

## **The American Civil Liberties Union and Roger Williams: Strange Bedfellows** by Stephen Cakouros

It is necessary to mention the American Civil Liberties Union [ACLU]. This union of determined litigants was the brain child of Roger Nash Baldwin [1884-1981]. It rose from the ashes of the National Civil Liberties Bureau [NCLB], a posturing organization that existed supposedly in order to defend conscientious objectors. It is a curious thing indeed when the ACLU came into being in 1920 in order to preserve our basic freedoms, why then was Baldwin found so often in the company of left-wing ideologues who are not in anyway devoted to basic freedoms? He visited the Soviet Union for the first time, and amazingly produced a book entitled *Liberty under the Soviets* published in 1928 in which he lavishes praise on the Leninists. Did he really believe that the liberties which are guaranteed Americans in the Bill of Rights could be found among the Bolsheviks? We admit that he broke with the Communists and other radicals in 1939, and that he attempted to purge the ACLU of Communists, but did he really change his opinions or was it because the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics [USSR] had signed a pact with the hated Nazis? Was he so naive as to think that there was any real difference between the far-left and the far-right when it comes to freedom of speech, press, conscience, and assembly? Or was it that he liked the collectivism of the Soviets that has such strong appeal to those who are born into wealth? Typically, Baldwin, a wealthy ideologue, took employment in factories to feel how it was to be among the people. This is that nauseatingly short-term experience that enables rich socialists to say that they know what it is like to be one of the proletariat. Do they truly?

Baldwin remained a communist to the end. Reflecting on his earlier life he wrote,

I am for socialism, disarmament, and ultimately, for abolishing the state itself as an instrument of violence and compulsion. I seek social ownership of property, the abolition of the properties class, and sole control of those who produce wealth. Communism is the goal. It all sums up into one single purpose - the abolition of dog-eat-dog under which we live. I don't regret being part of the communist tactic. I knew what I was doing. I was not an innocent liberal. I wanted what the communists wanted and I traveled the United Front road to get it.

The most important thing to be noted about Baldwin may be said of the ACLU as well. He did not really care an iota about civil rights. He was a professional agitator. Concerns over basic freedoms allow professional agitators the ability to muddy the waters until utopia arrives when Marxism replaces capitalism. Baldwin for one wanted to base life and existence on economic concerns and what he called a "workers' democracy." Notice how he chucks into the fire the Bill of Rights. On reading what follows we should not be surprised that he was the friend of Vietnamese revolutionary Ho Chi Minh and the Puerto Rican terrorist Pedro Campos. In 1934 Baldwin wrote a piece called *Freedom in the USA and the USSR*. Naturally he claimed that Russians were free and Americans were not as fortunate as they were. He wrote,

The class struggle is the central conflict of the world; all others are incidental. When that power of the working class is once achieved, as it has been only in the Soviet Union, I am for maintaining it by any means whatever. Dictatorship is the obvious means in a world

of enemies at home and abroad. I dislike it in principle as dangerous to its own objects. But the Soviet Union has already created liberties far greater than exist elsewhere in the world. . . . [There] I saw . . . fresh, vigorous expressions of free living by workers and peasants all over the land. And further, no champion of a socialist society could fail to see that some suppression was necessary to achieve it. It could not all be done by persuasion. . . . [I]f American champions of civil liberty could all think in terms of economic freedom as the goal of their labors, they too would accept “workers’ democracy” as far superior to what the capitalist world offers to any but a small minority. Yes, and they would accept - regretfully, of course - the necessity of dictatorship while the job of reorganizing society on a socialist basis is being done.

Here is a rich boy feeling guilty for having been born with a silver spoon in his mouth. Roger Baldwin came from the best New England stock. His relatives were among those who arrived on the Mayflower. His parents were Frank Fenno Baldwin and Lucy Cushing (Nash) Baldwin who were active in the Unitarian Church. Unitarians, (or those whom Madalyn Murray O’Hair called atheists that will not come out of the closet), are in the forefront of all liberal causes, even the most extreme ones. Baldwin would have known that his Puritan ancestors would have frowned on his association with the Unitarian church; however, he graduated from Harvard University, a haven for Unitarian rationalists.

Most of the social problems we are now facing can be traced to that time in history when Baldwin took on the establishment. At last free thinkers found their audience. The Ingersolls, the Darrows, the Sangers, and the Menkens had come front, if not center, and no one was able to silence an American version of the French Encyclopediasts. All things sacred and time-honored were up for grabs. This is the age of amoral Bertrand Russell. It was the age of Vladimir Lenin whose dictum “religion is the opiate of the people” fell on receptive ears. Baldwin’s heroes were radical anarchists like Emma Goldwyn whom he heard speak in St. Louis where he did social work and taught at Washington University. Her words found a permanent home in Baldwin. Something he said about Goldman explains what the ACLU is all about, “Emma Goldman opened up not only an entirely new literature to me, but new people as well, some who called themselves anarchists, some libertarians, some freedom lovers . . . **bound together by one principle - freedom from coercion.**” [emphasis added] There it is in a nutshell. Government is bad; it can never be trusted, and only when it is communistic, or run by an idealistic proletariat, will government be good.

