

Attenuated Religious Liberty

Introduction

The outgoing United States Administration campaigned on “hope and change.” It was an “idea” that appealed to greed by provoking the imagination: “I could get more.” The Executive Branch would “make the changes you want.” So America’s hope rose for something really unknown.

- This stimulated the assumption that government handouts would increase, which led to the now infamous Democratic follower to say before the election: “President Obama is going to pay my mortgage!”
- America has seen changes in the growth of federal power, suppression of religious expression, a national debt unequalled in U.S. history and regulations that affect every citizen.¹

“Change” did come, but was not guided by experience, knowledge or moral purpose. Chaos and despotism stalked Americanism. The “elitists” who helped the President govern America did not share the passion for religious liberty that its Founders had.

- Religious Liberty has been marginalized through focused legal challenges.
- Citizens in many areas have been dehumanized, especially when standing for religious convictions against “sexual rights.”
- The State, supported by a liberal media, has become coercive and deceptive. Truth is withheld or twisted for a globalist agenda that challenges the very need for God.
- Family and faith are now subservient to civil authority.²

These concerns were heightened in 2011 when President Obama instructed the Justice Department to no longer defend the constitutionality of the Defense of Marriage Act, or DOMA (legal protection of the marriage solely between a man and a woman).³ This ultimately led to the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision (June 2015) that homosexual marriage was legally permissible.

Through conflicting ideologies of equality, rights, liberty of conscience and victimization, the statist leaders exercised power to force “tolerance” of immoral behavior that currently threatens America’s fabric of “religious ideals.”

- The drive to guarantee these “new liberties” led the government to set secular standards, which belonged to the family and church. This created a *de facto* jurisdiction over the moral conscience of its citizens.
- This, in turn, slowly reset the standards in society down to what the “natural man” actually craves (I Corinthians 2:14).

¹ Levin, Mark; *Liberty and Tyranny* (Threshold Editions; New York, NY; 2009) p. 13.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

³ <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/obama-administration-will-no-longer-defend-doma/>

The divine principle of “free choice” instituted in a perfect world in the Garden of Eden became license to operate under the standards of the “prince of this world.” New laws forcing “tolerance” have undermined religious liberty! “Non-discrimination” became the “rule”, except in matters of spiritual interest. Christianity among the oligarchy is a “negative.”

Expositor White noted over a century ago: “In matters of conscience the soul must be left untrammelled. No one is to control another’s mind, to judge for another, or to prescribe his duty. God gives to every soul freedom to think, and to follow his own convictions. ‘Every one of us shall give account of himself to God.’ No one has a right to merge his own individuality in that of another. In all matters where principle is involved, ‘let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.’ Romans 14:12, 5.”⁴

- This ideal preserves the principle of choice and opposes coercion of another.
- But the change that is rapidly morphing America denies the spiritual nature of man.
- It has been driven by a social ideology that appeals to Cultural Marxism, where feelings – not virtues – set standards.

Wielding an Iron Fist

Martin Castro, Chairman of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights notes in a 360-page briefing (September 2016):

“The phrases ‘religious liberty’ and ‘religious freedom’ will **stand for nothing except hypocrisy** so long as they remain code words for discrimination, intolerance, racism, sexism, homophobia, Islamophobia, Christian supremacy or any form of intolerance. Religious liberty was never intended to give one religion dominion over other religions, or a veto power over the civil rights and civil liberties of others. However, today, as in the past, religion is being used as both a weapon and a shield by those seeking to deny others equality. In our nation’s past religion has been used to justify slavery and later, Jim Crow laws. We now see ‘religious liberty’ arguments sneaking their way back into our political and constitutional discourse (just like the concept of ‘state rights’) in an effort to undermine the rights of some Americans. This generation of Americans must stand up and speak out to ensure that religion never again be twisted to deny others the full promise of America.”⁵



This is an attitude that only shadowed America’s freedom in the past. It is now an overt threat to every Christian citizen! “Civil rights” – “societal rights” – “secular rights” – not only take precedence over religious freedom, religious expression is perceived by the secular culture as a threat!

⁴ White, Ellen G.; *The Desire of Ages*, p. 550.

