

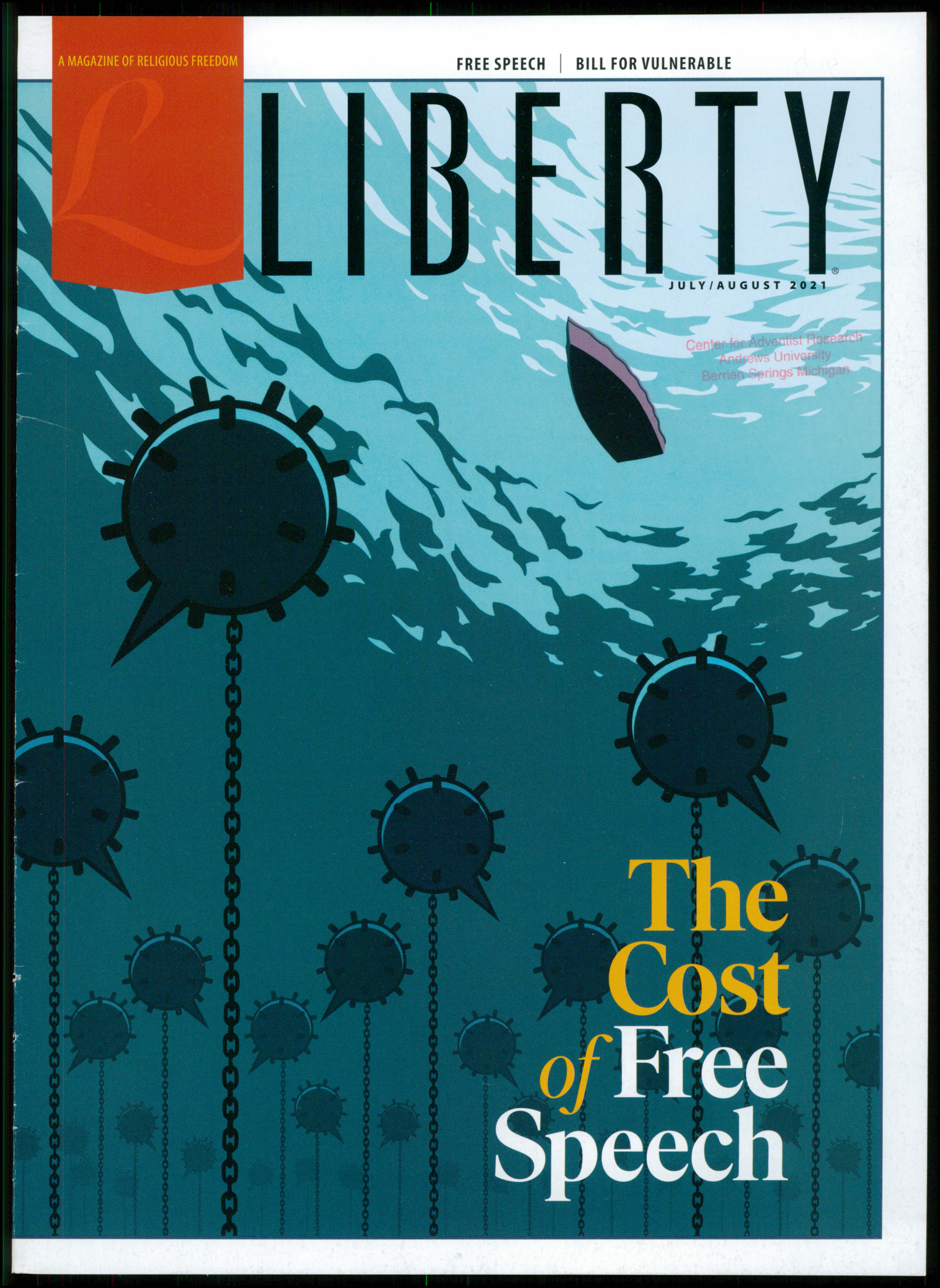
A MAGAZINE OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

FREE SPEECH | BILL FOR VULNERABLE

# LIBERTY

JULY/AUGUST 2021

Center for Adventist Research  
Andrews University  
Berrien Springs Michigan

The cover features a stylized illustration of a sea with a sinking boat. The water is depicted with dark blue and teal wavy patterns. A small, dark boat is tilted and sinking in the upper right. In the foreground and middle ground, several dark, spiked buoys are suspended from the surface by vertical chains. The buoys have a circular top with several small spikes and a pointed bottom. The overall mood is somber and suggests a theme of restriction or loss.

## The Cost *of* Free Speech



We We

EDITORIAL

A SMALL GAP

A little more than 22 years ago I sat down in a new office, at a new desk, and pondered what to do next. On the desktop were just a few items that tied me to this new reality. There was a cake-top decoration in the style of the Statue of Liberty, left over from the farewell with editorial staff at the Review and Herald Publishing Association. In a card that came with it, an editor friend had noted my possible risk in defending religious liberty in a volatile world: the thought perplexed me at the time, and did not make much sense till years later, walking alone through the religious-riot-ravaged streets of Ambon City, Indonesia, it hit me that there was mortal danger. In an incongruously small box on that desk was also a little pile of articles, some yellowed and marked as accepted decades earlier: my "slush" file, otherwise known as the makings of my first issue as editor of *Liberty* magazine!

And so it began: an editorial journey I had never really anticipated. My predecessor, Clifford Goldstein, younger than me, was about seven years in the job before leaving precipitously to take up editorship of the Bible study lessons for the Seventh-day Adventist world church. Ironically, I had been called back from Australia about 15 years earlier to coordinate editorial and production on those same lessons! But *Liberty* magazine was not on my mind then; even if issues of religious freedom were.

As a young man I had been privileged to travel at a time when it was still a bit of an adventure.

I still remember the "escape" out of Kabul, Afghanistan: we had been stoned on highways out of the city by Muslim youth angry at Christian Westerners, and as the plane struggled up a narrow valley between towering peaks and crippling turbulence, I anxiously monitored the huge pile of luggage strapped to the floor where the first 20 rows of seats usually were in a Boeing

727. We made it! In Pakistan I encountered the pilot washing his hands in the garden of the hotel and quizzed him about the risks on that flight: he spoke cryptically about the wings falling off if he'd made a wrong move!

In Iran things seemed peaceful enough. I still remember walking down a Parisian-style boulevard and peering through the wrought-iron gates of the U.S. embassy, later to be the scene of a drawn-out hostage drama. But what I remember most clearly was driving hours out of Tehran to meet with Seventh-day Adventist Christians at a camp meeting convocation. Political freedom is relative, and they were using what they had.

But it was in Communist Bulgaria that the importance of religious freedom most took root in my psyche. At the time Bulgaria was one of the "Reddest" of the Communist states and usual host for Warsaw Pact military war games. Christians were not so much persecuted in the active, violent ways many in the West imagined, but marginalized and restricted. Party membership and advancement in any line of employment was denied people of faith. Worship was allowed only in proscribed venues and for limited times. The older faithful were seen as irredeemably out of step with socialism; but the young were to be kept from this contagion at all costs.

My father was not allowed to preach in the Adventist church in Sofia, the capital. But his work with the government on anti-drug education meant he was a guest of the authorities, and they allowed him to bring greetings to the somber congregants—all, I noted, clutching contraband handwritten or typewriter carbon-copied Bible study lessons! Those greetings went for more than an hour, with extensive Bible texts and allusions—rather sermon-like, I thought!

After it was over, we met in the

side room with the translator and his sad-eyed daughter. She was not much younger than me at that time, so she had my attention. "She is a good daughter," her father said. "She comes to church every week, rather than school, as the government requires. But pray for us," he asked with tears in his eyes. "They are going to take her away from us because she would rather come to church than go to school." In that instant I understood what was at stake with conscience and religious liberty.

Later on that same trip, almost a lifetime back now, we crossed much of India by train. I will never forget looking out on the fields one morning, as the train chugged across the countryside, and seeing humans, almost shoulder to shoulder in morning ablutions, dotting the plain from trackside to horizon. It was disorienting to my sense of humanity. Jesus Christ was said to have looked on the crowds and had pity on them. Far easier to depersonalize one's concern and transmute religious liberty to legislative action, court cases, and efforts to protect religious organizations. I know we have to fight our own sensibilities in standing up for the conscience rights of all humanity. How easy it is in matters of religious liberty to slip into thinking it does not apply to *Untermensch*, only to we who understand all its complexities! As though we ever could!

Back in my Australian homeland, with my foreign-born wife, Rosa Delia, whom I had met while living and studying in the United States, those visions and insights seemed dreamlike. After all, in a nearly empty lucky country, a two-hour drive into the country might reveal only dusty-road-edge-to-distant-ridge congregations of kangaroos and wombats: existential emptiness and easy forgetfulness.

Then in the early hours of the morning: a call to return to the United States for editing responsibilities. "Don't





PEOPLE of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do hereby constitute a Constitution for the United States of America.

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go," cautioned my wife, echoing the view of many that the United States is the eye of a hurricane best avoided. I was conflicted, to be sure. "But this is so unexpected, and the signs of God's leading so clear [no time here to enlarge on that amazing part of the story], that I must go," I explained. "It may be that I am just a small connection in a big plan: a single contact I make may complete the chain." And so we returned. And a few years later I sat at the *Liberty* editorial desk!

For most of my formative years Roland Hegstad was the editor of *Liberty* magazine—34 years in total for him. So for me he will always be Mr. Liberty. But of course *Liberty* belongs to none of us, editor or reader. Religious liberty is as big as humanity and everyman's stirrings of conscience. It is surely the *idée fixe* at the center of a gospel proclamation. For years I have tried to remind Christian audiences that fallen humanity has been released from millennia of captivity to sin by the actions of a Redeemer. We are free; we have freedom; no one can take that from

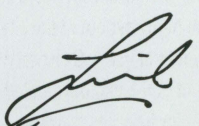
us. "I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it" is how the Bible puts it (Revelation 3:8, NKJV).\*

And during the time with *Liberty* I have seen the religious world warp and narrow religious freedom into an entitlement to restrict others. And during that time I have seen a narrowing of even the secular concept of freedom. After the towers went down in 2001, an article in *Le Monde* commented on the realism of the moment. More than real, it said: symbolic! As I remember, the author wrote that "we have reached the point where the very idea of freedom, itself relatively recent and new, is in the process of being replaced by its polar opposite, that of a terror of security." And so, enhanced interrogations; unitary visions of executive power; impromptu prayer sessions by insurgents in the House chamber; a choice of isolation over worship during a pandemic. What next? God only knows (try reading the book of Revelation)!

So where is my place within all this? This will be my last issue as editor before retiring. I dare not apply General

MacArthur's self-pitying epilogue. "Old soldiers never die—they just fade away," he said. Of course we fade away, like the grass, according to the Bible: but our actions can endure. Instead, I'd like to invoke a Russian folk song of wartime loss. I always find a deep sadness and melancholy in Russian song and literature. (As a young man of the Vietnam War era, I was deeply affected by reading Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace*.) The song is called "Cranes": I loved it best sung by the late baritone Dmitri Hvorostovsky.

