

~Other Speakers M-R: Revival Email List:**RELIGIOUS THOUGHT POLICE**

-by Mary Ann Collins.

“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.” (Edmund Burke)

Christianity is under assault. A Swedish pastor was sent to jail for preaching what the Bible says about homosexuality. A Canadian judge forced schools to teach homosexuality in kindergarten classes. Australian Christians were prosecuted for handing out Christian literature, even though there are no laws against doing it. The Supreme Court of Vermont forced the state to legally recognize same-sex unions. Two Australian pastors have been prosecuted for teaching what the Koran says about Islam. A Canadian judge forced a Catholic high school to allow a gay boy to bring a male escort to his high school prom. In America, a Methodist bishop said that Christian evangelism is arrogant and it can lead to hate crimes. Canadian mayors have been fined up to \$10,000 for not celebrating Gay Pride Week in their cities. The European Union is considering laws which might make some parts of the Bible illegal.

Many Christians are not aware of the extent to which the Church is becoming hemmed in because they have only seen bits and pieces of the picture. The purpose of this paper is to suggest what the big picture is like. There may well be many more examples than those I have given. This paper is only a start. We Christians need to understand what is going on. The Bible says, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge”. (Hosea 4:6)

Will the religious beliefs and practices of Christians become subject to government regulation? Will governments of democratic nations make it difficult for Christians to live by Biblical standards and to protect their children from moral corruption? This paper will demonstrate that such things can happen in today’s world. However, if Christians are vigilant, then by the grace of God, we can prevent it or at least minimize it.

It has been said that, “Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.” That includes freedom of conscience and freedom of religion. If we want to have them, then we need to protect them. All of us can pray. Some of us can also do other things.

BELGIUM

The Belgian parliament has published a list of “cults”. It includes Amish, Quakers, Pentecostals, Assemblies of God, and 21 groups of Evangelical Christians.

SWEDEN

In 1988, an Evangelical pastor in Sweden preached about Sodom and Gomorrah. He told his congregation that homosexuality is still wrong and God will judge people who practice it. The courts ruled that the pastor had violated Sweden’s anti-hate laws, and sentenced him to jail. In the name of tolerance, the Swedish courts refused to tolerate the truth of the Bible.

In June 2002, the Swedish Parliament approved a constitutional amendment which outlaws speech or materials which are unfavorable to homosexuality. In order to become effective, the amendment has to be passed a second time, by a new Parliament which was elected in

September 2002. The Swedish government said that it hopes this will happen in 2003.

According to the constitutional amendment, it would be a crime to teach that homosexuality is a sin, or to say that Scripture verses prohibiting it apply today. People convicted under this law could serve two years in prison. Homosexual activists could come to church services with tape recorders to catch pastors and church members who criticize homosexuality. This would apply not only to preaching but also to private conversations. One Evangelical leader said that the amendment would result in having the Swedish government define what theology is permissible. Conservative pastors and Christian schools say that government officials often harass them.

CANADA

Canada also has anti-hate laws which protect homosexuals. A Canadian man was convicted of hate crimes because he published an advertisement which gave the references of four Scripture verses which condemn homosexuality. The newspaper which published the ad was also convicted of hate crimes. The case was not tried in the regular court system. There is a special tribunal system, under the Human Rights Commission (HRC), for people charged with anti-hate crimes. This case was decided by a feminist lawyer, appointed by the HRC, who acted as judge and jury.

Canadian Christians have been convicted of hate crimes for following their conscience. A Christian printer was fined \$5,000 for refusing to print literature for a homosexual organization. In addition to paying the fine, he also had \$100,000 in legal expenses. He was forbidden to refuse such business in the future. The court ruled that the printer has a right to practice his religious beliefs in his home, but he is not allowed to practice them in public if they result in discriminating against homosexuals. This printer was not allowed to practice freedom of conscience.

Christian mayors have also been forbidden to practice freedom of conscience. Six mayors were convicted of the "crime" of refusing to proclaim Gay Pride Week in their cities. Mayors had to pay fines of up to \$10,000. One mayor had to pay \$70,000 in legal expenses.

Gay Pride Week ends with a Gay Pride Parade. The Toronto parade has had up to a million visitors. Some marchers wear conservative clothing. However, there are also men wearing G-strings, and bare-breasted women holding hands. Some men wear black leather and are bound with chains to portray sadomasochism. (I saw online photographs of these things.) Since 1997, there have been nude marchers. In 2002, seventy men marched naked. Seven of them were arrested. However, the charges were dropped because they were wearing shoes and were therefore not totally naked. The Gay Pride Parade is being forced on Canadian mayors and citizens by the Canadian government.

Chris Kempling is a Christian teacher and a student counselor. He was concerned because homosexuality was strongly promoted in his school and the students were not told about the health risks involved or the fact that homosexual relationships are often unstable. He never said anything about it at the school where he taught. However, he wrote some letters to the editor of a local newspaper. Because of this, he was formally reprimanded and suspended without pay for a month. In addition, Kempling has been blacklisted as a teacher. This disciplinary action was for things which Kempling did as a private citizen.

