

We Tell God to Leave Us Alone. Why Be Surprised When He Does?

The following was written by Ben Stein and recited by him on CBS Sunday Morning Commentary, Sunday, 12/18/05

Herewith at this happy time of year, a few confessions from my beating heart

I have no clue who Nick and Jessica are. I see them on the cover of People and Us constantly when I am buying my dog biscuits and kitty litter. I often ask the checkers at the grocery stores. They never know who Nick and Jessica are either. Who are they? Will it change my life if I know who they are and why they have broken up? Why are they so important? I don't know who Lindsay Lohan is either, and I do not care at all about Tom Cruise's wife. Am I going to be called before a Senate committee and asked if I am a subversive? Maybe, but I just have no clue who Nick and Jessica are. If this is what it means to be no longer young, it's not so bad.

Next confession:

I am a Jew, and every single one of my ancestors was Jewish. And it does not bother me even a little bit when people call those beautiful lit up, bejewelled trees Christmas trees. I don't feel threatened. I don't feel discriminated against. That's what they are: Christmas trees. It doesn't bother me a bit when people say, "Merry Christmas" to me. I don't think they are slighting me or getting ready to put me in a ghetto. In fact, I kind of like it. It shows that we are all brothers and sisters celebrating this happy time of year. It doesn't bother me at all that there is a manger scene on display at a key intersection near my beach house in Malibu. If people want a crutch, it's just as fine with me as is the Menorah a few hundred yards away. I don't like getting pushed around for being a Jew, and I don't think Christians like getting pushed around for being Christians. I think people who believe in God are sick and tired of getting pushed around, period. I have no idea where the concept came from that America is an explicitly atheist country. I can't find it in the Constitution, and I don't like it being shoved down my throat.

Or maybe I can put it another way: where did the idea come from that we should worship Nick and Jessica and we aren't allowed to worship God as we understand Him? I guess that's a sign that I'm getting old, too. But there are a lot of us who are wondering where Nick and Jessica came from and where the America we knew went to. In light of the many jokes we send to one another for a laugh, this is a little different: This is not intended to be a joke, it's not funny; it's intended to get you thinking. Billy Graham's daughter was interviewed on the Early Show and Jane Clayson asked her "How could God let something like this happen (regarding Katrina)?"

Anne Graham gave an extremely profound and insightful response. She said, "I believe God is deeply saddened by this, just as we are, but for years we've been telling God to get out of our schools, to get out of our government and to get out of our lives. And being the Great God that He is, I believe He has calmly backed out. How can we expect God to give us His blessing and His protection if we demand He leave us alone?"

In light of recent events... terrorists attacks, school shootings, etc. I think it started when Madeleine Murray O'Hare (she was murdered, her body found recently) complained she didn't want prayer in our schools, and we said OK. Then, someone said you better not read the Bible in school, the Bible says thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not steal, and love your neighbor as yourself. And we said OK. Then, Dr. Benjamin Spock said we shouldn't spank our children when they misbehave because their little personalities would be warped and we might damage their self-esteem (Dr. Spock's son committed suicide). We said an expert should know what he's talking about. And we said OK.

Now we're asking ourselves why our children have no conscience, why they don't know right from wrong, and why it doesn't bother them to kill strangers, their classmates, and themselves. Probably, if we think about it long and hard enough, we can figure it out. I think it has a great deal to do with "WE REAP WHAT WE SOW." It's funny how simple it is for people to trash God and then wonder why the world's going to hell. Funny how we believe what the newspapers say, but question what the Bible says.

Funny how you can send 'jokes' through e-mail and they spread like wildfire but when you start sending messages regarding the Lord, people think twice about sharing. Funny how lewd, crude, vulgar and obscene articles pass freely through cyberspace, but public discussion of God is suppressed in the school and workplace. Are you laughing? Funny how when you forward this message, you will not send it to many on your address list because you're not sure what they believe, or what they will think of you for sending it. Funny how we can be more worried about what other people think of us than what God thinks of us. Pass it on if you think it has merit. If not then just discard it... no one will know you did. But, if you discard this thought process, don't sit back and complain about what bad shape the world is in.