The lines of that song that admit me now are:  
*"Flying in the fog at the end of the day;  
 And in those ranks there is a small gap:  
 Maybe this is the place for me."*

  
**Lincoln E. Steed**, Editor  
*Liberty* magazine

Please address letters to the editor to [Lincoln.Steed@nad.adventist.org](mailto:Lincoln.Steed@nad.adventist.org)

DECLARATION  
*of Principles*

The God-given right of religious liberty is best exercised when church and state are separate.

Government is God's agency to protect individual rights and to conduct civil affairs; in exercising these responsibilities, officials are entitled to respect and cooperation.

Religious liberty entails freedom of conscience: to worship or not to worship; to profess, practice, and promulgate religious beliefs, or to change them. In exercising these rights, however, one must respect the equivalent rights of all others.

Attempts to unite church and state are opposed to the interests of each, subversive of human rights, and potentially persecuting in character; to oppose union, lawfully and honorably, is not only the citizen's duty but the essence of the golden rule—to treat others as one wishes to be treated.



**“I disapprove of what you say, but I will  
defend to the death your right to say it.”**

—Evelyn Beatrice Hall in *The Life of Voltaire*.





# The Cost of Free Speech

BY MICHAEL PEABODY

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JON KRAUSE

**I**t was not too long ago that Americans were wholeheartedly defined by a dedication to concepts of freedom of speech and the equal availability of knowledge—and many still recoil at the idea that somebody else should tell them what to think and might control what they can say to each other.

The origins of this attitude are not hard to find. “The priesthood of all believers” was a bedrock principle of the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation—all Christians were equal before God, and clergy no longer had a monopoly on the understanding and exposition of sacred writ.

Throughout human history, in most parts of the world, freedom of speech has been an anomaly. During the Middle Ages only the ordained clergy could represent a congregation, interpret Scripture, or administer sacraments. It took a radical “reformation” of thinking to change that. If clergy had no greater standing before God than anybody else, then all could serve equally, and all could approach God in prayer directly. This concept had implications far beyond the spiritual world: setting in motion changes to encompass politics, science, and even economics.

Today the distribution of Bibles is nearly ubiquitous, with Bibles available online if not in the physical space. But in those pre-Reformation days the printing of Bibles was strictly illegal, and even in England to have a Bible without the proper license could even lead to the death penalty. This was because not only was the Bible clearly a spiritual document, but it could be used to question the power of the church to rule the state. Individuals were not trusted to interpret Scripture for themselves—and this was not only to protect the people,



but more likely to protect the hierarchy.

John Wycliffe, who translated the Latin Vulgate Bible into English and called the Catholic Church's hierarchy into question, was blamed for the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, and his writings were banned. Thirty years after he died of a stroke in 1384, the Council of Constance declared him a heretic and ordered his body exhumed and burned and the ashes thrown into a nearby river. Dangerous man indeed!

William Tyndale, who translated the Bible into English in the early 1520s, was also seen as a threat to the hierarchy: his writings are said to have influenced King Henry VIII to separate the Church of England from the Roman Catholic Church. Of course, Tyndale, being a man of many words, also published a book against Henry's annulment of his marriage. Sandwiched between the ire of the Catholic Church and Henry VIII, Tyndale fled to Brussels, where he was arrested. In 1536 he was convicted of heresy and executed by strangulation, and his body was burned at the stake.

The hierarchical control of information was not just with religion or politics. In 1633 the Inquisition came to scientist and astronomer Galileo, who dared question the church's teachings that the earth was the center of the solar system. He was found "vehemently suspect of heresy" and sentenced to house arrest for the rest of his life, and his books were banned.

While Europe maintained vestiges of the Divine Right of Kings and the primacy of particular clergy, the United States began with an open platform that upheld, however imperfectly, the ideas of the free flow of information, religious independence, and economic self-determination. Vestiges of Old World hierarchies remained in the slavery that characterized most of the first century of the nation and the racial disparities that existed on the books and in practice for at least the century after the Civil War. But the United States at the federal level prided itself on its dedication to principles of free speech and self-determination. It did not bestow honorific titles based on some kind of social ranking or develop permanent and imposed caste systems.

For most of human history, however, it took great effort to provide information to a wide range of people. Edicts went out at the speed of a man on horseback. With the availability of paper, the news and laws might be posted on a church door. But since few could read, it was the vocal proclamation to assembled subjects or the update from the town crier that informed—and compelled! Books, when they finally became available, had to be printed and

published at great cost. Newsletters were mailed, adding handling and postage expense. Until very recently even long-distance phone calls were costly and conversations limited to small groups of people. Distributing a video beyond a few people required substantial funding and distribution skill. The few who broke through the barriers and hosted television shows, wrote books, or served as journalists to magazines and newspapers were generally regarded as "the experts," and the most the average person could do to contribute to the flow of ideas was to get a "letter to the editor" selected for publication.

But 25 years ago the Internet introduced the concept of the "priesthood of all believers" to every subject imaginable on the Internet. Sure, the media continued to control most print, radio, and television outlets, but as laptop computers and cell phones took over the planet, and social media giants facilitated massive international conversations between thousands of people, it was not long until anybody could become an "expert" complete with publication or video production. Most people reading this are within an arm's reach of broadcasting a live video to the rest of the world—the only limit being how many viewers they can attract.

Just as the printing press was welcomed as a great innovation until it was used to publish things the ruling elite did not appreciate, the Internet, hailed as the "information superhighway," has been applauded until recently, as armchair "experts" share their opinions from their kitchen tables.

The Inquisition, which first sought to reason with the wayward theologians centuries ago, turned deadly when troubling speech grew out of control. That's human nature. In those days the Reformers often had to seek refuge in the recesses of the castles of friendly royals. It is human nature to crack down on speech that challenges the status quo and can be identified as "dangerous" to certain power centers or institutions. In the United States those whose speech is challenged by the elites can find their refuge in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. But what about the vast majority of social media websites where the U.S. Constitution is seemingly more distant?

Free speech online is facing a major crack-down. Arguably, limits on freedom of speech may have more to do with protecting the interests of the party doing the limiting than the protection of others; usually under a pretext of preserving public safety or preventing "misinformation." Americans are typically repulsed by the idea that some social media "priest" can interpose between





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**Americans are typically repulsed by the idea that some social media “priest” can interpose between them and the pursuit of knowledge and expression of ideas.**



them and the pursuit of knowledge and expression of ideas. But the Internet is not confined to the United States—major media companies in the U.S. can be driven by international forces that do not value individual freedoms.

For instance, in order to access lucrative theaters in China, American filmmakers have made major changes to films to ensure that they do not offend government officials. Last June the actor Richard Gere testified before the U.S. Senate to warn about the dangers of allowing China to control the content of films. He said, “The combination of Chinese censorship, coupled with American film studios’ desire to access China’s market, can lead to self-censorship and overlooking social issues that great American films once addressed.”<sup>1</sup>

In January 2021 thousands of retail investors, many who met on the Reddit website, grouped together to drive up prices of stocks that major hedge funds had shorted. While retail investors collectively made billions of dollars, and prices increased more than 2,000 percent at one point, the hedge funds lost billions as they had to come up with money to cover their market positions. When “experts” on the major financial cable networks complained that the individual investors were working together to drive up the stock price and punish the short positions, the Reddit website hid the WallStreetBets group from public view, sending share prices plummeting—despite the fact that their behavior mimicked the action of the hedge fund brokers, just on a much bigger scale.

In early 2020, when the United States and many other nations essentially “shut down” to “flatten the curve” to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and ensure the availability of medical resources, millions of people had to worry about how they were going to make a living, whether they would die from the virus, and ponder on why it was all happening. Conflicting medical advice and a general sense that the media had a bias against the administration at the time caused many to look to alternative news outlets to find out what was “really happening.”

On April 22 two doctors from a Bakersfield urgent-care facility, Dr. Dan Erickson and Dr. Artin Massihi, held a press conference claiming that COVID-19 was no worse than influenza and that its death rates were low, and that restrictions from work and school were not appropriate. California state senator Richard Pan, himself a pediatrician, complained that the doctors were being “disingenuous” and said, “We have to push back on any media that promotes this information.”<sup>2</sup>

While the Internet has long been the home to all kinds of health theories, ranging from questionable ideas to outright quackery, COVID-19 ushered in a new level of health conspiracy. In May 2020 a 26-minute video called *Plandemic* exploded across the Internet: it claimed that a group of people was using the virus and also the vaccine to gain money and power. Within a week Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram counted at least 8 million views and people shared it across their networks.

Mainstream media reports labeling *Plandemic* a “falsehood” and “discredited” increased curiosity about the video; which alarmed many who felt that the video would cause viewers to improperly cast blame for the pandemic on certain individuals; or perhaps take risks with their own health. The video was removed from most Internet networks and is now viewable only on independent websites.

Since then, major social media networks have posted warnings on most posts promoting alternative theories about COVID-19 that either hide posts completely and require a click-through to read them, or imply that the person posting them is spreading untrustworthy information.

### **Freedom of the Press**

As if COVID-19 was not enough, 2020 began with an impeachment proceeding against President Donald Trump involving his request for a leader of a foreign government to help investigate claims against a competing presidential candidate. Much of that discussion involved whether or not Joe Biden’s son Hunter Biden had acted improperly.

In October 2020 the *New York Post*, a conservative-leaning newspaper founded by Alexander Hamilton in 1801, published an article discussing a laptop purportedly belonging to Hunter Biden. Facebook and Twitter hid the *Post* story and deleted it whenever users posted it on their own accounts; even though it would not directly affect the health or well-being of those who read the article.