Along with Goldwyn, who became his life-long friend, Baldwin was the friend of anti-war activists who could not distinguish between pacifism and sedition. In fact, he spent a year in jail for refusing to respond to the draft. He could have chosen a non-combatant role but his aim was to resist whatever the government dictated. At about the same time, feminists with radical views emerged. He honored their views as his wife was a member of the feminist movement. Then as now, the traditional values and political opinions held by most Americans were being called into question. Baldwin’s own marriage was what we now would call an open marriage similar to that of the founder of Planned Parenthood, Margaret Sanger, to whom monogamy was old-fashioned and outdated.

Because Baldwin left behind an organization that has devoted its energies to removing religion from public life, he cannot be ignored. The ACLU has an agenda. Under the rubric of saving America from another inquisition it has demonstrated repeatedly that it looks at religion as a threat to democracy. The ACLU does not practice a quiet kind of atheism. Its battery of lawyers along with the politicians they have in their pocket are as militant as radical Islam. The bombs they set off are in our courts. It is however one of the ironies of history that the ACLU owes a debt to Roger Williams who wished to disestablish the church as early as the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It is because an idea was hatched in the mind of Williams that the ACLU can claim the right to warn America about an encroaching church.

No sooner had the ACLU begun its crusade to replace capitalism with socialism, i.e., Karl Marx in place of Thomas Hobbes, than it began to bear its fangs when it comes to Christianity. The irresolute dislike of Christianity faithfully adhered to by members of the ACLU since its inception can be explained by merely taking note of the fact that the Communist party considers religion and God-talk dangerous because communism must be all in all. Therefore it despises individuality. The ACLU attracts to its bosom those who do not like religion because religion has rules. Those who talk about God also talk about what individuals and nations must do to please God. This is what ACLU types cannot stomach. How dare it be said that this is right and the other is wrong! This is why the ACLU has always been willing to defend those who refuse scruples especially when it comes to sex. Case in point, the ACLU defense of North American Man/Boy Love Association (NAMBLA) has published literature that guides adherents on how they can successfully entrap and molest young boys without having to face the legal consequences. A defense by the ACLU of NAMBLA proves that it is not free speech or free press that concerns them. They want a society which has no rules, especially when it comes to sex.

An all-out attack on Christianity launched by the ACLU makes them chargeable under the RICO Act. The modus operandi used by the ACLU demonstrates that they are trying to create a climate in which the free expression of religion, especially Christianity, can be hindered. Since religious expression on or off government property is guaranteed under the Constitution the RICO Act should be invoked simply because a case can be made that demonstrates that the ACLU has launched a crusade against religion. This crusade which is unrelenting amounts to harassment and illegal intimidation.

The operational method of the ACLU is the principle reason why the RICO Act should be invoked. The ACLU shops around for a disgruntled atheist or freethinker in order to wage war on religion. The still the most famous case in American history is the Scopes Trial which began in 1925 shortly after the ACLU's founding. The trial's time proximity to the origin of the ACLU establishes that religion and not freedom of conscience were the main focus of the ACLU. Nothing has changed. The ACLU may have purged the organization of Communists, but its hatred of religion and Christianity will likely remained in place. A vigorous hatred of religion has been faithfully adhered to for nearly a century now by ACLU members and lawyers. This indefensible attitude is said to be the result of a desire to keep Jesus away from Caesar since that is what the founders of America wanted. All the while it is assumed that the ACLU has the handle on how to insure the separation of the church from the state. This supposition must be refuted.

Tennessee enacted the Butler Act, which forbids teachers from denying the biblical account of man's origin. The law did not mention whether plants or animals had undergone evolutionary changes; it simply alluded to the idea that in the state no one could teach that man had evolved from lower animals. Even Charles Darwin, now the most famous name associated with evolution, maintained that man did not evolve directly from monkeys. What he said was that simians and humans had evolved from a common ancestor. The Tennessee law which represented the way most parents thought in the state would have none of it. The ACLU which is not interested in parental rights objected to the law and in doing so revealed its true colors; it was and is a Marxist organization. This means that from their standpoint parents do not have the final say in what is taught to their children. In the Marxists' view of family and state relationships, the state owns our children.

