

If God Ran the State Department

by D. George Leech



Anna Myreck-Wodecki

“**I**n the Name of the most Holy & undivided Trinity.” Thus begins the Treaty of Paris (1783) by which Great Britain formally conceded the existence of the independent United States of America. This matter-of-fact invocation of the Triune God of Christianity stands in sharp contrast to the stirring tributes to human authority in the opening words of the documents usually cited as the foundations of the American republic: the Declaration of Independence (“When in the Course of human events . . .”) and our second, and theoretically our current, constitution (“We the People of the United States . . .”). In fact, as the deed to our national existence, the Treaty of Paris is arguably *the* American founding document. The fact that the Christian invocation was *pro forma* for the times says as much about the times as the principle: the United States took its place among the nations of the world as an explicitly Christian polity.

With the possible exceptions of Puritan New England and the incipient state of Deseret, the United States has never been a *theocracy* in the sense that the ecclesiastical establishment ruled the civil. But until recently, it was unarguably a *thearchy* since public authorities, at all levels, from the schoolmarm leading her students in the Lord’s Prayer to the President and the Supreme Court, openly affirmed Christianity (in its Protestant iteration) as the uncontested ruling ethos. The herald of liberty, Patrick Henry, proclaimed: “It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians, not on religions but on the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”

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In sharp contrast to our current legal fictions, Justice Joseph Story, a preeminent expositor of our constitutional order (when we still had one), elucidated: “The real objective of the First Amendment was not to countenance, much less to advance, Mohammedanism, or Judaism, or infidelity, by prostrating Christianity, but to exclude rivalry among Christian sects, and to prevent any national ecclesiastical establishment patronage of the national government,” and, in particular, to protect the then-established churches of several states. That a Christian America had an international mission was attested to by John Adams: “The destiny of America is to carry the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all men everywhere.” Even as late as 1905, U.S. Supreme Court Justice David Josiah Brewer could state at Harvard University: “This Republic is classified among the Christian nations of the world. . . . We constantly speak of this Republic as a Christian nation—in fact, as the leading Christian nation of the world. The popular use of the term certainly has significance. It is not a mere creation of the imagination.”

Today, in what Don Feder has rightly called Pagan America, such sentiments have only a quaint antiquarian significance; if uttered today, they would be offensive and subversive. The constitutionalism of Story and Brewer has long since given way to the lawlessness of Stevens and Breyer and their ilk. As if their conscious intent were to vex the shade of Justice Story, our judicial authorities act precisely to prostrate Christianity while giving official protection to pernicious cults that would have scandalized the Founding Fathers. The exemplar, of course, is the Supreme Court’s extension of First Amendment protections to Afro-Caribbean animal sacrifices in *Church of The Lukumi Babalu Aye, Inc. v. City of Hialeah* (1993).

The United States no longer prides itself on exporting ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; instead, as Irving Kristol has put it, “our missionaries live in Hollywood”—missionaries not of Christ, as John Adams had hoped, but of “a dominant secular hedonistic ethos. It is an imperium with a minimum of moral substance.” As is true of our domestic policy, our globalist foreign policy reflects the values of a ruling pseudo-elite that is estranged not only from our country’s Christian heritage but from the inarticulate and half-forgotten residue of that heritage among ordinary Americans. That is, the moral plunge of our international agenda from exporting the Gospel to exporting cash and condoms for the cooperative, sanctions and bombs for the recalcitrant, is inseparable from the progressive de-Christianization of American society and of the larger European civilization which gave it birth.

Recently, someone asked the not entirely rhetorical question in reference to what has long been called the “American experiment” in republican, “pluralistic” self-government: When can we say an experiment has failed? To answer that question, it is necessary to recall that in the long history of Christendom, republicanism has been the rare exception—and “pluralism,” a modern marketing term for de-Christianization, was unknown. That a public religious establishment can exist while allowing a reasonable degree of toleration of private dissent was obvious to the premodern mind; Swift, speaking through the giant king of Brobdingnag, gave the classic justification for limited forbearance: “A man may be allowed to keep poisons in his closet, but not to vend them about for cordials.”