However egregious such an attempt to hide a story from the public may seem, President Trump was hardly a champion of a free press. Soon after launching his 2016 campaign, Trump began threatening to sue media organizations that he felt were unfair to him. He threatened to sue the *New York Times* for a report on his business dealings, and frequently called cable news companies “fake news” and “the enemy of the people.” The White House famously suspended CNN correspondent Jim Acosta’s press credentials after an alleged altercation between



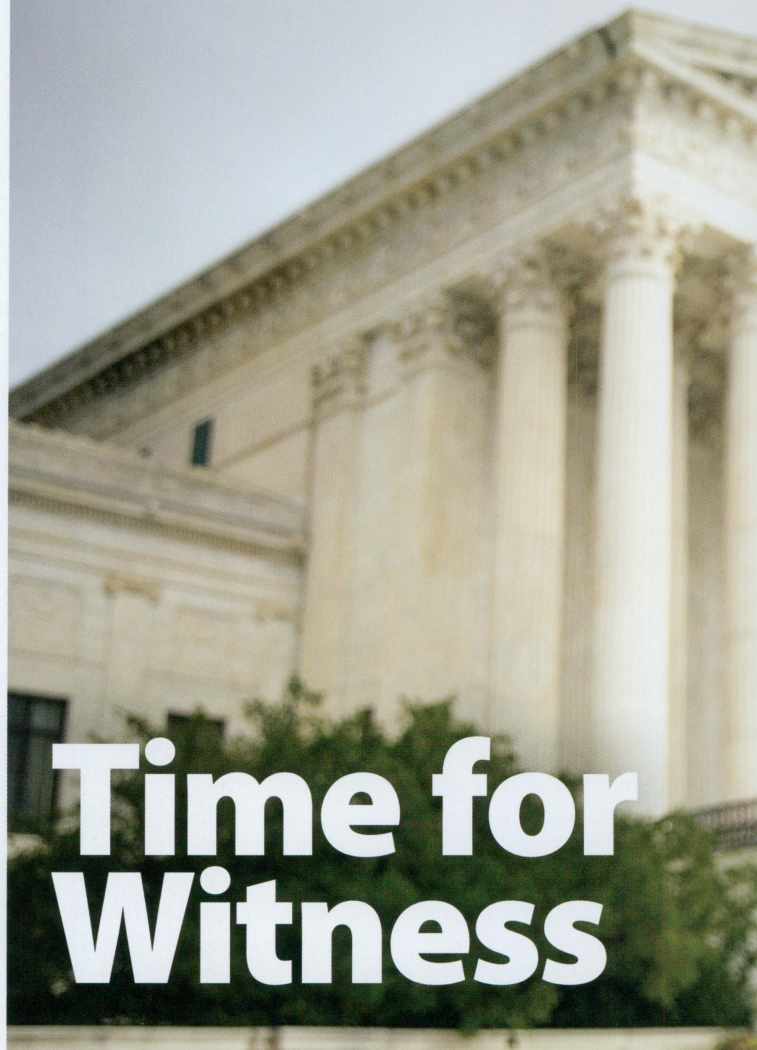
Acosta and a White House intern. The press access was later restored after CNN filed a lawsuit claiming that the suspension violated the network's constitutional rights. CNN reported that Trump's campaign had paid more than \$200 million in two years to a law firm that sued media companies on his behalf.<sup>3</sup> Trump's history of lawsuits against media critics went back to 1984, when he sued the *Chicago Tribune*.

In 1964 the Supreme Court ruled in *New York Times v. Sullivan* that if public official, or person running for public office, is a plaintiff in a defamation lawsuit, he or she must not only prove the basic elements of defamation, which is publication of a false defamatory statement to a third party, but must also prove that the statement was made with "actual malice." In other words, the defendant would have had to know the statement was false, or recklessly disregarded whether or not it was true.<sup>4</sup>

In the *Sullivan* case the *New York Times* had published a full-page advertisement by supporters of Martin Luther King, Jr., that criticized the police in Montgomery, Alabama, for mistreatment of civil rights protestors. There were some factual inconsistencies involving the number of times that King had been arrested during protests, what songs were sung at protests, and whether or not students were expelled from school if they participated. This was part of a pattern of multiple lawsuits in which Southern public officials had sued newspapers for defamation, for a total of about \$300 million in outstanding libel actions. The Montgomery police commissioner followed this pattern and sued the *New York Times* for defamation and prevailed at the trial court level; but then the Supreme Court unanimously reversed the decision, and as a result made it difficult for public officials who had been using these lawsuits to suppress media criticism of their actions that had violated civil rights.

In January 2021 outgoing President Trump's entire Twitter account was removed by the service for violating Twitter's internal policies. While the rights of journalists to speak openly about public officials was established, the rights of individuals to say things online remained unclear. Two early online services had very different approaches to handling what users say. CompuServe made it clear that they did not regulate what customers communicated on their services, but their competition, Prodigy, actually employed a team of moderators to validate customer-posted content.

In 1990 a newsletter on CompuServe called Rumorville USA published "defamatory content" about Cubby, Inc., a competing online newsletter. Cubby sued CompuServe, but was unable to prove that CompuServe knew, or should have known, that



# Time for Witness


BY JOHN AND NISHA WHITEHEAD

**I**n a victory for the First Amendment, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in March that a college student cited by campus police for "disorderly conduct" for speaking about his Christian faith and distributing religious literature on campus can sue officials for violating his free speech rights.

In its 8-1 decision in *Uzuegbunam v. Preczewski*, the Supreme Court found in favor of college student Chike Uzuegbunam's free speech rights, ruling that he suffered a violation of his constitutional rights when officials enforced their speech policies against him. The Rutherford Institute had asked the Supreme Court to ensure that campus policies and administrators at Georgia Gwinnett College comply with the First Amendment.

"This case reminds us that there is no room for trust in the relationship between the citizenry and the government," said constitutional attorney John W. Whitehead, president of the Rutherford Institute and author of *Battlefield America: The War on the American People*. "Trust the government to police itself, and it will sidestep the law at every turn. The only way to ensure that government officials obey the law and respect the rights of the citizenry, as Thomas





**A student accused of  
“disorderly conduct” for  
sharing faith on campus  
can sue college police,  
rules 8-1 Supreme Court.**

Chike Uzuegbunam outside the U.S.  
Supreme Court in Washington, D.C.

PHOTO: ALLIANCE DEFENDING FREEDOM

Jefferson recognized, is to bind them with ‘the chains of the Constitution.’”

Chike Uzuegbunam is a Christian and was a student at Georgia Gwinnett College, which has a 260-acre campus in Lawrenceville, Georgia. Because Chike’s faith requires that he share his religious beliefs with others, he sought to do so in 2016 by passing out literature and speaking to students from a spacious concrete plaza near the college’s library. A campus security officer stopped him and warned that Chike could not distribute written materials there because he was not in one of two “speech zones” the college had established. Under the college’s policies, students were required to reserve times for one of the two “speech zones,” which consisted of one patio and one sidewalk that amounted to 0.0015 percent of the total area of the campus. The policies also required students to apply for a reservation at least three days in advance and gave college officials unbridled discretion to decide who could speak, when they could speak, and what materials they could give out.

Although Chike properly reserved a time for sharing his faith from one of the zones, he was again stopped from speaking by a campus security officer. The officer told him

that because someone had complained about his speech, he was engaged in “disorderly conduct” under college policies. Chike then brought a lawsuit against the college, alleging that its policies and their application to prevent him from engaging in religious speech violated the First Amendment. After months of litigation the college moved to dismiss the case as moot because it had changed its “speech zone” policies, and the trial court granted the motion. Chike appealed, arguing that his case was not moot, that he was entitled to nominal damages for the interference with his First Amendment rights; but the appeals court upheld the dismissal. Chike sought and was granted review by the U.S. Supreme Court. In its amicus brief supporting Chike, the Rutherford Institute argued that dismissal of the lawsuit violates long-established court precedent affirming the right of citizens to obtain an award of nominal damages against government officials when they violate a person’s constitutional rights.

The Supreme Court’s opinion and the amicus brief of the Rutherford Institute in *Uzuegbunam v. Preczewski* are available at [www.rutherford.org](http://www.rutherford.org).

John and Nisha Whitehead write from the Rutherford Institute in Charlottesville, Virginia.



## Currently social media companies are allowed to moderate and remove content for any reason and still avoid legal liability for statements made by users.



somebody had posted the defamatory conduct. An appellate court found that “CompuServe has no more editorial control over such a publication than does a public library, bookstore, or newsstand, and it would be no more feasible for CompuServe to examine every publication it carries for potentially defamatory statements than it would be for any other distributor to do so.”<sup>5</sup>

CompuServe’s hands-off approach saved it, but Prodigy’s active involvement did nothing to shield it from liability. In 1994 an unknown user of a Prodigy online bulletin board posted that an investment firm, Stratton Oakmont, had committed criminal and fraudulent acts

in connection with an initial public offering of a stock. Stratton Oakmont sued Prodigy and the anonymous user. Prodigy tried to assert the rationale in the CompuServe case, to argue that it could not be held liable for user-posted content. The court disagreed. Wrote the court: “Prodigy’s conscious choice, to gain the benefits of editorial control, has opened it up to a greater liability than CompuServe and other computer networks that make no such choice.”<sup>6</sup>

The following year, in order to protect the Internet from constant lawsuits, Congress passed the Communications Decency Act, codified in 47 U.S. Code § 230 (“Section 230”), which



states in part, that “no provider or user of an interactive computer service shall be treated as the publisher or speaker of any information provided by another information content provider” and shields them from civil liability.

However, the rule does not restrict the ability of online services to restrict content. It exempts the services from liability if they work to “restrict access to or availability of material that the provider or user considers to be obscene, lewd, lascivious, filthy, excessively violent, harassing, or otherwise objectionable, whether or not such material is constitutionally protected.” This does not protect services from liability in case there are materials that are prohibited by federal law, such as sexual exploitation of children or obscenity.

In the text of Section 230 itself Congress stated that “it is the policy of the United States . . . to encourage the development of technologies which maximize user control over what information is received by individuals, families, and schools who use the Internet and other interactive computer services.”

### Free Speech in a Private Forum

There are no easy solutions to the issue of maximizing free speech and responsibility while limiting legal liability. Currently social media companies are allowed to moderate and remove content for any reason and still avoid legal liability for statements made by users.

In response to apparent partisan censorship, some politicians have talked about removing Section 230 protections from online services. However, this would likely have a chilling effect on speech, since it would again make social media companies liable for defamatory statements, as we saw in the *Prodigy* case.

Another solution would be to impose an updated version of the Fairness Doctrine, which required companies that held broadcast licenses to present both sides of controversial issues in an equitable manner. The Fairness Doctrine per se would not apply to the Internet since it was a creature of the FCC and in 1987 was abolished by the commission, which found that “the intrusion by government into the content of programming occasioned by the enforcement of the Fairness Doctrine restricts the journalistic freedom of broadcasters and actually inhibits the presentation of controversial issues of public concern to the detriment of the public and the degradation of the editorial prerogative of broadcast journalists.”<sup>7</sup>

In addition, there is an interest of social media companies to operate in a manner that they believe to be reasonable and profitable to them

and their shareholders. Attempts by a governing authority to monitor the degree of freedom they offer to users beyond protecting users from material that is already prohibited by federal law would raise its own constitutional concerns.

Americans cannot trust that social media companies will have their best interests in mind when it comes to limits on free speech. As time goes along, and more speech is funneled through nongovernmental technology, the government’s ability to promote freedom of speech will likely decrease, and people will need to find alternatives to major social media companies if they wish to share opinions. It may well be time for parallel networks that are truly dedicated to principles of equality of ideas and free speech.

