

**“One Nation” Without God, No. 1**

When I was in elementary school, our earliest readers used many of Aesop’s Fables to teach both reading and principles. Yes, our schools even taught morals back then! Below I am copying “The Cats and the Cheese” from a third grade reader copyrighted in 1914 by American Book Company:

There were once two cats who were very fond of cheese. Each had a little money, but neither had very much. “Let us put our money together and get a whole cheese,” said one, “Then we can divide it afterwards.”

That suited the other perfectly, and the cheese was bought that very day. The next question was, who was to divide it. Neither one would quite trust the other. At last they agreed to ask the monkey to cut the cheese into two equal parts. The monkey came with his scales in one hand and a big knife in the other. He put a large pair of spectacles on his nose and turned the cheese over and over while he looked at it on all sides. When they saw him do that, both cats were sure that they had done well to ask him to help them.

“My friends,” said the monkey, “I shall try to divide this evenly. Then I shall weigh both pieces and be sure that I am right.” “How wise he is!” the cats whispered softly to each other. Meanwhile the monkey cut the cheese and put the two parts on his scales. One side was heavier than the other.

“That will never do,” cried the monkey, and he took a big bite from the larger piece. Both cats gasped, but they did not quite dare to say anything. This time the other piece was too heavy. “See, you bit off too much,” said one cat. “Ah, that is easily changed,” said the monkey, and again he took a bite. So he went on, biting from first one side and then the other, until both pieces became very small.

At last the cats could stand it no longer. “Enough!” they cried. “We are satisfied now. Stop! We are satisfied!” “But I am not,” said the monkey, looking sternly over his spectacles. “As I have gone to all this trouble for you, I certainly must be paid. For my fee, I shall take these two little bits of cheese – and small enough my fee is, to be sure,” he added, as he stuck one piece into his mouth. With the other piece in his hand, he flapped his tail in the faces of the two cats and jumped through the window.

As for the two cats, they are still quarreling over who was to blame for calling the monkey in to eat the cheese.

WOW! Are our third grade kids exposed to lessons like that today? Many lessons of wisdom can be gained from this parable of life. Among them, this fable well illustrates the weakness of democracy in trying to balance rights and freedoms with judges holding the scales. Those seeking their “rights” always feel cheated but the bites of adjustment diminish the freedom of everyone else and undermine the very freedom under which the rights are claimed. Democracy cannot survive unless there is a mutual respect with the greater deference being made to the majority and the basics upon which their society is established.

If I were to become a citizen of another country with a different culture, to demand change of the established culture for my own satisfaction would be to selfishly rob the society of its freedom.

There is no debate that our country was founded in recognition of God; call him the Judeo-Christian God if you like. This is recognized in our federal Constitution and also in the constitutions of each of the fifty states. The Constitution does not speak of “separation of church and state.” It does declare, however, that there would be no established religion, that is, no official, government-sponsored religion like prevailed in Europe. This disestablishmentarian concept was a radical idea adding to the greatness of the nation. This did not mean that the founders of our nation intended it to be a Godless society. They created a society favoring religion without binding it on the individual. That has served us well for over two centuries. But now, through nine judges who alter that practical course, the monkey keeps taking bites out of this concept to the applause of a growing number who want a totally secular nation.

“One nation ‘under God’” is presently being challenged in the Supreme Court by one who at best could be representing only a very small minority. Since neither he nor his child is compelled to repeat that phrase, the objector is displaying disdain and hatred for both the principle upon which his country was built and the vast majority of its citizens.

Are you protesting this imbalance, or do you think it is no big bite of the cheese? If all is ruled out that displays or honors religion and God, it would be a tragic, far-reaching decision. Sooner or later, one bite at the time, we could expect other challenges that would make our government sponsor a truly secular, Godless society – which actually is sponsoring another form of religion, that is, irreligion.

Crosses are being removed from public property because they honor Christ. How far will we let that go? Our national cemeteries have thousands of those crosses honoring Christ and those who served in the military, many giving their lives, and the crosses mark their graves by their choice, yet it is federal property.

Making churches tax-exempt is actually a form of support. The government builds chapels and pays chaplains for our military. I suppose it pays for their training also. Sessions of our Supreme Court and of Congress are opened with a prayer. Oaths are made with a hand on the Bible. Quotations of Scripture and religious symbols are on many federal buildings. Must these all be destroyed to satisfy a few radical people? Must “Proclaim liberty throughout the land” (Leviticus 25:10) be ground off the rim of our hallowed Liberty Bell? For most of my career I have used a nice, leather-bound Bible bought at government expense. My brother-in-law attended ACC on the GI Bill. The textbooks were supplied by the government, and Bible courses were required there. Later, I bought the Bible from him. Must purchase of such textbooks be forbidden? How much longer may we have “In God We Trust” and religious symbols on our currency? Can we no longer sing “God bless America” at public gatherings?

Our calendar would ultimately suffer from the bites also. January was named to honor the goddess Janus. Sunday honors the Moon God; Monday honors the Moon God;

Thursday honors Thor, and other days are named for other supposed divinities. Sundays are identified on our calendars in red because they are recognized holidays (holy days).

All official documents would have to be altered, for they are dated A.D., the abbreviation of Anno Domini, meaning “year of the Lord.”

President Jimmy Carter’s effort to convert us to the metric system was a confusing failure. That ain’t nothin’ compared to the confusion that would be caused by the change in our maps in an effort to eliminate all names that honor religion. Names like Santa Fe, Sacramento, Corpus Christi, Providence, and Los Angeles would have to go. Texas would lose two rivers – the Trinity and the Brazos. According to legend, Spanish explorers were in dire need of water. When they came upon this stream (God must have been with them for sometimes it is dry!), they called it “Los Brazos de los Dios,” the Arm of God. The Sangre de Cristo (blood of Christ) mountain range would be out of favor.

If all the cities bearing the names of Saint, Santa, or San, honoring persons of religion, were changed, the people of California would have to study geography all over again! What new names do you folks in Virginia and West Virginia want for your states? And how about the many cities that have a “Church Street”? Eden, Texas and Paradise, California would need new names.

Geographical features like Devil’s Backbone, Purgatory Road, and Hell’s Canyon, and Spirit Mountain would need new names also. School textbooks would have to change the names of heavenly bodies (Oops, celestial bodies) that are named after Greek or Roman gods like Mars, Jupiter, and Pluto.

These things we have mentioned are just a small indication of how much our nation is built upon religion. Some of these may seem insignificant, but each bite off the cheese leaves us with a more Godless and secular society outwitted by the disdainful monkey to whom we appealed.

I know I am preaching to the choir – well, to the couple of you who have not already walked out from my dull droning. However to all the cats out there who are distrusting others and jealous of all “rights,” I would like to appeal. If you have an “I am a victim mentality,” you can always find something to cry about. Each of us can claim some injustice which, if remedied, would limit the freedom of others. So let’s be thankful for the great freedom we have and learn to live together cutting each other some slack lest the monkey continues to rob us all before our very eyes and we blame each other for it.

Thanks for your patience. More to follow, if the Lord wills. []

(Cecil Hook: April 2004)