



"The philosophy of the classroom in one generation will be the philosophy of the government in the next."
—Abraham Lincoln

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A Nation Under God?

Without a doubt, the biggest story this week has been the ruling by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in California that the words "under [God](#)" in the Pledge of Allegiance make it unconstitutional. Politicians—both Democrat and Republican—decried the Court's decision. Radio airwaves vibrated with arguments, mostly against it, a few for it. Millions of words flowed from commentators' mouths and keyboards and into the mainstream and alternative media. Here are a few more and from a perspective that has not yet espoused.

What do the words "one nation under God" mean? It could have a few different meanings, but its original intent can be seen in President Eisenhower's statement when "under God" was added in June 1954:

In this way we are reaffirming the transcendence of religious [faith](#) in America's heritage and future; in this way we shall constantly strengthen those spiritual weapons which forever will be our country's most powerful resource in [peace](#) and war.

"One nation under God," then, means that we acknowledge God's part in our founding and in our future. By it, we admit our submission to—in Thomas Jefferson's words—Divine Providence and faith in His continual guidance upon the nation. As

Eisenhower said, by reciting this pledge, we seek to strengthen the "spiritual weapons" of the Almighty so that we can employ this "most powerful resource in peace and war."

In short, it means that Americans acknowledge God's rule over them.

Now tell me that the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance means this to most Americans.

It reminds me of what [Jesus](#) Himself says in [Matthew 15:8-9](#): "These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." Americans give lip-service to Christianity, but their lives—to their innermost being—are far from godly. As our Savior says, their worship is useless because they do not learn and practice what the Bible says but what men tell them the Bible says.

Americans have been ushering God out of public life for at least forty years, with decisions on religion in public schools leading the way. In 1962, the Supreme Court banned organized, officially sponsored prayer. In 1963, it prohibited state-sponsored recitation of the Lord's Prayer and reading of the Bible as part of devotional exercises in public schools. In 1980, the Court outlawed the posting of the Ten Commandments on classroom walls. In 1985, the Court barred daily moments of silence if public school students are encouraged to pray during that time. In 1992, the Court proscribed clergy-led prayer at public school graduation ceremonies. Finally, in 2002, the Court found student-led prayer before high school football games to be unconstitutional. Banning the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance is a logical step in the progression to root out all vestiges of religion—read "Christianity"—from public life.

These are just High Court decisions on religion in school. America's immorality paints a picture of a nation even farther from God. *Roe v. Wade* is still the law of the land. Homosexuality and other perversions are becoming increasingly "normal" [under the law](#). Vile and profane speech receives protection under a loose and evolving interpretation of the first amendment. We allow neo-pagans to shape our environmental policy, and our politicians pander to every selfish interest among the electorate.

And this is a Christian nation—a nation under God?

Truly concerned and Christian Americans need to remember what God has promised a nation that obeys Him—and one that disobeys Him:

If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments, and perform them,

then I will give you rain in its season, the land shall yield its produce. . . . [Y]ou shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none will make you afraid. . . .

But if you do not obey Me, . . . I also will do this to you: I will even appoint terror over you, wasting disease and fever which shall consume the eyes and cause sorrow of heart. And you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. I will set My face against you, and you shall be defeated by your enemies. Those who hate you shall reign over you, and you shall flee when no one pursues you. ([Leviticus 26:3-6](#), 14, 16-17)

Would that Americans truly were "one nation under God"!

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Values and Conversion](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

John Ritenbaugh insists that our natural carnal human nature (our heart, Jeremiah 17:9) is committed to values that are destroying us spiritually. These are values derived from family, religious, and cultural traditions?old wine that cannot go into new wineskins. Conversion involves incorporating new and godly values and tastes, which clash violently with what we already are (Roman 8:7). God's Word sets the value system for those who believe in Him, setting them apart (John 17:17) from other destructive value systems, freeing them from death (John 6:63). Repentance involves incorporating God's values, alien to our human nature?ones that will unify us with God and with others who accept His value system.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[Are Your Beliefs Preferences or Convictions?](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

John Ritenbaugh discusses the depth of our beliefs, showing the difference between our preferences and our convictions. He looks at both legal and spiritual ramifications of this

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subject.

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