The ACLU is kept afloat by contributions, fueled by a disregard for common decency; it is tolerated by cowardly politicians who are fearful that this gathering of misfits and litigants will someday turn on them or that they may eventually do some good. Through tax-exempt status, the ACLU has in effect forced taxpayers to subsidize their perverted sense of free speech.

Lately they have shown signs of mutual distrust. The organization is troubled; there is dissention in their ranks. However, we should not expect that the ACLU will suddenly disappear. Both factions are driven. The ACLU is determined to replace the three-letter word "God" with any number of four-letter words. In particular they appear to be an anti-Roman Catholic organization. The ACLU has tried to divest mankind, and especially the American people, of both the need and the right to express itself in religious terms. This is an organization that acts as if it were endangered each time God is mentioned. It quakes with fear when religious people express themselves using God-speak especially if they are standing on government property. It has even been rumored that they wish to have crosses removed from war memorials.

That part of America that goes to church or that believes in God is sick of the ACLU. In the most tiresome manner its lawyers continues to refer to Christians with a Jeffersonian expression about the "wall of separation" between government and religion. They quote this expression out of context and confuse it with the Great Wall of China which was built to repel enemies. Religion, especially Christianity, is looked upon as the enemy of democracy.

**It is interesting that the freedom of speech that allows the ACLU to denigrate religion by all accounts is owed to the religious community which it truly despises.** The dislike of and their fear of religion and God-talk is no doubt due to the fact that their Unitarian founder was an atheist. It is a fear of religion and what it stands for that has led the ACLU to deny science and logic whenever it supports a religious belief. This is why they are now and for a century to come will be litigating against the concept of "intelligent design." The fact that not only Christians and men of faith believe in Intelligent Design is critical. This indicates an idea has been a priori excluded by the ACLU because Christians and Jews have always favored it. This is a real threat to freedom of thought and speech because it amounts to the worst kind of censorship. They have rejected something just because people of faith favor it. Unlike the Greeks who gathered in the agora the members of the ACLU will not discuss something if it could lead to religion. The argument from design espoused by Socrates and Plato would never have made it to

the pages of the *Memorabilia* of Xenophon or the *Timaeus* of Plato if we followed their way of reasoning. All ideas deserve respect initially. An idea is a priceless thing. The body of lawyers and secularists that make up the ACLU do not understand that they have shackled the minds of students who are not now allowed to discuss Intelligent Design. The ACLU needs to listen to the voices of the agora.

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution deals with among other issues the separation of church and state or the so-called wall which Jefferson mentioned. It reads, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof . . .”

The First Amendment strictly forbids federal or state governments from establishing (elevating) any particular religion or sect to a place where it becomes the official or the favored religion. The words “prohibiting the free exercise thereof” on the other hand restrict the government from following any practices or enacting laws that interfere with the acceptance and propagation of religious beliefs. In other words the government cannot assume an anti-religious posture. This is what the ACLU does not understand or if it does understand it, it does not appreciate it. The government cannot become a religious organization, but on the other hand it cannot give the impression that it has a quarrel with or is in opposition to religion. The “establishment clause” was designed to forbid preferential treatment to one or more religious bodies. It was not designed to forbid the possibility that the government might not be allowed to use the word God or even fund chaplains who serve the military at taxpayers’ expense and by that serve our national interests. The paying of chaplains) which Madison strenuously resisted along with tax exemptions for churches, etc.) is an acknowledgment on the part of the government that religious expression is the right of all our citizens.

The ACLU has attempted to prove that the words “establishment of religion” must of necessity prohibit any and all references made to God by anyone who may have anything at all to do with the government when they are acting in an official capacity. This means that the average American thinks of the ACLU as a way-out organization with nothing else to do but challenge the American people on nit-picky issues. Being true to form they have of late tried to restrict the Pentagon from allowing any soldiers from using the Boy Scout pledge which happens to mention God. Obviously then, the ACLU is not just a wacky organization. We must not lump them in with the Mystic Knights of the Sea Lodge Hall popularized by those beloved radio characters Amos and Andy. They have for more than 20 years assailed the Boy Scouts.

In Connecticut the ACLU has succeeded in getting the state to remove the Scouts from the list of charitable institutions to which public employees may make voluntary contributions. And earlier this year it settled a suit against the city of San Diego, which agreed to evict the Scouts from a public park they have been using since 1918. The Scouts countersued, lost, and the case is now before the Ninth Circuit.” [*Wall Street Journal*, November 27, 2004]

Apparently the ACLU has nothing else to do but persecute the Scouts. It is amazing what boredom and the inability to land a good job will lead one to do. But it is not only boredom. The Supreme Court upheld the Scout’s rights to free speech when it barred openly gay scoutmasters from serving. Since that defeat they have looked for every opportunity to deny free

speech to an organization that has done more good for America than the ACLU. It is projected that the ACLU will continue to deny the Scouts the right to free speech especially if the gay lobby, still smarting because of the Supreme Court, continues to stoke the fire.

