

believed the news delivered to them was often flat-out wrong. Only 39 percent were comfortable with the accuracy of the media. In June 1985 just 34 percent of Americans said the news was often inaccurate. The startling turnaround over a period of seventeen years is certainly worth noting.

Since Fox News is the youngest of the major national news organizations, perhaps millions of Americans have found a place they consider more accurate. Of course, only you can decide if I am being self-aggrandizing or if I or any other media person is truly looking out for you. That is your personal decision to make. And remember: It is tough to fool the camera or newspaper. We media people say plenty, but what do we really *do*? Judge us on that. And say a prayer for those ink-stained wretches and on-camera troublemakers who are truly trying to right some wrongs.

CHAPTER FIVE

God Help Us

Somebody up there likes me.

—*Rocky Marciano*

F THE DEITY isn't looking out for us, well, the landscape turns mighty bleak, if you ask me. Faith, hope, and charity, the antidotes to evil and the forces of darkness, are so strong that all three affirmations are needed if civilization is going to continue. There is no question that religious zealotry has brought the world pain and suffering, but without the hope of eternal life, not to mention infallible justice, eventually dog-eats-dog turns into human-exploits-human.

For centuries, all members of the O'Reilly clan have been baptized Roman Catholics, whether the Church wants to admit it or not. (After my reporting on Cardinal Law the Church was not pleased.) From the time that I could walk, I've gone to mass on Sunday and have respected my religion. I am, I believe, among a

minority of journalists who actually attend church on a regular basis. But judging by the stares I get when I leave mass early, I am not enhancing the image of my profession.

Since I have talked about my religion on the air, I am often asked by skeptical correspondents how I can hold on to such traditions, especially when I hammered the Catholic Church over the sex-abuse scandals (more on that later). I love those questions. Here's what I told the *Saturday Evening Post*: "People say, 'Why do you go to church?' I say, 'Why not? What is a better use of my time? For an hour a week, I can think about things of a spiritual nature in a nice church with beautiful sculptures and stained glass windows and a 2,000-year old tradition that makes sense. Why would I not go?"

"What's the downside of going? What if there is no God? Well, so what? If there is no God, I'm dead. It doesn't matter, OK? I'm looking at it like, 'What's to lose? What's the problem here?' If the theology is positive, if it is designed to help people, and I believe in that philosophy, why would I not embrace that? Now that being said, do I do everything the bishop tells me to do? Certainly I don't. He's a human being; he's not somebody who has sway over me. I can't understand that about atheists. Is there nothing you can embrace? Do you know more than everybody else and can you explain every mystery of nature? Why would you be so definite in the fact that there isn't a God? It doesn't make any sense."

I figured out early on that I was not nearly smart enough to understand the vagaries of the universe, so I threw in with the Supreme Being. Thus, faith was not a struggle for me. My logic is

simple: Everything man is involved with is imperfect. But nature works all the time. It never breaks down. It never fails to show up. The sun comes up, the sun goes down. The tide rolls in, the tide goes out. Seasons change, people die, babies are born. Sure, destructive storms and fires descend, but new growth begins almost immediately. Nature is perfect, so man could not possibly have anything to do with it. You don't have to memorize Ecclesiastes to figure that out.

With the renewing cycle of life staring all human beings in the face, it is incumbent upon us to analyze things further. If Big Bang theorists are right, the entire universe was about the size of an acorn fifteen billion years ago; everything in existence was produced when that cosmic seed exploded. What human being could make *that* happen? I look around. You can build a table, for example, out of existing natural materials. You cannot create anything out of nothing. Not even an acorn.

If you are a nonbeliever, I respect that, but I also urge you to consider data from the scientific community. A six-year study of four thousand Americans at Duke University found that those who prayed regularly had healthier immune systems than those who did not. And it makes sense. Putting your faith in a higher power is a release; it is therapeutic, especially when things beyond human control, like disease or accidents, happen. Praying brings solace and relief. Trusting that things happen for a reason is a major stress buster.

Unfortunately, there is sometimes an element of "bustle" in the religious world, with various faiths competing with and even

hating each other. This, of course, is absurd. I respect all religions that espouse goodwill toward men. I am not a missionary and will not tap on your window urging you to embrace Jesus. I believe that all human beings are equal in God's sight and all sincere beliefs that do not cause injury are acceptable under heaven.

Right away this philosophy puts me at odds with many who believe that if you don't believe what they do, you are bound for Hades. I could never figure this one out either. If a human being lives a good life, holds sincere beliefs, but just happens to be a Hindu, an all-just and all-merciful God is going to set the guy on fire for eternity? I don't think so.

