be written it would be: 1) there is no supernatural Deity outside of nature; and 2) meaning can be found in aligning with the principle behind nature, namely evolutionary progress.

The secularists of America seek to impose their religion, pantheism, upon the whole country – and that necessarily requires the disappearance, or extinction, of Christianity. Why? Because Christianity not only demands morality, it preaches accountability for one's behavior. And that's an alien message today; a message that's not only unwanted, it's abhorrent. Pantheism is at war with Christianity. It seeks to neutralize Christianity, at minimum force it to go private, at best eradicate it from planet Earth. The issue is religious belief.

Pantheists believe in progress. It's a corollary of their core belief in Darwinian evolution. Just as they believe that in nature there is the progressive spontaneous emergence and then expansion of the

universe, the progressive spontaneous appearance of the elements, the spontaneous progressive arrival of the species from common ancestors, there is social progress as well. Progressive development is supposedly intrinsic to nature. And so it is expected that in a society, primitive superstitions such as religion will eventually and spontaneously give way to more enlightened rationalistic views.¹ What's happening in America today is the purposeful and deliberate attempt to *hasten* the spontaneous progress of nature, to give it needed impetus, to push Christianity (America's dominant religion) into oblivion. Not merely so that an amoral secular state can replace Christian America, but so that pantheistic views can reign supreme.

The notion of ineluctable progress is such a key feature of Western thought that we could say it's foundational to modern society. We expect our autos to improve every year, likewise our electronic devices and health care. Construction, transportation, agriculture, every aspect of society is in the process of progressing, of getting better and better.² Thus in the realm of politics, many are thoroughly imbued with the notion that, with the passage of time, the policies we enact, whether by legislation or by fiat, will improve society. As democracy progressively spreads to other parts of the world and authoritarianism regresses, peace and prosperity will flourish globally. Education of the masses will make the world more civilized. Americans are infatuated with the notion of progress. We don't have slavery any more. We now find child abuse abhorrent. We now treat our animals in a humane manner. We've come a long way and we'll continue to make progress. Just as there's continual, spontaneous progress in nature, there's progressive development of society. This is pantheism. It's a religious idea that underlies progress in nature – as uncovered by science – and in society.

The pantheist/theist warfare is spread widely in America, it pervades society.³ The CEO of Mozilla was forced out of office because it was discovered that he had donated money to enable a California referendum opposing same-sex marriage. Did his personal views on marriage or religion make him unfit to manage a business? The problem was, he didn't have the "bona fides" in the view of the pantheists who matter in America, to run a major company; he had the wrong religion. Many creationist scientists have been denied tenure, denied grants, or have been expelled from their faculty positions for no other reason than they hold to the wrong religion.

Consider the efforts to create in America a secular state. Secularism is the notion that government and societal structures must be neutral toward religion to protect the rights of all citizens, especially those in a religious minority. Government, it's argued, can only be fair to all if its state structures and policies are deliberately secular, totally free of religious ideas. But this philosophy has the necessary effect of

¹ The LGBT movement frequently uses rhetoric such as being "on the right side of history." This phrase assumes a progressive view of history. In England, "Whig history," referring to 17th century political controversies, assumed inevitable and perpetual progress throughout all human history, from ignorance and darkness to enlightenment. Marxism has a similar view of history.

² The argument at this point is not that all progress is pantheistic or even religious. The progressive improvement in these examples is obviously due to purposeful design by intelligent beings. But the progress supposedly inherent in evolution assumes no such thing. In pantheism, progress is the outworking of an impersonal, non-thinking deity. It spontaneously happens, simply because that's how nature is. All human experience screams that progress requires intelligent weighing of options and a willful determination or choice as to what the desired end should be. So to posit progress a personal deity is required, which contradicts core pantheistic doctrine. Moreover progress needn't be forward; it can be in any direction, unless a deliberate choice is made and that again requires personality. Pantheism's core affirmations, that of natural progress and of a non-personal deity, are self-defeating.

³ This assertion should not be surprising. This country is becoming increasingly secular (and pantheistic). A recent survey found that 75% of Americans disagree with the statement, "Only politicians who believe in God are suitable for public office." One third of adults younger than age 30 have no religious affiliation.

forcing society to be free from religion, namely the Christian religion. Anyone who insists on being religious must keep their views and opinions private. They're not welcome in public. The result? The invisible religion, pantheism, reigns and Christianity is neutralized.

