

# **The Conservative Agenda: Its Basis and Its Basics**

By Norman L. Geisler

## **Introduction**

As I listen to liberals articulate their agenda, I am struck by the stark contrast between true conservatism and liberalism. In point of fact, I am struck by the unAmerican nature of political liberalism. Indeed, the basics of conservatism are identical with the basis of Americanism. The **natural** birth of conservatism is the same as the **national** birth of America: “We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” There are numerous basic principles of conservatism contained in our National Birth Certificate: The beliefs in 1) a Creator, 2) Creation, 3) God-given moral absolutes; 4) Governments are ordained of God; 5) the Providence of God, and 6) a final day of judgment. Other principles, like 7) the freedom of speech, 8) the right to political dissent, 9) the right to bear arms, 10) a government based on the consent of the governed, and 11) freedom against tyranny are also implied in *The Declaration of Independence*.

However, the most fundamental principles of conservatism are the first three: Creator, creation, and God-given moral absolutes. These are the foundation of our country, our constitutions, our courts, and our conservative agenda. And the erosion of these principles in the courts portends the condemnation of our country, as the prospects of restoring them offers hope for our preservation.

## **The Basis of Conservatism**

A conservative is someone who wishes to conserve the basic principles on which our country was founded. He wants to protect, preserve, and achieve the application of these principles to our country. So, the **basis** of conservatism is the grounds for the **basics** of conservatism. This being the case, let me speak first about the origin of conservatism.

### **The Origin of Conservatism**

Conservatism is firmly rooted in the principles of *The Declaration of Independence* which is the basis of Americanisms. That *The Declaration of Independence* is our founding document and the birthday of our country has been firmly established in a recent brilliant Amicus Brief before the High Court titled *Gonzales v. Planner Parenthood* (2007).

### ***The Original States***

*Gonzales* demonstrates that all the original states endorsed *The Declaration*, and every state since has been required to form a government that is in conformity with the U. S. Constitution “and the principles of *the Declaration of Independence*.” As late as August

21, 1959 Hawaii was admitted to the United States based on the same basis, namely, that it concurred with “the principles of *the Declaration of Independence*.”

### ***The Articles of Confederation (1781)***

In the pre Constitution *Articles of Confederation* document drafted in 1777 and ratified in 1781 all agreed in “cooperation between the States” and sent “delegates of the United States of America” to participate. This acknowledges that the country already existed before this time and had delegates to send. Indeed, following the spirit of *The Declaration of Independence*, these Articles spoke of the “Great Governor of the world” who “authorize[d] us to ratify the said *Articles of Confederation* and perpetual union.”

### ***The Northwest Ordinance (1787)***

Likewise, in *The Northwest Ordinance* was created in 1787 to serve for those territories that would seek thereafter to become States of the already existing United States. It too borrowed from *The Declaration of Independence*, insisting that “religions, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government...shall forever be encouraged.” In its introductory legal document it insists that “the fundamental principles of civil and religious liberty... formed the basis whereupon these republics, their laws and constitutions are erected....”

### ***The U. S. Constitution***

In 1789 *The Articles of Confederation* were replaced by *The United States Constitution* and thus became the national government mandated by *The Declaration of Independence*. It begins, “We the people of the United States...do ordain and establish this Constitution **for** the United States of America.” Clearly, the “United States” already existed or they could not be doing this “for” the nation. Indeed, as *The Constitution* says, they were only making “a more perfect union” than the one already in effect for 13 years. The new Constitution did not create a new nation. It simply created a new document to govern the already existing nation. This new Constitution was “**for** the United States of America.” It was not the creation **of** the United States. Article VI makes it clear that it was only providing a better government for the nation that already existed. It affirms that the nation already existed and had an initial form of government under *The Articles of Confederation* which in turn was based on *The Declaration of Independence*. For *The U.S. Constitution* affirms that “all the debts contracted and engagements entered into before the adoption of this Constitution shall be valid against the United States under this Constitution as under the Confederation....”

