

The Changing Priorities of Christianity

No, it wasn't a concept discovered in the laboratory. A scientific theorist didn't mathematically create it. A teller of fortune didn't consult a crystal ball regarding a new philosophy. It is simply an inherent part of every person – everywhere. It's the love of freedom and the liberty to choose.

Challenging this, however, is an earth-old issue: How does society deal with a freedom for one that brings bondage to another. Cain and Able didn't agree on religious liturgy, what God and family loyalties meant or how to respond to one another's conflicting expressions. It is sinister when one's values lead to the harm of another who holds standards at variance with their own. That creates behavior outside the parameters of healthy competitive rivalry. Oppression, retaliation or even tarnishing the name of the opposition often comes in the "name of freedom." When it demands annihilation of those who don't believe like they do, it is tyranny. That is happening all throughout the Islamic world with their hatred towards Christians. In America it is taking on an ominous twist.

In the political arena there is a growing intensity of hate-filled rhetoric that prejudices public understanding. Many perceive that equality, liberty and meaningful democracy is coming to an end.¹ Freedom of religious expression is coming under unexpected opposition. Christian traditions and values are being undermined by powerful media moguls, the entertainment industry, and political support of anti-Christian activity (i.e., promotion of gay marriage, explicit sex education in schools, infanticide through abortion, etc.). A conservative Christian family can no longer shield children from influences that undermine standards they wish to preserve. A schism between conservatives (who claim the Ten Commandment and Bible values) and liberals (who welcome and tolerate everything except Christian values) is widening and brewing feelings of retaliation.

During the 2004 presidential campaign, cars with a Bush–Cheney bumper sticker were often scratched with metal objects if in a liberal neighborhood. A car with a Kerry–Edwards sticker in a conservative urban area almost never was marred. When conservative Ann Coulter goes on college campuses, she has to have a bodyguard, and a police contingency comes out to protect her. If ultra-liberal Al Franken goes to a university campus, there is no police or body guard faction.

Liberals consider conservatives as morally inferior for not supporting abortion, environmental causes and sexual freedom. Thus they are not owed decent respect. Conservatives tend to view liberals as immature and foolish, those in need of being defeated because they are traitors to American virtues and strength.²

A predictable outcome is defensiveness and activism. A growing number of Christian leaders have begun to visibly take sides in this arena. A political foray has infiltrated both Roman Catholic and Protestant agendas. The Vatican's positions are fascinating but vapid. Pro-life is a hallmark of their social and political dogma. Yet, threatened censure of Catholic politicians supporting even late term abortions is never acted upon. The anti-gay moves to rectify over

¹ Chomsky, Noam; *The American 'system' is spelling the end of its historic values.*

² Prager, Dennis; *Who Hates the Other More – Liberals or Conservatives*, 040406, Creator Syndicate Inc., www.worldnetdaily.com.

10,000 abusive priests supports two sides of the homosexuality/pedophile issue without true resolution. Though advocating law abiding citizenry, they support illegal immigration.³

The Protestants are coming at moral and anti-Christian threats very differently. The majority lay claim to Reformation zeal and have appropriated the word “evangelical.” That has drawn together diverse Protestant persuasions into activist coalitions (i.e., Focus on the Family, Christian Coalition, The Rick Scarborough Report movement, Reclaiming America, Renew America, etc.). In turn, those organizations seek ever tighter ties to political leaders who are portrayed as Christian conservatives.

There is a persona to this whole movement that is an intriguing and a sociological phenomenon. It is a “resistance” movement. The rhetoric is intensifying and borders on oppression. That is disturbing.

Evangelicals and Catholics claim theological authority for their activism. But the imagery of both groups of “conservatives” is pretentious. Battle lines are being created over social issues and how secularism has improperly impacted schools and society at large. This trend by religious institutions and agencies detract attention from the Cross of Jesus and places undue emphasis on behavior and social concerns.

Though support for the inerrancy and infallibility of the Bible is claimed, its spiritual virtues are only lightly addressed. This has introduced a significant dilemma into the Christian world. What really are the boundaries to faith? Are they doctrines, Calvary and Christ’s cleansing blood or the “right to life,” immigration, environmental issues or perhaps prayer in schools?

These tendencies have developed an objectionable spirituality within modern Christian churches. Faith itself is being promoted as a saving work. It has become mechanical and a “human activity” that guarantees salvation. This view of faith reduces the power of God to merely a human technique.⁴ That in itself mechanizes salvation and becomes another form of a “sacrament” which saves.

The search for certainty, assurance and hope should be found in one’s conversion and intensely personal friendship with Jesus. The Christian world is defining itself more in a power struggle over behavioral ideals, leaning more and more on civil authority to “power” their agendas. The Christian “cause” has become a quest for verifiable “rights” that extend beyond Biblical truth. Its battle cry is the reclamation of moral community standards.

This is so unique and tragic. A Christological center, a theology based on fulfillment of God’s great redemptive covenants is not only displaced but replaced by “religious humanism.”

Piety is being replaced by activism. Faith based on loyalty is replaced by a simple “believe in.” Worship is replaced by fellowship. The power of the Spirit is being replaced by appeals to civil authority. The natural result of what is now occurring will inevitably be compulsion to unify to resolve the seemingly unsolvable.

³ <http://www.miracoalition.org/issues/federal/immigration-reform3/religious-letters/letter-from-cardinal-mahoney-to-pres.-bush>

⁴ Schneichen, Peter M.; *The Challenge of Conservative Theology*, www.religion-online.org/listbycategory.asp?Cat=81 - 6k.

We are seeing fearful psychological and sociological trends in the Christian world. This is the beginning of the changing personality of the Revelation 13 earth beast. Though a pretense for commitment to Jesus under girds this movement, it is Babylon becoming manifest. The Catholic Church has also penetrated the political arena and is creating training centers for activism in the area of immigration. They have formally announced that the church will defy the law unless illegal's are handled properly.⁵

Two psychological barriers have been penetrated. One, the unifying work of Christian churches over social issues; two, the use of civil power to achieve these goals. This was noted as an end-time matter long ago.

“By every means at their command they will endeavor to suppress the discussion of these vital questions. The church appeals to the strong arm of civil power, and in this work papists and Protestants unite.... Conscientious obedience to the Word of God will be treated as rebellion.”⁶

BUT: “It is not part of Christ’s mission to compel men to receive Him. It is Satan, and men actuated by his spirit, that seek to compel the conscience. Under a pretense of zeal for righteousness, men who are confederate with evil angels bring suffering upon their fellow men, in order to convert them to their ideas of religion; but Christ is ever showing mercy, ever seeking to win by the revealing of His love. He can admit no rival in the soul, nor accept of partial service; but He desires only voluntary service, the willing surrender of the heart under the constraint of love. There can be no more conclusive evidence that we possess the spirit of Satan than the disposition to hurt and destroy those who do not appreciate our work, or who act contrary to our ideas.”⁷

A personality change of Christianity in America is occurring. It is actuated most blatantly by revised priorities of Protestants. Apostasy has arrived under a fascinating religious pretense. Oppression is on the horizon.

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⁵ *United States Conference of Catholic Bishops*, May 10, 2005.

⁶ *The Review and Herald*, 04/27/1911.

⁷ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 487.