Having failed with the high court they have whenever possible denied Scouts access to tax-funded public facilities. If that way of thinking were to prevail then churches could not use public parks for Sunday school picnics. This says more about the American judicial system than it does about anything else because it strongly implies that the courts can be used to harass people and organizations. Are we willing to let our courts be used to satisfy a peculiar organization like the ACLU which suffers from litigious-mania? The ACLU is always suing in court somewhere because its 400,000 members send it money for that particular purpose.

The ACLU may have been begun by a Harvard Unitarian, who was ashamed that he was a New England blue-blood, but the attitude of the ACLU is curiously Anabaptist - the government is guilty until proven innocent. It acts as if all governments are all evil all the time. It thinks this way because it originally adopted a posture which assumed that all governments in history were unsupportive of the down-trodden workers. Government is always bad, especially when it pays respect to religion because it uses religion to suppress the masses which do not need religion. They need something better than religion; they need material prosperity.

The ACLU is always defending some lone individual who has been "offended" by religion as if the Constitution says that we cannot be offended in a civil society. This gives the impression that they want to use the democratic system to achieve their ends which are the removal of one thing more than any other - the offense of religion and religious expression. They want to create a completely secular world. They want the abolition of God. Since religious expression happens to be a right we already have under the Constitution, a secular instrument, one has to wonder why there is all this commotion. It has to do with the psychology of the ACLU. Their members not only want the freedom to be irreligious; they want to be so free of religion that religious practices cannot be carried out within their ear shot. The freedom to not be religious must include, they think, the freedom not to have to observe or even hear of religion, especially if the mentioning of the deity takes place on government property. If even a farthing of their taxes supports anything that is even remotely associated with God it gives them the right, or provides them with an excuse, to petition the government on the basis of the First Amendment.

The ACLU assumes that if God is mentioned that a particular interpretation of God is being imposed on others. This is clearly not the case. No one has to believe what they hear in reference to God. The ACLU has created a Boogiemán. He is waiting just around the corner and will soon jump out with a whip in hand dressed in the black robes of the Inquisition. Therefore it is their calling to keep the word "God" from ever being spoken on government soil. Any government that listens to the majority who want the name of God to be used in public life must be confronted head-on because this majority do not understand how much evil religion and God in concert together have caused. The unsuspecting public must be warned!

A great deal has been made of an unfortunate expression used by Jefferson. When misread it gives the impression that the government or those who are acting in the name of the government

can never do anything religious. In a letter to the Danbury Baptist Association ten years after the adoption of the First Amendment Jefferson wrote,

Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between man and his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legislative powers of government reach *actions only, and not opinion*, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole of the American people which declared that their legislature “should make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof” thus building a wall of separation between church and state.  
[emphasis added]

The reference to a wall has proven misleading. A close look at this statement by Jefferson does not reveal any hostility toward religion, nor does it indicate in anyway that he believed that the government proscribe religion. His letter distinguishes between actions and opinions. The letter sent by Jefferson to a persecuted sect was intended to support what would later be affirmed in 1944 by the Supreme Court in *United States v. Ballard*, “**Heresy trials are foreign to our Constitution. Men may believe what they cannot prove.**”

The wall of separation means that if the government were to enact laws which prohibit the “free exercise” of religion, the Constitution will have been violated. Free expression is not only the right to form a religious sect around a certain set of beliefs; it is also the freedom to mention God or to perform activities that are deemed religious. If freedom of religious expression is allowed for those who vote it must be allowed for an elected government as well. The Government cannot institute or call into being any religious sect, but at the same time it may be allowed to call on God without being in violation of the Constitution. God is not a denomination.

The wording in the First Amendment may have caused some of the difficulty. If it is said that the government cannot establish any particular religion, it may be inferred to some degree that religion is suspect and of no use to the government. Religion seems to be cast in a prejudiced light. In its desire to do away with religion, the ACLU has seized upon this inference. It has scored many points with those who think that religion is a negative influence.

Roger Williams who experimented with religious freedom in Rhode Island must be mentioned in connection with the ACLU. Each exacerbated those around them. The Puritans suggested that Williams should have been placed under the care of a physician. It seems certain that neither Williams nor the ACLU will ever be cured of what ails them.