Indeed, the draft of *The Constitution* (1787) ends with a reference to the ratification of the Constitution, speaking of “the Independence of the United States of America” as the “twelfth” years before it (in 1776).

As late as 1961 in *McGowan v State of Maryland*, Justice Douglas wrote: “The institutions of our society are founded on the belief that there is an authority higher than the authority of the State; that there is a moral law which the State is powerless to alter; that the individual possesses rights, conferred by the Creator, and which governments

must respect.” It then refers to the familiar words of *The Declaration of Independence* as a basis of this affirmation, saying, “We hold these truths to be self-evidence, that all men are created equal....” Justice Douglas adds, “And the body of the Constitution as well as the *Bill of Rights* enshrine those principles.”

On the Jubilee of *The U. S. Constitution*, President John Quincy Adams wrote: “This act [i.e., the Constitution] was the compliment to *the Declaration of Independence*; founded on the same principles, carrying them out into practical execution, and forming with it, one entire system of government....”(1).

Indeed, the Founders and presidents dated their government from the time of *The Declaration* (in 1776), rather than from *The Constitution* [in 1789]. This included Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, John Quincy Adams, Jackson and even Abraham Lincoln. In his famous Gettysburg Address (1863) Lincoln said: “Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation....” But eighty seven years before 1863 when Lincoln gave the famous address was 1776, the year of *The Declaration of Independence* when America was born.

#### The Implication of Conservatism

If *The Declaration of Independence* is our founding document, then its principles are our founding principles. And a conservative is one, who by definition, wants to conserve these principles. As already noted, the most basic of these are the first three. So, we will concentrate on them and their implications for a truly conservative agenda.

#### **Creator**

Contrary to current judicial shyness about recognizing God, our founding document and our founders had no reluctance to acknowledge the Creator. This is obvious in numerous way. First, *The Declaration* itself refers to the “Creator” and “Nature’s God.” Also, *The Articles of Confederation* speak of “the great Governor of the World.” Further, the father of the Constitution, James Madison, declared that “Before any man can be considered as a member of Civil Society, he must be considered as a subject of “the Governor of the Universe” (*Memorial & Remonstrance*, 1785).

What is more, Congress has been opened by prayer to God from the very beginning. And presidential oaths have been taken in the name of God, adding “so help me God.” This is to say nothing of “In God we trust” on our coins, above the head of the president of the House of Representative’s, and in the fourth stanza of our National Anthem.

Further, early presidents with the consent of Congress invoked “God” in their thanksgiving proclamations, such as Washington, Adams, and Madison. The First National Thanksgiving Proclamation in 1777 was signed by Henry Laurens, President of the Continental Congress. It affirmed that: “...it is the indispensable duty of all men to adore the superintending Providence of Almighty God; to acknowledge with gratitude their obligation to Him for benefits received, and to implore such further blessings....” Later, George Washington declared that “...it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the

providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favour” (Oct. 3, 1789).

What is more, the Constitutions of many States refer directly to God. In my own State the Constitution begins: "We, the people of the State of North Carolina, grateful to Almighty God, the sovereign Ruler of Nations, for the preservation of the American Union ... do ordain and establish this Constitution."

Like other States, the Tar Heel Constitution even went so far as to disqualify atheists from holding office, saying, in Article VI, Section 8: "Disqualifications of office. The following persons shall be disqualified for office: First, any person who shall deny the being of Almighty God." There is no scarcity to official references to God by our Founders and in our founding documents. And a conservative is someone who wishes to confess openly and conserve perpetually this God-given and God-acknowledged heritage, including our *Pledge of Allegiance* "under God."

### ***Creation***

Further, in addition to acknowledging "the Creator and Ruler of the world," a conservative is one who believes that "all men are created equal." He does not believe, as the Scopes evolutionary textbook did in 1925, that the "Caucasians" are the "highest type" of human beings (2). Nor does he believe as Charles Darwin did (in *The Descent of Man*) that vaccinations and laws to help the poor should be eliminated because it preserves the weaker breed that natural selection would have eliminated. Darwin wrote: "We civilized men, on the other hand, do our utmost to check the process of elimination; we build asylums for the imbecile, the maimed, and the sick: we institute poor laws; and our medical men exert their utmost skill to save the life of every one to the last moment. There is reason to believe that vaccination has preserved thousands, who from a weak constitution would formerly have succumbed to small pox"(3).

