

**EDUCATION CREATES OR
DESTROYS ALL SOCIAL ORDERS:**

BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS

WITHIN

FAMILIES, CULTURES, & NATIONS

NEIL J FLINDERS – BYU CAMPUS EDUCATION WEEK – AUGUST 15-19, 2016

OVERVIEW OF THE FOUR HOURS

- **Tuesday**
The Revealed Role for both Education & Schooling:
Joseph Smith's and Elijah's Foundational Missions
 - **Wednesday**
How and When American Education Changed:
Rise of the Secular Society & Meeting its Challenges
 - **Thursday**
Education, Religious Freedom, and Institutional Liberty:
Apostolic Counsel Regarding the Current Legal Crises
 - **Friday**
A Millennial Movement: Education in the 21st Century
Agency-based Education, Key to Protecting Families
-

FIVE PREMISES BENEATH THE TITLES

1. Due to their inherent spiritual nature, humans are social beings that require communication to sustain and enhance their personal existence.
 2. People embrace and eventually choose basic beliefs (assumptions) that drive their behaviors and aspirations.
 3. Physically, people are more alike than different; the patterns and cycles of various cultures and civilizations tend to be more similar than different.
 4. The family unit is the most basic and vital social order—father, mother, children; the well-being of this unit is governed by interpersonal communication relationships that create various lifestyles and cultures.
 5. Today, the central human issue is, as it has always been, a matter of discerning and acting upon truth or error, right or wrong, good or evil—then coping with the consequences.
-

EDUCATION, RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, AND INSTITUTIONAL LIBERTY:

APOSTOLIC COUNSEL REGARDING THE CURRENT LEGAL CRISES

DEFENDING RELIGIOUS LIBERTY; THE PREDICAMENT BEGINS IN THE FAMILY

A recent newspaper headline read:

“Big Battles Loom Over Marriage and Religion Bills”

“Supreme Court justices who dissented predicted . . . the landmark ruling legalizing same sex marriage [leaves] an unsettled future for people on both sides of the issue. . . . More than 100 bills have been filed with state legislatures in the past 10 months. . . . the fallout will take years to resolve according to legal experts.”

– *Deseret News*, Apr. 24, 2016 p. 1

OVERVIEW

- There are national and international concerns about the erosion of *personal freedom* and institutional *religious liberty*.
 - The concerns range from matters of conscience to, in some societies, the killing of Christians and others—not for their actions but because of their beliefs.
 - The restored Gospel of Jesus Christ provides a protective *context*; this shield can be acquired by willing *individuals* and *families* who desire to learn and do more to preserve religious liberty.
 - Religious liberty was a major concern of those who founded America and considered this new country a *covenant* nation. This view no longer prevails in our society.
 - The roots of the problem are deeper than political incidents and negative legal decisions. Satan is real; ancient forces are at work that threaten *collective liberty* world-wide. The issues are becoming more and more evident.
-

ELDER DALLIN H. OAKS HAS NOTED A SHIFT IN THE ROLE OF RELIGION

Elder Dallin H. Oaks noted there are at least 500 million declared non-believers in the world—enough to make *atheism the fourth biggest religion*. In addition there are others who reject the idea of a supernatural power. Organized religion is surely on the decline—especially among the young.

“It was apparent twenty-five years ago [1986], and it is undeniable today; the significance of religious freedom is diminishing.”

– Chapman University Law School address, February 4, 2011

OUR PROPHET LEADERS ADVISE LEARNING AND STUDYING JESUS CHRIST AND HIS MISSION

They discourage impulsive learning about and probing into Evil forces and practices.

The *dark side* and the *underworld* is dangerous, complex, voluminous, and evolving. The internet is filled with such information. It is not a good use of our time. We need to understand Satan is the Father of Lies and is a great copycat. He promotes all manner of *false doctrines* and *counterfeit practices mingled with scripture* that *imitate* or are opposite of truth.

