

# Why New York's Mario Cuomo wants to separate morality from politics

by Nancy Spannaus

It was immediately after the Democratic Party convention that vice-presidential nominee Geraldine Ferraro opened up the "debate" on morality and politics in the U.S. presidential campaign by attacking President Reagan as "not being a good Christian." Since then, with the help of the national media, the issue has taken center stage of the election campaign. Coming to the fore in this debate has been Democratic New York Gov. Mario Cuomo.

Cuomo has taken the lead in arguing the so-called liberal side of this debate. A Roman Catholic by profession, he has argued that religion and politics should not be mixed.

This article will tell you why.

There are three essential and incompetent points presented by Cuomo, and his cohort Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.), on why politics and religious morality must be separated. They have been dissected in depth by presidential candidate Lyndon H. LaRouche in a document entitled "Church and State: A Rebuttal of Senator Edward Kennedy and Governor Mario Cuomo." We will summarize those arguments here, but for the full treatment, we refer readers to Mr. LaRouche's document. (Available on request.)

But, we must argue, it is not their philosophy on the nature of morality which has shaped the views of Kennedy and Cuomo on this issue. They have shaped their "philosophy" pragmatically—in order to justify the immoral public policies which they have already put into place.

If there is one thing that unites Senator Kennedy and Governor Cuomo on public policy, it is their common willingness to withstand the judgment of their church, and the Judeo-Christian ethic as a whole, by promoting policies of euthanasia, infanticide, and legalized murder under the name of "bioethics" and "concern for the dying."

When you have finished reading the record here, confined in this case to Governor Cuomo, it will be clear that if the standards of the Judeo-Christian ethic on the sanctity of life were enforced by U.S. law, Governor Cuomo would be in danger of being prosecuted as a Nuremberg criminal. To prevent that, he would just as soon keep morality out of politics altogether.

As outlined by LaRouche, the argument put forward by Cuomo in his Notre Dame speech on Sept. 13 rests on three specious arguments:

1) Since U.S. constitutional law separates church and state, and the content of churches is religious belief, therefore religious belief must be kept out of politics.

2) Since church doctrine which touches on areas of public policy is personal morality, and constitutional law demands separation of church and state, the personal morality of church members must be kept out of areas of public policy.

3) Since constitutional law in the U.S. is derived from the "pluralistic" social contract of Rousseau and Locke, and pluralism dictates that it is oppression to impose particular morality on public policy, personal morality must be separated from the decisions of public officials.

It is the third argument which gets to the core of the problem in the way Cuomo thinks, for it is based on a fundamental lie. While the United States was founded on the principle of separating all particular religious establishments and the state, it was nonetheless founded on the principle of natural law based on Judeo-Christian morality. It is that morality, not a pluralistic social contract, which forms the basis for making judgments on public policy in the United States.

Yet it is the pluralistic social contract—the degree of "consensus" which has been formed in any society—that Cuomo appeals to in his Notre Dame speech. Starting off with an appeal to those who fear a witch-hunt against Catholics—not unprecedented in the United States, Cuomo ends up with the following pitch: "I protect my right to be a Catholic by preserving your right to believe as a Jew, a Protestant or non-believer, or as *anything else you choose* [emphasis added]."

What a fraud! First, he deliberately entangles the issue of separation of the state from a particular religion with the issue of fundamental morality. Then, he declares that *any belief you choose* is acceptable in American society!

It is under such a "philosophy" that Americans can, like Germans before them, be transformed into docile followers of evil practices like those of Adolf Hitler.

But Cuomo, of course, has a “practical” limit for what he will tolerate. That is, the *consensus* which is possible under current political conditions:

“And surely, I can, if so inclined, demand some kind of law against abortion not because my Bishops say it is wrong but because I think that *the whole community*, regardless of its religious beliefs, *should agree* on the importance of protecting life—including life in the womb, which is at the very least potentially human and should not be extinguished casually.”

And later on:

“Our public morality then—the moral standards we maintain for everyone, not just the ones we insist on in our private lives—depends on a *consensus view of right and wrong*. The values derived from religious belief will not—and should not—be accepted as part of the public morality *unless they are shared by the pluralistic community* at large, by consensus.”

And in case his audience didn’t realize that he was addressing a totally *a-moral* audience, Cuomo later says:

“Put aside what God expects—*assume if you like there is no God*—then the greatest thing still left to us is life. Even a radically secular world must struggle with the questions of when life begins, under what circumstances it can be ended, when it must be protected, by what authority; it too must decide what protection to extend to the helpless and the dying, to the aged and the unborn, to life in all its phases.”

Those who might believe that Cuomo is within the bounds set by America’s founding fathers are either ignorant or dishonest. Abandoning any specific religion, the framers of our Constitution believed that God’s law was not writ in any particular church, but in the nature of the universe and man himself. It was on this basis, not “consensus,” that they determined, in league with humanists throughout Europe, to oppose the *unnatural*, immoral regime of Great Britain, that violated God’s law for mankind.

