

assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances." (note what are often referred to as "the establishment clause" and "the free exercise clause")

Although from the founding of the United States its culture was heavily influenced by the basic principles of the Bible; and although its Constitution was formulated within the context of that culture and those principles; nevertheless its society is pluralistic. Its citizens and officeholders are not bound to believe or to practice any one religion. Article 6, section 3 of the Constitution states that all legislative, executive, and judicial officers, both of the United States and of the separate States, "shall be bound by oath or affirmation to support this Constitution; but no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States."

Pluralism arises out of a commitment to freedom; yet pluralism does not guarantee that all beliefs and opinions will be given equal status or accorded equal respect. It simply guarantees equality of opportunity to all citizens to freely exercise their religious beliefs.

Frankly, some religious beliefs do not deserve equal status or respect. Some are built upon ignorance and superstition; some are illogical or mindless or fanatical; some appeal to the baser desires; and some are physically harmful to their adherents.

Christians in the United States have a special problem in this connection, as citizens of both an earthly and a heavenly country. On the one hand they believe in freedom of religion; on the other hand they believe that there is only one true religion. They live in a tension between their commitments as citizens of an earthly country, and their commitments as citizens of a heavenly country. As citizens they are committed to freedom of religion. All religions, including Historic Christianity, can openly and freely compete in the religious marketplace for the minds and hearts of men. However, as citizens of heaven, they are committed to the one true and living God, and to Historic Christianity as the only true religion. They know that all other gods are idols, and that all other religions are man-made and will lead men to eternal destruction!

Actually there are only two religions: the religion of God and the religion of man (which takes many forms). Under the influence of the religion of man, the basic principles of the Bible, which in the past have so heavily influenced Western culture, are being increasingly ridiculed and held in contempt.

What can be done about this? Shall Christians living in a pluralistic society simply permit the basic principles of the Bible to be pushed out of their culture? If they do, will their culture then be morally neutral? The answer to this question is already apparent, from the manner in which secularist, relativist, subjectivist, man-centered principles are permeating that culture!

Using the informal world-view of Secular Humanism as an example, it should be noted that secular humanists do not wish to get rid of Christian theism, supernaturalism, absolute truth and absolute values merely in order to make our culture value-free and neutral with