Nor does a conservative believe, as Hitler did in *Mein Kampf*, that "If Nature does not wish that weaker individuals should mate with the stronger, she wishes even less that a superior race should intermingle with an inferior one; because in such a case all her efforts, throughout hundreds of thousands of years, to establish an evolutionary higher stage of being, may thus be rendered futile"(4). In short, there are moral implications to Darwinian evolution, namely, if natural selection explains common ancestry, then there is nothing wrong with eliminating the weak and undesirable among us.

In short, if there is not a Creator and Moral Law-Giver, then man is just an animal without any God-given rights, and those in power are under no moral obligation to preserve these rights. A true conservative finds Darwinianism and its social consequences to be contrary to every fiber of his being and loudly proclaims with our founding Fathers and documents that "all men are created equal" and, hence, are "endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights," foremost among them are the rights to life and liberty.

### ***God-given Moral Laws***

Nietzsche was right: If God is dead, then there are no God-given moral laws. As the French atheists Jean Paul Sartre put it: As a person without God, “I was like a man who’s lost his shadow. And there was nothing left in heaven, no right or wrong, nor anyone to give me orders.... I am doomed to have no other law but mine”(5). The simple truth is that if there is no absolute Moral Law Giver, then there are no absolute moral laws. Or, in Jeffersonian terms, “Nature’s Laws” come from “Nature’s God.” Both logic and history inform us that we cannot separate the Moral Law from the Moral Law-Giver and that we cannot have good government or society without an absolute standard for good.

### The Destruction of the Declaration

Liberals are deconstructionists. They want to deconstruct the Constitution. Conservatives are reconstructionists. We want to reconstruct the Constitution the liberal courts have deconstructed to conform with the way the framers constructed it. Sadly, liberals, to borrow the title of Ann Coulter’s excellent best seller, are truly “Godless.” Of course, this is not necessarily true in their private lives, but it is in their public policy. For they would eliminate God from government and government schools. But a government less God is literally a God-less government. Mark Twain said it well: “ The American Christian is a straight and clean and honest man, and in his private commerce with his fellows can be trusted to stand faithfully by the principles of honor and honesty imposed upon him by his religion. But the moment he comes forwards to exercise a public trust he can be confidently counted upon to betray that trust in nine cases out of ten, if ‘party loyalty’ shall require it....” He continues, “There are Christian Private Morals, but there are no Christian Public Morals, at the polls, or in the Congress or anywhere else—except here and there and scattered around like lost comets in the solar system”(6). The more recent godless trend in our government can be demonstrated by the Supreme Court decision between 1961 and 1987 discussed later. First, lets look at the historical record.

### *The Humanist Manifestos*

Beginning with the first *Humanist Manifesto* in 1933, Secular Humanism declared itself a “religion” with three fundamental principles(7): No Creator, no creation, and no God-given moral absolutes. In their own words, they declared there is—

*No Creator.*—“Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.” In brief, there is no Creator of the world or of mankind.

*No Creation.*—“Humanism believes that man is a part of nature and that he has emerged as the result of a continuous process.” In short, mankind was not created but evolved by natural processes.

*No God-Given Moral Absolutes.*—“Humanism asserts that the nature of the universe depicted by modern science makes unacceptable any supernatural or cosmic guarantee of human values” That is to say, there are no God-given moral absolutes.

So here we have a self-proclaimed religion of Humanism that is opposed to three fundamental principles of *The Declaration of Independence*. But since *The Declaration* is

the founding document of America, *The Humanist Manifesto* is at the core an anti-American religion. And since it is a religion less God, then it is a God-less religion.

