

Breathtaking Hypocrisy

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In my last column for the *St. Croix Review*, I examined the recent Supreme Court decision on the Boy Scouts, in which the court's liberals argued that the Boy Scouts must admit homosexual scoutmasters against their wishes. The case underscores the inconsistency and shallowness of modern liberalism. The case further showed that liberalism is relativistic, allowing liberals on the court (and elsewhere) to happily argue in often contradictory ways, depending on whichever purpose they want to serve.

Something worse happened, however. Something that almost sickens in its hypocrisy. I caught a few paragraphs of the liberals' dissent in the Boy Scouts decision in light of one of the court's other decisions that same week—one that I didn't mention in my previous column. I'll review both.

The court ruled in *Santa Fe Independent School District v. Doe* that public-school students must be prohibited—read: censored, silenced—from mentioning the Almighty in speeches at high school football games. How allowing prayer before a football game somehow constitutes a government “establishment of religion” is beyond me. However, stopping such prayers clearly would seem to violate the Constitution's right to free exercise of religion. How can this latest legislation from the bench be implemented? If some rebellious football player blurts out the G-word—or, worse, the J-word—in a prayer, will security guards handcuff him? Fine him? Suspend him? How will this be enforced?

The words “separation of church and state” are not found in the U.S. Constitution. (They are found in a letter by Jefferson to a friend.) The first words in the Bill of Rights—indeed the first words in the First Amendment itself—do not delineate freedom of speech, press, assembly, or petition (all of which follow in that order) but, instead, freedom of religion. This probably reflected the priorities of the Founding Fathers, intensely religious men whose faith was the core of their daily existence.

The first line in the First Amendment reads,

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.

The first half of that line is known as the “establishment clause.” Congress' intent was to prohibit the national government from establishing a national religion, akin to what the founders had fled in their native England. Liberals argue that it means much more. But their arguments nearly always assault the second half of that line,

known as the “free exercise clause.” They often react as if that clause doesn’t even exist. They exaggerate the meaning of the first half, never balancing it against the second part.

This distortion produces egregious results in our public-school system, already lacking in moral education. A boy in a Florida elementary school was yanked from his cafeteria seat and hauled off to the principal’s office because he bowed his head silently to say grace before eating lunch. When a fourth grade teacher required students to write a paper on a “historical figure,” the only paper not accepted was that of a girl who wrote on Jesus Christ—who it can be argued without controversy was a historical figure.

In a memorial a year after the shooting massacre, a few students at Columbine High in Colorado drew commemorative “tiles” with religious messages, such as “God rest their souls.” Only they had their work banned.

I could give countless more examples.

Also, the U.S. Supreme Court in the year 2000 can conclude that a prayer before a high-school football game is unconstitutional.

In all of these cases authorities are prohibiting the free exercise of religion by individual Americans. They are neglecting the other half of the first line in the First Amendment.

At some point one begins to wonder if these people are simply anti-religious, looking for a means to halt religious practice. (They insist that’s not the case, and that they are mere protectors of freedoms.)

This brings me full circle to the Boy Scouts’ decision.

The four dissenters in the Boy Scout’s case cited a brief by the General Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church. This brief, submitted by a religious organization, provided a list of religious denominations that accept homosexuality, including,

... the views of the United Methodist Church, the Episcopal Church, the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, the United Church Board of Homeland Ministries, and the Universalist Association, all of whom reject discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

These are all religious groups cited by court liberals!

As Terence Jeffrey, editor of *Human Events*, wrote:

On its face it might seem ironic that the very justices who a week before would not allow a voluntary prayer to be said by a high school student at a football game because that might constitute an unconstitutional “establishment of religion” should now effectively argue that the Boy Scouts must adopt the United Methodists’ view of homosexuality.

It’s more than ironic. This is the same group, plus one, that prohibited a voluntary prayer before a football game because they reason it an unconstitutional infringement of religious beliefs upon others. Yet, all of America is simultaneously expected to adopt the liberal view of homosexuality by certain

churches because the court says so.

Which seems closer to an “establishment of religion?” Which “blurs” the “separation of church and state” more? Which is a greater imposition by the state on the freedom of individuals? How could the same group reach such two contradictory decisions?

For convenient purposes, the liberal judges embraced church theology and brought it into state policy. They employed church teachings to support their dissent.

Imagine the reaction from the media if Justices William Rehnquist or Clarence Thomas or Antonin Scalia had begun an argument by asserting, “The Southern Baptists believe,” or “According to the teachings of the Vatican in Rome. . .”

Liberals will be consistently inconsistent in advancing their own (inconsistent) ideology.

Liberal ideology is baseless and inconsistent. Its opponents face a difficult road against an adversary that will say or do almost anything to advance its unequivocally relativistic goals. Ω