One thing is sure: without free speech, the tyranny of ideas will emerge. Without free speech, faith proclamation will wither and retreat to the catacombs. But with the viral explosion of both information and disinformation we risk the biblical warning of “always learning, but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth” (2 Timothy 3:7, NIV).<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See testimony of Richard Gere, Subcommittee on International Trade, Custom, and Global Competitiveness, June 30, 2020, <https://www.finance.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/30JUN2020GERESTMNT.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Barbara Feder Ostrov, “Cue the Debunking: Two Bakersfield Doctors Go Viral With Dubious COVID Test Conclusions,” CalMatters.org (<https://calmatters.org/health/2020/04/debunking-bakersfield-doctors-covid-spread-conclusions/>), retrieved January 22, 2021.

<sup>3</sup> Katelyn Pollantz, Sara Murray, and Ellie Kaufman, “Trump Campaign’s Biggest Legal Costs Are to Firm That Sues and Threatens Media,” CNN, February 28, 2020, <https://www.cnn.com/2020/02/28/politics/charles-harder-trump-law-suits/index.html>, retrieved January 22, 2021.

<sup>4</sup> *New York Times Co. v. Sullivan*, 376 U.S. 254 (1964).

<sup>5</sup> *Cubby, Inc., v. CompuServe Inc.*, 776 F. Supp. 135 (S.D.N.Y. 1991).

<sup>6</sup> *Stratton Oakmont, Inc., v. Prodigy Services Co.*, 23 Media L. Rep. 1794 (N.Y. Sup. Ct. 1995).

<sup>7</sup> Robert D. Hershey, Jr., “F.C.C. Votes Down Fairness Doctrine in a 4-0 Decision,” *FCC Video* (FCC 1987), NBCUniversal, New York Times, August 5, 1987.

<sup>8</sup> Bible texts credited to NIV are from the *Holy Bible, New International Version*. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

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### We are at an information crossroads.

*I sometimes think the problem is less information overload than it is enabled by the declining general literacy of the man/woman in the “street” or at the keyboard. Unless we have a reasoned and informed philosophical base, extra information is more likely to be uncritically accepted, and will either confuse or confirm pathologies. I wish we had the space to print the entire text, or at least a detailed exegesis of, John Milton’s enduring classic from 1644: *Aeropagitica*. It is a detailed defense of free speech composed during the English Civil War: a war with various social and political alarms that congealed into violent religious strife. As with this article, much of Milton’s argument derives from the experience of the Reformation. —Lincoln Steed, Editor.*





ISTOCK / COLDSNOWSTORM

## Injunction Blocks Ban!

BY MICHAEL  
D. PEABODY

**O**n February 6, 2021, nearly a year into the COVID-19 shutdowns, the Supreme Court issued an injunction blocking the state of California's ban on indoor church services. The Court did indicate that current restrictions on singing and percentage occupancy can remain in place.

Two large California churches, South Bay United Pentecostal Church near San Diego and Harvest Rock Church in Pasadena, had sued the state because the restrictions violated their religious liberty.

California had instituted a tiered system, where restrictions in some parts were more severe than others, depending on the number

of COVID-19 cases in a region. Still, critics argued that the tiers were arbitrary. For instance, large stores could remain open, while shopping malls were closed for a while. Theme parks such as Disneyland had to close, but Sea World reopened under a "Zoos and Museums" exemption. Manicurists could not work indoors, while hair salons could reopen. Outdoor dining was encouraged and then discouraged. On tribal land, outside the jurisdiction of the state, casinos reopened while those in the state's jurisdiction remained shuttered. Government employees and large retailers' employees continued to receive their paychecks, while small business employees were often laid off.



During times of national stress people tend to seek out houses of worship, but in the pandemic age, people looking for spiritual assistance were forced to meet online. Elderly individuals and those without access to fast Internet connections simply stayed home in silence. If their church was meeting outdoors, they needed to find people to share cars with or sit outside exposed to the winter elements. Evangelism was at a standstill, and people not already attached to congregations would have a much more difficult time making these community connections.

While the state claimed that it had scientific evidence that there was a high risk of exposure of meeting indoors, they did not produce evidence to the satisfaction of the Court that this risk could not be mitigated through social distancing, masks, or other forms of protection. Yes, the state had a compelling interest in preventing the spread of COVID-19. Still, the solution of an outright ban on indoor worship was not narrowly tailored to advance that objective, so the state's effort failed to meet the legal strict scrutiny test.

Six of the justices agreed that the ban on indoor church services, which was unique to California, went too far, but disagreed on whether the state could enforce occupancy restrictions or prohibitions on singing or chanting.

Chief Justice John Roberts wrote that although the courts should give "significant deference" to state officials, it had its limits. He wrote, "The State has concluded, for example, that singing indoors poses a heightened risk of transmitting COVID-19. I see no basis in this record for overriding that aspect of the State public health framework. At the same time, the State's present determination—that the maximum number of adherents who can safely worship in the most cavernous cathedral is zero—appears to reflect not expertise or discretion but instead insufficient appreciation or consideration of the interests at stake."

Justices Neil Gorsuch and Clarence Thomas, joined by Justice Samuel Alito, wrote that California's restrictions on worship should be abandoned. They observed that television programs had hosted studio audiences and filmed singing competitions while churches could not meet or sing.

Justice Amy Coney Barrett, who has recently joined the Court, wrote an opinion joined by Justice Brett Kavanaugh, agreeing that churches could meet but saying that churches should show that the singing ban was inappropriate.

Justice Elena Kagan, joined by Justices Stephen Breyer and Sonia Sotomayor, wrote

that epidemiologists and elected officials should take precedence over the free exercise of rights because the "experts" are "desperately trying to slow the spread of a deadly disease."

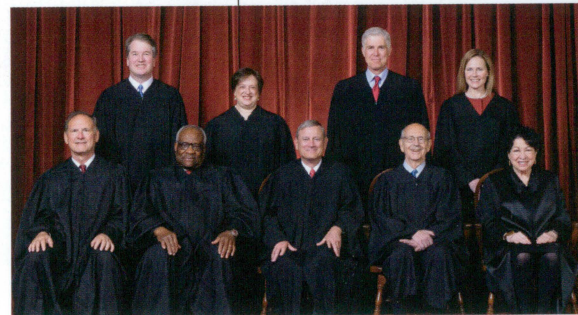
This decision follows on the heels of the November decision in which the Court voted 5-4 to stop New York from enforcing attendance limits on houses of worship.

In response to the ruling, some churches chose to resume indoor church services while observing social distancing protocols, while others decided to remain closed. Many churches are offering a hybrid program during which parishioners can either attend in person or view services online.

The Court's injunction does provide an opportunity for Governor Gavin Newsom to develop further the argument for keeping churches closed. Still, so far the evidence presented has not convinced the Court that it is essential to shelve the First Amendment during a time of stress.

If the shutdown of churches is not a religious liberty issue, then it is hard to imagine what would qualify. Throughout history nearly all impositions on religious liberty were claimed to be for the safety of the people, either for their temporal or eternal souls. In 2019 nobody anticipated that during the next year, church services would be banned, and that those who wished to quietly meet together would have to do so underground, and that those privately gathering in homes would be threatened with punishment. Whether this has to do with religious animus or some grander, more beneficent theme, the effect is the same—churches could not meet. If the Supreme Court's decision had gone the other way, California congregations that dared to use their buildings would be subject to severe state sanctions, including fines or imprisonment. Different states have understood that restrictions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 can be put in place without shutting down churches. California should work to narrowly tailor its regulations to actually advance public safety with a minimal impact on religious freedom as well.

**If the shutdown of churches is not a religious liberty issue, then it is hard to imagine what would qualify.**



The Supreme Court as composed October 27, 2020

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# Bill Protects the Vulnerable

## Dignity, Respect, and Protection from Discrimination

BY MELISSA REID

Public opinion in America around LGBT civil rights has undergone something of a revolution over the past decade. It's a shift that has been driven in large part by heightened awareness of the legal vulnerabilities faced by gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) Americans. According to recent polling data, 83 percent of Americans agreed with President Joseph Biden's January 2021 executive order prohibiting workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.<sup>1</sup> Currently 21 U.S. states and several large cities ban such discrimination; however, the majority of LGBT Americans still lack clear recourse when they are evicted or refused service because of their sexual orientation or gender identity (SOGI).

"Enforcing basic civil rights for everyone should not be controversial," maintains Stanley Carlson-Thies, founder and senior director of the Institutional Religious Freedom Alliance. "Government has a responsibility to ensure protection from unjust treatment to all, including LGBT persons."<sup>2</sup>

### The Equality Act

Last summer's Supreme Court ruling in *Bostock v. Clayton County* provided a major victory for LGBT rights advocates. The Court ruled 6-3 that the 1964 Civil Rights Act protects gay, lesbian, and transgender employees from discrimination based on sex. In his majority opinion Justice Neil Gorsuch wrote, "Today we must decide whether an employer can fire someone simply for being homosexual or transgender. The answer is clear."<sup>3</sup>

In February of this year the U.S. House of Representatives sought to build on the SOGI protections affirmed in *Bostock* by once again passing the Equality Act,<sup>4</sup> a LGBT civil rights bill President Biden has often referred to as one of his top legislative priorities.<sup>5</sup> If enacted, the Equality Act would amend existing civil rights laws, including the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and



TED EYTAN, CC BY-SA 2.0



Rally outside the Supreme Court building on the day of the oral hearing in the *Bostock v. Clayton County* case.





**“It is hard to really love our neighbors when we are fighting with them over whose rights are more important.”**

Lead sponsor of the Fairness for All Act, Representative Chris Stewart of Utah



the Fair Housing Act, to explicitly ban LGBT discrimination in areas such as employment, housing, credit, education, public spaces and services, federally funded programs, and jury service. The legislation faces an uphill battle in the Senate, where key lawmakers have voiced concern over its absence of religious liberty protections.<sup>6</sup>

#### **Problems With the Equality Act**

Proponents of the Equality Act claim the legislation maintains our nation’s historic religious freedom protections.<sup>7</sup> In reality, the bill as drafted includes a number of areas troubling to religious freedom advocates.

In its statement responding to the House’s passage of the Equality Act, the National Association of Evangelicals identified some of those concerns. “Religious charities and institutions that believe marriage is a covenant relationship between a man and a woman play indispensable roles in our social safety net—feeding the hungry, housing the homeless, healing the sick and educating disadvantaged children—as well as other valuable contributions to the well-being of all Americans. The version of the Equality Act passed by the House of Representatives would pressure institutions to change their religious beliefs or withdraw from the public-private partnerships that make our charitable sector so dynamic.”

In its current form, the Equality Act would:

- Jeopardize the eligibility for federal financial aid by religious schools, religious chari-

ties, faith-based community services, and houses of worship seeking to receive security grants.

- Create a blanket exemption from the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which limits the scope of federal religious freedom protections available to religious people and organizations as a defense against discrimination claims.
- Establish a vague and expansive definition of “public accommodations,” which threatens the ability of faith communities to administer their houses of worship, schools, and other facilities according to their deeply held religious convictions.
- Produce uncertainty regarding whether current employment protections for religious communities would continue to shield hiring choices guided by their faith.

