

# PUBLIC-SCHOOL SPIRITUAL FORMATION HAS PRODUCED THE MINDLESS LEFT

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The phenomenon this Thinksheet addresses is this: While mainline religion is threatened from the left by a mindful, self-conscious, aggressive secularism (as documented, among other places, in Roof & McKinney's AMERICAN MAINLINE RELIGION), the threat is even greater from the mindless mass of Americans who've unthinkingly accept as gospel (!) the metaphysical formation, viz evolutionism, which they got in public school. Even though perfunctorily religious, most Americans live by a set of assumptions inferred from the premise that I-we are alone in an impersonal, uncaring-for-us universe. My purpose in this Thinksheet is not to list & treat these assumptions but to point to the phenomenon via some recent fragments of evidence supporting my thesis.

1. The great metaphysical divide in American society appears in the affirmation of faith we've used in the Craigville Tabernacle Sunday morning services this summer: "We are not alone, we live in God's world." The affirmation is religious (based on human experiencing of the divine Presence), theological (based on intellectual reflection on that experiencing), & metaphysical (based on a world-paradigm, a particular way of seeing-understanding reality around-within-beyond us). The negative prodosis is necessary because we live in a secular culture that teaches us, more by indirection & assumption than by precept, that we are alone; and the apodosis states Whom we are with, viz the One whose reality relativizes all other reality.

2. People of the American Way, & others of their ilk, proclaim that our public schools do not teach metaphysics & should not teach religion. Setting aside for the nonce the second proclamation, let's note the falsity of the first. When "evolution" is taught as how things came to be (ontogenesis), what they are (ontology), & what process-&-structure they have (cosmology)--& that is how the P.S. teaches "evolution"--nothing remains of "metaphysics" that is not being taught. When further no other metaphysics is taught, no other account is given, no other story is told, almost all children will "believe in" evolution (& the proper term, accordingly, is "evolutionism"). We should not be surprised, then, that for the American masses, the religious question "What does it all mean?" is captive to the impersonalistic, humanity-diminishing doctrine of evolutionism, as in this cartoon:



3. In the American media, the two lefts I'm speaking of--the mindful & the mindless--converge, & less & less do we see exceptions to the assumption that we (human beings) are alone (in an impersonal universe, frequently slightly defrosted by being called "Mother Nature"). There's more pathos than promise in the occasional affirmation that "out there" in space some planets have "intelligent beings." But if

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God, the biblical deity, theism is alluded to, it's either in a fundamentalist-bashing context or in words that distance the speaker-writer from personal identification with the belief (even when the person practicing this distancing is known to be, personally, committed to the God-way of seeing the world, understanding reality!). The usual excuse for rigid adherence to this media tabu against identifying oneself as a God-believer directly, or indirectly with statements having the God-assumption, is that religion is a private matter & should not be "imposed on the public" in the media. But assumptions underlie all human utterance, & the banning of the God-assumption hands the victory over to the no-God-assumption, on the psycho-principle "Out of sight (and speech), out of mind." (When the tabu was clamped down on Iran under the secularizing Shah, the believers' rage boiled over into a religious revolution. Which is what People of the American Way fear may happen in America.)....Except for some local media, media fears of offending the two lefts are greater than of offending the right.

4. Evolutionism's great-grandchildren have come to power in the media & in much of the rest of our society, & it isn't just the fundamentalists who are anxious & concerned about this. Evolutionism naturally filters-censors out, psychosocially, its rivals; its theistic rivals produced our culture; therefore, the children are more & more being deprived of the culture-with-its-roots. Said Margaret Mead of her generation, "We have lost our ancestors & will have no descendants" (the children being ignorant of the ancestors & cynical about their parents --the Mead comment coming, obviously, from the 1960s). Culture analysts are, accordingly, producing books like THE CLOSING OF THE AMERICAN MIND and CULTURAL LITERACY.

5. At the pop level, I'm an avid reader of letters to the editor. One in today's CAPE COD TIMES has this: "Evolution has brought man to a level of development whereby he is capable of reverting life on this planet to the stone age, and within a time frame of a single day. Where is your God now, Mr. Souler?" (Mr. S.'s letter had said it's a sin to believe in evolution instead of in God.) Note the holophrastic hypostasis, "Evolution has brought..." Well, now, if evolution did it, why blame God? Or if "history" did it, as in the Nicaraguan constitution (in contrast to ours, which assumes rather than stating theism), Or if "nature" did it. Theism is personalistic: its rivals, with their substitutes for "God," are pseudopersonalistic (or poetic?). The writer then defends an evolutionistic scientist thus: "Belief in the natural order of things serves a purpose, and it need not have anything to do with" theism. So true; its Western name is Stoicism, the greatest rival of Christianity in the early centuries, and today (its Eastern name is Taoism). But the writer is among the uncommitted and closes thus: "The message is: I don't know 'What it's all about,' and neither do you." Evolutionism's choices come down to this agnosticism, or cynical nihilism, or poetic-romantic (HUDSON REVIEW, eg) naturalism. I put it baldly: Evolutionism is unAmerican, a subversive ideology.

6. Except for the single issue of the environment (ecology), evolutionists (as defined above, including the American masses) are privatists, bestiring themselves only on such public issues as they perceive to affect them, their freedoms & their comforts, their cocooning, directly --noble exceptions God to be thanked for. Instance a CCT local columnist yesterday. She's explaining why she stays off weighty matters in her column & in her life: "We will surely become extinct," & "nothing I say could possibly alter that." "Content to be with friends," I "shy away from confrontations." I "believe in the importance of our individual lives, trivial as they may be in...infinite space." God? Nonono.