

Separation of Church and State

While I am far from a constitutional scholar I did grow up in a Southern Baptist Church in El Paso, Texas. And, while not in the "Bible Belt" I remember the doctrine of "separation of church and state" being hammered into me on a regular basis and I bought into it like it was the gospel!

My 18 years of attending Sunday School, Training Union, Prayer Meetings and Worship services were followed by four years at Baylor where I took two semesters of religion and attended two years of chapel.

So, I feel I have some credibility regarding the issue of separation of church and state and am baffled as to why this is no longer a core belief among many Christians.

While living in Houston, I attended South Main Baptist Church where I had the privilege of having a very enlightened and knowledgeable Bible scholar as my Sunday school teacher. He was a devout Christian, a well-respected attorney and the best Sunday school teacher I ever had. I remember one Sunday when discussing other faith traditions him saying, "I can say, I have the best wife in the world, she is perfect for me, but you may also have the best wife in the world who is perfect for you, and that in no way diminishes either or our relationships." In this simple analogy, he was saying that while my religion/faith may be right for me, yours may be equally right and valid for you.

This brings us to the doctrine of "separation of church and state." Our constitution states in the 1st Amendment that religious freedom is protected and prohibits the government from the establishment of a religion. The idea that we are a Christian nation or founded on Christian principles is not entirely true. We are a nation of religious freedom that hopefully appreciates the teachings of love and charity in all faiths. For myself, I try to follow the teachings of Jesus. If that makes me a Christian, so be it, but more importantly I hope it helps me to be kind, accepting, charitable and loving.

So, while I can say, "I have the best husband in the world, it in no way diminishes the fact that your husband might be a pretty good one too!"

Sincerely,

Maggie McCollum