When challenged on these specific threats to religious freedom, Equality Act supporters have recommended the courts as the clarifying venue.<sup>8</sup> But prior civil rights legislation has purposefully navigated the balancing of competing rights in order to clearly define protections and avoid lengthy and costly legal battles.

According to Todd McFarland, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists associate counsel and *Liberty* legal advisor, the task of respecting and protecting the First Amendment is not just the job of the courts, but also of Congress. “Members are not doing their job by passing laws they know infringe on the rights of people of faith and force the judicial system to fix their errors,” he says.

Tim Schultz, president of the First Amendment Partnership, a leading religious freedom advocacy organization, agrees. “Clear protections written in statutes are always the gold standard of protections for religious freedom,” he says. “They prevent expensive and uncertain litigation with their clarity, and they represent a democratic consensus that is difficult to go back on.”

#### **A False Choice**

The Equality Act’s stripping away of religious protections is both unnecessary and contradictory. LGBT nondiscrimination protections can be paired with historically respected religious freedoms to maximize freedom for all. Faith-based humanitarian aid and community service institutions that provide essential services to all Americans need not be shuttered in order to enhance basic LGBT protections.

There’s no doubt the uncharitable tone often taken by people of faith toward the LGBT



community has been enormously damaging to relations between these groups. At the same time, critics of religious protections have unfairly rebranded once-cherished religious liberty as the “right to discriminate.” Neither attitude has been beneficial to the critical issues at stake. Both parties would benefit from working together to resolve the continuing conflict between religious freedom and LGBT rights.

As Council of Christian Colleges and Universities president Shirley Hoogstra said, “The Equality Act, as currently drafted, fails to do justice to the rich complexity of moral traditions that are central to the multifaith and pluralistic world of twenty-first-century America, and also fails to do justice to core ideals of America itself, including a deep respect for differences and the role of religious freedom as a primary driving force in the founding of our nation.”

### A Balanced Approach

Members of a diverse coalition of faith traditions (including the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which publishes *Liberty*), religious freedom advocacy groups, and LGBT organizations believe there is a way to protect everyone’s dignity in public spaces. Known as the Fairness for All Act (FFA),<sup>9</sup> this legislation is grounded in two core beliefs:

1. No American should lose their home or livelihood simply for being lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender.
2. Religious persons should not be forced to live, work, or serve their community in ways that violate their sincerely held beliefs.

Fairness for All was reintroduced into Congress earlier this year with both heightened interest and increased congressional support. In introducing the bill, lead sponsor Representative Chris Stewart (UT-02) spoke of the need for a harmonizing piece of legislation. “It is hard to really love our neighbors when we are fighting with them over whose rights are more important,” he said. “The country can accommodate both civil liberties for LGBT individuals and religious freedom.”

The Fairness for All approach balances religious freedom and LGBT rights by amending the Civil Rights Act, protecting religious freedom in the workplace, protecting the rights of LGBT individuals, and preserving First Amendment rights. State-level SOGI nondiscrimination legislation has proved this balanced approach is not only possible but effective. California, New York, and Utah LGBT civil rights laws all include religious exemptions and have rarely been challenged.

“Leading up to the passage of this legislation in Utah, we were concerned about religious freedom in the middle of a culture war and a winner-takes-all approach of those engaged,” shared Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints spokesperson Doug Andersen. “We think protections for both religious liberties and LGBT rights can be reached without either side having to compromise its values. At the national level, we hope Congress will enact balanced legislation benefitting both individuals and communities of faith.”

Tyler Deaton, senior advisor for the American Unity Fund, urges lawmakers to act. “The 117th Congress represents the best opportunity we’ve ever had to expand both religious freedom and LGBTQ civil rights if we all come together to protect one another.”

By our working together and rejecting polarizing rhetoric, it’s possible to find a just, practical, and durable solution to this ongoing challenge; a solution that honors our nation’s commitment to religious freedom and that upholds every person’s right to dignity, respect, and protection from discrimination. It’s up to lawmakers to take advantage of the opportunity.

<sup>1</sup> P. Bacon, Jr., “Biden’s Initial Batch of Executive Actions Is Popular,”

*FiveThirtyEight* January 27, 2021, <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/bidens-initial-batch-of-executive-actions-is-popular/>.

<sup>2</sup> S. Carlson-Thies, “A Better Way Than the Equality Act,” *Institutional Religious Freedom Alliance*, April 25, 2019, <https://irfalliance.org/a-better-way-than-the-equality-act/>.

<sup>3</sup> Supreme Court of the United States, June 15, 2020, [https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/19pdf/17-1618\\_hfci.pdf](https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/19pdf/17-1618_hfci.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> United States Congress, H.R. 5: The Equality Act, February 28, 2021, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/5?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22equality+act%22%5D%7D&s=1&r=2>.

<sup>5</sup> The White House, “Statement by President Joseph R. Biden, Jr., on the Introduction of the Equality Act in Congress,” February 19, 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/02/19/statement-by-president-joseph-r-biden-jr-on-the-introduction-of-the-equality-act-in-congress/>.

<sup>6</sup> C. Johnson, “Romney Declares Opposition to LGBTQ Equality Act,” *Washington Blade* February 16, 2021, <https://www.washingtonblade.com/2021/02/16/romney-declares-opposition-to-lgbtq-equality-act/>.

<sup>7</sup> Tom Gjelten, “Some Faith Leaders Call Equality Act Devastating; For Others, It’s God’s Will,” *National Public Radio*, March 10, 2021, <https://www.npr.org/2021/03/10/974672313/some-faith-leaders-call-equality-act-devastating-for-others-its-gods-will>.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> United States Congress, H.R. 1440 The Fairness for All Act, February 26, 2021, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/1440?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22chris+stewart%22%5D%7D&s=3&r=6>.

Melissa Reid functions as the legislative liaison for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America.

**“We think protections for both religious liberties and LGBT rights can be reached without either side having to compromise its values.”**



BY ELIE MIKHAEL NASRALLAH

ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT BAKAL

If God is male, then the male is God," a feminist theologian once remarked. Quite an overreaction: but maybe an insight into an all too human dilemma, often projected onto the world of faith.

Throughout history—history being a reliable laboratory of the human condition—the male of our species, empowered by culture, religion, and social norms, has been the dominant force in the long march of the human journey.

But let's look a little more closely at the topic of religion and the role of women, or lack thereof, in the institutions of organized religion.

Although women are in general more religious, or spiritually minded, than men—see the Pew Research Center, "The Gender Gap in Religion Around the World," March 22, 2016—they have often been treated offhandedly in the balance of power within the hierarchy of the church, and have been excluded from various roles, decision-making processes, and much more.

"Standard lists of history's most influential religious figures—among them Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad, Siddhartha Gautama (the Buddha)—tend to be predominantly, if not exclusively, male. Many religious groups, including Roman Catholics and Orthodox Jews, allow only men to be clergy, while others, including some denominations in the evangelical Protestant tradition, have lifted that restriction only in recent decades."<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, while women are demonstra-

bly more religious than men and profess deeper faith and adherence to traditional religious narrative, they are still marginalized and given little power. For example, in the United States women are more likely than men to say religion is very important in their lives (60 percent versus 47 percent).

Why is this gap between the sexes becoming a matter of intense and complicated academic and social debate? "Noting similar gender differences in other countries, mainly in Europe, some social scientists have argued that women are universally more religious than men across all societies, cultures, and faiths. More controversially, a few sociologists have even theorized that the gender gap in religion is biological in nature, possibly stemming from higher levels of testosterone in men or other physical and genetic differences between the sexes."<sup>2</sup>

### Religion and Women

In 2009, while addressing the parliament of the World's Religions in Australia, former president Jimmy Carter said the following remarkable words: "Women are prevented from playing a full and equal role in many faiths, creating an environment in which violations against women are justified. The belief that women are inferior human beings in the eyes of God," Mr. Carter continued, "gives excuses to the brutal husband who beats his wife, the soldier who rapes a woman, the employer who has a lower pay scale for women employees, or parents who decide to abort a female embryo."<sup>3</sup>

The core issue here, or the main problem, is not the faith community and the

Maybe it's more than just social activism?

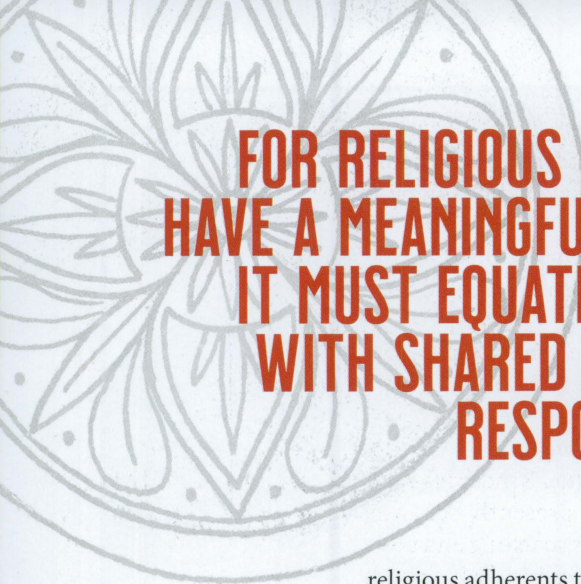
# RELIGION

## and the Significant Other









# FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM TO HAVE A MEANINGFUL PRESENCE, IT MUST EQUATE THE SEXES WITH SHARED RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

religious adherents themselves. They are faithful, moral, and good citizens. Rather, it is in many ways the interpretations of various religious texts that are written in many religions. Take, for instance, the following quotes: “There is of course plenty of fodder, in both the Koran and the Bible, for those who seek a theology of discrimination. The New Testament quotes St. Paul (1 Timothy 2) as saying that women ‘must be silent.’ Deuteronomy declares that if a woman does not bleed on her wedding night, ‘the men of her town shall stone her to death.’ An Orthodox Jewish prayer thanks God, ‘who has not made me a woman.’ The Koran stipulates that a woman shall inherit less than a man, and that a woman’s testimony counts for half a man’s.”<sup>24</sup> There are of course cultural and personal aspects to these quotations; and interpretation and matters of authority enter into the discussion—but they have been used by some to confirm horrendous social stigmatization of women in society and the church.

But make no mistake about it: organized religion did advance and create the moral environment to fight slavery and illiteracy, and contributed to the scientific revolution in Europe. There are always two sides to each coin. Religious faith is the great balm to the soul of society, and finding the true God is the greatest quest. The Old Testament promises that “ye shall seek me, and find me when ye shall search for me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:13). “Another excellent precedent is slavery. Each of the Abrahamic faiths had to deal with societal slave institutions. Muhammad owned slaves, and St. Paul seems to have condoned slavery. Yet the pioneers of the abolitionist movement were Quakers and evangelicals like William Wilberforce. People of faith ultimately worked ferociously to overthrow an oppressive institution that churches had previously condoned. Today, when religious institutions exclude women from their hierarchies and rituals, the inevitable implication is that females are inferior.”<sup>25</sup>

To expand and flourish in our age of secularism, modernity, and diversity, the churches must adapt and embrace women as never before. As with all aspects of faith, the vital and irreducible truth must be distinguished from human invention. Women are leading in university studies, and illiteracy is virtually eradicated in North America to a considerable degree. Women are asserting their place in society and have been empowered by the new modes of production, technology, communications, and access to the Internet. They do not face physical barriers; are not diminished in potential by hard farming and manufacturing jobs; and they are now needed to advance our economy and public endeavors.