It is this harsh, judgmental approach espoused by some true believers that has made religion in general a tough sell in the modern industrialized world. Many Americans and Europeans react furiously when a moral code is imposed on them. But sometimes the moralist is really looking out for you. However, it is also true that the more freedom a society has, the more difficult it is to listen to someone tell you what to do. Which, of course, is why Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and Hindu fundamentalists often do not embrace a free society, preferring the "my way or the die way" theological tradition.

So here's the question we are here to discuss: Does organized religion look out for you? And the answer is not definitive. Sometimes religion can be good and sometimes it can be bad. It is how *you* incorporate religion into your life that provides the best answer to the question. Use theology to help others and comfort yourself, it becomes a good thing. But use it to belittle and mock others, or to punish yourself, then it is pernicious.



IN OUR PERSONAL LIVES, we do actually enjoy full freedom of religion in this country. But publicly that is no longer so in America. Because of the rise of secularism, a philosophy that argues there is no room for spirituality in the public arena, religious expression in public is under pressure from some in the media and, of course, from the intolerant secularists who hold power in many different quarters. They are *definitely* not looking out for you.

One of the biggest frauds ever foisted upon the American people is the issue of separation of church and state. The American Civil Liberties Union, along with legal secularists like Supreme Court justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg and John Paul Stevens, are using the Constitution to bludgeon any form of public spirituality. This insidious strategy goes against everything the founding fathers hoped to achieve in forming a free, humane society.

I said "fraud," and I meant it. Let's look at some historical facts. There is no question that Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and most of the other framers encouraged spirituality in our public discourse. Letters written by these great men show that they believed social stability could be achieved only by a people who embraced a moral God. Time after time in debating the future of America, the Founders pointed out that only a "moral" and "God-fearing" people could meet the demands of individual freedom. That makes perfect sense, because a society that has no fear of God relies solely on civil authority for guidance. But that guidance can and has broken down. All great

philosophers, even the atheists, realized that one of the essential attributes of a civilized people is a belief that good will be rewarded and evil will be punished.

In 1781, Jefferson said the following words, which are engraved on the Jefferson Memorial in Washington: "God who gave us life gave us liberty. Can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed a conviction that these liberties are the gift of God?"

I wonder what Jefferson would think of the ruling by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in California that the word God is unconstitutional in the Pledge of Allegiance. I also wonder what of Tom would think of the American Civil Liberties Union suing school districts all over the country to ban the use of the word "God" in school-sanctioned speech. Here's how ridiculous this whole thing is: At McKinley High School in Honolulu, an official school poem has been recited on ceremonial occasions since 1927. One of the lines mentions a love for God. After the ACLU threatened a lawsuit, that poem was banned from public recitation, a seventy-five-year tradition dissolved within a few weeks.

This is tragic insanity. To any intellectually honest person, it is apparent that the Founders wanted very much to keep God in the public arena, even uppermost in the thoughts of the populace. What the Founders *did not* want was any one religion imposed by the government. Jefferson, and Madison in particular, were suspicious of organized religion and of some of the zealots who assumed power in faith-based organizations. But the Founders kept it simple: All law-abiding religions were allowed to practice, but the government would not favor any one above another.

At the same time, Jefferson in his wisdom predicted that some of the things he and the others wanted for the new country would eventually come under fire. On September 6, 1819, he wrote: "The Constitution . . . is a mere thing of wax in the hands of the judiciary, which they may twist and shape into any form they please."

How prophetic is that? Right now we have well-funded and extremely litigious groups of anti-spiritually people running wild in the U.S.A., and a number of judges are in their pockets. Led by the incredibly vicious ACLU, they are suing towns, school boards, states, and municipalities to wipe out any public displays relating to heavenly matters.

In addition to the Hawaii case, there have been dozens of other disturbing developments: In Georgia, the ACLU sued to get the words *Christmas holiday* taken off a school district's calendar, the anti-spirituality fanatics demanding the words *winter holiday* be substituted. But President Grant did not sign legislation making "winter holiday" a federal day off. No, he signed into law the "Christmas holiday." Nevertheless, the ACLU's bullying legal tactics succeeded in that case.

In Alabama, civil libertarians sued to get the Ten Commandments removed from a state courtroom. They won. You know about the Pledge of Allegiance suit in California, and I could give you hundreds of other examples. In New Jersey, the secularists even stopped schoolkids from seeing *A Christmas Carol*, based upon the Charles Dickens novel. The kids went to see some cartoon instead.

