

# Nebraska State Legislature

Unicameral  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509

*Chaplain*

## SENATOR ERNEST CHAMBERS

District No. 11  
3116 North 24th Street  
Omaha, Nebraska 68110

Legislative Address:  
State Capitol  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509  
Office: (402) 471-2612



## COMMITTEES

Vice Chairperson, Government, Military  
and Veterans Affairs  
Judiciary  
Law Enforcement and Justice Advisory  
Legislative Council

## EIGHTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

July 7, 1983

The Honorable Warren Burger  
Chief Justice  
United States Supreme Court  
Washington, D. C. 20543

Re: Poem inspired by your opinion declaring it constitutional to hire Legislative Chaplains and pay them with tax money for uttering meaningless prayers.

Dear Mr. Chief Justice,

Before transmitting the poem mentioned above, I must tell you that your logic and reasoning are terribly flawed in the case of Frank Marsh, et al., v. Ernest Chambers. I shall deal with only one point and make no attempt to reargue the case.

You opined that nothing is wrong constitutionally with hiring a Legislative Chaplain in 1983 because Congress had a hired Chaplain in 1789 when the First Amendment was adopted.

As a legal and history scholar, you know that when the Eighth Amendment was adopted prohibiting "cruel and unusual punishments", flogging and maiming were deemed "acceptable" punishments by some of the Framers -- maiming being specifically referenced in the Fifth Amendment: "*nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or LIMB*".

Though barbaric punishments were in existence at the time the Eighth Amendment was adopted, they have since been declared unconstitutional, violative of the "cruel and unusual punishment" provision of the Eighth Amendment. Thus, your linchpin argument is weak. As you know, times change; and a constitution expands in meaning to accomodate those changes.

But on to the poem.

It is dedicated modestly to:

CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN BURGER & THE FRENCH FRIES.

TO WHICH GOD SHALL THE LEGISLATIVE CHAPLAIN PRAY?

by

Nebraska State Senator Ernie Chambers

God is a Baptist!

A Methodist!

No --

Clearly, God's a Catholic!

Jewish!

Not so.

God's Episcopalian!

Baghwan!

A Monk!

Seventh Day Adventist!

Isis!

You're drunk!

God is a Buddhist!

Taoist!

That is loonie!

God's Presbyterian!

Lutheran!

A Moonie!

Surely, God's a Hindu!

A Witch doctor

Crazed!

God is a Muslim;

Allah

Be praised!

God is Christian Scientist!  
Apollo!  
A Fawn!

God is Greek Orthodox!  
Irish  
Leprechaun!

Unitarian! Mennonite!  
Mars!  
Humanist!

God is a Pilgrim!  
No,  
Fundamentalist!

Dutch Reformed!  
Mormon!  
New England Quaker!

Amish! Tiki! Totem!  
Legba! Zeus!  
Ra! Shaker!

God is Hiawatha!  
Moloch!  
Coffee Bean!

Earth! Sea!  
Sun!  
Chromosome! A Gene!

God is Osiris!  
Asmodeus  
In a bottle!

Aphrodite!  
Medicine Man!  
Quetzalcoatll!

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God is straight!

Hermaphrodite!

No, gay!

Cannibal!

Veg~~e~~tarian!

Anyhow or way.

Prayers to, arguments about God breed confusion,  
Animosities and hatreds, bitterness, delusion.  
For, you see, God has no traits -- none be Hers or His --  
God is nothing more nor less than what the believer is.  
One may deem God physical, another, poltergeist --  
BURGER & THE FRIES DID RULE THAT EVERY GOD IS CHRIST.

\* \* \*

Mr. Chief Justice, your opinion has done much to advance  
the Christian religion.

Sincerely,

*Ernie Chambers*

Ernie Chambers  
State Senator

cc: Associate Justices of the U.S. Supreme Court  
Members of the Nebraska Legislature  
Interested parties