

Consider the Merits of Religious Freedom

by Ella J. Monckton

The word merit; claiming to respect and praise; excellent; worth. The inherent rights and wrongs of a matter unobscured by procedural details. Treat people according to their merits. Claim to spiritual reward, earned by the performance of righteous acts.

In a Christian School children were given merits according to their actions. Merits were given when a child performed wrong actions, talking when it was inappropriate or misbehavior at the time. They did not receive merits for praise. If they received numerous merits they would receive correction from the administrator; a child accrued a spanking that was not always justified. In the political system and Religious field we have to consider our merits for our religious freedoms. Evidently the increasing punishment for our merit is the lost of our religious freedom; not rewards or praise. The government is involving itself in religious freedom for control of certain matters; some issues that are preferred over others will be unjustified. Congress in April 2001 began the navigable precarious details of sending tax dollars to religious groups. 850 religious leaders arguing contra to mixing church and state signed a petition. "These provisions would entangle religion and government in an unprecedented and perilous way," the petition said. President Bush plan would expand "charitable choice," that would entitle religious groups that run both secular and religious programs to contend for government grants." Rep. Jerry Nadler, D-N.Y. said, "Religion has never needed government, and it doesn't need it now."

In 1974 a federal judge ruled that "Neither this court, nor any branch of this government, will consider the merits or fallacies of a religion. Nor will the court compare the beliefs, dogmas and practices of a newly organized religion with those of an older, more established religion. Nor will the court praise or condemn a religion, however excellent or fanatical or preposterous it may see. Were the court to do so it would impinge upon the guarantees of the First Amendment of the Constitution."

The Court ruled the ordination of ministers and the chartering of churches are accepted activities of religious organizations even in the manner by mail. The government does not appoint religious leaders for the churches. And no religion can be preferred over others or sustained by taxes. Christianity is not a denomination, which some have claimed and have caused upheaval and unrest in the world, where difference culture feels Christianity is cruel. Christian is (*Christ in you.*) *Christ is not the one who causes war and disrespect towards others;* religion on the other hand has its difference of opinion.

A federal court ruling in Columbus, Ohio motto, "With God, all things are possible," Jay Sekulow the Chief counsel for The American Center for Law and Justice.

In September 1999 Congressman Ernest Istook (R-OK), at pro-family rally on the capitol steps reintroduce the Religious Freedom Amendment.

The Religious Freedom Amendment was cosponsored by 150 members of the House of Representatives from both parties and passed by the House Constitution Subcommittee on October 28, 1997.

The religious Freedom Amendment is endorsed by more than 30 different national organization.

U.S. congressman Ernest J. Istook, Jr. mentioned that the courts have become hostile to religion, placing barriers to religious expression. UN feels the religious Freedom Amendment (RFA) is intended as the solution. To read the Text of the RFA adding to our Constitution you may read it on the World Wide Web "Reading Room." "U.S. House of Representatives." "Religious Freedom Amendment."

William Rehnquist, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, feels that the "separation of church and state." It is labeled as "mischievous diversion of judges.... And it should be explicitly abandoned" ...because it has frequently been used to promote official neutrality towards public religious expression and it promotes hostility.

News in American Civil Liberties Union, July 28, 2000 "Final Passage of Breakthrough Religious Freedom Bill Hailed by Religious and Civil Rights Groups." Religious and advocacy groups "This legislation is a victory for all who cherish the basic American values of fairness and religious freedom." Christopher T. Anders, a legislative counsellor for the ACLU.

Thomas Jefferson August 28, 1785 "A Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom in Virginia, 1785." May be read 'First Amendment Cyber-Tribune.' "Fact." Section I-III. "That the opinions and belief of men depend on their own will..."

On December 20, 2000, President-elect George W. Bush held a discussion with 30 devout leaders to develop a plan for improving the nation's ills through the ministries of religious organization. He established an office for 'faith-based' action; headed by Don Eberly of Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

The United States religious core has over 1,500 and 360.00 churches, synagogues and mosques.

