



Liberal Anchor: “Our Rights Do Not Come From God”

“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...” These [words](#) are probably the best known in the Declaration of Independence, but perhaps not by CNN anchor Chris Cuomo (shown). Either that, or he simply doesn’t believe them. Because while debating the constitutionality of faux marriage Thursday morning, he said that our rights do not come from God, but man.



Toward the end of a passionate exchange with Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore in which the latter asserted that rights cannot be a product of man, Cuomo made his remark, [saying](#), “Our rights do not come from God. That’s your faith, that’s my faith, but that’s not our country. Our laws come from collective agreement and compromise.”

Thomas Jefferson, who wrote the Declaration of Independence, might be surprised to hear this. And there may be some who’d lament that the Founding Fathers didn’t have Chris Cuomo around to set them straight before ol’ Tom put pen to paper. But others might note that Cuomo’s opinion was a very shallow statement that gets at some very deep issues.

First, the newsman seems to be confusing “laws” with “rights.” If our rights are from God, they exist apart from governmental laws, which man does create. And then one of the main purposes of law is to recognize and protect those rights. This is why the Declaration states, immediately *after* the pronouncement on Creator-endowed rights, “That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men.” These rights are secured by government via the creation and enforcement of just law.

Why did the Founders emphasize rights’ divine origin? Because He (or he) who giveth can also taketh away.

As a related example, I’ve often [made the point](#) that if what we call “morality” comes from man, it then is illusory and will change with the winds of convenience. As I [wrote](#) at *The New American* in 2013:

To say that society determines “morality” is to simply put lipstick on the pig of man’s preferences about behavior. To analogize the matter, if we learned that 90 percent of the world preferred vanilla to chocolate, would this somehow make chocolate “wrong” or “evil”? No, it would simply be an issue of taste. But then how does it make any sense to say that murder is “wrong” *if the only reason we do so* is that the majority of the world prefers that one not kill in a way the majority calls “unjust”? If this is all it is, then murder falls into the same category as flavor: taste.

Of course, since our preferences masquerading as “morality” and minted as “values” would be created by man, it follows they can be recreated by him. And then the “creator” becomes the highest worldly



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power, be he a Hitler, Mao, Stalin, or tomorrow's tyrant.

The same is true of marriage, mind you. Ignored in the debate surrounding it is that the stage was set for faux marriage ages ago, when the wider society accepted that marriage could be just a governmental contract rubber-stamped by a justice of the peace. Note that the long-held position in Christendom (when it really could be called Christendom) was that a man and woman were joined in matrimony by God; this is why many churches consider marriage a Sacrament. It then followed that "what God hath joined, let no man put asunder." Once we began to believe marriage was a human creation, however, this became, "What man hath joined, he may put asunder." This first led to easy divorce. Now the very definition of marriage itself is being put asunder.

It is no different with rights. The Founders emphasized that our rights come from God because then no person, *with credibility and weight of moral force*, could put them asunder. But if they're minted by man — if the collective is their "creator" — man can recreate them. The collective can take them away.

Returning to Cuomo, his statement reflects something I [addressed yesterday](#) and that is all too common today: a denial of objective reality. For when he said, "Our rights do not come from God. That's your faith, that's my faith, but that's not our country," he implied that faith is a mere flavor, a preference, that it can have no basis in reality and thus should not influence law. You say potāto and I say potāto, you like vanilla and I like chocolate (harking back to my earlier analogy), but these are mere tastes, and we don't enforce tastes via law. Those are *your* likes — don't impose them on me.

This certainly is the fashionable view today. Secularists will say, "Separation of church and state! Keep your faith out of my government!" But not only is the "separation of church and state" not in the Constitution, there can be no true separation of church and law — if that law is to be just. I'll explain.

Although it's also fashionable to say now, "You can't legislate morality," all just laws do so; they impose right and wrong or a corollary thereof. Think about it: Would you create a law prohibiting something that wasn't wrong? Would you create a law mandating something that wasn't a moral imperative? There are laws that do so, unjust laws; and there are people who do so, tyrants. In these cases laws can become capricious, with preference and taste supplanting principle and Truth as the stuff of official decree. This isn't to say that all, or even most, wrongs and moral imperatives should be legislated, only that all just legislation reflects wrongs and moral imperatives.

So when making laws, we *must* legislate morality. But what is morality? Getting back to my block-quoted example, if at issue is just man's invention, then we're not talking about morality but mere human preference, that stuff of tyrannical laws. To be morality, properly understood, it must be an unchanging, universal, and eternal yardstick determining right and wrong that exists apart from man; in other words, God's law.

So, simply put, for man's laws to be just they must be based on morality, and for morality to be morality it must be God's law; therefore, man's laws must be based on God's law. What is the only other alternative? That they will reflect someone else's.

This is why, in reality, while we certainly can have a Congress that "shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," it's impossible to have a just government coupled with that very different thing: true separation of church and state. This is why Founder Gouverneur Morris wrote, "Religion is the only solid base of morals and ... morals are the only possible support of free governments." It is why Founder James Wilson counseled, "Human law must rest its authority ultimately upon the authority of that law which is divine.... Far from being rivals or



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enemies, religion and law are twin sisters, friends, and mutual assistants. Indeed, these two sciences run into each other." And it is why early American speaker of the U.S. House Robert Winthrop outlined the two alternatives thus: "Men, in a word, must necessarily be controlled either by a power within them or by a power without them; either by the Word of God or by the strong arm of man; either by the Bible or by the bayonet."

Then again, we could just listen to CNN and Chris Cuomo.

Photo of Chris Cuomo: [Cliffmore](#)



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