

**When church and state become cozy, the church loses.**

Some religious leaders in Ohio and across the nation are lining up for government handouts that will help subsidize their religious schools. In Ohio some religious school leaders are requiring their private school parents to secure tax money via the universal voucher scheme. Some religious private school providers depend on vouchers for a major portion of their private school budget. **Seemingly, their love of government money to subsidize their faith has greater attraction than their articles of faith.** As their reliance on public tax dollars increases, there will eventually be a point of no return. Without tax money, their operations will fold. They will have crossed the Rubicon.

As the government expands subsidies to religious private schools taxpayers will eventually demand that the private schools be regulated in the same way that authentic public schools are regulated. In many cases, the government regulations will conflict with many of the principles that gave rise to the establishment of the private school. Hence, the private school operators will have to choose between their faith position and government regulations. No doubt some will sell their birthright for a mess of pottage, compromising their religious convictions to continue receiving government support. In other cases, compromise will not be an option and closing will result. Government will ultimately win.

Religious leaders and their constituents need to be circumspect about what they ask for. Church and state are both best served by a wall of separation—a high wall. The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution prevents the government from making laws respecting the establishment of religion and prohibiting the free exercise of religion. One doesn't have to be a Philadelphia lawyer to understand the meaning of this segment of the Bill of Rights. Church and state, for the benefit of all citizens, must not become entangled.