The regime that our Constitution was written *against* was created by the pluralists John Locke and David Hume, who were simply apologists for the consensus among British aristocrats that the American colonies should not develop economically. That pluralism was simply a justification for evil—and so it is today.

## Justifying murder

The implementation of Cuomo’s high-sounding phrases is best seen in his record on the question of the right to life during his administration as governor of New York.

Two major tests of the right to life have come into the New York State courts since Cuomo has been governor. The first was the case of a baby girl (Baby Jane Doe) born in the fall of 1983 with spinal bifida, and refused a life-saving operation by the will of her parents. The second was the case of an 85-year-old New York man who refused food and medical treatment in order to kill himself.

In the Baby Jane Doe case, it was the New York State court which allowed the parents to deny the operation to the child. Asked by right-to-life groups to take action which would at least allow for review of the medical records to see how successful the operation would be, an action in which they were supported by the Reagan administration, the State not only refused to act, but blocked others from acting.

And Cuomo himself? He said that he could not support the intervention of the government into a physician-patient relationship—even to save a life! He also stated that decisions could not be made to spend so much money on handicapped infants, without taking into consideration the implications for the terminally ill as well.

In response, Cuomo began to make noises in the direction of setting up a private review board to determine the standards in such cases. But he refused to act to save the girl.

Cuomo used the same excuse to refuse action in the case of G. Roth Henninger, a man in a nursing home who decided to starve himself to death in February of 1984. The New York State Supreme Court in this case ruled that any attempt to sustain the life of Henninger would constitute assault and battery against the patient and violate his First Amendment rights. Henninger successfully killed himself.

One could argue that Cuomo was powerless in these cases. But, in fact, he has continued to espouse the philosophy of “private decisions” which justifies murder under the guise of “patient rights.”

It was in March of 1984 that the scandal of Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) orders being put on patients’ charts in New York City hospitals, unbeknownst to family or patient, finally forced the governor to do something about the flagrant disregard for human life. But even this did not get him to condemn the practice. Rather, he decided to set up an advisory board under his health commission Dr. David Axelrod to develop guidelines under which the practice could continue!

A statement issued by Axelrod at the New York Academy of Medicine on Sept. 17 indicates how he is thinking about the issue of the right to suicide, and the denial of care to handicapped infants, or elderly people. His view, in sum, is to go as far as the “consensus” will allow.

In this case, given the rise in health costs over the last decades, and the mass of propaganda condemning elderly and sick people as “useless eaters,” the “consensus” is grisly indeed.

“The courts have generally ruled that competent patients may forego any treatment,” Axelrod said, and “Life-saving measures may not be withheld from incompetent patients unless the family concurs in such a decision.” Urging that the courts be kept out of the question, he quotes the President’s (Carter’s) commission on Bioethics which suggests the “determinations of decisional incapacity be made by the attending physician,” and that “those who make and apply the law be encouraged to recognize the validity of such determinations.”

"Lest you think this is a relatively small problem, let me share with you the knowledge that, based on estimates provided by those who monitor our long-term care facilities, there are currently some 10,000 terminally ill individuals in nursing homes in New York State who are incapable of making a decision with respect to their own care. It is in their interest, as well as society's, that we articulate a consensus for dealing with DNR decisions."

And just to make it clear what it doesn't mean, he adds that "we should not confuse the issue of definition of death with that of DNR. DNR is not so much a matter of death, but a recognition of the burden associated with pain and prolongation of dying."

The idea that saving life should be redefined as "prolonging death" is a typical Jesuit redefinition which has been used by the bioethicists to justify a policy of murder of the extremely ill throughout the United States. In its baldest form, these "ethicists" argue that it is necessary to abandon the traditional Judeo-Christian approach of fighting to save every individual human life. Now, some lives are to be condemned as "too painful," some "too expensive," and others "useless" to be saved—despite the fact that the battle to save the terminally ill has been the most successful means of making scientific, and clinical, breakthroughs in life-saving technologies.

Already coopted onto Axelrod's Committee are the New York State Medical Society, the New York Hospital Association, and the Hastings Institute, one of the premier U.S. institutions in pushing genocide under the name of the "right to die."

In a speech to St. Francis College in New York on Oct. 3, Governor Cuomo proposed yet another taskforce, this one called "Life and the Law." The direction of this taskforce is transparent. As the governor said, "It's purpose is not endless study; its purpose is the earliest possible formulation of policy recommendations that will help our government to show its reverence for life in the midst of *complex competing forces and interests* [And why not simply overrule those forces?—ed]."

"It will take our highest aspirations and most noble pronouncements about life and seek to convert them into working laws and policies. It will try to provide practical answers to the question: what can a society that professes a profound respect for life do to realize its ideals? At the very least we ought not to avoid these hard questions. Rather we should bring them to the surface, explore them, debate them, bringing to bear on them all the best talent we have in an effort to arrive at consensus views that are decent and respectful of our greatest gift and greatest value—life."

The word "practical" should tip you off to the real meaning of this jesuitical doubletalk. Governor Cuomo is a practical, not a moral, man. And he doesn't want those who insist that our nation is founded on the principles of Judeo-Christian natural law to impose morality on him, or our society:

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