

# ANTI-RELIGIOUS FANATICISM

In late summer, a little girl from North Port, Florida learned at the age of eight what a gag order is. She had been practicing to sing the song *Kum Ba Yah* at the North Port Boys and Girls Club talent show. But because the song repeats the word “Lord,” she was barred from singing the tune the night of the event. Her outraged parents were told that others might complain if children went home and said they heard a religious song at the non-sectarian camp. Another camp official actually went so far as to warn, “You have to check your religion at the door.”

People often pray when they are in need, and what people in many western and southern states needed over the summer was rain. That’s why Louisiana Governor Mike Foster issued a proclamation in September asking citizens to pray: the state was in a drought and it seemed only right that people be encouraged to pray for rain. But this set off the alarms at the local ACLU. The local affiliate head, Joe Cook, went crazy, arguing “public officials who want to promote their personal beliefs from an elected perch and turn our country into a biblical theocracy not unlike that of a country called Iran.”

So kids can’t sing a song at camp that mentions the Lord and governors can’t recommend that people pray for rain. Now had the kid sung a rap song –replete with obscenities–that would have been dubbed free speech. And had the governor asked people to partake in a New Age ritual that beckoned the rain gods to produce, that would have been seen as a multicultural exercise.

The morale of the story is: the anti-religious fanatics lie when they say they’re neutral. What they want is to tear down what we have so they can establish their concept of nirvana.