But one may argue that the First Amendment permits freedom of religion—even for Humanist religions. In response, a serious case can be made against the thesis that by freedom of religion was meant also freedom from religion. And it may also be argued that “religion” as meant by the founding Fathers was not intended to include atheism. Indeed, many States incorporated anti-atheist statements in their constitutions. Even the Supreme Court of Massachusetts ruled in *Kneeland*, 1838 that “[The First Amendment] embraces all who believe in the existence of God. This provision does not extend to atheists because they do not believe in God or religion.”

Be this as it may, even granted that Humanism (without belief in God) is a religion (as *Torcaso v. Watkins* said in 1961), nonetheless, neither Humanism nor any non-theistic religion has the right to be the established (i.e., favored) religion in government schools.

### ***The Humanist Courts***

A Humanist culture will ultimately produce humanist courts. It took a generation or two to do it, but it eventually happened. And granted that Humanism is a religion, then it would follow that Humanism—or at least its central religious beliefs—have become the established beliefs in our public schools. Just how this happened is a matter of record.

1925—At the Tennessee Scopes Trial ACLU attorneys argued that teaching evolution was part of their religious rights, claiming that permitting the “teaching of a particular doctrine that comes from a particular religious book...contravene the provision of our constitution”(8). But, as we have seen, evolution is a particular doctrine from a particular religion called Humanism.

1933—John Dewey signed *Humanist Manifesto I* (1933) which proclaims a religious point of view that denies the fundamental beliefs of *The Declaration of Independence* – Creator, creation, and God-given moral absolutes.

1934--John Dewey wrote a book called the *A Common Faith* in which he declared: “Here are all the arguments for a religious faith that shall not be confined to sect, class, or race. Such a faith has always been implicitly the common faith of mankind. It remains to make it explicit and militant”(9). During the next decades Dewey concentrated on training teachers in this militant Faith to indoctrinate our children in our tax-supported government schools. Within a generation Humanist had achieved their first major victories in the Supreme Court.

1961—In *Torcaso v. Watkins* the High Court proclaimed that “Among religions in this country which do not teach what would generally be considered a belief in the existence of God are Buddhism, Taoism, Ethical Culture, **Secular Humanism**, and others” (emphasis added). Then in rapid-like decisions the Supreme Court began to make ruling after ruling that eliminated the Creator, creation and God-given moral absolutes as an official part of our government school programs.

1962 (*Engel*)—State required devotional prayers were banned from public schools. We had been praying in American schools for some 300 years before that with no perceivable damage to our children or our freedoms.

1963 (*Abington*)—State required devotional Bible-readings was barred from public schools. It is worthy of note that our earliest schools were started to teach children to read the Bible with the 1647 “*Old Deluder Satan Law*”(10).

1968 (*Epperson*)—Laws forbidding teaching evolution was declared unconstitutional. This was done in spite of the fact that evolution is opposed to creation, a doctrine embedded in our American Birth Certificate and at the basis of our freedoms.

1973 (*Roe and Doe*)—De facto abortion on demand was approved by the High Court in these two decisions. This too flies in the face of the fundamental constitutional right to life stated in *The Declaration of Independence* and in the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments of *The Constitution*.

1990 (*Stone*)—The display of the Ten Commandments was forbidden in public schools. With this ruling, not only was the legal history of these moral principles reversed but so was the moral foundation necessary for good government and education called for by our early Fathers.

1987 (*Edwards*)—Laws requiring teaching creation, if evolution is taught, were struck down. This ruling not only enshrined naturalistic evolution and eliminated teaching the crucial creation pillar of our founding document, but it established (contrary to the First Amendment) a crucial tenet of non-theistic religions.

Thus ended a generation of liberal, High Court rulings that in effect established the central tenets of Religious Humanism in our tax-supported institutions of learning. For they favored the central teachings of non-theistic religions, like Secular Humanism, over the opposing tenets of other religions, namely, orthodox theistic religions like Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Indeed, these Court rulings favored religious beliefs that were opposed to the foundational documents of America. All true conservatives cringe at these anti-American conclusions.