DURING RECENT DECADES THE RISE OF DISBELIEF (*NONES*), ALTERNATE BELIEFS, AND SATANISM IS INCREASING—ESPECIALLY AMONG THE YOUTH

- Satanism provides a *false religion* as a substitute for *true faith-based belief*. It provides symbolism and a sense of identity, culture, community, and shared values.
 - Some forms of Satanism believe in *spiritual entities*, others have a *materialistic* worldview, viz. atheists or agnostics who feel they can become God-like.
 - Modern Satanism claims Man is God, **spiritually** as well as **physically**. They teach it was Man who created the idea of *god*, and that it is Man using the *dark doctrines* that is destined to exercise dominion over the universe.
 - In truth, this ultimate dominion of evil, may only arise through the slaughter of the innocent and ascendance of evil; this *carnality* may also include extreme forms of force, perversity and sexual indulgence.
-

CHURCH LEADERS & SCHOLARS HAVE SPECIFICALLY WARNED REGARDING:

- *Overreach of governments*
- Religious freedom sustains *public peace and prosperity*
- Institutional *disregard for religious liberty*
- Intentional *killing of Christians and innocent civilians*

– Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion (IJRR)

The full report, “Is Religious Freedom Good for Business?: A Conceptual and Empirical Analysis,” is available on the [website](#) of the Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion (IJRR) vol 10 Number 4. The authors of the study are [Brian J. Grim](#), Georgetown University's Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs, and Greg Clark and Robert Edward Snyder, Brigham Young University's International Center for Law and Religion Studies. (Study of 173 countries in 2011)

CAREFUL DEFINITIONS TAUGHT IN THE HOME CAN BE HELPFUL IN PREPARING TO DEFEND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Consider *Freedom* and *Liberty*:

- The Founders of this Nation recognized *freedom* is what the Creator bestows upon humankind; it has to do with *agency* and *conscience*.
 - *Liberty* is what people bestow upon or steal from one another in their various relationships; it has to do with *tradition*, *social preferences*, and *Civil Law*.
 - *Freedom* is an inherent gift from the Creator. Our *liberty* comes and goes, depending on the cultures in which we live and the people with whom we associate.
-

CONSIDER MORALITY AND ETHICS:

- Traditional views of *morality* are related to standards given to humankind by their Creator. (e. g., The Ten Commandments and Sermon on the Mount). These standards tend to be *absolute*.
- *Ethics* are rules that people generate, invoke and use to moderate behaviors for the benefit of both themselves and others. These standards tend to be *relative* and *situational*.

Making these terms synonyms is seldom helpful. Fuzzy definitions affect the entire domain of *moral agency* which is fundamental to the purposes for which this nation was created.

THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH SAID:

“It is a love of liberty which inspires my soul—civil and religious liberty to the whole of the human race.” . . . I am bold to declare before Heaven that I am just as ready to die in defending the rights of a Presbyterian, a Baptist, or a good man of any other denomination [as for a Mormon]; for the same principle which would trample upon the rights of the Latter-day Saints would trample upon the rights of the Roman Catholics, or of any other denomination who may be unpopular and too weak to defend themselves.”

– *Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007, p. 345)

THREE MODERN WITNESSES FROM THE QUORUM OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES

Preserving agency and protecting religious liberty

1. Elder Robert D. Hales: The Theological Issue
 2. Elder D. Todd Christofferson: America's Origins
 3. Elder Dallin H. Oaks: The International Crises
-

ELDER HALES:

“Moral agency . . . is an essential part of God’s plan for all His children. . . .”

“The eternal plan, presented to us in the premortal Council in Heaven, included the gift of agency.”

“A third part of the hosts of heaven turned . . . away . . . because of their agency.”

“Heavenly Father’s spirit children who chose to reject His plan and follow Lucifer lost their divine destiny.”

ELDER HALES' EXHORTATION TO THE SAINTS:

“Our Savior’s Second Coming is drawing nearer. Let us not delay in this great cause. Remember Captain Moroni, who hoisted the title of liberty inscribed with the words *‘In memory of our God, our religion, and freedom, and our peace, our wives, and our children.’* Let us remember the people’s response: exercising their agency, they *‘came running together’* with a covenant to act. *My beloved brothers and sisters, don’t walk! Run! Run to receive the blessings of agency by following the Holy Ghost and exercising the freedoms God has given us to do His will.”*

– April Conference address, 2015, *Ensign*, May 2015. pp.111-113

ELDER CHRISTOFFERSON:

“I am convinced that those who question the value or legitimacy of religious freedom do not understand that it is woven into the very soul of America.”

“Religion was a leading reason for colonists to leave England for the New World.”

“The American Revolution cannot be understood without taking into account the religious teachings that motivated patriots to action.”

“The Declaration of Independence describes that . . . Americans believed they were endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights. Later the Constitution would enshrine the first of those unalienable rights—the right to religious freedom.”

“Critics now openly ask whether religion belongs in American public life at all.”

“Religious freedoms are being attacked by the popular opinion that the freedom of religion only guarantees the right to worship rather than the right to practice one's faith [and beliefs] in daily life into the public square.”

