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Theocracy Alert

Lou Sheldon and the vast left-wing conspiracy

By Eavan Callaghan

Online Journal Contributing Writer

October 17, 2005—Reverend Louis P. Sheldon is the founder of an organization called the Traditional Values Coalition and his daughter, Andrea Lafferty, is its Executive Director. Reverend Sheldon claims that The Traditional Values Coalition speaks on behalf of over 43,000 churches.

I am an avid reader of Reverend Sheldon's [web site](#). I agree with very little, if any, of what I see but I want to hear and consider everything anyone has to say about these issues, including those with which I disagree. Hopefully Lou Sheldon and his followers are equally open-minded and read [Online Journal](#).

One of Lou Sheldon's current efforts is an attempt to "save" the Pledge of Allegiance. Specifically, Lou Sheldon's effort is in opposition to those who would like to remove the reference to God from the pledge. He and his followers are [endorsing](#) the Pledge Protection Act, [H.R. 2389/S](#), a bill introduced in Congress that would prevent any federal court from hearing arguments on the issue. The reference to God was added to the pledge in 1954 and essentially makes the Pledge of Allegiance a public prayer, as Mel Seesholtz points out in an [article](#) for CounterBias:

"So who added the words "under God," and when were they added? Congress did, in 1954, after an intense lobbying campaign by the Knights of Columbus (one of the participants in the current litigation). As Dr. Baer noted, "The pledge was now both a patriotic oath and a public prayer." But there's more to it than that."

This, of course, is in violation of the First Amendment to the Constitution that states the Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion. Lou Sheldon and The Traditional Values Coalition are also 'outraged' that the courts have decided that government institutions such as public schools cannot mandate, dictate or organize in anyway, praying or referencing God as this is also in violation of the First Amendment.

Lou Sheldon, Andrea Lafferty and their followers are afraid that there is a movement underway to prevent their children and the children of their followers from saying a prayer at school. They are afraid that there is a vast left-wing conspiracy to prevent their children from saying the Pledge of Allegiance including the words 'under God' in school. Regarding his endorsement of the Pledge Protection Act is this from Lou Sheldon's web site: "[This bill will protect the right of children to recite the entire Pledge of Allegiance \(including the phrase "under God"\) in public schools](#)". They are afraid that this vast left-wing conspiracy is an effort to remove God from their lives. They are afraid that this movement will prevent them from acknowledging their belief in the existence of God or following the religion of their choice in the manner that they see fit. This current 'save the Pledge of Allegiance' campaign is part of their effort to prevent this.

Reverend Sheldon also has a "[Battle Plan to Take Back the Courts](#)." The following is from Lou Sheldon's "battle plan":

"For 40 years, the anti-God Left has been using America's courts to impose an anti-religion, anti-family agenda on America—an extremist agenda that politicians (even most liberals) would never dare vote for."

I've got good news for Lou Sheldon and his fundamentalist Christian followers. This is, in fact, good news for any Christian, fundamentalist or not. This is good news for all Americans of any faith or belief. The First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States guarantees them freedom of religion and free speech and the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution guarantees them the right to conduct their lives as they see fit, saying that nobody can be deprived of their liberties without due process of law.

Reverend Sheldon, anyone can say a prayer anytime and any place they have the desire to do so. Anyone can recite the Pledge of Allegiance, including the words "under God," anytime and any place. They can do this at school, they can do this in a court of law and they can even do this standing on a soapbox in a public square. These things just can't be endorsed, led or required by government institutions, as our government is not supposed to endorse one particular religious belief to the exclusion of others. You and your followers, however, are as free as you can be to do exactly that which you are afraid this vast left-wing conspiracy is attempting to prevent.

I hope my fellow left-wing "conspirators" won't mind if I admit that we do indeed have an agenda. Reverend Sheldon, our agenda is to protect your right and the rights of your followers to pray anytime and any place. We want to protect the right of your children to say a prayer at school. We want to protect the right for you and your Christian followers to practice any religion that you choose in any manner that you see fit. Reverend Sheldon, this left-wing agenda even includes protecting your right to say the things that you say on your web site.

The problem that Lou Sheldon has with our agenda is that we also want to protect the right of Muslim children to say a prayer to Allah and Jewish children to say a prayer to their God and children of any faith to say a prayer to any God. We also want to protect the right of children not to pray. Our agenda is to protect everyone's right to practice any religion and we even want to protect the rights of people who don't have any religion at all and may not even believe there is a God.