⁵ <http://www.crisismagazine.com/2016/us-civil-rights-commission-targets-religious-liberty>;
https://securisync.intermedia.net/web/#/s/file?public_share=0Nv7dtHYDIwpoL14da77wl

“There is coming rapidly and surely an almost universal guilt upon the inhabitants of the cities, because of the steady increase of determined wickedness. The corruption that prevails is beyond the power of the human pen to describe.”⁶

No longer is the following Constitutional guarantee viable:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are *endowed by their Creator* with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.”⁷

- Our Founders recognized that any human law, outside the precincts of the Divine, leads to tyranny. Liberty was never seen as license to pollute religious expression. Cultural trends were never grounds for behavior that undermined the freedom of others.
- The Constitution’s Framers sought to protect society through values that were found within religion. This was strengthened by inserting in the First Amendment: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”⁸

In one generation the traditional Judeo–Christian structure has been scorned, rejected and even demonized. In one presidential term the government has stepped in to guarantee their demise.

- “How can this be happening in America? How does child molesting become ‘man-boy love’? How does crushing a baby’s skull and sucking out his brains become a ‘constitutional right’? How does quoting the Bible become ‘hate speech’? How exactly is evil made to appear good, and good made to appear evil? How has America – which still boasts an 80 percent Christian population – seen fit to embrace what can only be called a culture of death, rather than a culture of life?”⁹
- The simplest answer: “Desensitization of the American conscience by appealing to greed and base morals.”¹⁰

Glorification of a sinful life, demeaning what the Bible says and popularizing an evil life style in entertainment and even by the nation’s (the world’s) leaders through legislation has calloused the mind against evil.

- A growing tactic is silencing opposition and truth, exemplified recently by cutting off of Julian Assange’s internet link.¹¹ (He did, however, publish those emails through alternative means.) But – it was an attempt to silence a voice heard by millions around the world.

⁶ White, Ellen G.; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 275.

⁷ *The Declaration of Independence* of the United States of America.

⁸ The First Amendment of the *Constitution of the United States of America*.

⁹ Kupelain, David, *The Marketing of Evil* (WND Books; Cumberland House Publishing, Inc.; Nashville, TN; 2005), p. 13.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ <https://www.rt.com/news/362985-julian-assange-internet-link/>

- Another hate move came through intimidation techniques through violent “gestures” against attendees at Trump rallies. This was organized by the “Democratic Partners” – an activist group out of Chicago and funded by George Soros.¹²
- Incredible! In the first half of 2015 cries began from across the U.S. spectrum to punish anyone who denies “climate change.”¹³ The latest being on November 4, 2016, by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.¹⁴

Incremental challenges to the First Amendment have weakened its basic purpose. Distorting reality, withholding truth and falsifying news has brought chaos to America. Nearly any social, liberal ideology or behavior can now be legally defended through the umbrella of “rights”, or misinformation related, as an example, to “climate change” (a new term introduced when global warming could not be documented).

Direct Threats to Religious Freedom

In Hillary Clinton’s 2015 address to “Women in the World Summit,” she said that “deep-seated cultural codes, religious beliefs and structural bias have to be changed.”¹⁵

- Change to what?
- This was intimidation and a radical warning that even the liberal *Washington Post* captioned as a “threat to religious liberty.”¹⁶
- She intimated that the religious views within America have to be reset.

That alarming stance, tied to the strong anti-Catholic sentiments that emerged from her “leaked” emails, revealed a bigotry that permeates the “progressive” world.

- Democratic leaders supported or have even created “front groups” to disrupt deep-seated religious and cultural beliefs. The IRS delaying and denying tax exempt status for religious ministries in the last eight years underscores a hateful Christian bias.
- They are attacking evangelical Christians, calling their views “backward.”¹⁷

Though the Catholic Church has hostility toward those objecting to their beliefs,¹⁸ Pope Francis said in front of the White House in September, 2015:

¹² <https://www.breitbart.com/big-government/2016/10/17/exclusive-okeefe-video-sting-exposes-bird-dogging-democrats-effort-to-ignite-violence-at-trump-rallies/>

¹³ <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/apr/18/ed-feulner-democrats-would-punish-climate-change-d/>

¹⁴ <http://www.un.org/sq/en/content/sg/statement/2016-10-15/statement-secretary-general-paris-agreement-climate-change>

¹⁵ <http://dailycaller.com/2015/04/23/hillary-on-abortion-deep-seated-cultural-codes-religious-beliefs-and-structural-biases-have-to-be-changed/>

¹⁶ https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/hillary-clinton-is-a-threat-to-religious-liberty/2016/10/13/878cdc36-9150-11e6-a6a3-d50061aa9fae_story.html?utm_term=.b3caaedadc8f

¹⁷ https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/hillary-clinton-is-a-threat-to-religious-liberty/2016/10/13/878cdc36-9150-11e6-a6a3-d50061aa9fae_story.html?utm_term=.cff9a1e59a61

¹⁸ Aquinas, Thomas; *Summa Theologica II:II 11:3 corpus* as supported by the Catholic Code of Canon Law, Can. 252, §3.