The scholar Perry Miller [1905-63] notes that Williams has been touted an apostle of liberty but this is in contrast to how the Puritans thought of him. Even after the Toleration Act of 1689 handed down by the British Parliament and the publication of Cotton Mather’s opinions on conscience in religious matters [1702] which allowed for religious toleration, Williams was still considered by the sons of the Puritans as a “frenetic creature.”<sup>1</sup> The same might describe the founders and members of the ACLU. They are not the apostles of freedom though they might think of themselves as such. Williams has been praised for his demand that matters of conscience be free of government control. The Puritan community of New England was divided

into two sections, the Massachusetts Bay Colony and the Plymouth Rock community of Connecticut. The Connecticut Puritans favored a limited democracy under the leadership of Thomas Hooker. The Massachusetts Puritans under Governor John Winthrop and Pastor John Cotton attempted to establish something that allowed for voting rights but it was further away from a democracy than the community presided over by Hooker.

Though charming and amiable, Roger Williams [1603-83] was not in any way amenable. This is the kind of man who could start an argument in heaven. His underlying problem, like those who resemble him throughout church history [e.g., the Donatists] was that he believed that if just one person were in church that was not fully Christian then such a church or congregation was reckoned unfit. No church deemed imperfect deserved his support for to support such a church would mean that he was imperfect. According to Williams he was living in a time when all the churches were unacceptable. Christendom had failed. As a consequence he was left without a church. In other societies less tolerant he might have been tarred and feathered. Instead the Puritans after failing to restore him to fellowship exiled him to Rhode Island.

Williams became a “Seeker.” On a trip to England he founded the first Seeker Church of London [1643]. The church’s source was the popular Puritan preacher Richard Baxter. Of all the dissenting sects proliferating at this time in England, the Seekers may have been the most aptly named. The Seekers had their eyes on the future. History had little to offer them. A past with the learning and example of the Reformers was of little use to the Seekers who were convinced that God was about to do something new. Seekers were not sure what the Spirit would say to the churches, but they were certain that the existing churches were all spiritually impoverished.

It should be obvious that Roger Williams and his Seekers were not like the other Puritans. To the Puritans, the Scripture and Spirit provided enough light for them to develop a doctrine of church order. The Puritans were certain that the true gospel had been recovered in the Reformation. Likewise the Bible revealed what could only be discerned as a distinguishable pattern of church polity. This pattern only had to be observed. This did not satisfy the Seekers because they were convinced that the primitive church was so superior to anything they could observe around them, that something had to be lacking in familiar churches. The future would reveal just what was missing when the church regained its powers. In keeping with this Williams spoke of the “resurrection of the Churches.” The present is never good enough for such individuals.

It was said, “He renounced fellowship with all New England Churches and declared that all so-called churches were since Apostolic times false and anti-Christian.”<sup>2</sup> Boston’s most important pastor the Puritan John Cotton said that “He fell off from his ministry . . . and from all ordinances [sacraments] dispensed in a church way . . . till God should stir up himself or some other new Apostles.” Williams explained, “It was my own voluntary withdrawing from all the churches . . . The act of the Lord Jesus sounding forth in me the Blast which shall in his own season, cast down the strength and confidence of the inventions of men.”<sup>3</sup> The Seekers were looking, but were unsure as to what they would find. Eventually many of them found their way into other existing sects such as the Ranters, Antinomians, etc. Seekers refused to believe that the sacraments, baptism and the Lord’s Supper, were to be observed throughout church history.



Like Williams they could not accept the sacraments from anyone who represented an imperfect church. Since all churches were imperfect, and the perfect had not as yet been restored, the sacraments were null and void. This explains why the Seekers who morphed into the Quakers [Religious Society of Friends] refuse to this day to observe the sacraments. Some of those who became Quakers referred to themselves using both the appellations of Seekers and Quakers.

Into the circles prepared by Seeker Questions and attitudes came a new and dynamic missionary movement. In the early summer of 1654 the followers of George Fox, the Quakers, came as “new apostolic men” from the heartlands in the Lake District and Lancashire into the Midlands and London. Their invasion of the South startled Seekers and unchurched religious eccentrics of all kinds. They brought the mentality of certainty. The revelation they said they had received was declared infallible. They said that the “new light” others sought had come. It was in fact within them; and the light was Christ Himself. . . . The last days had dawned.<sup>4</sup>

It does not seem possible but someone even more arrogant than Williams appeared in the person of George Fox [1624-91], the most famous Quaker. All churches but his were part of “mystical Babylon” and allies of the Antichrist. Eventually he distanced himself from the Quakers denouncing them because of their subjective Christology, which is near to pantheism. However he had been responsible for creating the atmosphere in which the Quaker movement began. Enthusiasts like Williams make bold assertions about what God is going to reveal to His people but when reality no such revelations, church members go off in different directions disillusioned. Williams was forced to remain a Seeker having never discovered the true church that had not yet become manifest.<sup>5</sup>