### ***The Tragic Conclusion***

Religious Humanist John Dunphy summed up their Humanist strategy well in his 1983 article in *The Humanist* journal: “I am convinced that the battle for humankind’s future must be waged and won in the public school classrooms by teachers who correctly perceive their role as the proselytizers of a new Faith: A religion of humanity.... These teachers must embody the same selfless dedication as the most rabid fundamentalist preachers. For they will be ministers of another sort, utilizing a classroom instead of a pulpit to convey humanist values in whatever subject they teach...”(11).

Indeed, this is precisely what happened between 1961 and 1987 when the Supreme Court ruled that government cannot endorse teaching Creator, creation, or God-given absolutes in America’s public schools, even though these are the basic principles of *The Declaration of Independence* on which our government is based. **So, in effect the courts**

**ruled that teaching the great truths of *The Declaration of Independence* is unconstitutional!** These judicial decisions are not only unconstitutional, but they are unAmerican. Thus, if Thomas Jefferson returned today, he would discover that he was being forced to pay taxes to public schools that were teaching his children that *The Declaration of Independence* is unconstitutional. I have no doubt what the proclaimer of “Taxation without representation” would do: He would start a second American revolution!

### **The Basics of Conservatism**

The basic principles of conservatism are the basic principles of Americanism—those embedded in our Birth Certificate—*The Declaration of Independence*. It is from these principles that we derive the conservative agenda. Foremost on the list are the beliefs in a Creator, creation, and God-given moral absolutes. Let me briefly comment on each area.

#### The Creator

If we are ever going to be successful in reestablishing the conservative agenda in America, then it cannot be done without overcoming the hostility to invoking God in the public square and overcoming the antagonism toward acknowledging Him in our schools. Contrary to the tragic ruling against teaching creation along side of evolution in public schools, our founders had no such problem in giving due credit to the Creator.

Fortunately, the vestiges of our religious heritage can still be found in our culture. Last time I looked God’s name was over the president’s head in The House of Representatives in the phrase “In God we trust.” Nor has it been minted out of all our coins. Indeed, it is still found in the last stanza of the National Anthem, though it is seldom sung outside of churches. Yes, his name is still invoked to call Congress into session. Ironically, the US Marshall still invokes God’s blessing at the opening session of Federal Court when he prays: “...God bless the United States and this honorable Court.” Yes, we still pay military Chaplains who can use God’s name, and presidents still take oaths in God’s name. And liberals have not yet physically deconstructed the Jefferson or Lincoln Memorials—even though they may wish to do so if they could.

A certain tragic irony emerges from eliminating God and any prayer to Him from our public school. After the Virginia Tech massacre, someone put the following on the internet which I summarize: “Dear God: Why don’t you do something about all the violence in our schools like the mass slaughters at Columbine and Virginia Tech. Signed, Johnny.” To his surprise He received a reply: “Dear Johnny: Sorry, I am not allowed in school anymore. Signed, God”!

Actually, there are at least ten good reason for prayers in the public school which I wrote to the editor of *The Charlotte Observer*, and my then honorable Senator Jesse Helms put into the Congressional record. We should have voluntary class prayer because:

1) Our government was based on religious principles (of which prayer was a part) from the very beginning.

- 2) The First Amendment does not separate God and government but actually encourages religion (which includes prayer) in the Free Exercise clause.
- 3) Early Congressional actions such as *The Northwest Ordinance* (1787) encouraged religion in public schools of which prayer was a part.
- 4) Early Presidents, with congressional approval, made proclamations encouraging public prayer.
- 5) Congress has prayed at the opening of every session since the very beginning.
- 6) Schools had prayer for some three hundred years before the Supreme Court ruled that State mandated class devotional prayers were unconstitutional (*Engel*, 1962).
- 7) Since the High Court outlawed state mandated class devotion prayer and Bible reading the nation has been in steady moral decline.
- 8) Morals must be taught, and they cannot properly be taught without religious sentiments like respect for the Creator since both logically and practically there will not be respect for an absolute moral law without respect for an absolute Moral Law Giver.
- 9) Forbidding prayer and other religious expressions in public schools establishes in effect the religion of Secularism.
- 10) To forbid the majority the right to pray because the minority objects, is to impose the irreligion of the minority on the religious majority.

