

Freedom of religion, not freedom from religion

JOSHUA
BOSSHARDT

Lewis and Clark

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of

religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."

Pledge of Allegiance also deserves such treatment because it coerces nonbelievers into acknowledging the existence of God.

The question we must ask is whether the First Amendment ordains freedom of religion or freedom from religion.

As applies to all pieces of written material, a law must be understood in its historical context and original intent.

As said by President Jefferson, "On every question of construction, carry ourselves back to the time when the Constitution was adopted, recollect the spirit manifested in the debates, and instead of trying what meanings may be squeezed out of the text, or invented against it, conform to the probable one in which it was passed."

The religious environment of the early United States consisted of several new states divided by a collection of denominations, all of which contained impassioned members who feared the establishment of a national religion.

Since state lines divided many of these denominations, Thomas Jefferson said, "Certainly, no power to prescribe any religious exercise or to assume authority in any

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religious discipline has been delegated to the General [federal] Government. It must then rest with the States."

One might say that with this overall theo-political mindset, states may have created their own state-established denominations, even though most just made provision for the encouragement of religion in a time marked by less religious zeal and increased toleration than in 17th century New England.

The actual term "separation between church and state" originates from a letter from Thomas Jefferson to the Danbury Baptists, a group of Christians in Connecticut who feared state intervention to prevent them from their own expression of religion.

Jefferson responded saying the First Amendment constructed a wall of separation of

church and state to, as was later put by the Supreme Court, "interfere when principles break out into overt acts against peace and good order."

In other words, he assuaged the fears of the Danbury Baptists that freedom of religion would become a dispensable right assigned to the power of the state, but his rhetoric says nothing about eschewing traditional public expressions of religion.

Numerous historical and legal precedents evince that the writers of the First Amendment did not want to abolish religion from the public sector, such as a tradition of commencing sessions of Congress with prayer and a congressional resolution to have the President request a day of thanksgiving and prayer for the people.

John Jay, the first Supreme

Court Chief Justice, spoke of the importance of remembering our religious heritage, demonstrating, in conjunction with 150 years worth of court decisions, that America's government had not only tolerated religion but embraced it.

American political feelings in regards to religion remained constant until around the 1950s in which the "separation of church and state" meant that any governmental endorsement of religion defied the principles of the Constitution, despite years of historical and legal precedents designating the contrary.

Loose definitions of coercion resulted in the abrupt expulsion of voluntary prayer, Scripture reading (for non-literary purposes), religious elective courses, and other innocuous activities. So much for original intent.

In a dominantly Christian nation, why should the state have the authority to inexorably erode the religious status of our country and endorse wholesale secularism representing only about 11 percent of the population?

To the contrary, I would like to see the healthy union of government and religion that emerged in the early United

States, a system in which we evade both a truly coercive Church of America and a government that blatantly denies its history and culture.

Some have even made the case that the irreligious have violated their own principle by establishing the "religion of atheism," a doctrine that eerily parallels religion as a system containing moral and life-purpose reflections revolving around a central belief.

Overall, we should not forget our heritage and the religious element of our society to favor the agenda of a loud but gravely mistaken minority.

In representing the thousands of documents and proclamations that occurred since the nation's founding, the Supreme Court in 1892 said: "This is a religious people. This is historically true... These are not individual sayings, declarations of private persons; they are organic utterances; they speak the voice of the entire people... These, and many other matters which might not be noticed, add a volume of unofficial declarations to the mass of organic utterances that this is a Christian nation."



Kennedy Krossen/Staff photographer

What the!?!?! Ann Coulter



MEGAN BROWNLEE
Mt. Spokane

Ann Coulter is the reason some mothers in the wild eat their young.

Like MySpace and text messaging, she is adamantly leading to the downfall of human civilization. However, in all fairness to Coulter, I honestly believe that she does not have the intellectual capacity to understand how what she is doing is hurting America.

I was okay when she published "How to talk to a Liberal if you must." I was even all right when she wrote "If Democrats Had Any Brains, They'd Be Republicans." I fully support freedom of the press, and I will gladly support her right to taint people with extreme writings even if it incinerates my soul.

The thing about Coulter is she does not just say the things she does just to get people fired up, she says what she says to blatantly offend people. In a recent interview on "The Big Idea" with Donny Deutsch, Coulter not only crossed the proverbial line, she took a running gazelle leap over it whilst spitting poisonous venom from her protruding fangs and ranting about right wing superiority.

"Do you know what Christianity is?... We just want Jews to be perfected," Coulter said. "That's what Christianity is."

She continued: "That is what Christians consider themselves to be, perfected Jews."

Being extreme makes Coulter millions, being a megalomaniac makes her have influence, which is absolutely terrifying.

The freedom to speak is one of America's sacred values and even if Coulter said, "I hope Megan Brownlee gets

hit by a large freight train," I would support her right to say it. What is terrifying about her however is that she uses her influence to turn people towards fascism.

As the author of five New York Times bestsellers, she has a strong following. When she says obscene things, she supports them and actually believes them, and the people who listen to her do the same.

At a CPAC convention in February 2002, Coulter said, "We need to execute people like John Walker in order to physically intimidate liberals, by making them realize that they can be killed too. Otherwise they will turn out to be outright traitors."