Quakers were not recognized in Massachusetts, but they could come to Rhode Island because Williams had declared that every one could worship God according to their conscience, not because he was so magnanimous, but because none could say that they had arrived at the truth. Ernst says “. . . he was unable to find a true ministry of the Word extant in the world.”<sup>7</sup> The true church and ministry had not yet been restored. Consequently Williams stated that he could not act in “the ministries of others” because he could not find anywhere the proof that the churches had been resurrected. By the way, he judged a church to be unfit if it paid its ministers. Sounding like Alexander Campbell, another heterodox who appeared in America during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, he denounced anyone who received a just compensation for preaching. **Williams would have to be opposed to any theocracy collecting taxes that might in some way contribute to the upkeep of a minister who of necessity had to represent a false church.** Consequently he had to separate the state from the church. It is an irony that the ACLU when calling for the separation of God from government has to build off the pride of someone like Williams who felt that all churches were ineligible to receive his approval. He wished to distance himself from government chiefly because any and all theocracies, however good or well-intentioned their leadership might be, would from necessity have to represent a false church. As late as 1652 while in England, Williams proved himself a strict separatist. He still held out against any connection at all between the church and the state by siding with the poet John Milton and other sympathizers in denouncing the collection of any revenues that might be used in support of ministers.

The ACLU on the other hand wishes to distance God from government because religion, however good or well-intentioned a belief system might be, will always be used to deprive people to be free of observing religious expression. What was said of Roger Williams may be also said of the ACLU. Williams was like Ishmael, Abraham's son who become the ancestor of the Arab people, that "his hand shall be against every man and every man's hand against him." [Genesis 16:12] This curious entourage of lawyers has no friends where faith is found or sometimes in a conservative Congress which thus far has reserved the right to say that America is "under God."

A second irony is inherent in these considerations. It relates to the way Williams interpreted Scripture. The first real experiment in America, in which liberty of conscience was guaranteed, was due in part to the way Williams employed what is called the allegorical method of interpretation. This more than anything concerned Puritan leaders since the interpretation of Scripture relates to everything else in a Christian community. If employed incorrectly the allegorical method can afford one the opportunity to use Scripture for his or her own ends. It can become a handy tool so that it may be used to support opinions that are not in keeping with reason and Scripture.

The most famous allegorist in early church history was the Egyptian father Origen. Williams approached the Scriptures, especially the Old Testament [OT], in the same way Origen did. An example of allegory found in Scripture can be taken from the OT law that an ox that treads out the corn must not be muzzled. The apostle Paul says that this should be interpreted to mean that ministers of the gospel can be paid for their services. Here is an irony in an irony. In one of the few places in the New Testament [NT] where Paul uses allegory Williams closes his eyes to its meaning just so that he may deprecate as hirelings those who receive pay in the ministry. On the other hand Origen reversed what Williams did when he took a passage intended to be allegorical and made it literal. In the Gospel of Matthew chapter 19 Jesus expects that some will be eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. This was not to be taken literally. Origen did take it literally and castrated himself. He employed this method of interpretation to great effect overcoming some of the problematic passages found in Scripture. He had learned this method from the Greeks and Jewish scholars in Alexandria who used allegory to explain certain portions of the OT that did not jell with Plato. The Greeks sought to redeem the less desirable passages in Homer by using allegory. In particular they used allegory to explain the way the gods in many of the fables became incarnate, which the Greeks found objectionable. Plato had taught the Greeks that the body is a tomb from which we should escape. Allegory helped in this regard. It made the Greek religion respectable. Origen used allegory so that he might whenever necessary reconcile philosophy and Christianity. He had to attempt this because Christianity and Platonism cannot be reconciled.

Since the allegorical method looks for the hidden meaning in Scripture the passage being considered is not important from the standpoint of what it literally says but from what it does not say. Needless to say this allows the entrance into theology of a subjective element. The allegorist seeks to uncover the true meaning of Scripture by not paying strict attention to obvious facts such as dates and personages. The allegorist only accounts for what he or she desires the passage to say and not to what it is plainly saying. Jonah and King David are important because they can refer us to the Christ and the Christian era. In keeping with this the allegorist knows

that the goings on in the Temple of the OT find their true significance in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. The Book of Hebrews in the NT makes sense out of all the liturgical offerings and feast days recorded in the older testament because they relate somehow to Christ. There is type and anti-type. This does not mean however that the allegorical method of interpretation is the preferred method so that it should be employed to the exclusion of all others, or that the OT does not possess an intrinsic worth of its own. If the allegorical method is allowed to elevate itself over the other methods of interpreting Scripture, one could do away with the literal interpretation altogether. That could lead some to conclude that the resurrection or miracles are without historical significance. We must never forget that the allegorical is important because it is couched in the literal. Yes, Joseph was sold into bondage, and this foretells the death and resurrection of Jesus, but there was a historical, literal Joseph.

