

Willis Elliott

From: "Willis Elliott" <wandlelliott@attbi.com>
To: "confessingchrist meeting" <confessingchrist@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, July 12, 2002 1:44 PM
Subject: "Under God"

"UNDER GOD" & THE GENETIC FALLACY

Almost every objection I've heard to keeping "u.G." in the Pledge of Allegiance has been based on the allegedly shabby warrant of an anti-USSR, USA-chauvinist, 1954, Eisenhower/Sen.McCarty ploy. Logicians note when something is condemned on the basis of its allegedly unsavory origin; "the genetic fallacy," they dub it.

Two can play. I condemn "one nation, indivisible," as based on the shabby, anti-Founding-Fathers notion that states do not have the right of secession, a right without which the thirteen colonies would not have been able to form any union.

I accuse of a million casualties (1/2 million deaths) the spirit of "one nation, indivisible." The Civil War would not have occurred if the spirit of this reduction of the Pledge had prevailed: "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, with liberty and justice for all."

"Liberty" was meant by the Founding Fathers to include the states' right of secession. Membership in the U.S.A. was states-optional.

South Carolina fired on Ft. Sumter only after the Federal government had, subsequent to the 1860 presidential election, highhandedly ("tyrannically," Jn. Wilkes Booth said five years later) revoked the states-secession right.

What would have happened if President Lincoln had not gone violent? South Carolina & probably a few other states would have seceded. In that case, how much longer would slavery have continued? Not long. It had ceased 1/4 century earlier in our mother-country, & the conscience against it was building in the South (partly because of slave-owner Jefferson's denunciations of it, & Washington's freeing of his slaves in his will). Besides, the loss of the advantages of being in the "United" States would have weighed increasingly heavily on the seceders.

Time fails me from pointing to many occasions when, abroad, the U.S.A. has favored the right of secession to minorities in a previously united entity. I mention only two: (1) When Serbia wanted to continue the unity of Tito's Yugoslavia, we came in on the side of the seceding populations. (2) When the Kurds wanted to withdraw from Iraq, we *said* we would back them up, then both times let Saddam slaughter them.

Agree with me? No matter. But agree, will you not, that the "under God" brouhaha is a teaching moment in a secular culture in which the defining powers would rather not (but now must) talk about God.

Grace and peace--
Willis

This post was mainly to show that the history-debunkers, in using the fallacy against "under God," are defenseless against its use to eliminate the entire Pledge, which (as "over" shows) I think we should keep in its entirety.

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Willis Elliott

From: "Willis Elliott" <wandlelliott@attbi.com>
To: "Bill Mills" <wmills@capecodonline.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 10, 2002 7:20 AM
Subject: Letter

"UNDER" WHOM OR WHAT?

Objecting to what he calls "the tyranny of the majority," Jim Coogan today virtually proposes the tyranny of a minority and claims this is the faithful understanding of the Founding Fathers' vision. Minorities--including the atheist who won in Federal court against "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag--"have the same rights and protections as everyone else."

The issue, Jim, is not "the same rights." Rather it is that in the present individualistic cultural atmosphere in America, a minority of one sometimes succeeds in functioning as a majority of one--in defiance both of our heritage and of common sense.

It was an atheist, Tom Paine, who in our founding days wrote COMMON SENSE. Now, another atheist has so twisted reason and history as to cancel common sense and move the nation further into amnesia about the God-orientation (not church-domination) of our Fathers. Few of our opinion formers in the media and education any longer go to church and sing "Our Fathers' God, to thee, Author of liberty, to thee we sing; long may our land be bright with freedom's holy light...."

Apart from the present debate on the Pledge--whether it's flag-idolatry and we should drop it, whether we should edit God out of it--we need to be reminded, and our children need to be taught, that to America's Fathers, God was not optional. In the Declaration of Independence, God is the source and sanction of our rights: not King George III, not the English Parliament, not the social contract, not any alliance of political entities. It is precisely because our rights are rooted in God that they are "unalienable." And the notion that we can forget God and keep our rights makes no philosophical or historical sense.

This country--especially since 9/11--is being jolted back into talking about God. Paradoxically, that California atheist lawyer is a big help.

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To the question whether an atheist can be as "patriotic" as a theist, the literary answer must be, Of course not. By definition, atheists root freedoms elsewhere than where the Declaration of Independence roots them, viz. in God the Creator. The Founding Fathers were Christians (even the deists being deistic Christians) & assumed God where they did not state him. The Constitution was dated by Jesus' birth, "In the year of our Lord...." To call Jesus "Lord" even in this pro-forma usage reflects the basic Christian creed, "Jesus is Lord."

Another "of course": Of course an atheist may be nonliterarily (i.e., apart from our nation's founding documents) as good a patriot as a theist--some, emotionally, even a more passionate patriot. But the notion that an atheist can be "as good" a patriot vis-a-vis America's founding documents is as false as the now-touted notion that a gay or lesbian couple can be "just as married" as a hetero couple--unless one sets aside the Bible & other basic ethical documents of our civilization.

The heart of the above letter to the CAPE COD TIMES is this: "the notion that we can forget God and keep our rights makes no philosophical or historical sense."