- “Freedom remains one of America’s most precious possessions. And, as my brothers, the United States Bishops, have reminded us, all are called to be vigilant, precisely as good citizens, to preserve and defend that freedom from everything that would threaten or compromise it.”¹⁹
- He referenced discrimination against small church congregations, governmental mandates to religious medical institutions, forcing abhorrent sexual mores on foster care and adoption services and restrictive expressions of Christian students on university campuses.

Francis was right, at least publicly. Something dramatic happened in America that did bring about *change* – but spelled coercion, intimidation and loss of principled values.

In June, 2016, a case came to the Supreme Court in which a family pharmacy in Washington State refused to dispense an abortifacient. This would violate the conscience of its owners.

- The High Court denied hearing the case – a stunning gesture against traditional jurisprudence!
- That, in turn, upheld the lower court’s order that the pharmacy begin selling those drugs.

So upset was Justice Samuel Alito that he, along with Chief Justice Roberts and Justice Thomas, issued a 15-page dissent – something most unusual on cases the court refuses to hear.

- “If this is a sign of how religious liberty claims will be treated in the years ahead, those who value religious freedom have great cause for concern.”²⁰
- “The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, two members dissenting, has underlined how right Alito was. In a conflict between non-discrimination laws and religious liberty, a commission report says, non-discrimination as defined by the government wins. Although the commission lacks enforcement authority, its report unquestionably reflects an ominous, growing consensus in secular liberal circles....

“Religious liberty is part of the Constitution, embedded in the religion clauses of the First Amendment. By contrast, non-discrimination isn’t mentioned in the constitutional text and tortuous interpretation has sometimes been required to find a basis for it there. Justice Anthony Kennedy’s majority opinion, legalizing same-sex marriage last year, was an egregious instance.”²¹

The Center for Religious Liberty reacted:

“At the end of the day, the only reason for this law is to disparage the moral objections of those who think differently and force these unwilling pharmacists to play a part in the government’s imposed regime by steamrolling their individual freedom....

¹⁹ <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/religious-liberty/current-threats-to-religious-liberty.cfm>

²⁰ <http://thefederalist.com/2016/06/28/justice-alito-just-sounded-the-alarm-on-religious-liberty/>

²¹ <http://www.detroitnews.com/story/opinion/2016/09/30/new-threats-religious-liberty/91366944/>

“Such developments, along with others in recent free exercise and RFRA jurisprudence, increasingly show a Supreme Court which now picks and chooses what **rights to uphold** based on ideology, politics, and the religion at issue, instead of being a neutral arbiter of law.”²²

What this means is profound! Constitutionally protected religious liberty is attenuated, degraded and diminished in light of non-discrimination laws.

- Upholding non-discrimination laws over religious liberty is in itself discriminatory!
- This represents a major turning point in judicial activism within the United States. The Constitution has become a piece of clay – malleable by social trends and archaic to the “rights movement.”

The Family Research Council recently published forty pages of legal cases where religious conviction and liberty were being attacked. They are all based on a reinterpretation of law and, really, hatred toward Christianity. They concluded:

“These stories feature real Americans who are trying to live peaceful, faithful lives, but find their conscience and liberty under attack. They are fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters. Many of them look like us and our neighbors. With little warning, they are attacked and marginalized by those who are seeking to redefine the rights given by God and expressed by our Founders and earlier Americans. The victims in these stories are caught in the center of a larger struggle – as their fellow citizens seek to redefine rights through policy, law, and culture. This narrative pits our historical understanding of the notion of religious liberty – an expansive vision that includes the ability to apply one’s faith to all the details of one’s life – against a more recent understanding of freedoms in which ‘rights’ to a ‘religion-free’ environment or to unfettered sexual expression are crafted into new law and elevated to the level of and even above our foundational constitutional rights of freedom of speech and religion.... Liberty does not maintain itself. Only as we become more fully aware of and engaged on the issue of hostility toward religion, can we effectively defend civil liberties and restore religious liberty to its proper place in American society.”²³

California Puts Religious Liberty into a Vice²⁴

On September 30, 2016, California Governor Jerry Brown signed into law SB1146 that initiates a new state law for judging religious matters within faith-based, higher educational institutions.

