

Christianity is Not “Hate Speech”

I can predict (and it’s a very easy prediction) that a direct frontal attack on the Church in America is imminent. The point of the spear of this attack will be that all Christian speech (wherever and however expressed) is “hate speech,” so it is therefore illegal.

We live in an idolatrous nation. Biblically, these are the Times of the Gentiles. And all (that is, *all*) the nations of the world are theocracies; they are ruled by a supernatural, authoritative being. Israel is a theocracy under the supervision and control by the Creator God, Jehovah, the God of the Bible. But all Gentile nations are under the supervision and control by wicked gods. God ordained it that way at the mass rebellion following the Genesis Flood. So America – however blessed my readers may suppose it is – also is idolatrous and in rebellion against Israel’s God and is therefore controlled by a god, an evil god. It’s no surprise therefore that the powers in our nation should seek to exterminate all witness to the existence and love of Israel’s Creator God. (The great surprise is, it didn’t happen long ago.) They want, *desperately* want, the Church to disappear. Not just to be marginalized, or to be private and silent; they want it gone from our land, indeed from humanity.

So, I see either of two possible strategies being deployed against Christianity in America. And these could surface at any moment. They are, (1) Christianity is a hate religion because in the Bible, God hates gay people. Or, (2) and although this is much less likely, it would be vastly more formidable: Christianity is a hate religion because of its doctrine of reprobation. Another possible (but in my view highly unlikely, so it doesn’t need a number) approach would be that Christianity is a hate religion because it demeans women.

Let’s examine allegation #1 first. The “sexual revolution” occurring in America the past 60 or 70 years has come to a climax. Homosexual people are now a protected class. Anyone attempting to persuade a gay person to abandon his “sexual orientation” is afoul of the law. Anyone who even slights a gay person is guilty of bigotry if not unlawful discrimination. We are to celebrate homosexuality . . . or else. So, to claim that the Bible condemns homosexuality must be “hate speech.” The first rule in morality is cause no harm. To claim homosexuals are condemned due to their “sexual orientation” is harmful to them. Therefore such speech and even such beliefs are illegal. It’s a set-up. And the Church is not merely targeted but trapped.

Allegation #2 is simple: “You say I’m going to go to hell because I don’t believe in your Christ. You’re hurting me with your beliefs. Your God is a god of hate and your holy book is violent and hate-filled. That means your religion is hateful. So Christianity has to go.” This isn’t merely a cultural issue, it’s deeper. We in the West, especially here in America, worship the god of personal autonomy. This idolatrous, rebellious notion is pervasive; it’s even in our churches. We suppose we’re little gods, each of us, totally and absolutely free to live as we please. We repudiate any and all restrictions or demands from outside of us. The demand that we believe in Christ or suffer eternal condemnation therefore is intolerable and so Christianity must be extirpated from society.

But we have answers to these two complaints. Of course, atheists will reject any answer (if they even understand our answers), but WE MUST BE PREPARED TO GIVE AN ANSWER. If we don’t, the Church will either go underground or disappear. That’s why this Sunday School lesson is so important to all believers. The 1st Amendment’s, “free expression of religion,” is no answer to these issues because *that’s the target!* Courts of law in America will decline adjudicating issues of theology or biblical interpretation. So if we answer biblically or theologically, we should win. If, however, we offer no answer or only a simplistic answer, *they* win. And they would win *big!* So let’s talk about answers.

Regarding (1), to argue simplistically that God hates the sin but loves the sinner is not biblical. Indeed, God hates sin, but there’s no dichotomy between sins and sinners. Let’s be very clear: we’re not sinners because we sin. We sin because we’re sinners. We’re not innately good, as humanism foolishly asserts. No, we’re innately sinners. We’re controlled, indeed, enslaved by a force that’s called a sin nature. It’s because of sin that people who reject gracious offer of forgiveness and justification thru Christ’s atonement are condemned. So we have to dig deeper to answer this issue.

By the way, we need to know how to answer this very crucial issue about homosexuality because not just our religious freedom is at stake. The eternal destiny of myriads of lost people is at stake if the church’s Gospel outreach is silenced. So I suggest that the answer should take this form: All sexual sins are in essence an affront to, or an attack on, God’s Trinitarian nature and on His cosmic saving purpose of uniting creatures to Himself in love. Let’s unpack that.

