

## **A CHRISTIAN MANIFESTO**

**by Francis A. Schaeffer**

### **Chapter three: The destruction of faith and freedom**

**We live in a secularized society and in secularized, sociological law. By sociological law we mean law that has no fixed base but law in which a group of people decides what is sociologically good for society at the given moment; and what they arbitrarily decide becomes law. Oliver Wendell Holmes (1841~1935) made totally clear that this was his position. Frederick moore Vinson (1890~!953), former chief justice of the United States Supreme Court, said, “Nothing is more certain in modern society than the principle that there are no absolutes.” Those who hold this position themselves call it sociological law. As the new sociological law has moved away from the original base of the Creator giving the “inalienable rights,” etc., it has been natural that this sociological law has then also moved away from the Constitution. William Bentley Ball, in his paper entitled “Religious Liberty: The Constitutional Frontier,” says: I propose that secularism militates against religious liberty, and indeed against personal freedoms generally, for two reasons: first, the familiar fact that secularism does not recognize the existence of the “higher law”; second, because, that being so, secularism tends toward decisions based on the pragmatic public policy of the moment and inevitably tends to resist the submitting of those policies to the “higher” criteria of a constitution.....**

**(Again quoting William Bentley Ball) “Fundamentally, in relation to personal liberty, the Constitution was aimed at restraint of the State. Today, in case after case relating to religious liberty, we encounter the bizarre presumption that it is the other way around; that the State is justified in whatever action, and that religion bears a great burden of proof to overcome that presumption. It is our job as Christian lawyers, to destroy that presumption at every turn.”.....**

**.....The materialistic-energy, chance concept of final reality never would have produced the form and freedom in government we have in this country and in other Reformation countries. But now it has arbitrarily and arrogantly supplanted the historic Judeo-Christian consensus that provided the base for form and freedom in government. The Judeo-Christian consensus gave greater freedoms than the world has ever known, but it also contained the freedoms so that they did not pound society to pieces. The materialistic concept of reality would not have produced the form-freedom balance, and now that it has taken over it cannot maintain the balance. It has destroyed it. Will Durant and his wife Ariel together wrote *The Story of Civilization*. The Durants received the 1976 Humanist Pioneer Award. In the**

***Humanist* magazine of February 1977, Will Durant summed up the Humanist problem with regard to personal ethics and social order: “Moreover, we shall find it no easy task to mold a natural ethic strong enough to maintain moral restraint and social order without the support of supernatural consolations, hopes, and fears.”**

**Poor Will Durant! It is not just difficult, it is impossible. He should have remembered the quotation he and Ariel Durant gave from the agnostic Renan in their book *The Lessons of History*. According to the Durants, Renan said in 1866: “If Rationalism wishes to govern the world without regard to the religious needs of the soul, the experience of the French Revolution is there to teach us the consequences of such a blunder.” And the Durants themselves say in the same context: “There is no significant example in history, before our time, of a society successfully maintaining moral life without the aid of religion.” .....**

**.....After about 1848 the great influx of immigrants to the United States meant a sharp increase in view points not shaped by Reformation Christianity. This, of course, is the situation which exists today. Thus, as we stand for religious freedom today, we need to realize that this must include a general religious freedom from the control of the state for all religion. It will not mean just freedom for those who are Christians. It is then up to Christians to show that Christianity is the Truth of total reality in the open marketplace of freedom. This greater mixture in the United States, however, is now used as an excuse for the new meaning and connotation of pluralism. It now is used to mean that all types of situations are spread out before us, and that it really is up to each individual to grab one or the other on the way past, according to the whim of personal preference. What you take is only a matter of personal choice, with one choice as valid as another. Pluralism has come to mean that everything is acceptable. This new concept of pluralism suddenly is everywhere. There is no right or wrong; it is just a matter of your personal preference.....**

**One choice is as valid as another. It is just a matter of personal preference. This new definition and connotation of pluralism is presented in many forms, not only in personal ethics, but in society’s ethics and in the choices concerning law.....**

**.....That is, a small group of people decide arbitrarily what, from their viewpoint, is for the good of society at that precise moment and they make it law, binding the whole society by their personal arbitrary decisions. But of course! What would we expect? These things are the natural, inevitable results of the material-energy, humanistic concept of the final basic reality. From the material-energy, chance concept of final reality, final reality is, and must be by its nature, silent as to values, principles, or any basis for law.....At this moment we are in a humanistic culture, but we are happily not in a totally humanistic culture. But what**

**we must realize is that the drift has been all in this direction. If it is not turned around we will move very rapidly into a totally *humanistic* culture. The law, and especially the courts, is *the vehicle to force* this total humanistic way of thinking upon the entire population. This is what has happened. The abortion law is a perfect example. The Supreme Court abortion ruling invalidated abortion laws in all fifty states, even though it seems clear that in 1973 the majority of Americans were against abortion. It did not matter.**

**The Supreme Court arbitrarily ruled that abortion was legal, and overnight they overthrew the state laws, and forced onto American thinking not only that abortion was legal, but that it was ethical. They, as an elite, thus forced their will on the majority, even though their ruling was arbitrary both legally and medically.**

**Thus law and the courts became the vehicle for forcing a totally secular concept on the population...**

**.....But, while this may spread the problem of responsibility around, that does not help us today-except to realize that if we are going to do better we must stop being experts in only seeing these things in bits and pieces. We have to understand that it is one total entity opposed to the other total entity. It concerns truth in regard to final and total reality-not just religious reality, but total reality. And our view of final reality-whether it is material-energy, shaped by impersonal chance, or the Living God or Creator-will determine our position on every crucial issue we face today. It will determine our views on the value and dignity of people, the base for the kind of life the individual and society lives, the direction law will take, and whether there will be freedom or some form of authoritarian dominance.**