

To become physically diminished by what 18th-c. Europe called "the course and constitution of nature," you don't have to do anything except hang around long enough, as the Apostle Paul rightly saith (2Cor.4:16b). But we are responsible for the non-decay & non-diminishment of "our spiritual being," which can be, & therefore should be, "renewed day by day" (v.16c). The maintenance & refreshment obligations apply, beyond the self, to the societies--home, church, community, nation, world--in which the self has membership. In this sense, "self" in this Thinksheet's title includes the corporate selves, our societies & institutions....**Abstract:** For various reasons, we persons-in-communities are tempted to inflict unnecessary & debilitating diminishment on ourselves, our relationships, our commitments, our traditions. At the time, a diminishment of this type is not viewed as such but rather as some good. This misapprehension often goes unchallenged, for we become amnesiac, unaware of our loss till our attention is called to the awful cost. Then sorrow may lead us to repentance & renewal. Examples:

Our public schools have long practiced **GOD-evasion**. The column I'm disputing in my CCT 25Sept89 letter illustrates the amnesia: highly sophisticated Spitzer had become unaware that our public schools took the lead in leaving out the biblical God, and [what follows in quotes was in my letter but not printed] "the media have followed. For example, CBS/TV, for which I did a number of public-interest religion programs in the 1960s & 1970s, has eliminated its highly competent, contributive, & awarded Religion Department....[Always & everywhere in human history, religion has been the root and support of what it's now fashionable to call 'values.' Our secular society is now engaged in an experiment to see whether 'values' can be self-validating, without religion. It's highly unlikely that the experiment will succeed....Herman Kahn (Hudson Institute)...an easy projection in light of the public school's developing skills in God-evasion, that is, in teaching non-religious supports for 'values.' The displacement of religious transcendence [I predicted] would open our society to artificial highs, specifically consumerism* and drugs....[It's going to take more than 'values.']"....*The NEW YORK TIMES, then the dictionaries, adopted my definition of 'consumerism' as a disease. For many Americans, the shopping mall has replaced church & synagogue."

Last week our "ed-u-ca-tion president" had a two-day "summit" on public education. Curiosity, awe, love, & fear are the great motivators to learning, all of them having deeply religious roots. Reportage does not show the summit as having gone that deep into our PS woes....It's a wellknown scandal that our PS texts leave out not only God but also the part played in history, esp. Am. history, by religious individuals, groups, institutions....We need a comprehensive pedagogic, & we'll not get one from our God-evading education establishment....Aging death-of-God radical "theologians" who, eg Wm. Hamilton, try to hang onto Jesus after abandoning God are no help. Plain folks can't dig deontologization, but they do know religious impotence when they see it, and at most they pity its self-victims.

My other example of self-inflicted diminishment is some Christians' **JESUS-evasion** when a Jew (it only takes one!) is present. Seems a matter of simple courtesy, doesn't it? No, it doesn't: rather, it seems a matter of simple betrayal, infidelity, even self-mutilation. Getting along worse with Jesus seems to these Christians not too high a price to pay for getting along better with Jews. But what Jews? only those who are fooled? but how many--how few!--are fooled? It would be worth a Thinksheet to view this behavior through the lens of the pathology of repression....Said the hen to the pig, "Let's make breakfast. I'll supply the eggs, you the bacon." Least-common-denominator "Western religion" leaves Jews with Moses & Christians without Lord-&-Savior Jesus, God's incarnate Son (& also, a smaller matter, without Jesus Messiah-Christ). This practice of Jesus-repression trains Christians to do without Jesus, as God-repression trained the public schools to do without God....Kindness, or cowardice? Jesus will be ashamed of Christians ashamed of him: M.8:38 L.9:26 cf.Mt.10:33.

Schools do lead a religious void

Richard Spitzer's column of Sept. 20 says our public schools "always follow society and never ever lead it." Untrue.

Beginning two generations ago, our schools progressively have been leaving out the biblical God of the American heritage. Why is another matter: that they've deliberately done so is beyond argument.

As a futurologist for the Herman Kahn Institute a score of years ago, I predicted the steady hollowing out of the sacred center of our American society, in light of public schools' teaching non-religious supports for "values."

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