



The Rapid Rise of Secular Orthodoxy

by Pastor Glenn Huebel

Our nation was formed largely by communities seeking to escape religious oppression and persecution in Europe. The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod was established in the 19th century by such a community of emigrants from Germany. In America, the freedom of conscience was a protected right. No one in America was required to become a member or follow the dictates of any religious group. That is the essence of the First Amendment which prohibits the government from establishing a religion that all citizens must follow. The same Amendment protects the "free exercise" of religion, as well as free speech in general.

Christians have become increasingly concerned in recent decades that this Amendment is now being misused to silence public religious speech and free exercise of faith rather than protect it. This concern has now reached an alarming level with the advent of government-imposed secular orthodoxy, which is not essentially different from the imposition of religious dictates.

By secular orthodoxy I mean the new standards of justice and morality commonly called "politically correct" opinions. These opinions have no clear source or norm such as the Bible, nor any court in which they may be honestly challenged. These vague

norms are evidently not subject to debate or even clarification. They are to be obeyed without question and all who refuse to conform in the slightest way are to be punished severely without a trial. The slightest evidence that one may be thinking incorrectly, or even thought incorrectly in the distant past, may result in public condemnation and isolation. The untried violator may lose reputation and career by the mere nod of the self-appointed thought police. Thus, the Mozilla CEO is fired because he contributed a few dollars to Proposition 8 in California a few years ago. Chick-Fil-A is publicly excoriated because it simply supports traditional marriage through retreats. A well respected newspaper editor is fired because he wrote a blog contending against a new "gay-friendly translation" of the Bible. A well respected meteorologist is under attack because he publicly differs from the propaganda that global warming is a scientifically settled opinion. Reputable and academically qualified scientists are ostracized because they challenge

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That you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name. —John 20:31

the scientific basis of the theory of evolution. This kind of behavior is expected in rigidly ruled theocracies such as Islam or the medieval papacy, but the USA fundamentally rejected theocratic rule in the first Amendment.

Strangely, the first Amendment, which denies government imposition of religion, has now given a virtual monopoly to secularism by the claim that it is not “religious.” Unintended consequences can make the cure worse than the disease.

One may argue that the chastenings listed above are those of public opinion, not government. That may be so, and conservatives are usually loathe to insist that government should interfere in the decisions made by private corporations, but the day of no-hands-on government is long past. Government is already deeply involved in such matters where social orthodoxy is concerned. Can we even imagine a newspaper editor being fired because he or she publicly defends gay marriage in a private blog? Who thinks that such a decision could ever hold up in court? Lawyers would be licking their chops to file a major lawsuit against the newspaper, and the owners would be counseled by their own lawyers to pay big bucks to settle out of court. Will the government come down equally when the plaintiff does not hold a secularly orthodox position or when his position conflicts with secular orthodoxy? Our confidence in the “blindness” of justice is waning. Are some moral opinions more equal than others? We shall see.

Though the Supreme Court “Hobby Lobby decision” supports religious freedom for the moment, the popular reaction against this decision does not inspire confidence that our Constitutional right will continue to be preserved. Evidently, a large number of Americans now believe that secular moral norms (as opposed to religious ones) may be imposed upon the people without regard to conscience. So much misinformation and hysteria has clouded the waters over this case that Christians need to understand that Hobby Lobby did NOT object to providing ordinary birth control means to its workers, but to providing abortifacients (abortion inducing drugs) to its workers. The orthodox church has, throughout history, opposed abortion. This is not some newly invented moral norm created to evade the law. In fact, the hysterical cry against this decision is based upon an incredible new norm, the norm that it is a “right” for women, not only to take such drugs, but to have them paid for by their employers. No one in the Hobby Lobby case even remotely challenged the “right” of women to take abortifacients. No one is even remotely trying to rule over an employee’s healthcare decisions. Every employee of Hobby Lobby has always been, and still is, free to purchase whatever legal drugs they choose to buy, without the slightest fear of reprisal by their employer. The issue was whether the owners of Hobby Lobby had a religious right to exemption from the imposition upon their conscience in a matter that has deep moral implications. The right to free exercise of

religion is explicitly stated in the Constitution. It would take incredible sophistry to find a “right to be paid for abortifacients” in the Constitution. The fact that there are obviously many people making this ridiculous claim is utterly frightening. If the courts are ever persuaded to follow the dictates of social orthodoxy against the clear words of the Constitution, we are in as much trouble as if our country became a theocracy.

As these controversies become more severe, and our nation is more subjugated to the fear of PC police, we Christians will be forced to comply by silent consent or to confess boldly against the new orthodoxy and risk significant temporal consequences. It is important for us to stand together and with one voice glorify God and His truth. This means that we come to the defense of our fellow Christian who suffers for the sake of the truth, and suffer with him if necessary. This means we ourselves “come out of the closet” and openly declare our allegiance to Christ and His Word. We find ourselves in a similar context as that faced by most of the prophets and Christians of old. This should not be surprising, for apostasy, and a massive rejection and persecution of Christianity is one of the major signs of the Lord’s coming in glory. Most of us have been raised in relative comfort and ease, taking our freedoms for granted. Jesus bids us to open our eyes to the signs of the times (Matt 16:2,3) and to prepare our children and our own hearts to face hardness as soldiers in His army (2 Tim 2:3).