State "Free exercise and enjoyment of religion without discrimination or preference are guaranteed."

Our religious liberties are in jeopardy from actions of all people of all religions from the challenges of gaining to losing our religious freedom. Religious freedom issues from prayer and bible in schools to Nation's religious broadcasting: televangelism, radio, parachute organization, religion in public life, school voucher program, human Rights: violence against women in other countries.

Religious Broadcasting: It has been a complete part of USA civilization subsequently initial of radio.

Radio began in 1896 with Guglielmo Marconi's discovery of wireless communication. In 1906 Christmas Eve first religious services transmission included a violin solo "O Holy Night".

Ministers who used radio transferred into television 1980 began televangelism and the rising cost of airtime was caused by televangelist bidding against one another for prime time slots.

Religion in Public Life: Does the limitation of religious exercise to the personal walk of life weaken free exercise?

In Wisconsin the Supreme Court refused to hear the Wisconsin School on the topic of the Voucher Program.

In October 1998 the senate approved International Religious Freedom (IRF) Bill. A Bill that required the President of USA to take action against countries that repeatedly violated the principle of religious liberty. The IRF equips the federal government to assist countries to deter religious persecution.

The latest news is the subject of USA getting out of the United Nations. The United Nations high commissioner for human rights, "Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief." In the General Assembly fundamental principles is that dignified behavior and state of being equal intrinsic in all human beings, and that all Member States have promised themselves to acquire cooperative and independent action in co-operation to elevate and encourage universal respect for and practice of human rights. The freedoms for all, without distinction as to race, sex language or religion.

Controversy from other religious organization is that this well constricts Christian's freedom and cause persecution relative to Christians only. The UN is persuaded that passing of intolerance of discrimination well contribute to the attainment of the goals toward global peace, social impartiality and mutual esteem between people and the exclusion of colonialism and ethnic discrimination. The only way discrimination can be ratified is for each individual to turn from his prejudice ways and turn his life over to Christ. " God who wants all to be saved and to arrive to knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus who gave himself as a ransom for all." (NIV). Christ has bridged the gap between God and man and made salvation available to all.

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free (NIV). Freedom spoken here is freedom from the yoke of the law. *Burdened*, in classical Greek the verb meant "to be caught or entangled." *Yoke of slavery*. The burden of the rigorous demands of the law as the means for gaining God's favor-an intolerable burden for sinful man.

Circumstances for religious freedom aggravation nationally and internationally exposed by US-based organization that observe religious liberty trends. " They exposed those 75 countries that the religious freedom rights of humanity persist to be eroded." Source: Adventist News Network.

Conservatives over the separation of church and state that RFA that would overturn the principles that our forefathers decreed to preserve religious freedom and prohibit sectarian strife. The conservatives about RFA are that they would " subject us to Holy Wars as religious factions fought to make their belief dominant. Aggressive religious majorities would insist on emphasizing their religious doctrine in all public places."

Both sides have partial truth those for RFA and those against. Personally, I would not want the government to control my Christian's practices. I.e., home Bible studies, and the Biblical Principle that Jesus Christ is the only way. Jesus said, "He is the way, truth and life, No one comes to the Father except through Him. John 14:6 (NIV) and there is no other name whereby man can be saved." Acts 4:12 (NIV)

Jesus, would treats others with respect no matter what their prospective on the issue. A true Christian should not make derogatory remarks or harass others because of their faith. The impression that a Christian presents will essentially leave the impression how others will perceive God.

American Civil Liberties Union, Freedom Network.

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Speaker Newt Gingrich, (GA-06) March 24,1997, supported the Religious Freedom Amendment.

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Worthynews.com, (2001 March 21) Christian New at Worth News, Toalston Art.

Religious Freedom Amendment, (1999) Micah Swafford, U.S. House of Representatives

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Webster's College Dictionary (1999). New York: Random House.

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Constitution of the State of California Article I. Declaration of Rights, Section 4. Religion