However, obstacles and old norms within organized religion are still present and enduring. “Religion News Service calculated in 2015 that a majority of religious women belong to a denomination that generally prohibits them from becoming leaders. It’s a disgrace to humanity that for millenniums some placed a divine stamp on discrimination against women, insisting that inequality is actually sacred.”<sup>26</sup>

Any church culture that teaches women to be submissive or abased, or tolerant of abuse, must be replaced by a new agenda for reform and new thinking of inclusion and compassion. For religious freedom to have a meaningful presence, it must equate the sexes with shared rights and responsibilities. The often improperly applied teaching of male headship, the stigma surrounding divorce that seems more likely to settle on women, and women’s experiences of harassment, all indicate that serious reforms are needed and urgently so.

## **Women in the Arab World: The Insignificant Other!**

*Half a mind, half a creed, half an inheritance.*  
—Arab proverb

From West to East, the treatment of women when it comes to religious affairs is striking. In the Arab Middle East, for instance, which is 95 percent of the Muslim faith, women have been under theocratic suppression and control for centuries. The prospect of change is also depressingly negative for the near future.

On December 7, 2006, *Time* magazine tackled this very subject after the release of the Arab Human Development Report (AHDR), compiled under the auspices of the United Nations Development Fund. The report was titled “Towards the Rise of Women in the Arab World,” and it was written by distinguished Arab thinkers from all walks of life. “‘The rise of women,’ the report argues, ‘is in fact a pre-



requisite for an Arab renaissance and causally linked to the fate of the Arab world and its achievement of human development.’”<sup>7</sup>

The AHDR report identified four major issues that contribute to the plight of Arab women:

- Education
- The legal system
- Patriarchal tradition
- Islamic jurisprudence

What concerns us in this essay is the last item. “Women’s prospects are further weakened by regressive Islamic jurisprudence that effectively codifies discrimination against women. So entrenched has this discrimination become, the report notes, that hundreds of popular Arab proverbs scorn women for having ‘half a mind, half a creed, half an inheritance.’”<sup>8</sup>

The report, furthermore, envisions that for reform to take place, there must be a modernization in interpretation and a new jurisprudence on the part of the religious establishment for an enlightened reading of Koranic texts.

Lest we forget, religion is an intrinsic part of all cultures, not just in the Arab nations. However, religion and culture are so intertwined in the Arab Middle East that most people in the world are unaware of and would be amazed at the level of interdependency. Author Reza Aslan writes tellingly on this subject saying: “No religion exists in a vacuum. On the contrary, every faith is rooted in the soil in which it is planted. It is a fallacy to believe that people of faith derive their values primarily from their Scriptures. The opposite is true. People of faith insert their values into their Scriptures, reading them through the lens of their own culture, ethnic, nationalistic and even political perspectives.”<sup>9</sup>

To add insult to injury, the few years of the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and Syria during the past decade was one of the worst years for women, especially Christian women in the Arab world, since the Middle Ages.

On June 25, 2015, the *Annahar* newspaper of Lebanon—one of the leading publications in the region—published a news report on how “ISIS” had transported 42 female hostages from the Yazidi sect in the eastern part of Syria to the marketplace, where they were “sold” for between US\$500 and US\$2,000 per woman. The sellers told the ISIS fighters that the Yazidi women had converted to Islam, so it was permissible to marry them.

Worse still, on August 13, 2015, the *New York Times* published a report on the sex slavery trade under the heading “ISIS Enshrines a Theology of Rape.”

## Everything Is About Religion

Sally Quinn in her series for the *Washington Post* on spirituality and religions globally, published, on November 17, 2011, the following summary on her findings under the title “My Five Lessons From ‘On Faith’”:

1. Nobody Knows
2. All Religions Are the Same . . . and Not
3. Everything Is About Religion
4. We Are All Looking for Meaning
5. Why There Is Suffering

*Everything is about religion* is indeed factual, historically evident and presently so. Sally Quinn wrote a story that is so telling and powerful regarding the same topic: “My friend, Welton Gaddy, a Southern Baptist minister, told me about a friend who informed him she had absolutely no interest in religion. ‘Well,’ he asked her, ‘are you interested in national politics or foreign policy?’ ‘Yes.’ ‘What about abortion, gay marriage, immigration and the environment?’ he asked. Of course she was. ‘Well, then,’ he replied, ‘you’re interested in religion.’”

“Gaddy might well have added the financial bailout, poverty, disease, movies, music, holidays, separation of church and state, parenting, sexual abuse, animal rights, sports, books, the Internet, the military, women’s rights, racism, violence, crime, marriage, families, science, medicine and on and on. Everyone is interested in religion. They just don’t know it.”

Thus is the power of religion and its institutions on people’s lives all over the world. That religion and women’s recognition have had challenges for centuries is beyond question. The question is: Can the religious establishments, all of them, adapt to modernity, be relevant, and survive if they continue to marginalize and neglect the rightful place of women among their ranks, especially given the fact that women are universally more religious than men? Can this imbalance in the power structure endure?

Change is inevitable. In the Bible, Old and New Testaments, angels often spoke directly to women. And women first proclaimed a risen Lord. At least the disciples were eventually moved to believe their story.

<sup>1</sup> Pew Research Center, “The Gender Gap in Religion Around the World,” March 22, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Nicholas D. Kristof, “Religion and Women,” *New York Times*, January 10, 2010.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Nicholas D. Kristof, “God and Her (Female) Clergy,” *New York Times*, March 31, 2018.

<sup>7</sup> Scot MacLeod, “What’s Holding Back Arab Women?” *Time*, December 7, 2006.

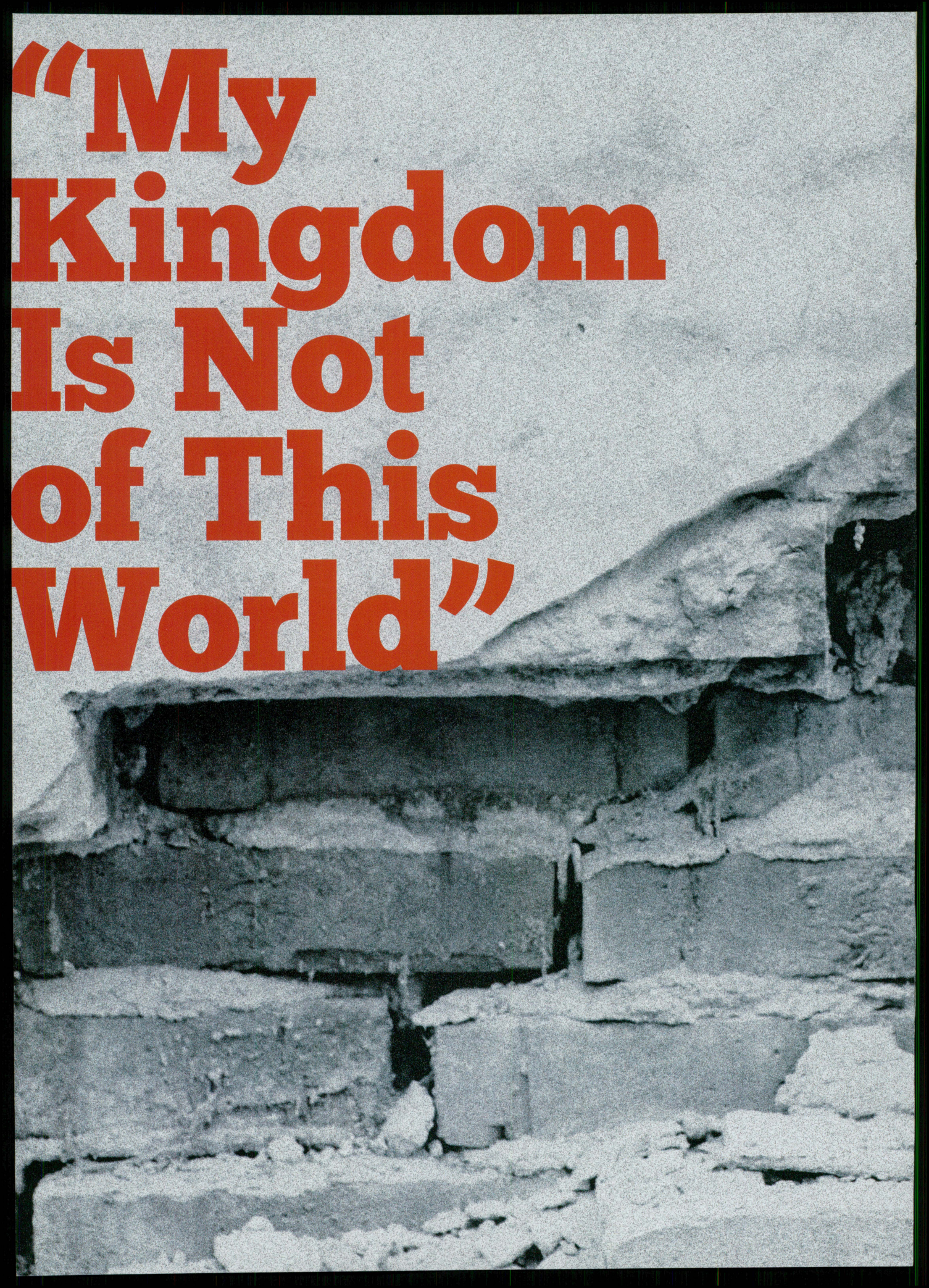
<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Reza Aslan, “Bill Maher Isn’t the Only One Who Misunderstands Religion,” *New York Times*, October 8, 2014.

Elie Mikhael Nasrallah lives in and writes from Ottawa, Canada.



**“My  
Kingdom  
Is Not  
of This  
World”**







This article is the latest in a series addressing changes in church and state relations in America. Because of the great influence of Christianity in America since the Colonial Era and onward, this article distinguishes between Christianity that adheres more closely to its biblical roots and that in unfortunate times in the history of Western civilization when misguided religious leaders departed from biblical principles. This article is not intended to criticize, or condemn, such leaders or moments, but is intended to demonstrate how biblical Christianity is often mischaracterized by those who use such departures from biblical norms to stereotype Christianity and its followers as a maleficent influence in society.

PIQUIGNANI/ISTOCK

BY EDWIN COOK

**O**n December 19, 2019, Mark Galli, then-editor of *Christianity Today*, published an editorial viewpoint, “Trump Should Be Removed From Office,” that set off a spate of contention among Evangelicals who supported Trump and those who did not. Galli argued that Christians should not support any national leader who demonstrated a lack of morality and ethics. To do so would diminish and tarnish the reputation of Christianity.

