**Prayer in Schools and Government**

**If we’re going to keep prayer out of the classrooms how about allowing it on school buses? *(Bits & Pieces)***

**As a Christian who is tolerant of choices in all things within reason, I find this hubbub about prayers at school and public events inconsistent with the teachings of Christ. Christ said, in Matthew 6:5-6: “And now about prayer. When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites who pretend piety by praying publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. Truly, that is all the reward they will ever get. But when you pray, go away by yourself, all alone, and shut the door behind you and pray to your Father secretly, and your Father, who knows your secrets, will reward you.” Now, fundamentalists will obviously take these words and skew them as they wish -- just as they do the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence and the Ten Commandments -- taking from those and other documents whatever fits their intolerant tenets and dogmas. No wonder we have some 1,200 varying religions in the United States. *(George Fentress, in Rocky Mountain News)***

**As long as there are tests, there will be prayer in public schools. *(Bumper sticker)***

 **Congress itself opens with prayer. The national motto, on all coins, is “In God We Trust.” Official oaths include the phrase, “So Help Me God.” The pledge of allegiance says the nation is “under God.” The Supreme Court starts sessions with: “God save the United States and this honorable court.” *(George W. Cornell, in Denver Post)***

**The first weeks of the Constitutional Convention of 1787 were so fraught with proposed that “henceforth prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven, and its difficulty that Benjamin Franklin, perhaps the least religious delegate, blessings on our deliberations, be held in this Assembly every morning before we proceed to business." He even requested that a clergyman be appointed to officiate. But Alexander Hamilton and several other delegates feared that the resolution, by being introduced at this late date, might lead the public to think that the convention was getting desperate. In any event, Hugh Williamson of North Carolina pointed out, no funds were available to pay for a chaplain. Franklin's resolution promptly died. He later noted, “The convention, except for three of four persons, thought prayer unnecessary." *(The Week magazine, June 10, 2005)***

**There will always be prayers in public schools -- as long as there are final exams to take. *(B. Norman Frisch)***

**A little boy was observed by a minister in church praying very fervently; but, much to the pastor’s surprise, he was also heard to say from time to time, “Tokyo, Tokyo, Tokyo.” So when the service was over the minister went up to the boy and said, “Son, I was very pleased to see you praying so devoutly, but do tell me, why did you keep saying, ‘Tokyo, Tokyo, Tokyo’?” The little boy replied, “Well, you see, sir, I have just been taking my geography examination in school, and I have been praying to the Lord to make Tokyo the Capital of France.” *(Sir Eric Roll)***

**Asked to pray for a Sunday school teacher who was having hospital tests, my grandson said, “Lord, help her to get all A’s.” *(Mildred Shuttleworth, in Country Woman magazine)***

**We are like Jimmy Carter’s phone in the conversation between Jimmy Carter and Menachem Begin. Begin was talking with Jimmy Carter in the Oval Office when he noticed three phones on Carter’s desk. One was platinum, one was red, and one was gold. Begin joked, “What are those phones really for?” “Well,” Carter said. “The platinum connects me to my brother Billy in the Plains. It’s my way of looking out for him. The red phone has a direct line to Russia, so I can call them any time. The gold phone is my personal hot line to God.” Begin laughed. “How much does it cost to talk to God?” “Ten thousand dollars,” answered Carter. “And it’s worth every penny.” Time passed, and Carter visited Israel. He happened upon an office with three phones in it. He couldn’t resist asking. “What are your three phones for?” Begin replied, “One is my direct line to Parliament, one is my line to Egypt, and the last is a line to God.” “And how much does it cost for you to reach God?” “Ten cents,” responded Begin. “It’s a local call.” *(King Duncan and Angela Akers, in Amusing Grace, p. 79)***

**The question is whether it is legal for children in schools at New Hyde Park, NY, to recite this 22-word prayer: “Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence upon Thee, and we beg Thy blessings upon us, our parents, our teachers and our country.” If such a prayer is ruled unlawful, it could open the way for eliminating all prayer from the public schools. Congress itself opens with prayer. The national motto, on all coins, is “In God We Trust.” Official oaths include the phrase, “So Help Me God.” The Pledge of allegiance says the nation is “under God.” The Supreme Court starts sessions with: “God save the United States and this honorable court.” *(George W. Cornell, in The Denver Post)***

**The professor of our graduate-school class on gifted children included a huge amount of material on the midterm exam. As tension in the room built, people were sighing and gasping aloud. The following week the professor tossed the graded papers on her desk and announced: “Class, after I left here last week, the Lord spoke to me. He said, “Gee, thanks, professor. I haven’t heard from some of those people in years!” *(Gail Thomas, in Reader’s Digest)***

**For our mid-term examination, our Professor wanted us to sign a form stating that we had not received any outside assistance. Unsure of whether he should sign the form, one student stated that he had prayed for the assistance of God. The Professor carefully studied the student's answers to the test and then said, “You can sign it with a clear conscience. God did not assist you." *(Tidbits of the Longmont Area)***

**Prayer should never be taken out of the public schools. That’s the only way a lot of us got through. *(Catholic Digest)***

 **As the children are sitting in the classroom Lucy prays: “Oh, please don’t let her call on me! Please, oh, please, don’t let her call on me. I’ll study hard tonight if you just, please, don’t let her call on me today.” Franklin: “I thought praying in school had been banned?” Lucy: “This kind will always be with us, Franklin!” *(Charles M. Schulz, in Peanuts comic strip)***

**As the child walks into the classroom at school she asks her teacher: “Could you let Kevin and me pray in school today? His grandma is in the hospital and she’s very sick.” *(Bil Keane, in The Family Circus comic strip)***

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**An Indiana farmer took his family to the nation’s capital to see how their government worked. After visiting the House of Representatives, they went to the Senate gallery, where the chaplain of the Senate was speaking. “Daddy,” asked the farmer’s ten-year-old daughter, “does the chaplain pray for the Senate?” “No,” said the farmer. “He comes in, looks at the Senators, and then prays for the country.” *(Quote magazine)***

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