

Expository Files 2.6

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#### THE FRONT PAGE

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It's that time of year again. School's out, just like every year since the beginning of our nation. Graduates are marching down the aisles and receiving their diplomas and degrees, just like every year since the beginning of our nation. The musicians are playing "Pomp and Circumstance", just like every year since the beginning of our nation. The graduates are being congratulated for their good work and are being encouraged to make their future a success, just like every year since the beginning of our nation. Prayers and blessings are being offered in their behalf, just like every year since...

No, it's not like every year since the beginning of our nation. God is no longer permitted to be mentioned at our graduation exercises, let alone petitioned. It has been decided by the powers that be that such would violate the constitution. One wonders why the original framers of the constitution did not realize this!

It was three years ago that I was asked to give a prayer at our oldest daughter's graduation from eighth grade. The principal and I talked at length about the direction that the nation was going. He talked of the changes he had seen during his career. He expressed fear that it would not be long until the school administration would have to stop the practice of graduation prayer. In fact, he said all it would take is one complaint. Rather than be entangled in an expensive legal dispute, the school board would simply drop the practice. I offered the prayer at the graduation ceremony.

One parent mockingly shouted "Hallelujah" at then end, and was the recipient of many glares as a consequence for this. It was plain that most parents wanted this part of the ceremony to remain.

It was the next month that the Supreme Court seemed to rule that my prayer had been unconstitutional. This is because some had argued that such a prayer consists of the school, an organ of the state, endorsing a religion. However, the school had no idea what I would say in my prayer. They had set no limitations, neither had they demanded anything be included. It had been completely up to me. So what about my right to speak my conscience as an individual when asked?

Of course, participation should and must be voluntary, just as it is with the Pledge of Allegiance or the singing of the national anthem. Or will we also forbid them if someone objects? After all, both mention God (although you have to sing the third verse of the Star Spangled Banner to find Him.)

Anyway, because of the Supreme Court's ruling, mine was the last prayer offered at graduation exercises in our public school district. As the foundation of our morality continues to be attacked, the eroding of our moral standards will continue. Of course, prayer at graduations will not save our nation, but a proper reverence for God and His Law most certainly will.

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