What does allegory have to do with the experiment in Rhode Island? As historian Miller records, the OT is not a chronicle of kings and harlots to the dedicated allegorist. If it were only that it would be just a record of sinful people. The allegorist looks for something more than sordid biographies. This has something to do with the government of New England which disciplined Williams. He believed that the civic government of New England could have nothing to do with religion. Williams knew that the Puritans had based their form of government on the Old Testament which in his opinion had nothing to say about New Testament times. “When viewed in this light, [the allegorical light] the repressive and persecuting actions of Jewish sovereigns [OT] are not precedents for modern [New England] rulers, but typological pointers toward the methods by which, in the antitype, ministers should pronounce purely spiritual condemnations.”<sup>7</sup> In other words the OT has nothing to say about the way the New England Puritans had created a theocracy. By embracing almost exclusively the allegorical method of interpretation when reading the OT, Williams proved that he was not looking to Scripture for guidance when he tried to create a working government in Rhode Island. This would have meant that Williams constructed a government that of necessity would be separate from the church. Even though the Scriptures contain wisdom about governing, they do not dictate when it comes to civil government. Williams promoted the separation of church and state, and for that, the ACLU has him to thank.

Williams did not need the allegorical method of interpretation of Scripture to arrive at his doctrine of the separation of church and state. It is taught in the New Testament. The difference between Puritans like Milton and Williams and those who were trying to build a government that would be in support of the aims of the Holy Spirit, was that Williams believed that the impediments to the work of the Spirit emanated from the government. His attitude was clearly Anabaptist. He believed that the government could make a fair progress in “promoting the gospel of Jesus Christ” by getting out of the way and by not requiring any particular kind of worship, and by providing security for all those who worship whatever their views on religion. It is this last point that the ACLU will be forced again to ponder. Therefore if the state was involved in the church, it would have an increased likelihood of undesirable elements thus being included in the church. Inadvertently the ACLU is helping the cause of Christ in America contrary to in Europe which has paid a price for combining church and state.

The covenant theology of Puritans John Winthrop and John Cotton made them think that the state itself could be in league with God through a church-like covenant. The state could be a

branch of the church. In a social order, in which state and church formed a confederation, they believed that it would provide “a rough approximation” of the kingdom of God on earth. From Williams’ standpoint, this amounted to a perversion of Calvinism. Williams was a radical separatist. He envisioned a church without tares, weeds, and that could only be realized if the government got out of the way. “The cast of his mind was not social; it was so exclusively religious that to him the doctrine of the covenant as propounded in orthodox New England seemed a prostitution of theology to social expediency.”<sup>8</sup>

On October 19, 1635, Williams was sent out of Boston. He was given three weeks to reconsider his views. Illness kept him away so that the period of grace offered him was extended. After recovering he spoke as before; Salem must separate from the unclean churches of the rest of the colony. Told that he was still under the “limits of their grant”<sup>9</sup> he might have fled to England. Instead he went further west and founded Providence, Rhode Island. From there he maintained a friendly correspondence with Winthrop. In a letter sent to him by Winthrop he revealed just where his views were to lead him. Distinguished historian Edmund Morgan [1916-] said,

Within a year or two Williams decided that the church must not include children simply on the basis of their parents’ membership and abandoned the practice of infant baptism... He had himself and all the other members re-baptized, but shortly began to question whether there could be a proper church at all until God raised up some new Apostolic power. Finally he reached the position where he could not consciously have communion with any one but his wife. This was the limit of his separation. He did not reach the ultimate absurdity of finding no one but him self fit to communicate with. Indeed, from this point forward his separatism, having reached the pinnacle of isolation, broke through to a new realm of freedom, unknown and undesired by other Puritans. . . . he had espoused a congregational independence so complete that when put into practice, it necessitated a hitherto unheard of religious freedom. It must have been painful for a man who set so high a value on purity in religion to stand sponsor at Narragansett for religious opinions he abhorred. Williams ended the pain by deciding that no church could attain purity in this world. He had effectively demonstrated the proposition to himself that as he withdrew successively from the Church of England, from the Churches of Massachusetts, and finally from everyone but his wife. What he saw at last was what Winthrop had tried to point out to him, that he was seeking an unattainable goal, that there was no escaping from the dung heap of the earth. William’s reaction to this discovery was characteristic; since he could not escape the dung heap, he would embrace it. And so, Winthrop says, “having, a little before, refused communion with all, save his own wife, now he would preach and pray with all comers.”<sup>10</sup>

In the case of Williams good came from his passionate desire to use Calvinism as a means for creating a perfect church. The desire to have a perfect church led to a separation of church and state. It did not however allow him to think that society could function properly if magistrates and lawmakers were not required to uphold the second table of the Law of Moses, Commandments 6 through 10. He was no secular libertarian like those in the ACLU, who defend whenever possible all forms of indecency and irreverence and who apparently take delight in them.