In 1999, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that same-sex couples are to receive the same spousal benefits which normal married couples receive. It also directed the Ontario government to pass legislation giving homosexuals all of the benefits of marriage except for the term "marriage". That includes the right to adopt children. The Canadian federal government has removed every legal distinction between normal married couples and same-sex couples.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Because I have mentioned homosexuality, I want to go on record about my personal attitude towards homosexuals. Jesus died for them. He loves them, and we should too. However, their lifestyle is unbiblical and it is destructive. I have personally known gays and lesbians whose lives were destroyed by their sinful practices. Homosexuals can change. I know a man who did. He became a committed Christian and now lives according to Biblical moral principles. I believe that the best way to show love for homosexuals is to resist their social and political agenda, to pray for their salvation, and to help them become set free from their spiritual and emotional bondage.

ENGLAND

England also has anti-hate laws. On November 28, 2002, the Crown Prosecution Service announced that it was making the prosecution of "homophobic" crimes a priority. It defines "homophobic" as fear or dislike of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transsexual people. The Crown Prosecution Service defines "homophobic" in terms of the perception of the victim, rather than in terms of the actions and motives of the person who commits the crime. In other words, it is subjective, rather than being something which can be objectively examined or proved. Making it a crime to show any disapproval of homosexuality results in forcing people to suppress traditional moral values and Biblical standards of sexuality.

AUSTRALIA

In 2001, the government of Victoria, Australia, proposed a "Racial and Religious Tolerance Act". According to legal experts, the language of the bill could result in having Christians be charged with religious intolerance for evangelizing. A Christian group called Salt Shakers analyzed the bill, prepared reports, and opposed the bill. The government then released a proposal for an amended bill which would be less likely to cause problems for Christians who evangelize. The amended bill passed in June 2001. This demonstrates the need for Christians to be vigilant and to be actively involved in legislation which affects freedom of religion.

Continued vigilance is needed because laws can be amended. As discussed earlier in this paper, there is pressure in Canada to expand and strengthen existing anti-hate laws.

In November 2002, the government of Queensland, Australia, introduced a Gay Reform Bill to Parliament. If it is passed, this bill will outlaw discrimination against gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transvestites. Adults who have had sex change operations will be allowed to change their birth certificates. (This is rewriting history to make their birth certificate match their new sexual identity.) Same-sex couples will have most of the legal benefits of normal married couples. Anti-discrimination laws will be made stronger. Lesbians will be allowed to be artificially inseminated by fertility doctors. Atheism will be classified as a religion which is protected by anti-discrimination and anti-vilification laws.

Sydney, Australia, has an annual gay and lesbian Mardi Gras Parade which draws crowds of up to a million people. I am going to describe it because Christians need to be aware of the degree to which national cultures are being corrupted by homosexual activists. The parade has a wide variety of marchers. Some dress conservatively. However, there are also men wearing nothing but thongs. There are bare-breasted women. There are floats with dancers who do provocative dances. There are men wearing black leather who are bound with chains to portray sadomasochism. Some marchers flamboyantly mock Christianity.

In 1999, Australia's Community and Family Rights Council presented a report about attacks on Christianity to the Australian Parliament. The report says that "counter culture" humanists have been systematically working to remove laws which are based on Christian morality, and to have Christian moral values be rejected by the community. Homosexual activists have openly declared in writing that they intend to destroy all churches which condemn homosexuality.

According to the council's report, Christian churches have been stormed by gay activists who disrupted services by chanting obscenities and throwing condoms. Gay activists are systematically attacking the foundations of Christian democracy in the courts and through legislation. Their goal is to give the secular government control over Christian churches. Homosexual activists are targeting the psychology profession in order to influence sex education and public health. They are undermining the concept of the traditional family by working to legitimize same-sex "marriages". Gay clergymen are working to get Christian churches to accept homosexuality. Because of the Human Rights Commission, humanist politicians are gaining increasing control over Christian churches.

AMERICA

On May 19, 2003 the American Psychiatric Association met to debate whether or not to stop classifying the following sexual behaviors as mental illnesses: pedophilia, sadomasochism, transvestitism, fetishism, exhibitionism, and voyeurism. The APA is seriously considering "normalizing" these sexual behaviors. If it does, then laws prohibiting such behavior are likely to be challenged by activists who are working to promote "sexual freedom".

The American Psychological Association has published a report which says that sexual relations between adults and children are not necessarily harmful and may actually be beneficial to the children. The authors did not do any research of their own. They reviewed previous studies (many of which were never published or given peer review). Some people question the validity of this study.

The idea that sex between adults and children could be beneficial for the children goes back to the work of Dr. Alfred Kinsey, a biologist who became the father of modern sexology. One of his disciples was Hugh Hefner, who published "Playboy" magazine. Hefner said that the purpose of "Playboy" was to change American society. The purpose of the articles in "Playboy" was to make the magazine seem intellectual and legitimate. Hefner boasted that America now has a generation of leaders who were influenced by "Playboy" in college.

