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Humanism Eroding Religious Freedom

BELIEVERS in God may list freedom of religion as one of the blessings for which we give thanks on this Thanksgiving Day, but we should season our gratitude with concern for our future liberty.

Freedom of religion is being eroded steadily in this country under the guise of enforcing separation of church and state. Atheism is being substituted for worship of the Deity as secular humanism is being established as our nation's actual, if not official, religion.

Humanists protest vigorously that they do not want anybody imposing their ideas of morality or religion upon them. Yet they are imposing their ideas of amorality and non-religion upon others.

By forcing every trace of traditional religion out of government, out of public schools, out of public life, they are substituting their own non-theistic religion. It is just as wrong for atheism to be given this priority as for Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism or Islam to be given such status.

This is not to say that there should be any sort of union between

church and state. Theocracies do not produce perfect governments. Three of the greatest causes of trouble in all nations have been hunger, religion and greed. This is true today.

Irish Catholics are fighting Irish Protestants. Israelis have been at odds with Arabs for centuries. Religions are restricted in Russia and China, as well as in many smaller nations.

President Anwar Sadat of Egypt apparently was assassinated by Moslem terrorists because of his religious views. Trouble in Iran is due primarily to control of government by religious extremists.

In "The Old Bailey," a story of London's historic court, there is reproduced a plaque that says "William Penn and William Mead were tried in 1670 for preaching to an unlawful assembly in Grace Church Street." They were locked up without food for two nights before the jury declared them not guilty of law violations. However, the mayor told Mead he deserved to have his tongue cut out for preaching.

Dave R. McKown wrote in his "This & That from Here & There" that "the Massachusetts Bay Company had scrambled out of England to escape the straight-jacket of the Established Church only to erect for themselves a monolithic faith which was destined to become just as inelastic, inflexible, unyielding and intolerant as that which they had so 'bitterly repudiated.'"

Another time McKown wrote: "As a tool for evangelism political meddling is a total flop." We are seeing a lot of political meddling with religion now, generated both by those who want only their own religion to prevail and by those who want no religion at all.

Are the courts going too far in handing down rules that limit prayers, discourage faith and interfere with teaching of morality, or hamper religious beliefs and practices?

Our constitutional freedom of religion does not imply that we should be a nation without religion. The Constitution declares that there shall be no limitations placed upon freedom of religion.