“Things may get worse before they get better. But these are our times. This is our moment to defend our fundamental freedoms. . . with courage, conviction, and civility.”

– *Church News* July 3, 2016. p. 7

ELDER OAKS:

February 4, 2011	(New York, New York)
May 16, 2013	(New York, New York)
April 23, 2015	(Buenos Aires, Argentina.)
February 9, 2016	(Washington D. C.)
March 25, 2016	(Claremont, California)
June 10, 2016	(Oxford, England)

ELDER OAKS EXPLAINED:

There are “Four *cornerstones* of religious freedom . . . Latter-day Saints must rely upon and protect:

1. “Freedom to believe. No one should be criticized, persecuted, or attacked by individuals, or governments . . . for what he or she believes about God. It is very personal and very important.
 2. “Freedom to share our faith and our beliefs with others.
 3. “Liberty is to form a religious organization, a church, to worship peacefully with others.
 4. “Freedom to live our faith—free exercise of our faith, not just in the home and chapel but also in public places.”
-

ELDER OAKS SUMMARIZED THE *LEGAL BASIS*:

“There is growing recognition of the need for engagement with and understanding of religion—and protecting religious freedom.”

“Understanding religion and religious freedom is essential to understanding world affairs.”

ELDER OAKS ALSO CITED

Article 18 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states:

“Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship, and observance.”

ELDER OAKS THEN DECLARED:

“Religious freedom is not just the concern of religious persons. It is necessary for peace and stability in our pluralistic world. Civility must be the goal of all leaders, religious or otherwise. We should love all people, be good listeners, and show concern for the sincere belief of others.”

ELDER OAKS EXPLAINS THE CAUSE OF THE PROBLEM:

The Question:

“What has *caused* the current public and legal climate of mounting threats to religious freedom?”

The Answer:

“... the *cause* is not legal but cultural and religious. *I believe the diminishing value being attached to religious freedom stems from the ascendancy of moral relativism.*”

“More and more of our citizens support the idea that all authority and rules of behavior are man-made and can be accepted or rejected as one chooses. Each person is free to decide for himself or herself what is right and wrong.”

“Our children face the challenge of living in an increasingly godless and amoral society.”

ELDER OAKS' CONCLUSION: "[THIS]NATION HAS MOVED STRONGLY TOWARD *SECULARISM* . . ."

"With secularism comes a disconnect from belief in God and the consequent reality of an absolute right and wrong."

"Today an increasing and influential group deny or doubt the existence of God and insist that all rules of behavior are man-made, to be accepted or rejected as one chooses because there is no such thing as right and wrong."

"We live in an increasingly godless and amoral society."

"While the work of science has made innumerable improvements in life, it has also contributed to the rejection of divine authority as the ultimate basis of right and wrong by those who *substituted* science for God."

ELDER OAKS' SOLUTION TO DEFENDING RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN AMERICA

“All that is necessary for unity and a broad coalition . . . is *a common belief that there is a right and wrong in human behavior that has been established by a Supreme Being*. All who believe in that fundamental should unite more effectively to preserve and strengthen the freedom to advocate and practice our religious beliefs, whatever they are. We must walk together . . . to secure our freedom.”

ELDER OAKS' OBSERVATIONS AND ADMONITION

“The problem of educating the public and especially the rising generation, needs to be addressed on a front wider than preaching, lobbying, and litigating. We must employ *education* to broaden the base of citizens who understand and are *committed to defending religious freedom.*”

“*We must give greater attention to the education of the rising generation. . . religious liberty is weakening . . . because the role of religion and the contribution of religious organizations and religiously motivated people in our nation is not sufficiently understood. The rising generation is not being taught these things. . . elementary and secondary textbooks over the last half-century . . . show a significant decline in the description and stated importance of religion in the founding of our nation and the progress of our civilization.*”

“We must be sensitive to the definition of religion. We must not define religion too narrowly—excluding those who do not believe as we do. [and] we must not define religion too broadly--[such] as 'freedom of conscience' whatever its source. . . . If we expand the definition of religion to systems of belief not based on a divine being, we incur the risk of the whole category of 'religion' . . . to diminish in significance.” [Religion must not be reduced to] “a purely private reality.”

MY VIEW OF HOW WESTERN CULTURE MOVED FROM WHERE IT WAS TO WHERE IT IS

Rhetorical sophistry erodes personal freedom and reduces collective liberty

I believe Hugh Nibley's 1956 article "Victoriosa Loquacitas: The Rise of Rhetoric and the Fall of Everything Else" captures the essence of this challenge so frequently evident in both higher *education, politics and the law.*

THE INSIDIOUS NATURE OF RHETORIC-DRIVEN COMMUNICATION

What is *Rhetoric*?

