

Under God in the Pledge

Edict Date: 11-26-2007

A famous Atheist - Michael Newdow - has again filed a lawsuit challenging the United States laws requiring money to have the phrase "In God we Trust" and the addition of "Under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance in 1954. A lot of people don't know this but the words "Under God" were added to the pledge to make a political statement during the Cold War. The intent was to state that the Communists were "godless Atheists" and that Americans were believers and it was intended to associate Communism with godless Atheism and that these were our nations enemies. So the intent of the addition of "Under God" in the Pledge was, in part, to get people to hate Atheists. Since we Realist are Atheists we see the Pledge as an attack on us. To get people to hate us.

"Under God" was added to the Pledge in 1954 to associate Communism with Atheism and get people to hate Atheists

If you must recite the Pledge then in place of "Under God" we say "One Nation, in Reality, Indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all."

The same is true to a lesser extent with "In God we Trust" on the money. It is a statement by the government that there are two classes of citizens, believers and Atheists, and the government is aligned with believers.

Ever since the beginning of America Christians have fought to declare America a "Christian Nation." The first 13 colonies however were different flavors of Christians. Some states required that you be Catholic to hold office while other states required that you be Protestant. In order to bring these different Christian factions together and incorporate the Jews, Muslims, and others, our founding fathers specifically excluded all religious tests, made all religions and non-religions equal in the eyes of the law, and created what is now called the separation of church and state.

This made America the great secular society it is today where all citizens live as equals. But our equality is still under attack as the Christians are still trying to change America from a secular nation to a Christian nation. We see the issues that Newdow is bringing as part of the attempt to cause America to evolve towards Christianity.

I am also granting Michael Newdow authority to argue our position to the court and I am ordaining him as a Beacon to speak in behalf of the church.

In support of this cause, the Church of Reality today is filing this letter with the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco. Our position is as follows:

Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals

P.O. Box 193939

San Francisco, CA 94119-3939

November 24th 2007

Re: Newdow, et al. v. Carey, et al.

Case Nos.: 05-17257, 05-17344, 06-15093

Church of Reality's position regarding Coinage Policy and the Pledge

Dear Honorable Justices of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals,

I'm writing to you today in my capacity as First One of the Church of Reality. I hold the title First One as the founder of the church. Since it was my idea, I am the "first one" to think of it. Essentially I am the Pope of Reality.

The Church of Reality is a religion dedicated to the pursuit of the understanding of reality as it really is. We are a monorealistic religion in that we believe in the one true reality than includes everything that is actually real. We evangelize reality and we believe that any time anyone says the word reality, the world gets a little smarter.

Realists are not Atheists in the traditional sense. Our would view is that we will believe in a god if it showed up in a form that is independently observable by any person whether they are a believer or not. However, for us to positively consider something as real, or even likely real, there has to be a scientific reason to constitute a basis for that belief. Since we are Realists and have made a commitment to reality, it is antithetical to our belief to be forced to be part of a collective, our nation, who speaks in our behalf stating that the Abrahamic God is real. Our nation is part of our personal identity and the government is stating who we are and what we believe in on our behalf and the message on the money and in the Pledge definitely do not represent us. As a result, we feel that Christians, Jews and Muslims are of a superior social status. Many Christians commonly assert that America is a Christian nation and that if we aren't Christian we can just leave. The message on the money and in the Pledge are used, in our opinion, as a message that America recognizes itself as a Christian dominated nation. Thus we Realists have an interest in hearing what this court has to say. We want to know if the Establishment Clause is real or if it's just ceremonial statements of religious equality that are not to be taken seriously.

Pursuant to the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment of the Constitution, it is the duty of this court to ensure that and the decision of the court to be religiously neutral. The government is prohibited from favoring one religion over another. However, as a Realist, I also have to acknowledge that it is unlikely this court will make a decision ordering the removal of the phrase "In God we Trust" from United States money. The arguments that reference the issue of money also apply to the pledge.

NEWDOW IS CORRECT

Technically we agree with the position of Michael Newdow, that "In God we Trust" is a religious statement and prefers the deity of the Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Islam, and Christianity) over those of other religions and non-religions such as Atheism, Humanism, Buddhism, Hinduism, etc. As a realist I find it troubling that the government would state, on behalf of all our citizens, that our nation trusts an invisible deity who has not appeared on this continent, except to the Mormons, and has no formal relationship to our government.

It is also our position that if the money didn't already proclaim "In God we Trust" and that if Congress were proposing it now, that it would clearly be deemed unconstitutional. Just as it is clear that changing it to "In Jesus we Trust" would be deemed unconstitutional if that were proposed today. The only difference between God and Jesus is that God believers represent a somewhat larger set than Jesus believers and that a tradition has been established which will cause an uproar if it is disturbed. In fact, we see a pattern that Christians, who are actively trying to alter laws in their favor to undermine the establishment clause, have used as a tactic altering the money, altering the pledge, trying to sneak prayer

into schools, and altering the definition of science to substitute religious dogma such as creationism and Intelligent Design. It is a historical fact that the alteration of the Pledge and the altering of the money was done explicitly for the purpose of trying to Christianize a nation founded on the secular principle that all religions are equal and that the government is prohibited by the Establishment clause from showing a religious preference.

The way we see it, the phrase "In God we Trust" is a short form of a much more profound statement. Since it is REQUIRED to be on ALL money and was put there by CONGRESS under LAW then it is a proclamation by the United States on behalf of all the people stating, "All of the People of the United States of America, and through it's government under the power of law, does hereby declare and decree that WE as a nation acknowledge the existence and the significance of the God of Abraham of the Old Testament, (GOD), and to the EXCLUSION of all other deities and non-deities, and that we as a nation agree to worship ONLY this deity by declaring our TRUST without having established any official relationship with it through either contract or treaty."