It should be remembered that in the Roman Empire, the legalization of Christianity under Constantine after three centuries of persecution and the establishment of Christianity as the official religion under Theodosius the Great coincided with the culmination of the progressive evolution of the office of the emperor—originally, in theory, just the “first citizen” (*princeps*) of the Republic—into a true monarch. By the beginning of the fifth century, in both Rome and Constantinople the emperor was a visible icon of Christian thearchy, the divinely anointed successor of David and Solomon, ruler of the New Israel: in a word, king (*basileus*). The indissoluble symphony between crown and cross, state and church, *imperium* and *sacerdotium* was in turn adopted by the sub-Roman successor states established by the barbarians, as new peoples—Celt, German, Slav—adopted the Faith, along with many aspects of classical Greco-Roman culture, under the command of a Clovis or an Ethelbert, an Olaf or a Vladimir. (In keeping with Ephesians 3:14-15 and 5:20-33, the same derivative understanding sanctified authority on the family level in the form of patriarchy; as late as the 18th century, wives in England who killed their husbands suffered not hanging but burning, the penalty for traitors, since their crime was not just murder but “petty treason.”)

In sum, the growth and consolidation of European Christian civilization took place in a context in which Christianity—in the form of an established church—was the exclusive public creed of states ruled by autocratic monarchs (invariably styled “defender of the faith”) in consultation with—but not under the command of—such councils, senates, and so forth as tradition provided. It is during this millennium and a half before the ironically misnamed “Enlightenment” that the true Light, the Word Incarnate, became implanted in the European heart: the vestigial Christian consciousness in modern America and Europe is nothing less (and alas, nothing more) than the small

change in copper left over from the moral gold bullion amassed during that time.

In contrast, modernity might best be defined as a rejection of divinely anointed, legitimate authorities in the world in favor of the moral nihilism that became intellectually respectable during the 18th century, received its fullest elaboration in the 19th, and achieved political dominance in the 20th. Today, not a single historically Christian country can truthfully claim to be a functional Christian society. On the state level, no government, whether nominally a republic or a monarchy (the latter being, in practice, a republic in ermine drag, where not even the monarch would claim that “the people” are not sovereign), would stake its legitimacy on the cross on its flag or would claim Christ as its ruler. The ideological assault on monarchy—first by democracy (*vox populi, vox dei*), then by socialism—is inextricably linked to the notion that God no longer rules the world, if He exists at all. (It is significant that the great revolutions of modern European history—English, French, Russian—each culminated in regicide, the national analog of deicide and patricide, an antisacrament, a blood sacrifice upon the altar of human self-will.) In due course, having killed, deposed, or emasculated our kings, and having intellectually expelled the Creator from His creation under the tutelage of Darwin, Marx, and Freud, it is hardly surprising that in recent decades our rebellion has now worked its way down to the family in the destruction of fatherhood: feminism as moral patricide.

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America, despite the best intentions and emphatic Christian aspirations of the Founders, has not been immune from this progression and in some respects has been its showcase. Perhaps the most *experimental* thing about the American experiment was the apparently unexamined assumption that a stable, Christian social order that reflected 14 centuries of Christian monarchy and church/state cooperation could be preserved and even strengthened under a political order explicitly based on then-current fantasies about the idealized civic virtues of pagan Greece and Rome. We thought we could declare every man to be his own king as well as his own pope, while under the guidance of a “natural aristocracy,” the inherited moral and social order would not suffer. We were wrong. The progressive degeneration over the years from a confederal republic, to a federal democracy, to our current demagogic unitary state can be traced in the decline from Jefferson’s apologetics for sansculottic obscenities in France, to the rule of King Mob under

Jackson, to Lincoln's anti-constitutionalism, to Wilson's sanctimonious one-worldism, to the bush-league Bolshevism of Roosevelt and Johnson, and finally to the Gramscian prevarications of Bush, Clinton, and Gingrich.

It is specious to believe, as do many American Christians (particularly evangelicals), that the prevailing corruption has not seduced and degraded "the people" as badly as our rulers, and that the Humpty-Dumpty of Christian society can (and will) be reassembled by a political movement like the Moral Majority or the Christian Coalition. Sadly, there are more Americans who are depraved enough to vote for the kind of government we now have than there are who will vote against it. Just as unlikely is national salvation in the form of "revival," a new Great Awakening. Americans' Christianity has almost entirely lost its savor. Social regeneration cannot be expected from a few more group hugs for "reconciliation" by Promise Keepers, much less from "designer" megachurches specializing in "Christian aerobics" for yuppies or from the babbling, barking, and backflopping of the Toronto Airport Blessing, the Pensacola Outpouring, and the rest of the demonic "signs and wonders" deception.

