

Ban prayer from school



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The founding fathers of the United States gave the people the right to certain basic freedoms. Through the centuries those rights have been examined carefully. Some have been re-interpreted by the nine wise men in black. But the last time the U. S. Supreme Court spoke on the matter of prayer in public schools, they banned it. They did not ban it because they are sinners. They did not ban it because they are atheists. Organized daily school prayer in public schools in the United States is banned because, after a careful perusal of the law, the United States Supreme Court has ruled that it is unconstitutional.

The hue and cry today seems not to be that prayer is banned in school but rather that organized Christian prayer is banned. Most schools offer a minute of silence to begin each day and no one objects if a student wishes to mouth a silent prayer. No one objects to an organization calling itself the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, though presumable they offer up Christian prayers in their meetings. The injunction is against those in positions of authority leading a group of impressionable school children in a dogmatic litany.

How can a rational and reasonable individual object to such a ban? No one has ever suggested that parents cannot lead their child in prayer before school, on the way to school, in the school parking lot, or even after school. But the child looks to the teacher to teach. If the teacher offers up a prayer, is that teacher not then teaching the child a religion? Surely most parents are not comfortable with a relative stranger teaching their child religion. There is not one religion, but many. Which religion is the teacher to teach then during this morning ritual?

If the teacher teaches the wrong religion are those who believe in the right religion going to be offended? There are not enough hours in the day for the teacher to pray in all of them. It seems expedient then for the parents to see that their child obtain his religious instruction in his home or center of religious activity. Even supposing the teacher offers up universal Christian pray deemed suitable to the Catholics, the Lutheran, the Amish, the Quakers, Baptists, Methodists, etc. ad infinitum, where does that leave the non-Christian child but on the outside looking in?

He is different. He is not like the rest. The majority, generally speaking, makes laws, but to be just those laws must protect the rights of the least citizen in the nation. It is possible to amend the constitution, and make organized school prayer constitutional, but the founding fathers intentionally made it difficult to alter the constitution. It cannot be changed on a whim or by a vociferous or violent minority. The reason the constitution reads as it does is because it is the will of we the people and no amount of threats or posturing can change it.

Now, however, what seems at the core of the issue is not law at all but rather religious rights and the freedom to obey the moral dictum lain down by God. For the sake of argument it is assumed that the Christians are the most put out by this ban. They seem to be the ones most loudly demanding the right to organized school prayer, so this paper will respond to them. The Christian religion comes with what seems to be a sort of owner's manual, a book containing all the laws and saying what is right and what is wrong.

In the sixth chapter of the book of Matthew, the Christ, whom Christians believe is God incarnate, says to his followers, “ And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray...that they may be seen of men. ” In the next verse the Christ is quoted as saying, “ But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret” (Matt. 6. 5 and 6). It appears that not only is organized school prayer banned by the U. S. Constitution, and the United States Supreme Court, it is banned, according to Christian text, by the word of God.