If theistic children who do not believe in Darwinian evolution, sex education, and homosexual life-styles are exposed to these contrary beliefs without violation of their rights, then why can't the tiny minority of atheist's children to be exposed to voluntary prayers?

#### Creation

My experience as the lead expert witness for teaching creation alongside of evolution in the 1981 Arkansas "Scopes II" trial taught me invaluable lessons. The State had passed a "balanced treatment" law which was the reverse of *Scopes I* (1925). It read in essence, if you teach evolution, then you must also balance it off by teaching creation, but one does not have to teach either. The evolutionists at the *Scopes I* Trial (1925) spoke in favor of teaching both views. John Scopes said: "Education you know, means broadening, advancing. If you limit a teacher to only one side of anything, the whole country will eventually have only one thought, be one individual. I believe in teaching every aspect of every problem or theory"(12). ACLU attorney Malone pled: "For God's sake, let the children have their minds be kept open—close no doors to their knowledge; shut no door from them.... Let them have both. Let them both be taught. Let them both live"(13). The irony is that creationists were called "bigots" many times at the Trial. But let not the kettle call the pot black. If it was bigotry in 1925 when only creation was taught in schools, then it is still bigotry in 2007 when only evolution is being taught.

#### God-Given Moral Absolutes

The Conservative agenda is a moral agenda. Yes, we believe in legislating morality. In fact, really everyone does, even those who deny it(14). Since virtually all good laws prescribe some behavior as good and others as bad, there are really no such laws that do not legislate morality. No civil society is without legislation on moral issues, forbidding theft, abuse, rape, and murder. Indeed, even liberals favor these laws, as well as others condemning racism, hate crimes, and genocide. The truth is that everyone favors legislating morality. The only question is whose's morality will be legislated. The conservative answer has always been "God's"! From the very beginning our founding document spoke of "Nature's Laws" that come from "Nature's God" or "the unalienable rights" of the "Creator." Among these are the right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Indeed, most all of the Ten Commandments have been put into law at one time or another.

### ***Laws Protecting Life***

First and foremost on the list is the right to life. For the right to life is the right to all other rights. Those who are not allowed to live, are not allowed to have any other rights. And this right to life extends to both ends of life, thus opposing both abortion and euthanasia. At the time of *The Declaration* abortion was forbidden by both English Common Law from which our law was derived and an early American law which in 1716 forbid midwives to perform abortions(15). And the unborn were defined in the dictionaries of the day as a "child in the womb" and a child as a "very young person"(16). This leaves no doubt about the framers views against abortion.

Historically, being against abortion was not a uniquely Christian view for even the ancient pagan Hippocratic oath opposed both abortion and euthanasia, pledging, "I will neither give a deadly drug to anyone if asked for it, nor will I make a suggestion to this effect. Similarly, I will not give to a woman an abortive remedy." Whatever minor intramural debate there may be about capital punishment for guilty criminals, there should be absolutely no doubt about the wrongness of giving capital punishment to innocent babies by abortion!

### ***Resetting the Conservative Agenda***

There are some who wish to refocus the conservative agenda away from the life and death issues of abortion, euthanasia, terrorism, and pro-family values to other things like poverty, privacy rights, Gay rights, animal rights, and environmental concerns. The conservative response is based in our founding national documents and its fundamental principles.

#### ***On Pro-Life***

1. We believe in the unalienable right to life of all humans, born and unborn, young and old—whatever their ethnic orientation..
2. We believe there is no right to do a wrong, and that it is wrong to intentionally kill innocent human beings of any size, age, color or creed. The unalienable right to life takes

precedence over questionable right of privacy. Killing innocent human beings in private is no more justifiable than killing them in public.