On "Politically Incorrect," Coulter said, "The problem with women voting, and your Communists will back me up on this, is that, you know, women have no capacity to understand how money is earned. They have a lot of ideas on how to spend it. And when they take these polls, it's always more money on education, more money on child care, more money on day care."

In her syndicated column in 1999, she said, "[The] backbone of the Democratic Party [is a] typical fat, implacable welfare recipient." On MSNBC, whilst talking to a disabled Vietnam vet, she said, "People like you caused us to lose that war."

In August 2000 in the Washington Post, she said, "The thing I like about Bush is I think he hates liberals."

The validity of these statements is obviously atrocious, but people still pay the woman to appear on news programs and publish books. She is not only filled with hate, she is so closed minded that she is synonymous to Hitler in the fact that she thinks that only one type of person should be alive.

Airport security is necessary, but taken too far for comfort



SARAH REYES
Rogers

November is a ruthless travel month due to the sole fact that it marks the start of the holiday season.

It seems to all hit at once and shows no mercy of being over until what seems like the middle of next year.

This involves people from all over the world hopping on a plane and going to spend time with their families for Thanksgiving, all the winter holidays imaginable, welcoming in the New Year and everything else.

It should be a happy time for people making the trip to go see their Great Aunt Ingrid in Wisconsin, but sometimes it is more of a hassle than anything. The fruitcake she made for you might not even have the chance to be brought home.

The reason? The answer would be the many safety precautions being taken at airports around the world. Since 9/11, the security at airports has been almost as tight as a Richard Simmons' workout ensemble.

I am really on the fence about how airports are being run these days. Do not get me wrong, I enjoy making it to the destination that I am headed for on the plane in one piece. At the same time though, it is really necessary to even contemplate whether or not the self-concerned young woman can bring her eyelash curlers on board.

Really, this should not even be an issue. Unfortunately, ever since August 2006 when fate was almost sealed for a Trans-Atlantic flight, there has been consider-

ation to not allow make-up, perfumes and even baby formula on carry-on bags, or flights in general.

Instead of total restriction, there is now a 3-1-1 rule for most liquids that are able to be brought on a flight. This rule says that 3-ounce or smaller containers can be put into a 1 quart zip-top bag and 1 bag is allowed per traveler.

I am glad that this 3-1-1 rule is in place because people can get clever in the ways they choose to go about blowing things up with all the technology that is around nowadays. It seems that it would be extremely

letting liquids on a plane when not many three-ounce containers can fit into a quart sized bag in the first place? According to the Transportation Security Administration, "Each time the TSA searches a carry-on it slows down the line."

Practicing 3-1-1 will ensure a faster and easier checkpoint experience." When reading this, the thought crossed my mind, "Would I rather be on a plane with someone that has a thoroughly searched bag and a can of hairspray, or bag holding a Ziploc, quickly scanned on the X-ray screening machine?"

Honestly, I think I would have to choose the bag with the hairspray.

The airport security workers should be ready to take their time to check bags and inspect everyone's things whether there has just been a threat or even if things are calm in airports everywhere.

The safety of vacationers, workers, college students or anyone should not be taken lightly, but it also should not make a yearly trip to "The Happiest Place on Earth," a living hell.

I will just leave you with this thought: A man on business arrives at the ever-so-anticipated security screening part of the airport.

After being searched, the security screener says, "Well, I have some good news and I have some bad news." "What is the good news?" the man asks.

The security guard responds, "You'll be able to board." Concerned, the man asks, "The bad news?"

"It seems you have a hemorrhoid."

Happiness isn't about material possessions



RACHEL MILHEM
Gonzaga Prep

Fake nails: \$25.
7 For All Mankind jeans: \$149.

Juicy Couture Velour Zip Hoody: \$94.
Coach purse: \$278.
Ugg Boots: \$119.95

The price of society's idea of beauty: expensive.

As Americans, we spend thousands of dollars on achieving physical perfection. People fork out money to have fat sucked from their thighs and stomach, to have their noses straightened and to have their faces reshaped to the form of a celebrity's.

Those who do not have access to a plastic surgeon spend their money on creams and cosmetics to fix or cover up their flaws.

Some people even go to the extreme of eating disorders to fit into the size zero designer jeans.

The way people degrade and hide themselves depresses me. I understand the pressure from media and peers to appear a certain way, but that we give into it is sad.

I have to ask: is external beauty really that important? Personally, I would rather be remembered for being a good person than having a flawless complexion and expensive, stylish clothes.

Material things cannot give a person

lasting happiness. If you get a purse you want, you will be happy for the moment, but you will just want a different one in time which will cause unhappiness.

I find that life has more important factors. My family, my friends and the opportunity to help others makes me happiest. For others, nature, sports or other things may be their source of joy.

My crazy Irish family's gatherings are my greatest joys, and my friends are always fun to hang around with. I am in three different clubs that provide opportunities for community service. Even the simple words, "Thank you," make me feel good.

All of these good feelings usually occur in a pair of twenty-dollar jeans and an old T-shirt. Putting such an importance on physical appearance is unnecessary.

The money and energy usually spent on the pursuit of physical perfection can be put to better use, and beauty can be more than the design on the pocket of a pair of jeans.

While I realize this message has been preached many times and material possessions are necessary, I only hope that next time you judge a person on how they look, or more importantly, judge yourself on your own appearance, you realize that a person is more than clothes and a face.