But . . . if God has not irrevocably withdrawn His grace from our corrupted world, and if He were, by some miracle unforeseen and undeserved by us, to restore an American Christian society and the constitutional republic that the Founding Fathers envisioned and which, for however short a time, existed—what should be its place in the world? What should be its policy toward other nations?

One good place to start would be with the old John Birch Society slogan, an oldie but goodie: "U.S. out of the U.N., and the U.N. out of the U.S." Most American Christians, to the degree that they have any kind of spiritual compass, as well as many people who are anything but Christian, have an instinctive and valid mistrust of the growing threat that world government presents to American national sovereignty. A Christian America would cease its participation in the United Nations and throw that organization's headquarters out of New York; the U.N. Participation Act of 1947 should be repealed. As Saint Paul told the Athenians, God "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation" (Acts 17:26). That is, even though all men are of the same flesh, Holy Scripture suggests that each kindred, tongue, people, and nation has its foreordained place and time. That the United States has become Frank Nitti to the U.N.'s Al Capone, breaking the knees of any nation (or at least the relatively weak ones, like Iraq, Somalia, Haiti, or Serbia) so crass as to want to preserve its independence and pursue its sovereign interests should be particularly repugnant to us. A Christian America would zealously preserve its own sovereignty—trade, immigration, and citizenship policy would be restructured to protect, not break down, the American nation—and respect the sovereignty of other nations. We would seek, with nations as with individuals, to "do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith," as the Apostle writes.

A Christian foreign policy would mean the end of foreign aid and, in general, the end of most officially approved meddling in other nations' business. Congress should repeal the 1961 Foreign Assistance Act and abolish the Kennedy-era Agency for International Development and the Peace Corps. If we object—as we should—to the efforts by the Chinese government to buy the Clinton administration, why do we expect other countries

to thank us when we use the National Endowment for Democracy, funded with tax dollars, to influence foreign elections and pick winners and losers, or when armed U.S. force embarks upon nonsensical "nation-building"? Why does our Gauleiter in Bosnia, Robert Gelbard, think he has the right to threaten Bosnian Serbs with the "most serious imaginable" consequences (more "serious" than the bombs and sanctions we have already inflicted on them?) unless they vote to ratify the leaders we have preselected for them? Why does the International Republican Institute conduct programs in Russia and Eastern Europe to encourage greater female participation in the political process, as if there is something inherently wrong with the traditional attitude (still stronger in the postcommunist world than in the West) that politics mostly concerns men and that women's major responsibility is the home? Most of what our money goes for is neither good nor Christian, and even if it were, there is no compelling reason why Americans should be taxed to pay for work that would be better done on a voluntary basis.

In general, an American Christian foreign policy that championed national sovereignty over internationalism would heed the long-neglected warning of George Washington against "permanent, inveterate antipathies against particular nations and passionate attachments for others." At the same time, a sovereign, Christian America would take a realistic and principled attitude toward two issues that should provoke the conscience of any Christian people: persecution of Christians and the march of militant Islam.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord," sang the psalmist, "is the death of his saints." An amazed and stupefied Washington establishment has lately discovered the obvious fact that more Christians have suffered a martyr's fate in the 20th century than in the previous 19 combined. (As a side observation on the abysmal level of Christian knowledge and solidarity, how many American Christians now fond of citing this know that today most Christian victims of Islam are Roman Catholics, or that the vast majority of this century's horrendous communist death toll were Orthodox?) Typically, the bipartisan establishment has managed to trivialize even this belated awareness of Christian persecution and has relegated it to the generic status of "human rights," unwilling to show any particular concern for Christians without throwing in Tibetan Buddhists, Iranian Baha'is, Chinese Muslims, and anybody and everybody else to avoid even the suspicion that American Christians might be especially concerned about fellow Christians. An American Christian policy would bar or severely limit goods from persecuting states and keep our political contacts with persecuting regimes at appropriately minimal levels.