3. We believe it is hypocritical to focus on saving baby seals while we destroying baby humans at the rate of over 3000 per day by abortion.
4. We believes in the unalienable right to life of the born and unborn, not in alienating the unborn from their right to life.
5. We believe that the right to privacy of the mother does not take precedence over the right to life of the child.

#### *On Civil Rights*

1. We believe in civil rights for all persons, but we do not believe in uncivil actions against any person.
2. We believe that abortion is the worst violations of civil rights because it violates the very basis of all civil rights--the right to life itself. The right to life is the right to all other rights. Hence, those who are not allowed to live are deprived of all their civil rights.
3. We believe that homosexuals have civil rights but that homosexual activity is a civil wrong against themselves and their society. We do not believe there are any rights to do a wrong. Likewise, polygamist, pedophiles, and rapist have civil rights, but their activities as such are not civil rights; they are uncivil wrong. And we believe is wrong to give rights to do a wrong.
4. We believe the evident truth that “all men are created equal” opposes slavery, racism, and ethnic discrimination.

#### *On The Family*

1. We believe that our domestic constitution should begins with “We the parents of our children, in order to form a more perfect society, establish the family to insure domestic tranquility, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.”
2. We believe that a family consisting of one male and one female, and whatever children with which God blesses us. And we pledge ourselves to preserve the family as the basic unit of society, the teacher of social skills, moral values, and the duty of good citizenship.
3. We believe that since the roots of most social problems begin in the family that we should be doing everything we can to strengthen the family, not to weaken it. To be pro-family is to be pro-society, and to degrade the family by approving of distorted unions is destructive of our society.
4. We believe that divorce is generally harmful to the family and should be discouraged and diminished.

#### *On Homosexuality*

1. We believe that civil rights for homosexuals should not be a pretext for civil wrongs done by homosexuals--both against themselves and society. We believe that if laws against smoking can add seven years on the average to ones life, then laws restraining

homosexual activity, which can add some 20-30 years to their lives, should be welcomed as well(17).

2. We believe that uncivil behavior is not the basis for a civil union. In the beginning God did not unite Adam and Steve but Adam and Eve.

3. We believe that since no homosexual union has ever produced a child, then only babies produced by homosexual unions should be adopted by homosexuals.

#### *On Education*

1. We encourage home schools, private schools, and parental control of public schools, not government control of our tax-supported institutions.

2. Since we firmly believe that taxation without representation is tyranny, we believe that the majority view of creation, held in some form by over 75 percent of Americans, should be represented in public schools. And we thank Judge Antonia Scalia for his brilliant defense of this in his dissenting opinion in the 1987 *Edwards* case.

3. We believe that sex education is best done by parents, not the schools. If the school is to be involved, it should be with parental permission and review of the curriculum. We believe children should not be taught a sex course in “how to” but, if any, they should be taught one in “why not” to get involved in sex before marriage.

4. We believe that no child should be left behind and that, if necessary we should spank their behind to help accomplish this. We believe discipline is a necessary condition for proper education and the moral law (as expressed in the Ten Commandments) is necessary for proper discipline.

5. The Ten Commandments are represented on the East end of the Supreme Court, over the Chief Justice’s head, and on the upper wall, and we see no reason the same Court should forbid our school children from having them on their walls.

6. We believe that no harm was done for 300 years of school classes talking to the Creator in public schools and much harm has been done in the generation since prayer has been locked out of school classes.

7. We believe that the Bible, the world’s best seller, should be read, not banned, from public school classes.

8. We believe that if it was bigotry in 1925 to teach only one view of origins in public schools when only creation was taught, then it is still bigotry today to teach only one view of origins when only evolution is being taught.

#### *On God and Government*

1. We believe in government based on God, not a government without God.

2. We believe civil laws should be based on unchanging Divine principles; , not on changing human precepts.

3. We believe in the cooperation of religion and state and in the encouragement of religion by the state, not in the separation of religion from the state or in the antagonism against religion by the state.