In the form defined by Hugh Nibley, *rhetoric* is:

- Persuasively *turning any proposition into a probability*,
 - Which can then be built into a seeming *certainty* by
 - High-powered emotional appeal and
 - Exerting various forms of authority—even in a science-driven society
-

CONTEXT IS HIDDEN AND TRUTH IS DEEMED RELATIVE OR IRRELEVANT

The core characteristic of such rhetoric is to focus on *content, process* and *structure* of language while ignoring and/or hiding *context*.

Context is cleverly concealed and seldom acknowledged.

RHETORICAL SOPHISTRY: A SEED BED FOR GUILE

Hiding one's mental and emotional *contextual assumptions* so nearly the entirety of a people's focus is invested in discussions of *content, process* (methodology), and *structure*.

This creates a fertile place for *guile* to thrive, and it confuses the critical role of *allegiance* in the family, education, law, and our political arenas. Definitions of terms like: *freedom, liberty, morality, ethics, absolute, and conditional* become obscured by the intellectual fog and the inevitable behavioral free-fall that comes with *the making of all values relative*. It threatens what some feel is a *fairness for all doctrine* which is essential for unity in a diverse society.

WE SHOULD REMEMBER AMERICA WAS INITIALLY FOUNDED AS A COVENANT NATION

The Founding Fathers did not hide the *Context* for the *Declaration of Independence* or the *United States Constitution*—nor did any of the States when they adopted their respective Constitutions.

THEY MADE THE CONTEXT (THEIR BELIEFS AND ASSUMPTIONS) EXPLICIT:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness . . .” (The *Declaration of Independence*, July 4, 1776).

Later, when they published the *Constitution of the United States*, they followed the same pattern of revealing their *intentions* as well as their *explanations* of *why* they believed what they were saying and doing. The first sentence is a clear introduction to how they proposed going about this task:

“We the people of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

THEY MADE THE CONTEXT (THEIR BELIEFS AND ASSUMPTIONS) EXPLICIT:

The founders formally acknowledged their belief in a *Creator*, a *Power*, a *Providence*—and a *Plan*—for humankind to succeed. They believed in certain *innate* and *self-evident* factors not of their making—factors put in place by the Creator.

THEY MADE THE CONTEXT (THEIR BELIEFS AND ASSUMPTIONS) EXPLICIT:

This type of laying bare **Why** they were engaging in creating a new nation is not common practice in most human communication. A more prevalent *rhetorical pattern* is to hide the deeper **Why** part of an explanation and focus solely on the **What, How, and When** of whatever desires are being pursued. *This is a current challenge!*

THEY MADE THE CONTEXT (THEIR BELIEFS AND ASSUMPTIONS) EXPLICIT:

The transparency by the Founders was opposite the driving force behind traditional *rhetoric*; using language to accomplish a *veiled* purpose; hiding the real *intent* until the goal is achieved. *Rhetoric*, often the opposite of sincerity, has long been a tool used for nefarious purposes. A hallmark of rhetoric is to *change definitions*, this confuses values related to integrity.

THEY MADE THE CONTEXT (THEIR BELIEFS AND ASSUMPTIONS) EXPLICIT:

We know we are living in an increasingly divided society. The Founders of this nation proposed and implemented an *inclusive* perspective that nurtured unity—*E pluribus unum*. This principle is now being challenged by some, and aggressively rejected by others.

THE CENTRAL CONTEST IS A TUG-OF-WAR BETWEEN THE *SACRED* AND THE *SECULAR*

The primary issue is: INCLUSION or EXCLUSION

- Appropriate *Inclusion* can lead to peace.
 - Arbitrary *Exclusion* fosters conflict.
-

A CRUCIAL CONCERN

Rhetorical sophistry now seems to rule in our confused and changing social order; values, once honored, are now ignored, despised or detested. Light diminishes; darkness increases.

Inclusive worldviews have been set aside in academia and *exclusive* philosophical propositions are now widely embraced and promoted.

I recently wrote a paper for the BYU Law School that attempts to outline the *historical* and *philosophical* context for “Defending Religious Freedom in a Secular Society.” (2016)

This article can be accessed at the BYU Law School site:

http://www.jrcls.org/folder=religious_freedom&page=voice

It seems self-evident that “a belief in right and wrong, as defined by Deity,” is most successful when taught in the *home*—as well as in our churches and where possible in our schools and communities. The home and family is our *first* and *last* and *best* line of defense. The paper concludes with 13 suggestions.