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This means immersion in His Word, which is our only defense against the deception of the evil one. You cannot possibly separate the wheat (truth) from the chaff (lies) without knowing Scripture. You cannot possibly be bold in your confession of Christ without faith in Christ which is worked through the Word. You cannot grow in faith and knowledge of the truth without regular hearing, reading, meditating, and memorizing of the Word of God, which is a lamp for your feet and a light for your path (Ps 119:105).

Our Lord Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He has

literally loved us to death by laying His life down in our place. Through His blood He has reconciled us to the Father so that we might be His own and live under Him in His Kingdom. He has now risen from the dead and ascending to the Father where He lives and reigns over all creation. He must reign until He puts all enemies under His feet, and He will do so on the last day when He comes to take us home. "Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (1 John 5:21).

Blessings in Christ,
Pastor Huebel



Music Ministry Kick-Off Gathering

Saturday, August 23

4:00pm - 7:00pm

Please mark your calendar to 'come to the cabin' on the 23rd of this month as we gather to celebrate the start of another music season. It's a time to eat, meet and greet (friends old & new), eat, laugh, eat, and just enjoy being together - and also eat. It is a gathering for all the instrumentalists & soloists, vocal choir, handbell choirs, those newly interested in joining, and any and all encouragers of the music ministry—even if you don't have a voice to sing or an instrument to play. This is a **"family-thing,"** so no need for anyone to stay home.

Ray & I will provide ice, plates, utensils, flavored water

You can bring your personal beverage to drink and an appetizer or dessert to share. The address for your navigation system is 945 Stonecrest Road, Argyle.

Look forward to seeing you!

Vicki Main 940-391-8593 vickinotes@msn.com



Messiah Lutheran Church & School

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

1308 Whitley Rd. Keller, TX 76248

Church Office: (817) 431-2345

Early Childhood Center: (817) 431-6139

Classical Academy (K-8): (817) 431-5486

Sunday Worship: 8:00 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.

Sunday School & Adult Bible Class: 9:30 a.m.

Rev. Glenn Huebel, Senior Pastor

Mrs. Erika Mildred, MLCA Headmaster

Mrs. Vicki Main, Kantor

Mrs. Shirleen Simek, Financial Director

www.messiahkeller.org

The Best “Homemade” Meal, by Veronica Hobson

Imagine relaxing with your spouse in your own home as an award-winning chef prepares dinner in your kitchen. You recline in your easy chair as he chops veggies and browns beef. Your doorbell rings and you usher in your son and daughter with their spouses. As the six of you chat in the living room, the chef's assistant serves you glasses of wine and appetizers of brie topped with cranberries, pistachios and grilled onions. You relish the tart and salty taste, but eat only a little because you know that more is coming, much more.

You and your adult children gather around the dining table. You can hear the chef in the kitchen as he continues to carve, simmer and bake the remainder of your meal. His assistant refills your glass with wine. She walks to the kitchen and returns with your salad of greens topped with slivered radishes and green onions, surrounded by grilled squash, zucchini and tomato. Oohs and ahhs rise from your guests. Before you can finish your salad, your server sets before you a pastry stuffed with tenderloin Beef

Wellington, surrounded by potatoes rolled in herbs. As you put your fork into your pastry, you hear, "Mmmm, delicious!" from your daughter.

Your fellow diners savor each bite as you make

progress on your pastry. The Beef Wellington fills half of your plate and you soon realize that this entree is much more than you can eat in one sitting, even though you are tempted to try. Just as you decide to save the rest for later, the assistant chef enters carrying Lemon Berry Trifle and more wine.

You look at the crystal cups layered with strawberries, blueberries, blackberries and lemon pound cake. The fresh fruit is topped with vanilla whipped cream and raspberry sauce. You decide that you have just enough room in your tummy for dessert. Your family delves into their dessert cups and soon you hear sighs, followed by groans. Your son looks at you and says, "That is the best meal I've had in a long time."



Sound like a fantasy? Well, this happened to me. Chef Charles Youts, of the Classic Cafe, and his wife, Melissa recently came to my home and prepared lunch for me and my family. I didn't have to travel to the Classic Cafe and buy lunch or purchase a catering package to have it served in my home. All I had to do was buy a raffle ticket.

Each year, Chef Youts teaches a cooking class in the Messiah Fellowship Hall as a fund raiser for the youth. He cooks for the class and describes his ingredients and techniques as the class proceeds. The students consume the gourmet meal as he prepares each course. As part of the fund raiser, Charles and Melissa sell raffle tickets. The winner of the raffle receives a free chef-prepared meal in their home.

So, if you enjoy fine food, cooking lessons, and good company, do not miss Chef Youts next class. Don't forget to buy your raffle tickets either. It's the best chance I can think of to impress your family with a "homemade" meal.