These religious institutions must change their rules of hiring, student conduct, and change moral codes regarding sex, marriage and gender identity.

²² Weber, Travis; Director, Center for Religious Liberty; *Supreme Court Stands by and Watches as Religious Freedom is Curtailed*.

²³ <http://downloads.frc.org/EF/EF14G83.pdf>

²⁴ <http://www.advocate.com/pride/2016/10/04/california-passes-law-preventing-colleges-discriminating-against-lgbt-students>

<http://www.pacificjustice.org/press-releases/what-is-sb1146>

<http://savecalifornia.com/10-1-16-gov-jerry-brown-signs-sb-1146-initiating-state-control-over-religion.html>

https://world.wng.org/2016/07/legal_expert_california_religious_liberty_threat_most_significant_ever

- If they object, they must apply for a ***federal exemption***, for which later the State, in turn, requires justification from the institution as its basis under California law!
- This makes the State the final arbiter of the moral codes in a religious college, university or seminary.
- The compliance laws are complex and make any institution a “victim” of subjective interpretations, inspections, complaints and even lawsuits.

Thirty percent of California college tuition comes from *Cal Grants* to their students. This will be suspended if the school is deemed non-compliant. Once again, State discrimination laws are making the First Amendment of the Federal Constitution subservient to subjective “rights.”

This law creates a legal prejudice against faith-based educational establishments unless that Title IX exemption is accepted. Interestingly, a liberal, secularized government has become a judicial body superintending religious conviction, morals and Biblical standards!

Iowa Dictates New Mores to Churches²⁵

The Iowa Civil Rights Commission published regulatory guidelines in 2007 and 2008 regarding sexual orientation and gender identity.

- These guidelines require private businesses, schools, libraries, police departments and any private agency receiving State governmental funds to respect how a person “feels” sexually, which, in turn, permits that person to use dressing rooms, showers or public restrooms according to that “feeling.”
- Violation of those “rights” would lead to administrative law hearings, intimidation and even fines. The final threat would be withholding educational funds.

In July of 2016 this same Commission revised their mandates to include churches and their religious leaders – and even church-run day care centers.

- No sex-change or birth certificate is required. Simply a self-declaration of sexual orientation is all that is needed to protect an individual’s “physical rights.”
- With this revision came a speech/preach ban (even from the pulpit) in speaking against those new regulations. Every church or church-related activity now comes under this Commission’s mandates.
- “The State of Iowa claims it has the power to regulate what churches can teach about human sexuality and how they operate their facilities.”²⁶

This is totalitarianism, based on someone’s secular standards. It’s not only anti-Christian but suggests retaliatory activism against Christianity. The church, pastor or its leaders are now subject to appearing before this non-judicial body.

²⁵ <http://thefederalist.com/2016/07/06/iowa-bureaucrats-force-trans-bathrooms-on-churches-forbid-non-pc-preaching/>

²⁶ *Ibid.*

“Convicted” individuals can be forced to undergo social re-education, have names posted publicly, lose contracts and licenses, and pay punitive fines.

- “Rights” – as primitive as a *feeling* can be legal grounds for coercion and punishment.
- The “rights” laws of Iowa’s Civil Rights Commission take precedence over the First Amendment of the Federal Constitution!²⁷

“America’s precious freedom of religious belief and practice is in danger of being destroyed by those who would force the conscience of the minority to conform to the wishes of the majority.”²⁸

“As religious aggression subverts the liberties of our nation, those who would stand for freedom of conscience will be placed in unfavorable positions.”²⁹

The Biblical earth beast *“forced all people, great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads”* (Revelation 13:16 – NIV). The functional groundwork for this prophecy has been laid! It could quickly become a reality.

- Though this *“mark”* is not the subject of this document, the *“sea-beast”* of the same chapter, with power and authority from its ten crowned horns, forces the world at the end to receive a *“mark”* on pain of death through the directed power of the earth beast, demonically possessed.
- Might the spirit and intent of a “progressively infiltrated” America be qualifying itself for this prophetic move?
- Will the new administration’s “America First” highlight the mores of our “originalist”? Or will “enforcing” liberty and freedom become a problem in itself?