Nearly a year later, on November 2, 2020, the new editor of *Christianity Today*, Timothy Dalrymple, alluded to the same issue and affirmed Galli’s concern, as well as expressing his own conviction that aligned with Galli’s. Dalrymple also identified two groups among Evangelical Christians—the Church Regnant and the Church Remnant. The first group (Church Regnant) supports leaders whose actions advance Evangelical issues, even if those leaders may have questionable moral character or potential ethical issues. The Church Regnant derives its appellation from the term *reign*, or to govern. Thus, the Church Regnant consists of those Christians who interpret Christ’s teaching to establish Christianity as a reigning, or governing, force in the world. In essence, the church should help to establish the kingdom of God on earth, and such Christians view their role as addressing moral issues and practices in society.

The second group (Church Remnant) considers the witness and integrity of Christianity to be more important than policy issues and politics. They interpret Christ’s teachings as more spiritual and forward-looking to the time of Christ’s kingdom being established on an earth made new, after the destruction of sin



and evil. From this belief, they see the church primarily as the medium God appointed for the salvation of humanity, a place where sinners are reconciled with God and given the assurance of eternal life. Such Christians participate in earthly activities, such as voting, daily life, holding down a job, forming a family unit, etc., but dedicate their primary focus upon evangelism. As such, they do not become so heavily involved in politics or candidates for public office.

What does the historical record reveal about Christianity from its founding to the present? The authoritative source for all Christians, the Bible, contains several principles regarding believers and their relation to civil authority.

### Church and State

In Matthew 22:16-22 Jewish religious leaders attempted to catch Jesus speaking against the law or against Caesar by showing Him a tribute coin and asking whether it was lawful to pay tribute. Jesus, perceiving their craftiness, rebuked them and asked them to show Him the coin. Then He asked them, "Whose is this image and superscription?" They said to Him, "Caesar's." Then He said to them, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's."

The historical context reveals that the tribute money in question had at least two meanings for the Jews living in Rome: some of the tribute money was used to support the temple of Roman deities, and the tribute tax was a perpetual reminder to the Jews of their subjugation to the Romans. Both of these issues led more zealous Jews to seek an opportunity for revolt, and most certainly was a discussion point as to whether any "pious and devout" Jew should pay the tribute in view of its association with Roman deities.

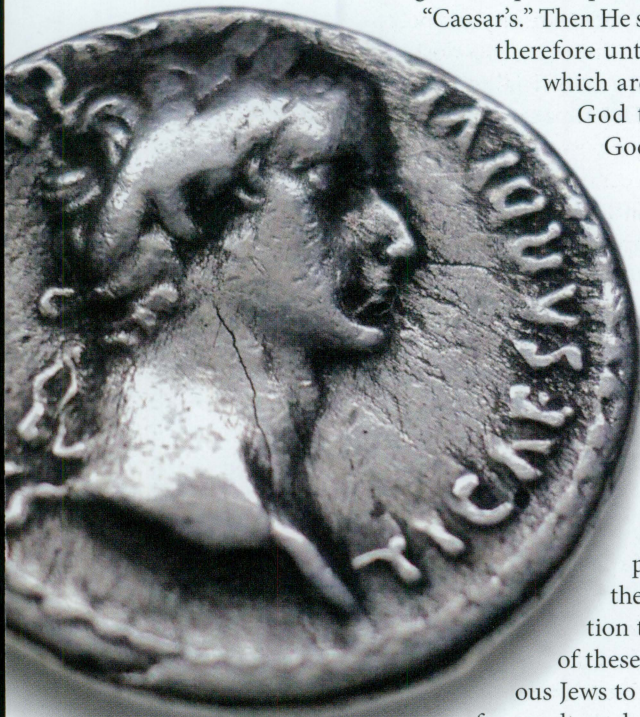
Christ's answer was clear: render, or pay, dues to whom they are due. By His answer Christ establishes the principle that Christians should show deference whenever possible to earthly rulers and authority. The apostle Peter admon-

ishes the same thing: "Fear God. Honour the king" (1 Peter 2:17). Christians should not be involved in efforts to overthrow even a pagan form of government. Christ's instruction here is the same that the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write in Romans 13, "The powers that be are ordained of God" (verse 1), including the pagan Roman government that existed when Paul wrote the book of Romans.

Additionally, in Matthew 22:16-22 Christ makes a clear distinction between two spheres of authority: the heavenly authority of God and the earthly authority of men. Martin Luther, the Catholic monk who turned into a Protestant Reformer, derived from this passage the concept that a Christian is a citizen of two kingdoms. As this passage implies, Christ foresaw times when both kingdoms would be in conflict over some things—the image on the coin identifies the kingdom to which it belongs. Likewise, humanity was made in the likeness and image of God (Genesis 1:26, 27) and, as such, belongs to God.

Yet a human is also a subject, or citizen, of an earthly kingdom, as Paul admonished: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. . . . Who-soever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God" (Romans 13:1, 2). But, the demands of the state, if in conflict with the demands of God, must take second place, as Christ further pointed out: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matthew 22:36).

What, then, are some areas that God has reserved unto Himself? The first four commandments clearly describe supreme allegiance that humans owe to God as their Creator: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3); "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image. . . . Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them, for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God" (verses 4, 5); "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain" (verse 7); and "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy; six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God" (verses 8-10). Thus, a Christian must worship God and rest on the Sabbath (Saturday) instead of yielding homage to the demands of one's employer (most state laws favor employers' rights above those of employees); a Christian should pay tithe before taxes; Christian parents have the obligation to raise their children in the ways of God, rather than the ways of nonbelievers (homeschooling versus public education that typically includes evolutionary theories)—these are just a few of the areas in which Christians'





convictions conflict with the demands of earthly (civil) authority and provide sufficient reason for which the two spheres should be identified and maintained as distinctly separate.

Church and state relations involve not only relations between civil authority and religious groups, but also relations between various religious groups. Perhaps the most notable teaching of Christ regarding tolerance toward differing religious beliefs may be found in Luke 9:51-56. Christ was en route to Jerusalem shortly before the events leading up to His crucifixion and had chosen to travel through a Samaritan village. The Samaritans held some religious beliefs in common with the Jews, but many that differed. One primary difference was they worshipped on a mountain in Samaria and not in Jerusalem at the temple, as the Jews believed and practiced (John 4:20). Thus, the Samaritans refused to allow Jesus and His disciples to pass that way. With great indignation two of His disciples wanted to “command fire to come down from heaven to consume them” (Luke 9:54). Christ rebuked them, saying, “You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives but to save them” (verses 55, 56, NKJV).<sup>1</sup> Thus, Christ not only demonstrated tolerance, but also revealed that religious bigotry and retaliatory actions toward those with differing faiths had no place in His teachings and should never be practiced by His followers.

Nonetheless, religious discrimination and persecution based on a false religious zeal have been revealed in Christian history and will again be revealed in the future. In Revelation 13:1-3 and 14-17 John, the beloved disciple of Jesus, described an entity that combined religious and political power, which had characteristics similar to those of Christ (receiving a deadly wound [Revelation 13:3] and having two horns like a lamb [verse 11], both of which are symbolic of Christ, the Lamb of God [John 1:29], and His crucifixion). That religiopolitical entity would deceive earth’s inhabitants into establishing a decree to enforce worship of itself and the mark of its authority. From John’s perspective of A.D. 98, what future events did he foresee?

Christianity was essentially an illegal religion from the time of its founding (roughly A.D. 33) until the fourth century, when Emperor Constantine recognized it as the religion of the Roman Empire. During its illegal existence Christians were considered a threat to the Empire because they would not recognize the divinity of each reigning emperor, and would make that known by refusing to offer a pinch of

incense to their statues. Christians were not allowed to proselytize (make converts), and blended in with the Jewish worship services because Judaism was a legal religion and because of the common day of worship for both groups, the biblical Sabbath (Saturday). For these reasons countless numbers of Christians died as martyrs as part of public entertainment—some through public burning and others through being mauled by wild animals during the Colosseum events.

As Christians became the dominant religion in the Roman Empire, they exerted more influence on society and its customs. Christians wrote much and entered into debates with non-Christians over philosophical issues and such practices as public entertainment at the coliseums. Emperor Constantine the Great came into power in A.D. 306 and issued the Edict of Milan in A.D. 313, which granted tolerance to Christians throughout the Empire. He presided over the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325, thus serving a dual role as emperor and as theologian over some doctrinal issues that church leaders needed to settle. This marked the first time in the history of Christianity that Christians entered into close working relations with civil authority and political forces. By A.D. 381 Emperor Theodosius I had made Christianity the official religion of the Empire, and in A.D. 392 paganism was officially banned, leading to persecution of pagans for the better part of a century. By A.D. 538 the church in Rome assumed the role and influence over the Roman Empire of the West when Emperor Justinian transferred the seat of imperial authority from Rome to Constantinople. This period marked the beginning of what would grow through the following centuries to become the monolithic, oppressive, and persecuting force of the Roman Catholic Church, which reached its apogee during the Medieval Era.

In A.D. 494 Pope Gelasius I conceived the Two Swords theory, by which the Church claimed the sword of spiritual authority and conceded to the state that of civil authority. Under this configuration the spiritual authority of the church outweighed the civil authority of the state. Thus, the Church justified itself in using civil authority and leveraging politics to achieve its ends if spiritual means would not suffice.<sup>2</sup> During the following centuries the Church assumed such authority that church leaders began to adopt practices and affirm doctrines that were not based on the Bible. In essence supplanting Christ as the mediator of human beings before God, the Church began to exert control over the consciences of adher-

**Religious discrimination and persecution based on a false religious zeal have been revealed in Christian history and will again be revealed in the future.**



**The Roman Catholic Church was not alone in committing atrocities unbecoming of Christians.**

ents (and nonbelievers) by teaching auricular confession (audible confession of sins to a priest in order to receive pardon). The popes began to take on a supreme, pontifical role, assuming prerogatives that belong only to God, such as power to forgive sins (Matthew 9:1-8) and holding “the keys of hell and of death” (Revelation 1:18). By claiming such authority and adopting the title of Vicar of the Son of God (i.e., one who stands as the incarnate Son of God), popes through the centuries abused such improperly claimed authority to denounce kings, to christen kings, and to coerce monarchs and their subjects through papal interdiction (not allowing any dead to be buried in the church cemetery and forbidding priests to conduct funerals, infant baptisms, or weddings—prohibitions that struck panic into the believing masses, because the priests were seen as the portal to the afterlife).