In 1954 Congress altered the Pledge to include the words "Under God" at the height of the Cold War. The Soviet states were associated with Atheist and Congress wanted to distinguish Americans from the "godless Communists". Since members of the Church of Reality are also godless, the pledge reminds Americans that we Atheists are the enemies of America, just like the Communists. It is our position that the words "Under God" were added specifically to associate Atheism with Communism and generate hatred towards Atheists.

The Pledge of Allegiance is even more offensive to us. Where "In God we Trust" on money is a passive statement the Pledge contains "Under God" and is REQUIRED to be recited by Realist children who belong to a religion that does not believe in God. In our view it is the same as government controlled forced prayer. It is no different that making Christian Children say "Under Mohammed" in spite of their religious upbringing. As the founder of the Church of Reality I have decreed that our children WILL NOT SAY "UNDER GOD" and we will, if necessary defy any laws and any order of any courts that compel us to pay homage to a foreign deity that we do not accept.

REMEDY

In our religion it is our custom to figure out solutions to problems. In this case there is a requirement for neutrality and the reality that a phrase that is on its face a religious statement, stay on some money. One possible solution is that the Mint issue a variety of religious series coins covering a wide variety of religious concepts. This model allows for neutrality without the requirement of causing a religious uproar,

We recognize that a variety of concepts of deities have been part of history for thousands of years and historical events are often the theme of coinage. However the Abrahamic deity which includes Judaism, Christianity, and Islam does not represent the full spectrum of religious thought and our position is that there be a reasonable amount of representation of other religions that do not believe in this particular deity.

It is also a tradition in coinage to do a series of coins representing a concept. One such series is the 50 states on quarters series where every state gets their own state quarter representing who they are to the nation.

As to the Pledge, we find it unacceptable and we will not participate in this religious ritual. Our view is that God doesn't exist and that factually no nation is under God. The United States does not have a formal relationship with any deities where the deity has signed a treaty to which we are bound. So even if God exists, there are no laws that indicate that we are under a deity. The money issue is possibly tolerable if amended. The Pledge is unacceptable.

WE WANT TO BE INCLUDED

We therefore ask this court to consider an order that will lead to the minting of coins that read, "In Reality we Trust". We believe that the Church of Reality represents an important religious concept that is actually bigger than God. In support of our position the Church of Reality states as follows:

- To legally be a religion, the courts have consistently ruled that the religious belief be sincere. But what is the definition of "sincere"? We argue that one definition of sincere is that you believe that the precepts of your religion are real. That your holy books describe reality. It is our contention that any group that claimed to be a religion, but refused to state that their beliefs had some relationship to reality, would fail the "sincere" test.

- Since the legal definition of all religions must include a relationship with reality we contend that reality is a more universal concept across all religions than God is. Not all religions believe in God. But all religions believe that whatever they believe is real.

- Our definition of church membership transcends the concept of the individual. Our worldview is that we are all linked together as a great community of minds sharing the "Tree of Knowledge" which is the sum total of human understanding. Whenever a person thinks about reality they become "Real in the Sacred Moment" and during that period of time they become a member of the Church of Reality. And our religious culture includes what we call "Communion" which is whenever two or more people are discussing reality itself.

Because everyone in the world has thought about reality at some time in their lives then everyone in the world has been a Realist at some point in their lives. We also contend that every adult person on the planet has had a conversation with someone about reality and has therefore performed communion. Our religion includes, to some extent, every person on the planet. So we have the larger membership. We include everyone.

- Because reality has existed since the beginning of time and that reality has played a role in every historical event, we contend that Reality has at least as much historical justification to be on a coin as God.

- Our worldview is that reality plays an important part in every religion because without reality, no religion would exist.

- When this court makes its important decisions, does it not take reality into account? We ask that this court honor our beliefs by taking reality into account when deciding this case.

- It is our position that a reality coin would honor all other religions because to be on a coin next to a reality coin is a statement by other religions that they are comfortable with reality and that they are sincere in their beliefs. To exclude "In Reality we Trust" on the coins is the same as making a statement challenging their sincerity.

- Similarly, if this court were to take the position that the phrase "In God we Trust" has no religious meaning it would be an insult to America's monotheists, and act that would violate the Establishment Clause. Can a monotheistic religion claim that they are sincere believers in a nation where the courts have ruled that God is meaningless? If I were a theist, I would have to object to that, and I hereby do object in their behalf. This court can not say that God has no meaning.

- Nor can this court say that reality has no meaning. We in the Church of Reality believe that we wouldn't be here if not for reality. We believe that reality has touched all our lives at one time or another. We believe that every person has some kind of relationship with reality, and that if you take a person's reality away from them, that they will cease to exist. We contend that if not for reality, God couldn't possibly exist. How could God be real if there was no reality?

WHEREFORE the Church of Reality suggests to this honorable court that, if Newdow is denied the remedy he seeks, that this court orders that some money have the phrase "In Reality we Trust" in place of "In God we Trust". Or that some money not have any religious message. Or that some money depict scientific history such as the big bang that created the universe. It is our position that if a religious statement is allowed that it can't be EXCLUSIVE of religious statements.

Our compromise position is that although money may be deemed by this court to be allowed, ALLOWED to have "In God we Trust," that it would violate the Establishment Clause to REQUIRE that one form of religious art or one religion's deity be preferred over that of another, or of that of no deity. In the eyes of the law all religions must be equal.

As to the Pledge, we in the Church of Reality will not accept any ruling that our children be required to say the words "under God" and that if this court upholds this requirement, then we will defy it. The government can not REQUIRE religious speech from those who find such speech personally offensive.