



"When the State starts becoming God, the State begins by expelling God from the schools and evicting God's Word from the lives of the people."

—J. Kesner Kahn

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## **Dangerous Believers**

What would you consider to be the most dangerous element in society? Al Queda? Gangs? Hezbollah? Private militias? Chechen terrorists? Environmental militants? Rogue nations? AIDS and other STDs? Hamas? Drug cartels? Neo-Nazis? Pollution?

Not according to former Clinton-era Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich. In "The Last Word: Bush's [God](#)" (*American Prospect*, July 2004, subscription only), he writes that the thing we need to be most concerned about is you and me—those who believe in God:

The great conflict of the 21st century will not be between the West and terrorism. Terrorism is a tactic, not a belief. The true battle will be between modern civilization and anti-modernists; between those who believe in the primacy of the individual and those who believe that human beings owe their allegiance and identity to a higher authority; between those who give priority to life in this world and those who believe that human life is mere preparation for an existence beyond life; between those who believe in science,

reason, and logic and those who believe that truth is revealed through Scripture and religious dogma. Terrorism will disrupt and destroy lives. But terrorism itself is not the greatest danger we face.

Ramesh Ponnuru, a senior editor at *National Review Online*, summarizes what Reich means in his article, "Robert Reich's Religion Problem":

It is a denunciation—as a graver threat than terrorists—of people who believe that [the world](#) to come is more important than this world, or that all human beings owe their allegiance to God.

Many millions of Christians, Jews, Muslims, and other religious believers will reject Reich's witless rhetorical oppositions.

Let us hope Ponnuru is right, but Reich's sentiments are becoming more commonly uttered in public by leading progressives in academia and government. The central theme is that America's social and political problems would simply disappear if those with Judeo-Christian values would just shut up and go away. They gripe that religious people keep dragging up "anti-modern," "traditional," "backward" ideas, beliefs, values, and methods and injecting them into the modern or post-modern world where they just do not fit! For instance, according to such people, the "archaic" belief in the sanctity of marriage between one man and one woman may have suited society in earlier centuries, but it is today outmoded, unnecessary, and overly restrictive.

Even if Christians and Jews hold such old-fashioned notions, why do the Robert Reichs of the world consider believers dangerous? Do they not realize that truly devout people are usually the last to resort to violence, terror, and offensive action? To whom are they a danger? Simply put, they are a danger to the Robert Reichs of the world! They are a danger because they hold the principled, ideological sword that threatens to dethrone progressives and their liberal views from the powerful positions they have held. Thus, liberals must tar and feather believing Jews and Christians and run them out of society on a rail because it is far easier to advance one's agenda if no opposition exists. (By the way, Reich is currently promoting his latest book, *Reason: Why Liberals Will Win the Battle for America*.)

Over the long haul, Reich's comments are nothing to get excited about, but they do point out a growing trend to sideline those who believe God. In time, if rabid liberals gained political power (note that by their voting records, Democrats John Kerry and John Edwards are the first and fourth most liberal Senators in that august chamber), marginalizing could lead to persecution—and even to governmental restrictions on worship. In the short term, they will continue to coarsen the culture and take victories where they can on such issues as gay "marriage," welfare, military (un)preparedness, diversity, education, sexual freedom, and separation of church and state. These are the frontline issues, and each minor victory enhances their power.

Paul gives us some sound advice for these times:

Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ [Jesus](#) will suffer persecution. But evil men and imposters will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through [faith](#) which is in Christ Jesus. ([II Timothy 3: 12-15](#))

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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## From the Archives: Featured Sermon

### [Persecution](#)

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

Although many in God's church have gone through sore trials and tests of sorts, virtually no one has gone through the nightmarish persecutions suffered by the early Christians in Imperial Rome. Because most of us have lived our lives in modern Israel rather than a Gentile culture, we have been—to this point—shielded from the kinds of persecution (being put to flight, pursued, or martyred from an external source) experienced by the early apostles. This message explores both a time factor and a righteousness

factor, explaining why intense persecution has not yet taken place. Paradoxically), persecution may be regarded as a reward for righteousness, a kind of favor and kindness toward us, preparing us for a better resurrection and greater service as priests in God's Kingdom, following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ.

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## **From the Archives: Featured Article**

### **[Contend Earnestly](#)**

by John O. Reid

All the signs point to Christ's imminent return, yet the Bible warns us not to let down! John Reid, using Hebrews 10, exhorts us to strive zealously to please God and finish our course!

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