The Holy Inquisition of the Medieval Era (1200-1500) marked the height of the abuse of papal authority. In twelfth-century France papal directive led to the violent suppression of the perceived errors of Cathars (aka Albigensians) and Huguenots, as well as in Italy against the Waldensians. The Inquisition was established over a vast area that included Madrid, Spain; Rome, Italy; Goa, India; Lima, Peru; England; and Mexico City, Mexico. The Renaissance (1300-1400) exposed fallacies of papal teachings. A Roman Catholic monk named Martin Luther appealed for a return to a biblical model of the church and its claims. He was rejected and became a figure at the epicenter of what we remember as the Protestant Reformation. Thus, after 1518, the Inquisition targeted Protestants primarily, and at times Jewish believers. The *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* (List of Prohibited Books) was used during the Inquisition to identify prohibited literary material. (Its use ended in 1966 in the wake of Vatican II, but the Legion of Decency in America and the Knights of Columbus monitor and refute any publications against the Church.)

The Roman Catholic Church was not alone in committing atrocities unbecoming of Christians. Protestants also utilized the weapons of this world and tactical measures to engage in conflict with Catholics. The Schmalkald League (1531-1547), organized by Lutherans, intended to defend Protestant believers against Catholic forces in the Holy Roman Empire. As Protestantism spread, the European Wars of the Religion,<sup>3</sup> lasting from the sixteenth to the early eighteenth centuries, were battles between Catholics and Protestants for control of formerly

Catholic territories. In Geneva, Switzerland, John Calvin established a union of Protestant religion (Calvinism) and civil authority (the Court of Star Chamber) to try to condemn those believed to be in violation of the religious teachings established by law. As part of Christianity’s sorrowful past, John Calvin ordered that Michael Servetus be burned at the stake because he held an antibiblical view of the Holy Spirit, had disseminated such views through writings, and refused to recant from those beliefs.

After several centuries of such oppression, society threw off the yoke of papal control. Secularists, non-religionists, and philosophers, disgusted by the un-Christlike actions of both Catholics and Protestants, contributed to the Enlightenment. In France Voltaire vowed to undermine the Christianity of the day; and the French Revolution (1793-1798) marked the beheading of many priests. Napoleon’s General Berthier took the pope captive, thus marking what church historians refer to as the Roman Question (i.e., Would the Roman Catholic Church regain the civil and ecclesial authority that it had once exercised during the Medieval Era, and what would become of the church as a mere spiritual entity?).

Several of America’s Founders were influenced by Enlightenment thought and perceived the dangers of church and state union as recorded throughout much of European history. Thomas Jefferson, in particular, helped produce a secular Constitution, while it was James Madison who penned the religion clauses of what later became the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Those founding documents have surely functioned well in America for more than two centuries. However, in recent decades, various Christian groups have organized for political power and influence: they appear to be producing a mirror-like image and following in the footsteps of Roman Catholicism from its earliest origins through centuries of dominance. The Church Regnant may believe involvement in politics is justified, but to what end will it lead?

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<sup>2</sup>Harold Kingsberg and Dustin James Hudgins, contributors to Quora.com, “What Was Gelasius’ Two-Swords Theory?” translated from the Latin text (2020), <https://www.quora.com/What-was-Gelasius-two-swords-theory>, accessed March 11, 2021.

<sup>3</sup>See David J. B. Trim, “The Reformation and Wars of Religion,” *Liberty*, 2010 edition, for a five-part series detailing these events, <http://www.libertymagazine.org/article/the-break-from-rome>, accessed March 11, 2021.

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*The Consecration of Saint Augustine* painted by Jaume Huguet, c. 1470

# The Theocratic Theory of Government

**A**theocracy is a form of government in which all the affairs of men, whether temporal or spiritual, civil or religious, are united under the control of God. The government of Israel was a true theocracy. It was really a government of God.

When doing their duty, the kings of Israel ruled the people according to the directions of God. But the kings did not always do their duty. Many of them rejected the counsel of the Lord. This was carried to such an extent by Zedekiah that God said to him:

“Thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, thus saith the Lord God; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it to him” (Ezekiel 21:25-27).

In fulfillment of this sentence, the kingdom of Israel was subsequently overturned three times—once by Medo-Persia, once by Grecia, and once by Rome. Soon after the third over-

BY A. G.  
DANIELLS



**While this world stands, a true theocracy can never be in it again.**

turning, the theocracy of Israel was removed from the earth, and, according to the sentence of God, "It shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him."

He "whose right it is," and to whom that kingdom will be restored, is the Lord Jesus Christ. Of Him we read:

"He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:32, 33).

When Christ was on earth, He declared to

*Christian Church*, Vol. II, sec. 27).

Of the principle in Augustine's theory, Neander says: "It was by Augustine, then, that a theory was proposed and founded, which . . . contained the germ of that whole system of spiritual despotism, of intolerance and persecution, which ended in the tribunals of the Inquisition" (*History of the Christian Religion and Church*, Vol. II, Section Second, part iii, div. 1, last part).

Yes, the theory that advocates law, compulsion, punishment in matters of religion, contains the germ of spiritual despotism, of religious intolerance and cruel persecution. The Papacy was that theory fully developed. The man who holds that theory will invade the rights of his fellows. The church that holds that theory will usurp authority over the state, and use the civil power as an instrument of persecution.

This has been done by men claiming to be Protestant reformers, and by professed Protestant churches. The cruel deeds of Calvin and Cranmer, and the dark chapters in the history of the Scotch Covenanter, the Puritans, and the English Church are the natural and awful results of this theory.

### Augustine's Theory Adopted by Calvin

The theory of counteracting evil and making Christians by enforcing laws and inflicting penalties, propounded by Augustine and now advocated by the Evangelical Alliance and other religio-political organizations of America, found a large place in the heart of John Calvin. One of his apologists says: "He allowed to the church a greater authority than any other Reformer. Here, again, the influence of Augustine is seen. He says, 'The church is our mother.' . . . Outside of the church there is no salvation. . . . In this scheme he had in the Israelites. He aimed at a theocracy" (*Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia*, art. "Calvin").

Calvin "aimed at a theocracy," and he succeeded in establishing one, and the account of its working and its influence in various countries forms one of the darkest chapters in the history of modern times. Geneva was his home and the seat of his operations. On arriving in that city in 1536, Calvin found the people emerging from a violent conflict between papists and Protestants. The reformed religion had just been adopted by the state. Calvin decided to remain in Geneva, and devote himself to the cause of the Reformation.

"He soon found himself at the head of the whole movement, political as well as religious; and by his iron hand a theocracy of a very stern



*The Last Moments of Calvin* by Emilio Castelar, c. 1880

Pilate that His kingdom was not of this world (John 18:36). He further declared that the time when He would sit upon the throne of His kingdom would be at His coming (Matthew 25:31, 32).

"Therefore while this world stands, a true theocracy can never be in it again. From the death of Christ until now, every theory of an earthly theocracy has been a false theory. And from now on until the end of the world, every such theory will be a false theory. Yet such was the theory of the bishops of the fourth century."

And it was this theory that led to the establishment of the Papacy.

### Augustine's Dangerous Theory

Augustine, one of the fathers of the Roman Catholic Church, reasoned thus:

"It is indeed better that man should be brought to serve God by instruction than by fear of punishment, or by pain. But because the former means are better, the latter must not therefore be neglected. . . . Many must often be brought back to the Lord, like wicked servants, by the rod of temporal suffering before they attain to the highest grade of religious development" (Philip Schaff, *History of the*





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type was established. The reformed doctrine became a civil duty, and dogmatical deviations were treated as treason. Ecclesiastical discipline was carried even into the routine of daily life, and a breach of its dictates was punished as a crime" (*ibid.*, art. "Geneva").

### Calvin's Theocracy

Calvin formed a "church court," which had "full authority to maintain discipline." ("On November 20, 1541, at a popular meeting, the scheme he drew up was ratified. This provided for a consistory composed of six city ministers and twelve elders—one of the latter to be a syndic, and their president—which met every Thursday, and put under *church discipline, without respect of persons, every species of evil-doers*" (*ibid.*, art. "Calvin").

This was a government after Calvin's own heart. It was the theocracy which he aimed to establish. The church controlled the state, and Calvin controlled the church. It is not surprising that historians have called Geneva the "Rome of Protestantism," and Calvin a "prophet king."

"His system of church polity was essentially theocratic; it assumed that every member of the state was also under the discipline of the church; and he asserted that the right of exercising this discipline was vested *exclusively in the consistory, or body of preachers and elders*. . . . Nor was it only in religious matters that Calvin busied himself; nothing was indifferent to him that concerned the welfare and good order of the state or the advantage of its citizens. His work, as has been justly said, 'embraced everything,' he was consulted on every affair, great and small, that came before the council—on questions of law, police, economy, trade, and manufactures, no less than on questions of doctrine and church polity" (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, art. "Calvin").

The government established by Calvin, and over which he exercised almost absolute control, bore such a striking resemblance in form to the Jewish theocracy that Wylie, speaking of Geneva, says: "Calvin took the Jewish theocracy as his model when he set to work to frame, or rather to complete, the Genevan republic. What we see on the banks of the Leman is a theocracy. . . . The government exercised a pre-

siding and paternal guardianship over all interest and causes, civil and spiritual. Geneva, in this respect, was a reproduction of the Old Testament state of society" (*History of Protestantism*, book 10, p. 284).

Yes, Calvin's government exercised a "paternal guardianship over all interests and causes, civil and spiritual." It interfered with the private affairs of the people to such an extent that it became intolerable. On one occasion the people arose in rebellion and banished Calvin from Geneva. At the end of two years he returned with a firm determination to persevere in his course to the end. Those who spoke against Calvin's religion or doctrines were severely punished. Ameaux, who declared that Calvin's religion was "deceit and tyranny," was compelled "to walk through the streets bareheaded, carrying a lighted candle, and to make confession of his fault on his knees" (*ibid.*, book 17, p. 310).

Gruet, on a charge of infidelity, was condemned and beheaded. Jerome Hermes Bolsec was imprisoned, and finally banished, on the same grounds. Michael Servetus was persecuted and finally burned to death by Calvin's theocracy, for having opposed the doctrine of the Trinity.

These are a few samples of fruits produced by this man-made theocracy. The theocracy itself was an exact counterpart of the Papacy, which grew out of Augustine's theocratical theory of government. And, like the Papacy, it invaded the rights of the people. It robbed them of their liberties.

The theory propounded by Augustine, and adopted by Calvin, at present occupies a prominent place in the schemes of many religious organizations in this and other Protestant lands. And as the germ of each scheme is the same, the fruits are not likely to be different. The only just and safe course to pursue is to keep the state and the church separate, and to allow men to exercise the fullest liberty in matters of religion. This is in harmony with the words of Christ, "Render . . . unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's."

Washington, D.C.

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A. G. Daniells (1858-1935) was president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists from 1901 to 1922.



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# A Touching Moment

“When he came down from the mountain, great crowds followed him; and behold, a leper came to him and knelt before him, saying, ‘Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.’ And he stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, ‘I will; be clean.’ And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus said to him, ‘See that you say nothing to any one; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a proof to the people.’”

—Matthew 8:1-4 \*

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