All currents in American society today that oppose or contradict Christian worldview can be shown either to flow from or promote pantheism. Euthanasia is increasingly being done in hospitals, especially since the death of Terry Schiavo. This practice doesn't derive from the Bible. Abortions in the United States now number about 4,000 per day, 1.5 million per year. Pornography, drug abuse, and anti-Semitism certainly aren't features of a Christian worldview. What religious worldview do they possibly stem from? The media ridiculing the Christian religion promotes pantheism. The aggressive environmentalist movement in the Western world can only derive from a pantheist worldview.

It could be argued further that pantheism is becoming the established religion of the United States. The positions on social issues such as acceptance of abortion and homosexual marriage that federal judges require of Americans promote pantheism. The Federal courts redefining marriage is an unprecedented taking of authority from the Church. The expansive role of central government in America likewise promotes pantheism. The federal support of artists thru the National Endowment of the Arts and of environmentalist organizations exemplify public funds being put to the service of pantheism.⁴ The Department of Education is increasingly taking control of education in the United States, requiring indoctrination in evolution and sexually explicit personal issues. It's a *religion* that is being forced onto students in their science courses. The U.S. government holds a near monopoly on funding scientific research in America; scientists find it difficult to obtain federal funds unless in some way their work promotes naturalism (pantheism). Rejecting a good, providential God, government sees itself as being the one to meet the needs of its humble citizens. The issues of today are, at their core, religious. Whose religion will dominate American society?

At its core, the conflict is the Word of God versus the ideas of man. The Word of God is a self-attesting authority of supernatural origin. The Old Testament messianic prophecies, for example, and their fulfillment in Christ compel the conclusion that God exists and that the Bible comes from Him and therefore is true revelation.⁵ There's no other explanation, no other way to account for those prophecies! Pantheism, in contrast, and its outworking of evolution (Darwinism), is based on nothing more authoritative than human speculation. Speculation is how prideful unbelievers aggrandize themselves; it promotes human autonomy. But speculation is not demonstration. It is not truth; it may be nothing more than fantasy. A reasonable person would conclude that Biblical theism is necessarily true and its alternative, pantheism, is phony.

The objective of the religious war that's going on is to defeat Biblical theism, to defeat it everywhere, permanently. Why? So that Christ can't return, and so that no one can ever get saved and avoid hell. Satan wants all of God's creatures to suffer the same destiny he knows awaits him; Satan wants to force God to have to send to hell His beloved creatures, the humans He made in His image. The role of the church is to evangelize the world effectively, which necessarily means focusing on the most critical issue standing as a barrier to salvation. The most harmful intellectual violence committed in the West is the aggressive promotion of evolution, the obvious corollary of which is, there's no God overhead. In the face of the above-described pantheistic onslaught, the church needs to mobilize its energies and re-orient its tactics appropriately.

⁴ Robert Mapplethorpe's "art" exemplifies the animus directed at a biblical view of human sexuality. The founder of the Sierra Club, John Muir, was considered a pantheist.

⁵ See Isaiah chapter 53 for one example.

Steven Weinberg, Nobel laureate in physics, said, "Anything that we scientists can do to weaken the hold of religion [i.e., Christianity] should be done and may in the end be our greatest contribution to civilization."⁶ The sentiment oozes with contempt, but it's not surprising. Weinberg reveals here that scientists are intrinsically religious; they certainly are not "objective," as the stereotype supposes. But this quote also aptly illustrates the Bible's assertion that the whole world, except those saved by trust in Christ, is in rebellion against God. And let's ask, why would a homosexual couple want to give their money to a Christian photographer, florist, or baker? They wouldn't. They deliberately are seeking to force Christians to abandon their convictions, to punish those who believe in God.⁷ What is surprising is that so many of those who trust Christ fail to see the big picture. Pantheism and its expression in science as evolution, naturalism and positivism, and its expression in society as secularism and forced acceptance of unchristian behavior, is aggressively opposed to Biblical theism. The church today seems paralyzed, with few Christians engaging in personal evangelism, missions, or with the social issues of the day. Christianity in America appears to have turned inward, into a largely private, or personal matter. Partly this may be because confidence in the Scriptures has been lost, and the revival that is desperately needed could result from a fresh awareness that the underlying issue is, fundamentally, the war of religions discussed here.

⁶ This and other anti-theistic quotes by Steven Weinberg are at http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Steven_Weinberg.

⁷ Other possible motives might include terrorization or harassment; intimidation seems too weak. Animosity is evident. Fierce attempts to silence opposition suggest fear that one's own truth claim is illegitimate.