God is love. But He also is holy and just. And as Creator He has the right to command how we're to live in His house. And His requirements are rational. They have supreme theological importance. Sexuality between male and female in marriage reflects on earth the perfect union of the Persons of the Godhead. A bond of love and joy exists within the Trinity, and God ordained the marriage of man and woman to mirror that eternal unity. God made man in His image. He then made the woman from the man, so that in marriage that unity is restored. Why? So that both, together, united, reflect the goodness and love of God. United, they reform the image of God. There's more.

The unity of married man and woman reflects the future unity with the Person of Christ of all those whose names are written in the Book of Life because of their faith in Christ. The Bible refers often to two metaphors, the Bride of Christ and the Body of Christ. Both these come from Genesis Chapters 1 and 2. The woman is the bride of the man, and she is derived from the body of the man, and united together they reform a body. Our glorious destiny is to be united forever with Christ. It's an asymmetrical union, a union of non-identical persons, in the same way that heterosexual union is. And it's a union that's fruitful, which is God's will for humanity. God loves all His human creatures, and He wants there to be lots of them.

Homosexuality is therefore a repudiation of God's eternal nature and His will for humanity. It's an expression of rebellion against God. Such people reject the gift of love that God made available in Christ. God is therefore just in forbidding such persons from spending eternity in His presence; they don't *want* to be in His presence. According to Romans Chapter 1, homosexuality and other sexual sins are themselves a judgment for the prior sin of despising God. God is there! He's revealed Himself to us. And He's not to be mocked or ignored. At death homosexuals don't cease to exist. When they die, they spend a resurrected everlasting existence in a place totally remote from the God whose love they deliberately spurned.

Re (2), the theology involved is more difficult. The answer has to do with God granting His human creatures a measure of free will *and the responsibility that goes with it*. And it has to do with the fact that all humans are sinners already under condemnation. And that God is free to dispose of His creatures as He chooses according to His holy will. Let's now unpack these statements.

For 1,600 years, the theologians of the Church have debated the issue of free will and election. Some follow Augustine. Others have adopted what's called semi-Pelagianism. Most, I suspect, switch from the one view to the other without realizing it. We need not discuss that debate here; I'll save it for another day. But this is clear, "God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance," and "He is the propitiation not only for our sins but for the sins of the whole world." And, "Whosoever will, may come." These seem to mean that God holds all of us responsible for our response to His revelation, and that the gift of salvation is freely available to all.

Election is biblical. It's an expression of God's love (see, e.g., Ephesians 1:1-14). Because our will is corrupted by sin, if it weren't for election and the grace that God supplies, no one would ever be saved. The whole human race, sinners all, would be hopelessly condemned. Calvinists reason that if some are elect, all others must therefore be reprobate; that is, God pre-determined that they not be saved but be in hell. But election does not require reprobation, nor is it biblical.

God has given us not total or absolute free will, but a *measure* of free will. With the freedom we have comes responsibility to honor our Creator by knowing, loving and obeying Him. Our will, however, is incapable of responding to God's revelation because of our sin nature. God has ordained it this way; our sin nature is itself a judgment. That responsibility remains ours though. In His exhaustive knowledge of all things, even of facts that haven't come to reality but could have, God knows how any given individual would respond to the Gospel (or to the revelation God provides). Those who respond with faith to God's love we can regard as elect. Those who would not (and if they hear the Gospel, they don't) respond with faith remain condemned.

Paul doesn't shy from acknowledging this matter. He argues at length that God is just. He is not unfair in any way. To the extent we don't grasp this difficulty, Paul writes, "Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?" (Romans 9:21, but see the whole discussion in that chapter.) And this, "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" (Romans 11:33-34). In other words, there is mystery in God's will, and it's not for us finite mortals to question Him. As Creator, God is free to dispose of His creatures according to His holy will. No one has an entitlement to salvation, and God is under no obligation to save anyone.

So, unbelievers who resent God's having condemned them really have themselves to blame. God lovingly reveals Himself to us, but if we reject His love, and the forgiveness that He makes freely available because of that love, it's our own hard hearts and rebellious spirit that's to blame. The Gospel is not hate speech. It's hatred of God that claims it is.