The problem that Lou Sheldon has with our agenda is that we want to protect everyone's rights. Lou Sheldon's agenda only wants to protect the rights of Christians. What Reverend Sheldon and his followers don't like is the fact that the courts have said that schools cannot mandate the prayers of their particular religious belief. What Lou Sheldon doesn't like is that we want to take the reference to his God, indeed a Christian God, out of the Pledge of Allegiance. I'm sure Lou Sheldon and his fellow Christians would be just as outraged if we were to change the pledge to read "... one nation under Allah". I don't know if the fundamentalist Christian is capable of understanding this, but public school sponsored prayer to a Christian God and a reference to a Christian God in the pledge and its required recitation in public violates the rights guaranteed by the Constitution of those who do not share their particular beliefs.

Regarding the reference to God in the Pledge of Allegiance that was added by Congress in 1954, this was done in an atmosphere of paranoia and hysteria. This law was passed by Congress during the [Senator Joseph R. McCarthy](#)-led inquisition designed to stamp out communism in the United States. Many citizens of the United States were treated very harshly by this process. Civil rights were violated, people were black-listed and lives were ruined. Regardless of how one feels about communism, the words "under God" were added to the pledge as the result of bigotry. Ken Lynn has written an [article](#) on this that's worth reading. From Ken Lynn's article:

"The pledge remained unchanged until the paranoia and hysteria stemming from Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy's 'red scare' hearings swept the nation in the 1950s. Fearing communism might cross the Atlantic and engulf America, a feeling arose in Congress and throughout parts of the nation that by acknowledging 'God' as our national symbol, America would be protected from the communist menace. Scoring a religious trifecta of sorts, the pledge was amended in 1954 to include the words 'under God'; legislation to add the motto 'In God We Trust' to all coins and currency was passed in 1955; and the national motto 'E Pluribus Unum' [out of many, one] was changed to 'In God We Trust' in 1956. Collectively these measures form an interesting trilogy of laws for a country founded on a secular Constitution and a belief in the separation of church and state."

I think it's interesting that the authors of the original Pledge of Allegiance, first published on September 8, 1892, considered ending it with "... justice and equality for all". The word 'equality' was rejected as a result of the bigotry of the time as the good Christians of that era did not want blacks or women to be considered equal. Also from Ken Lynn's [article](#):

"Bellamy considered putting the words 'fraternity' and 'equality' into the Pledge, but decided against it as equality for blacks and women was a controversial rather than patriotic issue of the time."

So the pledge was influenced by the bigots of two different eras. Now we want to change the pledge once again to remove the reference to God in order to include those who may not believe in God in general or in a Christian God in particular. Lou Sheldon and his group want the reference to God left in the pledge in order to exclude those who do not share their particular beliefs. So the Pledge of Allegiance to the United State of America can now be considered to have been influenced by the bigots of three different eras! The Founding Fathers must be rolling in their graves. The pledge was originally written and subsequently changed and currently argued about specifically to exclude people based on their ethnicity, sex and personal beliefs.

Apparently, Lou Sheldon read my article, [The Myth of the Will of the People](#), and has taken a look at the Constitution. His current effort to 'save' the Pledge of Allegiance references Article III, Sections 1-2 of the Constitution. Lou Sheldon claims that this gives Congress the authority to decide what cases federal courts can and cannot hear. In reading the Constitution it has apparently become clear to Lou Sheldon that the reference to God in the Pledge does indeed violate the First Amendment. Lou Sheldon's response to this is to change the law. He and his fellow Christians are endorsing [H.R. 2389](#) that would add a section to the United States Code that would prohibit federal courts from having any jurisdiction to hear or decide any question pertaining to the validity under the Constitution of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Lou Sheldon claims that judges who do not follow the Constitution and its original intent are renegade, activist and making law as opposed to enforcing the law as written. Here is more from Lou Sheldon's "[Battle Plan to Take Bake the Courts](#)":

"The new Supreme Court nominee must be someone who respects the Constitution and knows that his or her role is to interpret laws—not invent news [sic] ones. Liberals, however, want activist judges who are willing to trample on the Constitution and ignore the clear intent of laws passed by legislative bodies!"

I think we have exposed this line of reasoning as the lie that it is. Here we have an issue that violates the rights of a minority and is clearly unconstitutional and Lou Sheldon wants to prevent the courts from even hearing the arguments. Clearly it's Lou Sheldon and his right-wing fundamentalist Christian followers who do not want the Constitution enforced as written. Clearly its Lou and his group who want to make and change the law suit their purposes.

