

Atheists Demand Cross Removed Based on Fake 'Wall of Separation'

An atheist group, the American Humanist Association, filed a lawsuit to have the Peace Cross in Bladensburg, Maryland, removed because, they claim, it violates the Constitution. This 40-foot cross, which was erected in 1925 to honor WWI soldiers, has never posed a problem until now—a reflection of the anti-Christian bias that has emerged in our culture.

A Maryland judge agreed with the atheists, saying in her ruling that the presence of the cross, maintained by tax money, “breaches the ‘wall of separation between Church and State.’” The suit has worked its way through the lower courts and is now headed for the Supreme Court.

The Fake 'Wall of Separation'

The phrase “wall of separation between church and state,” to which Judge Stephanie Thacker and others have alluded, is not found in the Constitution. The First Amendment merely says, “Congress shall make no law concerning the establishment of religion or hindering the free exercise thereof.”

By establishing the First Amendment, the Founding Fathers were merely saying that America would never have an official state-run church. Indeed, it was from such oppressive state churches that they, their parents and grandparents had fled. They came to America to find the freedom to live out their faith without government interference.

The phrase “wall of separation” comes not from the Constitution, but from a letter written by President Thomas Jefferson to a Baptist group in Danbury, Connecticut. The letter was written to assure them that the First Amendment

provided a “wall of separation” that guaranteed their protection from government interference such as they had known in the Old World and in colonial Virginia.

Jefferson’s wall of separation was thus unilateral, in place to keep the government from interfering in matters of faith. Jefferson’s wall of separation, however, did not hinder the government from supporting Christian causes, which is why he took money from the federal treasury to pay for missionaries to work among the Kaskasia Indian tribe and to build them a building in which to worship. Jefferson was also free to close all presidential documents with the words, “In the Year of Our Lord Christ.”

The modern wall of separation that would remove crosses from public land is a fake wall, unknown to the founding generation. That the First Amendment had nothing to do with removing Christian influence from government is highlighted by the fact that the day after ratifying the First Amendment, those same founders proclaimed a day of prayer and thanksgiving throughout the land.

Not only that, but Congress continued to be opened with prayer and Bible reading, and prayer continued to be a daily part of the normal school day in America. Presidents continued to take the oath of office with their hand on a Bible, and they continued to issue proclamations for special days of prayer and thanksgiving.

America’s founding generation would be up in arms at the thought of the government banning a cross memorializing veteran soldiers. They would be astonished to see how the First Amendment is being distorted by modern secularists and manipulated into a weapon against religious liberty, the very thing it was meant to protect.

The Reason for the First Amendment

Yes, it is obvious to anyone who knows American history that

the First Amendment was not put in place to stifle Christianity or to be indifferent towards it. The words and actions of the Founding Fathers make this clear. For example, writing nearly four decades after the American Revolution, John Adams declared,

The general principles on which the fathers achieved independence were ... the general principles of Christianity. Now I will avow that I then believed, and now believe, that those general principles of Christianity are as eternal and immutable as the existence and attributes of God (Hyatt, Pilgrims and Patriots, 163-64).

This was also made clear by Joseph Story (1779-1845) who served as a Supreme Court justice for 34 years from 1811-1845. Commenting on the First Amendment, he said,

We are not to attribute this prohibition of a national religious establishment to an indifference in religion, and especially to Christianity, which none could hold in more reverence than the framers of the Constitution (Hyatt, Pilgrims and Patriots, 153).

Historical Precedent Says “Leave the Cross Alone”

Interestingly, the first act of the Jamestown settlers upon landing at Cape Henry, Virginia, on April 29, 1607, was to erect a seven-foot cross they had brought from England. They then gathered around the cross where they held a prayer service and dedicated the land of their new home to God.

If historical precedent holds any sway with the sitting Supreme Court justices, they should consider the 1892 ruling of the court in the case of “Church of the Holy Trinity versus the United States.” After reviewing thousands of historical documents, the nation’s highest Court declared,

Our laws and our institutions must necessarily be based upon

and embody the teachings of The Redeemer of mankind. It is impossible that it should be otherwise; and in this sense and to this extent our civilization and our institutions are emphatically Christian ... From the discovery of this continent to the present hour, there is a single voice making this affirmation ... we find everywhere a clear recognition of the same truth that this is a Christian nation (Hyatt, Pilgrims and Patriots, 167).

Those who want to remove the cross have based their case on a new and novel interpretation of the First Amendment that ignores its historical context. Their “wall of separation” is a fake wall, unknown to America’s Founding Fathers.

Leave the cross alone!

This article is derived from Dr. Eddie Hyatt’s book Pilgrims and Patriots, available from Amazon and his website at . Dr. Hyatt has a vision to see America reeducated concerning her spiritual birth and see the nation experience another Great Awakening. You can read about his vision on his website and blog and his latest book, entitled The Great Prayer Awakening of 1857-58.