

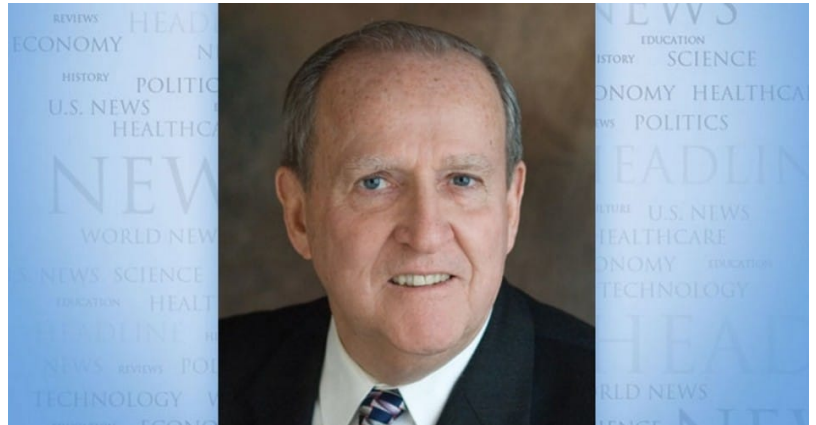


Written by [John F. McManus](#) on April 24, 2019

Free Speech Challenged

In America today, taking a stand for traditional values invites recriminations, even silencing. Progressives enjoy challenging past values, and they are winning many battles. Ask David and Jason Benham about what's happening on college campuses and be prepared for bad news.

The Benhams are twins who once aspired to be professional baseball players. Not making the grade in that demanding profession, they became entrepreneurs and authors. Successes in their latter pursuits resulted in an invitation to start a television reality show. All set to air, the show was cancelled when their commitment to Biblical values became known. They now make a point of crusading for free speech, something no American should have to do but now must do as more Americans abandon what, until recently, was something taken for granted.



A [recent article written by the twins](#) discussed this turning away from tradition. Entitled “America’s Anti-religious Bigotry,” it focused on the drive by so-called progressives to silence freedom of speech and combat freedom of religion. The brothers pointed to an event scheduled by the Yale Federalist Society featuring the Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), a partisan group known for defending traditional Americanism at the Supreme Court level. Before the event occurred, however, more than 20 campus groups protested. Those groups claimed that ADF was “homophobic and hateful,” basing their claim on ADF’s defense of religious freedom, something it had done by siding with the nationally publicized Colorado cake-making artist who refused to produce a cake for two homosexuals about to be married to each other.

As far removed from tradition as was the stance taken by the student groups, they were joined in their protest by the dean of the Yale Law School. The result was predictable: the event was cancelled. This means that, at Yale, partisans championing non-discrimination can slap each other on the back for a victory achieved by practicing discrimination of a kind unheard of before the rise of those who claim to be progressive.

The Benham brothers cited the early 20th Century prediction of Elton Trueblood, a chaplain at Stanford and Harvard. Asked what he expected of treatment experienced by Christians in the 21st Century, he looked ahead and predicted: “By the year 2000, Christians in America will be a conscious minority surrounded by an arrogant, militant paganism.” He saw the beginning of a trend away from tradition. He didn’t live to see his prediction became a growing reality.

David and Jason Benham blame progressives for the change in America. But they are comfortable pointing to an even deeper cause, something that has little to do with Republicans vs. Democrats,



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conservatives vs. liberals, blacks vs. whites, or citizens vs. immigrants. The brothers contend that the battles on college campuses, like what occurred at Yale and are occurring regularly in films and the mass media, should be known as “a spiritual battle between good and evil, right and wrong.”

The American nation was founded on a belief in God. There are four different mentions of the Almighty in the Declaration of Independence. No proud and haughty purveyor of “progressivism” today can credibly deny that. It’s a fundamental part of what made America great. Along with it appears the Constitution’s First Amendment guarantee of “freedom of speech.” Sadly, both the Declaration and the Constitution need strong defenses today. And the “progressivism” being practiced today needs to be known not for progress but for pushing our nation into chaos and eventual ruin.

John F. McManus is president emeritus of [The John Birch Society](#).



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