And the most insane incident of all occurred in New Mexico, where secularists demanded that the town of Las Cruces change

its name. Las Cruces means "the cross." (It's still Las Cruces. And the upstate New York town of Fishkill is still called that despite the efforts of animal rights crazies to have it legally changed.)

What must Benjamin Franklin think as he looks down from Heaven? In 1787, Franklin delivered a stirring speech at the Constitutional Convention in which he said: "I therefore beg leave to move that henceforth, prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven and its blessing on our deliberations, be held in this Assembly every morning before we proceed to business, and that one or more of the clergy of this city be requested to officiate in that service."

Prayers? Before a public debate? Clergy? Some Supreme Court justices are gagging on their gawds. And those jurists must really hate 1787, because also in that year the Northwest Ordinance was passed to govern the territories not yet admitted into the Union. Article III of that ordinance states: "Religion, morality and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools, and the means of education shall be forever encouraged."

Forever? Religion? Schools? Holy water, Batman! Does this mean that the media and the secularist judges and the intrusively dishonest ACT.U have all lied to us? That's exactly what it means. Robin.

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LET'S TAKE A LOOK at those Ten Commandments. Boy, the federal courts don't want you to see those on any government property, no way. But wait, there's a signpost up ahead. It was

written by James Madison, the guiding force behind the language of the Constitution. Said Madison: "We have staked the whole future of American civilization, not upon the power of government, far from it. We have staked the future of all of our political institutions upon the capacity of mankind for self-government; upon the capacity of each and all of us to govern ourselves, to control ourselves, to sustain ourselves according to **THE TEN COMMANDMENTS**." (My emphasis.)

President Madison knew, as did all his founding brothers, that a precise moral code was necessary to set boundaries for everyday life. Ruth Bader Ginsburg and her pals want to erase those boundaries and allow those in power to govern solely by man-made law. But that is impossible. No government can police individual behavior on a massive scale. Either a society has morals or it turns into the Mongol hordes. The way the U.S.A. is going, you might want to start taking riding lessons.

It should be abundantly clear that the antispirituality forces in this country are on a tear. The trend began in June 2000, when a 6-to-3 Supreme Court decision held that a student in a Texas public school violated the Constitution by offering a public prayer before a football game. Interestingly, the entire student body in the school had voted on the student who would deliver the prayer. It was considered a great honor.

Writing for the majority, Justice John Paul Stevens opined in part, "School sponsorship of a religious message is impermissible." Yet a national poll on the situation found that two out of three Americans thought that the prayer should be permitted.

Chief Justice William Rehnquist, one of the three dissenting

Judges, summed up the situation this way: "Even more disturbing than its holding is the tone of the court's opinion; it bristles with hostility to all things religious in public life."

"That is absolutely true. In every debate about public spirituality, the secularists spin the issue and equate God with the legal concept of religion. The two are separate, and here's some legal proof. God is a spiritual being. Witches and Wiccans are recognized religious groups. They reject God.

The United States was founded on Judeo-Christian *philosophy*, not a particular religion. As Madison pointed out, in order for a just society to exist, Americans must behave according to an established moral code, and they chose the Ten Commandments as a good model. That is the logic of the situation. A philosophy that citizens must love and fear a higher power and love their neighbors as themselves encourages civility on a mass scale. As I mentioned, the Founders knew America would never survive the challenges of freedom if spirituality was not a part of the nation's fabric.

Yet the spirituality and philosophy of the Founding Fathers have now been beaten to a pulp by the hyperaggressive forces of the secular opposition. They have waged a successful campaign to convince millions of Americans that public spirituality is "non-inclusive" and therefore offensive. They have succeeded mightily in burying the true tenor of this country: That there is a right and wrong. That everyone is entitled to pursue happiness while receiving the protection of an effective and responsible federal government that understands the intent of the Constitution and those who forged it.

But why have the secularists launched their jihad? Well, the primary reason is that they do not want personal conduct to be judged. That's what this holy war is all about. If spirituality is encouraged in the public arena, then questions about violent crime, corrupting media products, drug use, abortion, sexual behavior, conspicuous consumption, irresponsible parental conduct, and a myriad of other personal issues will be raised. Above all, the secularists do not want that. They want a moral free-fire zone in the U.S.A., where consenting adults can do just about anything in the name of personal freedom. It is not an accident or a coincidence that as moral imperatives have broken down, the number of American children born out of wedlock has skyrocketed in the past decade. And that is the primary cause of poverty and crime. We'll deal with this shocking situation later on in Chapter Eight.

From their experiences in Europe, the Founding Fathers knew that a lax approach to personal behavior leads to decadence and decay. The Founders wanted moral boundaries and standards of behavior set at the local level. They did not want the excesses of England under the Hanovers or France under Louis XVI.

