

itself. In light of current distortions, do you suppose the passage of 24 hours made them forget what they'd done? When pressed on this matter the ACLU once said, "They were confused." Confused? Not those guys.

As Andrew Cord writes, "If we accept the present view of the court, then both Congress and George Washington violated the Constitution from its inception."

Since the Supreme Court has succeeded in erecting a WALL between church and state, crime rates, although recently abated, have skyrocketed; hard drug use is higher; emotional disorders are up; divorce rates have soared; we've got abortion "on demand"; more suicides; more children clinically depressed and inclined to engage in crime; and venereal disease, including AIDS, has proliferated. The ACLU would have you believe these trends are coincidental.

Well, where did all this urban decay, racial polarization, deterioration in public schools and loss of community spirit come from? It took just 30 years! There's nothing comparable in our history. Why?

No individual judge or court can be solely blamed for such an appalling divergence from core beliefs but our cumulative supine acceptance of evil has created in certain influential classes of academics and among leaders in print journalism and show business an inclination to create great mischief. The sudden decay of moral and ethical standards in current highest political circles has built up an active antipathy to all rigorous standards whether in religion, education or moral ethics. Relativism is taking a fearsome toll. "Everybody does it. It's all relative, anyway."

John DiLulio sums it up, "Accumulating evidence confirms the efficacy of faith-based approaches to social problems." We're a society that's slipped its old moorings. We must get them back.

We're accepting decadence passively, rambling through a moral nine field. We're assaulted daily through eyes and ears with outrages that once would have been unimaginable. We've had entering the workplace a generation of people whose moral development has been arrested.

Up to now my comments have been Christianity-centered. The spiritual insights of our Founders made that our heritage. But, due to those same insights, we've honored, respected and protected the religiosity and nonreligiosity of all citizens.

America from day one has been a haven for Jews. When we set out on our "great experiment" in 1789 there were about 2,500 Jews in the 13 colonies (1,000, or 40 percent, in South Carolina). They'd come in sailing ships and brought with them an understandable apprehension that this new country might evolve into a hell similar to the ones they'd left behind.

As was frequently the case, President George Washington set the standard. Writing to the Jewish congregation in Newport, he said, "The government of the United States gives bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance. Everyone shall sit in safety under his own vine and fig trees." (1 Kings 4:25). In other correspondence he always referred to America's Jewish population with respect and good will. Jewish financiers helped underwrite the eight-year American Revolution and no one knew that better than he. He referred to them in his ornate way as "the sons of Abraham."

None of us can forget that in the 20th century a great and Christian nation followed evil leadership, turned on its Jews; bankrupted them; ran them off and killed the rest. The Jewish people have earned the right to stay alert, but I do feel that in America they sometimes overdo it. What we call Western Civilization is really Judeo-Christian civilization.

As to the Catholics of all descriptions, their roots go just as deep. There were times and places in our early history when neither Catholics nor Jews could be elected to state level office. In my lifetime, intermarriage between Catholic and Protestant young people could cause a crisis, in both families. This was even truer of Christians and Jews. Today, intermarriage is almost commonplace.

My subject is the First Amendment and religion, not race. Everything I've said about recent court decisions applies equally to our 30 million black citizens. In some ways these trends have hurt some of them most. When we concentrate on all the bad news we overlook the galvanic progress of our black fellow citizens. But the shift in judicial emphasis away from values and religion has hurt those on their bottom rung the most.

In its 2,000-year history Christianity has had its dark sides—times of torture, trials, inquisitions. I find it unacceptable when some Christians preach that unbaptized babies or most of the world's non-Christian multitudes are doomed to eternal punishment. Hard-edged Christianity is a contradiction in terms. Some of our mainline churches are roiled in their own controversies.

America is the most spiritual of nations. Over 90 percent of us believe in God. We have never been in danger of becoming a theocracy, a government dominated by a God belief as prescribed by one church. Not ever tempted.

Any prayer offends militant atheists, some of whom sit in our pews every Sabbath. At one time in life many of us have been atheists or agnostics. People who remain seated during national anthems, or don't pray, or pray differently, should feel free but not enough to trample on the majority or intimidate educators as they sometimes do. A very small tail has been wagging a very large, friendly dog.

Our most effective dispenser of deeprooted goodness is firmly religious and Christian-based, The Salvation Army. Nobody has yet diverted it from its mission although there've been efforts. Here's part of their credo, "We have been called and ordained by God to serve in the trenches of human warfare, to be a compassionate arm of the militant church, to bring light to those in darkness and hope to the hopeless." Christianity's 2,000-year-old uniqueness is its gospel outreach, its energy.

I've been discussing the heated argument going on in this country between the religious and groups with different viewpoints. Transcendental movements are vulnerable and make mistakes. But the glorious truth cannot be gainsaid and that's the overwhelming good that our organized religionists do. Governments pale in comparison. Members of religious organizations give twice as much to charity as non-members. Scientific double-blind tests prove that sick people recover sooner and more often when fervently prayed for. The immense opening up of outer space continues to make believers of our most sophisticated scientists.

Every single day an immense flood of food, money, books, medical healing and pure goodness pours out of American churches, temples and synagogues due to the boundless, borderless love religions generate. There's even evidence that our Brennan-less Supreme Court is having second thoughts about the havoc it's wreaked. Surely through all this we've learned that any prayer to a multi-religious assemblage should not be hurtful or mean-spirited. But, to paraphrase a recent president, "Tear down this wall!" The wall exists due to a gross misreading of history and law followed by execrable legal conclusions.

The American Revolution was the final flowering of the "Enlightenment." Those Founders of ours, brilliant and prescient as they were, could hardly have grasped the fact that they were creating a whole new world.

This tiny 18th century nation hanging on for dear life on the outer edge of a raw continent was unstoppable. It took a mere hundred years for it to become "the light of the world."

We're got to stop the rot that has poisoned and weakened our society. Ultra-liberals with their soggy convictions have way overreached. Authentic faith is an act of freedom.

HONORING THE ST. VINCENT COLLEGE DRUG PREVENTION PROJECTS

HON. JOHN P. MURTHA

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 15, 1998

Mr. MURTHA. Mr. Speaker, five years ago I came before the House to call attention to an innovative drug abuse prevention program in Pennsylvania that was celebrating fifteen years of success. While we as a Nation have by no means solved the problem of drug abuse among our young people, the young people of Southwestern Pennsylvania are far better off today than they would have been without that program at St. Vincent College in Latrobe, Pennsylvania. So, today, I stand before you again to recognize and pay tribute to this wonderful program as it now celebrates its twentieth anniversary.

In 1978, St. Vincent College joined with the Westmoreland County Drug and Alcohol Commission, the Latrobe Area Chamber of Commerce, and area school districts to develop a primary prevention education program. St. Vincent continued the sponsorship of the program as a community service project which provides education and other prevention services in all 17 public school districts in Westmoreland County as well as school districts in surrounding counties.

We will continue to fight to stop the flow of drugs into our country. But we can't focus only on stopping supply; we have to focus on stopping the demand, within our own country, among our young people who are vulnerable to the daunting pressures of social and economic factors and the predatory tactics of the suppliers. Prevention of a young person from ever trying drugs is the best way to reduce the demand. That is done through education, and that is what the program at St. Vincent College does very well. It set out to make a difference and it has made a difference.

I am proud to salute the many people who have worked at this for twenty years and who continue to reach out to these young people and help to understand the importance of avoiding drugs. I hope they see their triumph reflected in the face of every happy healthy young person and look forward to celebrating with them many more anniversaries of success in the fight against drugs.