Although there's little likelihood that the issue forcing a hate-speech court case will be that Christianity puts down women, it is something we should address and here's a good place. The feminist/women's lib movement has been transformed into something far more radical: the idea that women, not men, should dominate American society, its culture and its institutions. Men, the argument goes, are exploitative and oppressive and therefore not worthy of having a dominant role. Feminism now eschews – *despises* – a woman's traditional role as wife, mother, and/or being a "help-meet" to a man. They resent even having the ability to bear children. There is no role in life, feminism says, that a man fulfills that a woman cannot. Nature, they observe, often places the male of a species in a subordinate role; so, feminism says, modern American society should do the same. Christianity, seeking to keep women subordinate to men, for example by denying women a role in pulpits or to teach in church assemblies, therefore is hate speech.

God created sequentially: the earth, then man from the earth, then woman from the man. But He gave the woman equal status to the man in that they together form the image of God and, united in marriage, they reflect God's Person. Although the woman is equal, God gave the woman a role distinct from that of the man. It's a role that does not make her inferior, but she is subordinate. To be subordinate does NOT equate to inferiority. When He was here on earth, Jesus was subordinate to the Father. He was, in fact, fully submitted to the Father's will. He obeyed the Father in spite of the suffering it necessitated. He honored the Father, depended on the Father, and trusted in the Father. Yet the Son is eternally equal to the Father!

We fail to grasp how important humility is to God. Submissiveness to authority or to wise counsel expresses biblical humility. It is not weakness, it is a supreme virtue. Our sin natures compel us to be narcissistic, proud and rebellious. We love the will of Satan and his wicked hosts. We therefore exalt personal autonomy and its deceptive freedom to indulge our sin natures. Only by trusting in the vicarious atonement Christ effected and the new life the Spirit offers can this will to sin, to dominate others, to be proud and self-absorbed, be overcome.

In wisdom and goodness, God placed each of us here on earth in the particular circumstances that He willed for us. That would include our time and place in history, and the sex He determined for our body. Our responsibility is to humbly submit to God's will and to be faithful to Him in the particular circumstances He chose for us. We're here on probation; we're not here to pursue maximal happiness in this life. Fulfillment in life is living purposefully for God. If we're weak in some way, whatever it may be, whether real or perceived, or if we find ourselves in a subordinate role, we should nevertheless be faithful throughout this life and rejoice at Scripture's promise of a glorious future existence.

Feminism rejects this. The goal of such women to dominate is pagan power-lust. Their "liberation" is really an enslavement to demonic influences. The only true "liberation" anyone can experience is being in Christ and pursuing sanctification. But feminism is worse than lust for power, though. Because the husband/wife relationship mirrors the asymmetric relationship God has with His people, a woman seeking equality to men reflects humanity seeking to be God. Or to replace God. May God have mercy on such! In almost all other societies on earth as well as throughout history, women were (are) horribly treated. It's in Christ that women experience the respect and status and acceptance they cannot find in pagan society. It is Christ who has tender love for women. For a woman, Christianity is love speech.

We might as well also mention racism here. It's highly unlikely to trigger an anti-Christianity court case because finding racism in Scripture is unconvincing. Scripturally, there is no such thing as "race." It's an invention of Darwinism. There's only one race, and that's the human race. We are all descended from one man and woman. Therefore we are all brothers. The different skin colors and other physical features mistakenly thought to express race are really only certain genomic changes that occurred during the post-Flood dispersion. All humans, whatever their skin color or facial features, bear the image of God. What we call "racism" is therefore a cleverly invented construct for certain (malign) political ends.

Sure, there's bigotry in the churches. It's intrinsic to humans. So is anti-Semitism. And greed, idolatry, worldliness, lusts, apathy, and selfishness and many other vices. Failure is inherent in humanity because we're fallen creatures. But we can overcome all these failures by yielding to the Spirit and obeying God's Word. That's our goal in life and how we glorify God. Right now God is doing something huge in our nation. So if the courts rule against us and we suffer loss due to our identity with, and faithful service to, Christ, God has promised to bless us. Christianity is God's unique love expressed.