

Brother Allfree's booklet says, he does not hold evangelical views about the Holy Spirit, since he does not believe in the Trinity nor the personality of the Holy Spirit. However, no suggestion was made in either the booklet or the review that he believes either of these things. It is his idea that God and Jesus act directly on the hearts of believers by means of the Spirit that is referred to as evangelical teaching. That this view is typical of the teaching of evangelical churches, but not the traditional Christadelphian understanding of how God works, is, I believe, an accurate statement of the position.—T.B.

Roman Catholicism and religious freedom

I am writing in response to some remarks made by Brother Tony Benson under the above heading in his ["From the Editor's postbag"](#) (May 2006, p. 164). The email he was responding to was objecting to the teaching of intelligent design in American schools, on the grounds that it is "pushing religious ideology", something which the pope apparently objects to. I am surprised by what Brother Benson says on two counts:

- 1 that he appears not to approve of "religious ideology";
- 2 that he would "go along" with the pope's encyclical statement that religion should *not* be state imposed.

Surely our position must be that we do indeed approve of "pushing religious ideology" in schools, as long as it is truth. The statement that it should be taught alongside evolution, for the sake of comparison, hardly seems supportable. What liberals are pleased to think of as "pushing religious ideology" we would consider to be a statement of the only truth. Whether this comprises a 'balanced' education in the minds of some is not of concern.

Similarly, I do not think we can say that we would not go along with a "state-imposed [again, an emotive term] religion" *carte blanche*. Obviously a state-imposed religion based on Catholicism would be unacceptable, but one fully based on the Truth would be acceptable. The fact that this has never in history happened, and is not foreseeable in the realms of reality, does not mean that hypothetically it would not be acceptable to us. I think Brother Benson's correspondent should have been made aware of this (and on what basis it would be acceptable), the reasons why

it is extremely unlikely, and when we will see a state-imposed religion.

In my opinion we should not be afraid of pursuing the logic of our beliefs in the modern world. It may be an opportunity to stand out from what people perceive to be the pathetic 'policy-on-the-hoof' approach of the Church of England in particular.

I should be interested in Brother Benson's thoughts.

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I welcome the opportunity to clarify, and expand upon, what I said in the short piece referred to. I agree that in theory the ideal society would be one in which the Truth was the only religion allowed by the state. Such a society would have an education system based on Bible truth, which would include the Creation record in Genesis 1. However, I think we can say categorically that this will not come about this side of the Kingdom; it is more than "extremely unlikely". The coming of Christ, which we believe will be soon, is to a world steeped in wickedness and ripe for judgement.

Let us suppose, however, that a ruler arises who decides to make the Truth the only religion for his country. Could it work in practice? I do not think it could, unless the ruler and his subordinates had Divine guidance. Even then, judging by what happened in the first-century ecclesia, problems and divisions would still arise over what exactly was 'the Truth'. It will take immortal, righteous, infallible beings (Christ and the saints) to make the Truth the only religion. It is surely not even a theoretical possibility that such a state could exist today. Since we know that Christadelphians will never be more than a small minority in any society, freedom of belief is the best situation for us.

Regarding the first part of Brother Whittaker's letter, I was not objecting to the principle of education being based on "religious ideology" but rather pointing out that it is not reasonable to say that the teaching of the concept of intelligent design as the alternative to evolution is "religious ideology". Only if the teaching of intelligent design is linked to particular religious texts, such as Genesis 1, can it reasonably be called "religious ideology".

If we are discussing these issues with interested friends, then I agree we should state what the ideal is, as long as we make it clear that we do not expect this ideal to be achieved in the world as it is today, and that it will be immortal, infallible beings who will impose it.—T.B.