“The ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but will receive ruling authority as kings with the beast for one hour. These kings have a single intent, and they will give their power and authority to the beast” (Revelation 17:12-13 – NET). These *“kings”* oversee the world (vs 2). Prophecy sees freedom escaping out the back door and a “unifying” global agenda forcing its moral standards. The new administration’s corrective actions may well be coercive.

“The so-called Christian world is to be the theater of great and decisive actions. Men in authority will enact laws controlling the conscience.... Every nation will be involved.... ‘These have one mind.’ There will be a universal bond of union, one great harmony, a confederacy of Satan’s forces.”³⁰

When laws are on the books, they beg one thing: Enforcement! Religious liberty is being dramatically eroded in America. We know from the Biblical record that soon the loyalty of every

²⁷ <https://icrc.iowa.gov/pressrelease/iowa-civil-rights-commission-releases-revised-sexual-orientation-gender-identity-public>; https://icrc.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/2016/2016.sogi_.pa1_.pdf

²⁸ White, Ellen G.; *Darkness before Dawn*, p. 24.

²⁹ White, Ellen G.; *Counsels on Health*, p. 506 (CME p. 11).

³⁰ White, Ellen G.; *Selected Messages*, vol. 3, p. 392, 1891.

Christian will be tested. What the Bible and a personal relationship with Christ mean to each Christian will then come to light.

Trump and America's Moral Future

Promise – Excellent

2015: Senator Mike Lee and Representative Raul Labrador introduced legislation to clarify and strengthen religious liberty protection in Federal law. It was called “The First Amendment Defense Act.”³¹

2016 (November): Donald Trump pledged to sign this Act if and when it comes across his desk.³²

Federal History

“The granddaddy of free exercise cases, *Reynolds v. United States* (1878), found that Mormons have no constitutional right to practice polygamy. ‘Laws are made for the government of actions,’ the Court declared, ‘and while they cannot interfere with mere religious belief and opinions, **they may with practices.**’

“That dictum was quoted approvingly by the late Justice Antonin Scalia in the most important recent free exercise case, *Employment Division v. Smith* (1990), which found that members of the Native American Church had no right to ingest peyote as a sacrament. *Smith* established the Scalia Rule: **A free exercise claim cannot prevail against a neutral and generally applicable law – in this case, one against drug use.**

“But even before *Smith*, the Supreme Court ruled that Bob Jones University had no free exercise right to prevent the IRS from lifting its tax exemption because of its faith-based ban on interracial dating. Also, in *Goldman v. Weinberger* (1986), the Court said that an Orthodox Jewish Air Force chaplain had no right to wear a yarmulke while in uniform.”³³

The president elect is entering the governing realm of America with a firm commitment to “strong-arm” a restoration of what has been lost. Will that “iron-hand” overreach in areas of spiritual conviction?

Promises – Worrisome

The week before the election Donald Trump said to “*Yahoo News* that if elected he would target Muslims with a previously unthinkable degree of intrusion. ‘We’re going to have to do things that we never did before. And some people are going to be upset about it, but I think that now everybody is feeling that **security is going to rule,**’ he said. ‘Certain things will be done that we never thought would happen in this country in terms of information and learning

³¹ <http://www.lee.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/press-releases?ID=e42a7e9d-294b-423e-ac90-208212c766d0>

³² <http://www.nationalreview.com/article/440502/trump-supports-bill-protecting-religious-liberty-introduced-mike-lee>

³³ <http://religionnews.com/2016/08/04/the-religious-liberty-case-for-trump-the-religious-liberty-panic/>

about the enemy. And so we're going to have to do certain things that were frankly unthinkable a year ago."³⁴

That's coercive language. Could religious practices of other faiths ever intimidate the President in waiting? To assure security, might less freedom follow? Many things are in the balances.

Reality Already?

Statesman and adviser to many presidents, Henry Kissinger, just said:

"The U.S. and the world's situations are fluid and President-elect Donald Trump's positions policies will similarly be, too — so do not expect him to stick unilaterally to his campaign promises.... One should not insist on nailing [Trump] into positions that he had taken in the campaign."³⁵

Does this mean that globalism is going to come, which has been an agenda for nearly a generation? The Bible forewarns that it will – Revelation 17.

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³⁴ www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/11/donald-trump-muslims-religious-liberty/416889/

³⁵ <http://www.newsmax.com/Newsfront/henry-kissinger-dont-nail-trump-/2016/11/20/id/759867/>