It is the separation of church and state that has been manipulated by the ACLU in order to cast religion in a pejorative light. Since the ACLU is a Marxist organization it looks to the civic order, preferably based on the proletariat, as the true source of man's happiness. It must therefore prevent the church from influencing society so as to make it think that religion is not the best way to happiness, for unless it does, the civic order they wish to see implemented will not occur. Since religion is in their opinion the one true source of man's unhappiness. Where such reasoning will finally lead us we do not know since the ACLU and others of their stripe have taken this to what they believe is its logical conclusion, namely that anything that is religious must not be sanctioned by the government because it is inherently evil or even dangerous. In other words the government will be expected to assume a posture that is against religion or it is not acting in its best interests. It is assumed, though not proven, that if America adopts anything into government that might give the impression that religion can provide us with social guidance then the state has been united with religion and is no longer secular. This is simply not the case, and the ACLU knows it.

<sup>1</sup> Miller, Perry, *Roger Williams*, Atheneum, New York, 1966, p. 31

<sup>2</sup> Ernst, James, *Roger Williams New England Firebrand*, Macmillan, 1932, p. 479

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 479

<sup>4</sup> Garrett, John, *Roger Williams*, Macmillan, 1970, p. 169

<sup>5</sup> The Seekers are reminiscent of Joachim of Fiore [~ 1135-1202 A.D.] who developed a three-fold philosophy of history based on the three persons of the Trinity. In a very real sense he is an early dispensationalist dividing history up into three distinguishable parts, the age of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. As might be expected or suspected, the last age the age of the Spirit was dawning just at the time he happened to be preaching. False prophets always conclude that they are in the final phase of history even if like Joichim they put up caution flags. Fiore was a date-setter after the fashion of William Miller [1787-1849] and the Seventh-day Adventist Church. His prediction that cataclysmic events would take place in 1260 proved wrong. Discussing the coming of the Antichrist with Richard the Lion-Hearted in a meeting in Calabria, Sicily, he declared that the Antichrist was already born in Rome, that he was 15 years old, and that he would eventually usurp the Apostolic See. Richard having adopted the traditional view thought that the Antichrist would be born in Babylonia. Fiore went on to declare that the seven headed beast of the Apocalypse had two heads that as yet had not been wounded. The sixth head was the Saracen warrior Salidin who would soon be defeated by Richard. The seventh head would be the usurper to the apostolic See. The best age was soon to come upon the earth. It would be a time when mendicant orders would appear. Earth would be filled with the Spirit, and men and women would be given to meditation.

Following the death of Fiore, the Christian community was thrown into a state of confusion because of his prophecies. The Scandal of the Eternal Evangel erupted in Paris in 1254-5. A

half-witted Franciscan, Gerardo of Borgo San Donnino, concluded that the third epoch of history was about to begin.

The core of Gerard's message was that, with the advent of the third *status*, the Old and New Testaments were utterly abrogated, and authority had wholly passed to the Eternal Evangel of the Holy Ghost contained in the works of Joachim. Thus Joachim, who had always upheld two Dispensations, even while expecting the third status, and had maintained that the two Testaments would last till the end of time, became the prophet of a system which might involve the overthrow of all previous institutions and authorities in a third and final Dispensation.

The Quakers, which emerged from the Seekers, went on to overthrow regular church order when they declared that we had entered the Millennium. Christ was now in every man which meant that the sacraments were rendered null and void. More radical still were the Shakers who came out of the Quakers. They were the most eccentric group that ever set foot on American soil. They concluded that marriage was invalid since in the Millennium, which they believed began with their movement, people will not marry or be given in marriage. Shaker doctrine asserted that God was not God in three persons, a blessed Trinity, but two persons, one being feminine. The feminine deity was incarnate in Mother Ann Lee [1736-84]. They laid claim to every New Testament. This mayhem, and what Scripture calls the "confusion of faces," would have not happened by Roger Williams had not complained about the impurity of the existing churches.

<sup>6</sup> Ernst, Op cit., p. 484

<sup>7</sup> Miller, Op. cit., p. 34

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 28

<sup>9</sup> Garrett, Op cit., p. 18

<sup>10</sup> Morgan, Edmund, *The Puritan Dilemma*, Little Brown and Company, 1958, p. 131