#### *On Poverty*

1. We believe that poverty cannot be voted out of existence but that it should be worked out of existence. We believe poverty is better addressed by private compassion than by public compulsion.
2. We believe in making a living by working, not in making a living at not working.
3. We believe our economy is best served by capitalism, not collectivism. We believe that the economy is best served by private entepenuership, not by public ownership.
4. While we are concerned about the poor life of those born, we are even more concerned about those who by abortion were never allowed to be born.

#### *On Crime and Punishment*

1. We believe the punishment should fit the crime and that it is fit to punish a crime.
2. We believe that focusing on criminal rights to a fair trial should not overshadow the need to protect non-criminal's rights to happy life.
3. We believe in the rights of innocent citizens to be protected from the wrongs of guilty criminals.
4. We believe criminals should be treated as persons to be punished, not patients to be treated. We believe forced "rehabilitation" is a violation of personhood. We believe proper punishment is the best form of rehabilitation.
5. We believe it is a gross inconsistency to protest capital punishment for guilty criminals while one engages in capital punishment on innocent babies.

#### *On War*

1. We believe in the right to protect our right to life.
2. We also believe that fighting terrorist is better done on their soil than ours and that we must fight fire with fire, not with mere fiery anti-war rhetoric.
3. We are more concerned about actual global terrorism than debatable global warming. Indeed, I believe that alleged global warming could be significantly diminished by circulating less liberal hot air used in attacking the Commander in Chief in his fight against global terrorism.
4. Yes, we still believe in the Second Amendment and the old NRA slogan that "when guns are outlawed then only outlaws will have guns."

### **Conclusion**

In summation, conservatives believe in life, liberty, and happiness based on God's law and achieved in a context of freedom of religion and speech. In short, we believe in a godly, not a God-less government. Put another way, we believe *The Declaration of Independence*.

I close with a quote from its author. My favorite line on any monument in our nation's capitol is from the Jefferson Memorial. Standing in front of the magnificent statue of Thomas Jefferson and looking over the water toward the White House one can read these words engraved in large marble letters: **“God who gave us life gave us liberty. Can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed the conviction that these liberties are the gift of God?”**

### Notes

1. Robert C. Cannada, *America's Rule of Law* (National Lawyers Association Foundation, 2002).
2. George William Hunter, *A Civic Biology* (New York: American Book Company, 1914), 196.
3. Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, in *The Great Books* edition, 323.
4. Adolph Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1939), 162.
5. Jean Paul Sartre, *No Exit and Three Other Plays: The Flies* (New York: Vintage Books, Random House, 1947), 122.
6. Mark Twain, *Christian Science* (NY: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1906), 359-361.
7. It added other principles, but these are among the first and most basic listed in the *Humanist Manifesto I* (1933).
8. The trial transcript is published in *The World's Most Famous Court Trial: Tennessee Evolution Case* (Cincinnati, Ohio: National Book Company), 51-52.
9. John Dewey, *A Common Faith* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934), 87.
10. This was so named from its first line of the law which goes on to affirm that if our children are taught to read the Bible they will have the best defense against Satan who wishes to deceive them.
11. Paul Kurts, *The Humanist* (Jan/Feb., 1983), 26.
12. Cited in P. William Davis, *The World of Biology*, 2nd ed. (NY: McGraw-Hill, 1979), 610.
13. Cited in T. C. Mercer, ed., *The World's Most Famous Court Trial* (Cincinnati: National Book Company, 1925), 299.
14. See Norman .L. Geisler and Frank Turek, *Legislating Morality* (Eugene, Or: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1998).
15. See James Witherspoon “Reexamining Roe: Nineteenth-Century Abortion Statutes and the Fourteenth Amendment.” *St. Mary's Law Journal* 17 (1985), 32.

16. See Dennis J. Horan, "Abortion and Midwifery: A Footnote in Legal History," in Hilger, Horan, and Mall EDS, *New Perspectives on Human Abortion* (Frederick, Md.: University Publications of America., 1981), 199.

17. See Geisler, *Legislating Morality*, Chap. 9.