Similarly, the United States should reverse its pro-Muslim bias in the conflicts that currently rage between Muslims and Christians in the Balkans, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and along the southern Sahara and extend toward the Christians what traditional diplomacy called "benevolent neutrality"; we should encourage the moral unity of traditionally Christian peoples and should abandon misguided policies, like NATO expansion and our Bosnia deployment, that promote disunity. It is not the job of even a Christian America to go to war to protect Christians abroad, but we should be in solidarity with, not hostile to, Christian communities that are increasingly subject to physical eradication by the devotees of a crazed false prophet.

Of all the items on the Christian Coalition's voters' guide, in

all likelihood the only one never to be faulted by the ACLU or People for the American Way on the ground of church/state separation is the notion that American Christians have a *religious* obligation to insist on unqualified American support for the state of Israel. This is not to suggest that the United States could not justify a cooperative relationship with Israel purely on prudent foreign policy grounds, given the latter's antipathy toward Islamic radicalism. However, we should terminate Israel's peremptory claim to over four billion dollars in various forms of American assistance every year, the benefit of which even many Israelis are now questioning; the Cranston Amendment, for example, which requires that American annual aid to Israel be no less than Israel's annual interest payment on past loans, should be repealed. Likewise, it is natural and—if it were kept within certain limits—tolerable that American Jews would have an inclination to interpret Israel's interests as harmonious with America's, even as Americans of other ethno-religious stock maintain their emotional bond with their countries of origin.

But there is no justification for the conviction of so many American Christians, mostly evangelicals but including members of other denominations, that American support for a non-Christian foreign state is an *absolute* divine mandate. This superstition derives almost entirely from a novel—indeed, heretical—method of biblical exegesis called Dispensationalism, which holds, among other things, that the covenant given to Israel in the Old Testament continues to run concurrently with the New Covenant; in its extreme form, its adherents go so far as to suggest that there are in effect two paths of salvation, one for Jews and the other for Gentiles, a clear perversion of Scripture (especially Saint Paul's Epistle to the Romans, chapters 9 through 11) and of any Christian teaching to be found

from the first century to the 19th. Some Dispensationalists even expect in the not-too-distant future to hail the returned Christ in the guise of an earthly king and messiah ruling from a rebuilt Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem—and have provided moral and material support to a radical Israeli group called the Temple Mount Faithful, which has repeatedly provoked violent tensions in its campaign to rebuild the Temple destroyed by Titus in A.D. 70. For any serious Christian, especially one familiar with the writings of the Church Fathers, less important than the political consequences of a rebuilt temple (the site is now occupied by the Dome of the Rock and the al-Aqsa mosque) or the Jewish religious significance of rebuilding the Temple (the last serious attempt to do so was under Julian the Apostate in the fourth century) is that there could be absolutely no doubt as to *who* will be the “Christ” ruling the earth from that Temple: “that man of sin . . . , the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God,” as Saint Paul warned.

Of course, speculation as to how specific political events relate to the unfolding of the “mystery of iniquity” have no more proper place in setting policy than do those of Dispensationalism and should not bias American policy for or against either Israel or any other country. But as a purely religious question, the effect of Dispensationalism on American perceptions of world events deserves urgent and immediate examination by all American Christians.

Unfortunately, that examination is about as likely as the United States having a Christian foreign, or domestic, policy any time soon—or ever again. God gave the Christian world 15, maybe 16, good centuries after Constantine. We cannot expect Him to be so generous again. ◀