THIRTEEN SUGGESTIONS

1. Become familiar with the path that led to the present. Understand the basic consequences.
 2. Gain a clear understanding of why believers in an exclusive secular society would be inclined to dismiss, persecute, and even destroy those who favor an inclusive sacred worldview
 3. Learn the limitations of a purely secular society; practice expressing them.
 4. Learn why some belief systems (Atheism/Humanism) claiming religious status are counter-productive. “By their fruits” is a valid way to base judgment.
 5. Recognize the value of distinguishing between morality and ethics. It matters.
 6. Understand the heritage bequeathed by the Founders, the moral order inherent in our founding documents; compare this foundation with the various alternatives of *ethical relativism* espoused in contemporary society. Chart it by contrast and comparison.
 7. Acknowledge that exclusive secularism robs our nation of the moral code the Creator provided to ensure success in the quest for Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of happiness.
-

THIRTEEN SUGGESTIONS

8. Discuss with others (family, friends, associates) why guile is not a helpful quality of character. Understand how *rhetorical sophistry* can become the seed-bed for *guile*.
 9. Seek to understand proper covenant-making in our society. Find your answer.
 10. Recognize that *morality* and *spirituality* are not synonyms. Traditional *Morality* is adherence to principles that protect and preserve the well-being of others as well as self—sometimes at the expense of self. *Spirituality* is the result of religious practice usually involving authorized rites, rituals, and ordinances sponsored by a specific organization.
 11. The Spiritual sectarian practices involving rites and ordinances are what the Founders believed should not be established by the Federal and State Civil Governments.
 12. The Founders were for the moral order implied by the Ten Commandments—not against it. Honoring Providence and parents; avoiding murder and adultery; stealing, lying, cheating, resisting covetous greed are all helpful—not harmful—to America.
 13. If you believe in a power higher than the human intellect, pray for help and seek confirmation in behalf of yourself and others. This was the American way.
-

ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE (1945, VI, 43-44)

“Liberty regards religion as its companion . . . as the cradle of its infancy and the divine source of its claims. It considers religion as the safeguard of morality, and morality as the best security of law and the surest pledge of the duration of freedom.”

– quoted in Janet Jacob Erickson's article, in *Deseret News*, Sunday July 3, 2016. p. G2

GEORGE WASHINGTON'S FAREWELL ADDRESS

“Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. Reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.”

– quoted in Janet Jacob Erickson's article, in *Deseret News*, Sunday July 3, 2016. p. G2

FINDING PEACE IN A TROUBLED WORLD; THERE IS A PATH THAT IS CLEARLY MARKED

Notes to consider (see several major addresses):

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| 4 February 2011 | Chapman University School of Law, New York City |
| 16 May 2013 | The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, Canterbury Medal Dinner, New York City. |
| 23 April 2015 | The Argentine Council for Foreign Relations, Buenos Aires, Argentina. |
| 9 February 2016 | John Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, Washington D. C. |
| 25 March 2016 | Keynote Address Claremont Graduate School CA Conference on Religious Freedom |
-

FREE DIGITALLY AVAILABLE RESOURCE DOCUMENTS

NEIL J FLINDERS

1. dynamicagency.blogspot.com [Check the index to access the files]
 - Slides used in my presentations during this BYU Education week – August 2016
 - Music and lyrics to the song “**Teach My Child**”
 - Verses to: “**This Generation: The 21st Century**”
2. http://www.jrcls.org/?folder=religious_freedom&page=voice
 - “Defending Religious Freedom in a Secular Society”
 - Article was prepared at the invitation of the BYU Law School
3. <http://www.josephsmithforum.org/research/papers/traditions-of-scholarship>
 - “Traditions of Scholarship that Shape the Foundations of Education and the Nature of the University”
4. https://video.byui.edu/media/Kim+B.+Clark+%E2%80%9CCESA+The+Lord%E2%80%99s+Educational+System+for+His+Church%E2%80%9D/0_xl0zwja3/21751142
 - Elder Kim Clark’s address introducing the *CES-Global Learning Initiative*
 - Search on Google for “Kim Clark CES initiative” and look for video.byui.edu link
5. <https://ojs.lib.byu.edu/spc/index.php/BYUStudies/article/download/4401/4051>
 - President Alvin R. Dyer “*Education: Moving Toward and Under the Law of Consecration*”