But grant Louis would love secular America here in the early part of the twenty-first century. Our dismissal of spirituality in the public schools and the embracing of secular values and thought throughout society would have greatly cheered mad King George III as well as loopy Louis and his greedy wife, Marie Antoinette. But America is paying a heavy price for letting the good times roll, a price seen most vividly in the behavior of children and especially public high school students.



THERE'S ONE MORE aspect of the religion controversy that needs to be addressed: the selective favoring of a certain religion in the name of "diversity." This usually goes on beneath the radar screen, but an incident at the University of North Carolina blew the cover off this trend:

I do believe the Founding Fathers were absolutely correct in demanding that no public authority in the United States favor a specific religion. So I was distressed to hear that in the fall of 2002, the administration at UNC was going to require all incoming freshmen to read a book entitled *Approaching the Koran: The Early Revelations*. The book is a sanitized version of Koranic philosophy, concentrating on lyrical stories and poetic lore. It's a very interesting book, but there's no way it should be mandatory reading in any public school.

Just imagine the outcry if any school demanded that students read *Bible Highlights* or *Nice Stuff from the Torah*. I mean, the ACLU would be setting itself on fire in protest figuratively speaking, of course. But the ACLU was strangely mute when UNC issued its reading list.

So what was *really* going on here? Well, the backlash from 9/11 was hurting many law-abiding Islamic Americans, and the philosophy of "diversity" was taking some hits. So the University of North Carolina decided to set a proactive example and require students to read a book that is favorable to Islam. The intent was good, but it was a direct violation of the separation concept

because it required students to learn about the positive aspects of a specific religion while ignoring the negative aspects. That's religious advocacy, not intellectual discipline. And that's not allowed in a publicly funded university in the U.S.A.

The force behind the Islamic reading selection was UNC professor Dr. Robert Kirkpatrick. On July 10, 2002, he entered the No Spin Zone on *The O'Reilly Factor*. I've condensed some of our debate, but the main points are these:

O'REILLY: The problem here is that this is indoctrination of religion.

KIRKPATRICK: No, it has nothing to do with that. It's a text that studies the poetic structure of the Koran and seeks to explain why it has such an effect on two billion people in the world.

O'REILLY: UNC never gave incoming freshman a book on the Bible to read.

KIRKPATRICK: We assume that most people coming to the University of North Carolina are already familiar with both the Old and New Testaments.

O'REILLY: But if you did do that, there'd be an outcry all over the country.

The professor had no answer for that. Soon after, under pressure from the North Carolina legislature, UNC dropped the book from its required reading list. *Approaching the Koran* became an optional reading assignment, as it should have been all along. And I'll go one step further: If the book was mandatory reading in a theology or history class, I would have had no problem with it. But

forcing all incoming freshmen to read any book praising a specific religion does violate the mandate that public universities have to live by in order to receive tax dollars.

There's an interesting side note to the controversy. As I said, the ACLU was MIA during the UNCG brouhaha (I love all those initials). Also, most other media did not cover the story as aggressively as we did. As part of our analysis, we rejected the argument that reading the Koran book would help us get to know the world that the 9/11 killers inhabited. Number one, I don't think the revelations of the Prophet Muhammad have anything to do with homicide and terrorism. And second, I reject the argument that you have to digest a book of poetry and religious interpretation in order to "know" your enemy.

I said this to Professor Kirkpatrick: "As a UNCG freshman I wouldn't read the book. And if I were going to the university in 1941, I wouldn't have read *Mein Kampf* either."

Kirkpatrick asked why. "Because it's tripe," I answered.

The next day a number of Muslim websites wrote that I compared the Koran to *Mein Kampf*, the usual vile propaganda some of these sites spew out. What can you do?



I SHOULD BE obvious to clear-thinking Americans that spirituality and Judeo-Christian philosophy were main ingredients in the dense fabric of ideas that became the Constitution. Simply put, historical revisionists and antireligious fanatics are tearing down what the Founders relied upon: moral clarity. And the courts are

allowing them to get away with it, proving that the courts are not looking out for you, the American citizen.

As far as your personal religious conviction, that is completely up to you. But I will say this: Used in the correct way, religion can be a force that makes your life more worthwhile. It can make the bad times bearable and the good times more satisfying. Spirituality looks out for you because it brings you out of yourself and into a realm where the welfare of other people becomes as important as your own. And as we've discussed previously, that kind of worldview will allow you to build relationships with people who will indeed look out for you even as you are looking out for them.