Let me spell this out for Lou Sheldon's followers. Your leader is trying to prevent the Constitution from being followed as written and is, in fact, seeking to prevent the Constitution from being followed at all! You leader only wants the Constitution followed when it suits his purpose. When the Constitution doesn't suit his purpose, he either wants to change it or prevent its use entirely. If Lou Sheldon can do this, so can [David Duke](#), former leader of the Ku Klux Klan, and so can the leader of any other group whose views you may find offensive. What Lou Sheldon is attempting ought to scare the hell out of you!

Now that we have Lou Sheldon reading the Constitution he's finding that there are parts of it that he doesn't like. What happened to Lou Sheldon's claim that he wants judges who will strictly interpret the Constitution as written? Apparently that's only if Lou Sheldon gets to write the Constitution. Lou Sheldon wants to prevent judges from even hearing cases that violate parts of the Constitution.

The framers and original intent be damned. If Lou Sheldon and the Traditional Values Coalition can't prevent judges from hearing cases that violate the parts of the Constitution that they disagree with then they want to [change the Constitution](#). Consider this from Lou Sheldon's daughter, Andrea Lafferty:

"The Federal Marriage Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which is scheduled for a vote this month in the Senate, is a grand gesture in the most important battle of the 'culture war ..."

Obviously Lou Sheldon, Andrea Lafferty and the Traditional Values Coalition have a big problem with much of what the Constitution of the United States has to say. They want to solve this problem with the use of the "Exception" to exclude those who do not share their beliefs.

Lou Sheldon would like the Full Faith and Credit section of the [Constitution](#) to read:

Article. IV, Section. 1: Full Faith and Credit shall be given in each State to the public Acts, Records, and judicial Proceedings of every other State *except gay marriage*.

Lou Sheldon would like the [First Amendment](#) to the Constitution to read:

Article [I.]: Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, *except Christianity*, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof *except everyone should be forced to obey the rules of Christianity*; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people, *except homosexuals and non-Christians*, peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Lou Sheldon would like the [Fourteenth Amendment](#) to the Constitution to read:

Article XIV, Section 1: No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States *except homosexuals and non-Christians*; nor shall any State deprive any person *except homosexuals and non-Christians* of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person *except homosexuals and non-Christians* within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

The fact that Lou Sheldon has such narrow-minded, erroneous, bigoted and, indeed, hypocritical beliefs is not something that I find particularly worrisome. The scary thought is that Lou Sheldon may be quite intelligent and his whole purpose is to sell these narrow-minded, erroneous and bigoted beliefs to a large uneducated and unintelligent mass of Christian followers.

It's hard for me to believe that even Lou Sheldon himself believes much of what appears on his web site. It would seem impossible, or at least improbable, that Lou Sheldon would believe two diametrically opposed points of view. That he wants judges to interpret the Constitution as written on one hand and to prevent judges from hearing constitutional arguments on the other hand. Perhaps Lou Sheldon doesn't actually believe these things and just says them because they suit his purpose of imposing his beliefs on as many people as possible. Reverend Sheldon claims that The Traditional Values Coalition speaks on behalf of over 43,000 churches. I don't have any idea how many followers there are in each one of these churches but this has got to be an awful lot of people. Perhaps it's the intelligence of Reverend Sheldon's flock of uneducated sheep that we should be questioning.

A big part of our agenda—this vast left-wing conspiracy's agenda—is to educate. It is our fervent hope that the Constitution of the United States will remain unchanged and will be interpreted as written. It is our hope that the Constitution, our form of government and the intent of the framers will be understood by all who benefit from it, including conservative Christian fundamentalists. It is our hope that Lou Sheldon's good Christian followers will understand how important it is that we protect everyone's rights, including theirs. Maybe now that we have Reverend Sheldon reading the Constitution, we can get Reverend Sheldon's good Christian followers to read up on it. Maybe we can get them to understand our form of government, how it was set up, why it was set up the way it is and how it works. I don't know how educated many of them are, but this is high school stuff. I think Lou Sheldon's entire effort depends upon

the lack of education and lack intelligence of his followers. Lou Sheldon's worst nightmare would be if his followers were to become educated and to start thinking for themselves.

We should remove the reference to God from the pledge and add the word equality or scrap the Pledge of Allegiance altogether.

The pledge should read:

"I Pledge Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation Indivisible with Liberty, Justice and Equality for All."

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