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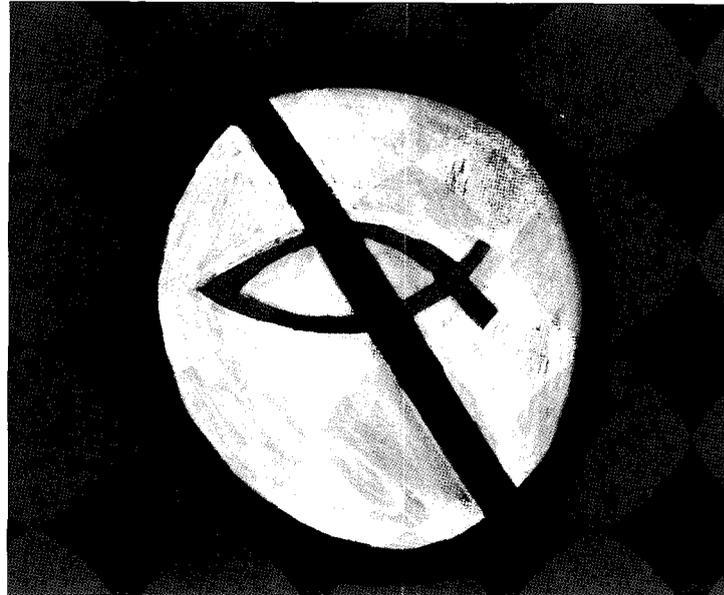
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The Last Respectable Bias

by William A. Donohue



Anna Mycek-Wroblecki

In this age of multiculturalism and sensitivity, there is one bigotry still tolerated: anti-Catholicism. As Arthur Schlesinger, Sr., Peter Viereck, and Daniel Patrick Moynihan have all observed, anti-Catholicism remains our nation's deepest bias, and the only one found respectable by intellectuals.

The anti-Catholicism that marked our nation's founding was directed at both individual Catholics and the institutional Church. Somewhat later, it became colored by an anti-Irish impulse; later still, anti-Irish sentiments gave way to bigotry against Eastern and Southern Europeans, most of whom were Catholic. And, of course, there was always the nativistic element expressed by the Know-Nothing Party and the Ku Klux Klan; their fondness for Catholics is well known.

Today's anti-Catholicism looks different but still bears that same odor: there is something basically un-American about the Catholic Church. Indeed, in a survey in the mid-90's commissioned by the National Conference of Christians and Jews, anti-Catholicism was found to be the nation's leading prejudice. To be specific, the sneaking suspicion that Catholics are trying to impose their views on society elevated anti-Catholicism to the top of the charts. Incidentally, the authors of the report never flagged this result but merely made a quiet notation of the conclusion.

Contemporary expressions of Catholic-bashing involve such serious issues as bugging a priest in the confessional, forcibly removing ashes from an employee's forehead on Ash Wednesday, beheading statues of Our Blessed Mother, villainizing Catholics for religious reasons (à la Louis Farrakhan), and displaying anti-Catholic art so vulgar and blasphemous that only a college campus would allow it. The role of the media should also not be discounted. Just consider the work of Disney, and of its subsidiary, ABC.

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The 1997 fall lineup for ABC included *Nothing Sacred*, a program of pure propaganda that depicts a politically correct priest, Father Ray. This priest doubts the existence of God, thinks of his vocation as merely a "job," violates his duties as a confessor, and instructs the faithful to disobey the Church's teachings on sexuality. But in the end Father Ray is really a good guy: unlike his heartless parishioners who are upset with the homeless for urinating in front of their church (they are heartless because they are loyal to the Church), Father Ray maintains his compassion. He operates a soup kitchen.

As we go to press, the Catholic League has mailed to Michael Eisner, chairman of Disney, the names of 500,000 persons who have signed a petition protesting the show and demanding its termination. Moreover, 20 companies—among them K-Mart, Ocean Spray, DuPont, Red Lobster, Benckiser, American Isuzu, AT&T, Sears, and Montgomery Ward—have all canceled their sponsorship of the show. Nor has the crusade against the program been an exclusively Catholic affair. Without solicitation, Protestant churches have made the petition available to their parishioners, and Jews and Muslims have also supported the drive. What the faithful of all stripes realize is that more is at stake than just a show that pushes the envelope against Catholics.

ABC's anti-Catholic bias was especially evident in its coverage of the funeral Mass for Mother Teresa. Anchor Peter Jennings allowed Christopher Hitchens of *Vanity Fair* and the *Nation* to rant and rave about Mother Teresa's alleged "false humility" and "rabid fundamentalism." Mother Teresa had one person who hated her, and the Disney-owned network found room for him to vent.

Hitchens is a notorious critic of Catholicism and the author of a slim book on Mother Teresa—infamous for its obscene title, absence of citations, and its hate-filled commentary. ABC was certainly well aware of all this when it invited him to speak, and to allow him to continue his diatribe against Mother Tere-