

SPIKE IN BIBLE BANNING

There was a time when religious groups sought to ban obscene books from public libraries, but these days it is militant secularists who are seeking to ban the Bible. Here are four examples. What makes this special is that they all occurred during the same week.

- A host of activist groups contacted the Department of Veterans Affairs asking it to put an end to the practice of banning the Bible at Veterans' medical clinics, and on military installations
- An Ohio congressman registered his objections to the removal of the Bible from a POW display at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base
- The American Library Association reported that (for the first time) the Bible made the "Top Ten" list of books that citizens sought to ban from libraries
- The Governor of Idaho, Butch Otter, vetoed a bill permitting the Bible to be used as a Reference book in the public schools

In some cases, malicious intent was operative; in others, ignorance was at work. Take the last example.

Gov. Otter said that allowing the Bible as a Reference book in a public school violated the Idaho Constitution. He offered the following quotes: "No sectarian or religious tenets or doctrines shall ever be taught in the public schools," and, "No books, papers, tracts or documents of a political, sectarian or denominational character shall be used...."

This is patently false. It has been legal to teach about religion, using religious texts, since the beginning of the republic. It is the teaching of religion that is unconstitutional. Gov. Otter looks even more enfeebled when he relies on the Idaho Constitution to make his point. Is it not

a decidedly political document? Does he think it is a comic book? Moreover, don't they teach the U.S. Constitution in Idaho schools? Has any teacher ever been arrested for distributing the Declaration of Independence?

This is patently false. It has been legal to teach *about* religion, using religious texts, since the beginning of the republic. It is the teaching of religion that is unconstitutional. Gov. Otter looks even more enfeebled when he relies on the Idaho Constitution to make his point. Is it not a decidedly political document? Does he think it is a comic book? Moreover, don't they teach the U.S. Constitution in Idaho schools? Has any teacher ever been arrested for distributing the Declaration of Independence? This is worse than madness—it is anti-American.