Dr. Judith Reisman has been studying Kinsey's work for over 20 years, including interviewing people who worked with him. She wrote two books about him. They are "Kinsey, Sex and Fraud: The Indoctrination of a People" (1990) and "Kinsey, Crimes and Consequences" (1998, 2000). According to Reisman, Kinsey did fraudulent research in order to change the

moral standards of American society. During his research, hundreds of children were sexually molested by pedophiles.

On March 2, 1991 a respected British medical journal (‘‘The Lancet’’) published an article saying that Kinsey’s research was based on the sexual abuse of children. ‘‘The Lancet’’ and a German medical journal (‘‘The German Medical Tribune’’) demanded that the Kinsey Institute be investigated.

In 1998, British television aired a documentary about Kinsey’s sexual research on children. It was titled ‘‘Secret History: Kinsey’s Paedophiles’’. The documentary interviewed a woman who had been one of the children used for Kinsey’s research. She is now in her sixties, yet she still breaks into tears when she recounts what happened to her. Her father was a classmate of Kinsey’s. Her father repeatedly raped her. He used a stopwatch and took notes while he was doing it.

Why haven’t we seen this video in America, or at least heard about it in the media? It is so contrary to political correctness that perhaps journalists are afraid that writing about it would harm their careers.

Dr. Kinsey serves as a good reminder that we Christians need to base our morality on what the Bible says and not on what the ‘‘experts’’ tell us. As the old hymn says, ‘‘On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand.’’

In the face of such things, we need to remind ourselves that if we love God, then He will make everything work out for our good. (Romans 8:28) Even things like this. What the enemy of our souls intends for evil, God can use for our good. (See Genesis 50:20)

RETURN OF THE 'GODDESS'

Philip G. Davis is a professor of religious studies at a Canadian university. He wrote the book ‘‘Goddess Unmasked: The Rise of Neopagan Feminist Spirituality’’ (Spence Publishing Company, 1998). According to Davis, the credibility of goddess worship has been increased by its acceptance by university professors and its incorporation into textbooks. (Davis, pages 29-31) Some feminists have even demanded that the goddess be given parity with the God of the Bible in university religion programs. This will impact our entire society because universities and colleges are training most of our future leaders, including government, health care, and the clergy. (Davis, pages 361, 363)

Goddess worship has become strong in the field of health care, particularly nursing. Health care professionals are actively promoting New Age practices. For example, thousands of nurses in 80 North American nursing programs have been taught ‘‘therapeutic touch’’ (manipulating auras and energy-fields by passing your hands above a person’s body). (Davis, pages 31-33)

A Canadian television station ran a five-part series titled ‘‘Return of the Goddess,’’ which introduced many people to goddess worship. The National Film Board of Canada produced ‘‘Goddess Remembered,’’ which became one of their most popular productions ever, being featured by public broadcasting TV stations in the United States as well as in Canada. ‘‘Cakes for the Queen of Heaven’’ and ‘‘Goddess Remembered’’ have become staples for study groups in some major Christian denominations. (Davis, pages 25-27)

EVANGELISM IS BECOMING MISUNDERSTOOD

In view of the increasing Wiccan influence on our culture, it is not surprising that evangelism has become controversial. One example is the Southern Baptist Convention for 2000, which was held in Chicago. Plans for the convention included evangelizing. The Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago asked the Southern Baptists not to hold their meeting in Chicago. Bishop Sprague is one of the members of the Council. He oversees 425 Methodist Churches in the Northern Illinois Conference. He said that evangelizing is arrogant because it presumes that some people are saved and other people need salvation. He said that this treats unsaved religious groups like second-class citizens, and it is dangerous because it can encourage hate crimes against them.

Bishop Sprague's comments make me wonder whether hate crimes laws could eventually be interpreted in such a way that Christian evangelism would be considered to be a hate crime.

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL INFLUENCE OF GAY ACTIVISTS

Homosexual activists have so much political influence in America that local governments allow Gay Pride Parades. Prominent politicians participate in these parades.

America's largest Gay Pride Parades are in New York City and San Francisco. In 2000, half a million people came to the New York parade. Prominent politicians marched in the parade, including Mayor Rudy Giuliani, first lady Hillary Clinton (in 2000 she was first lady, not yet a senator), Congressman Barney Frank of Massachusetts, former Mayor Koch, a member of New York's state Senate, and two members of the City Council. Congressman Rick Lazio did not participate in the parade. Because of this, he was criticized not only by Democrats but also by some fellow Republicans. In 2001, all six candidates for mayor participated in New York City's Gay Pride Parade.

The New York parade had men wearing thongs, bare-breasted women, and men portraying sadomasochism. There were floats with go-go dancers. There were drag queens (men dressed like women). Men publicly kissed and embraced. There were inflatable life-sized figures of nude men. Some mainline Christian denominations had groups in the parade, including a "lavender choir".

The political and social strength of the homosexual activists is demonstrated by the fact that Gay Pride Parades are held around the world. The 2003 parade is scheduled for 109 American cities and for 63 cities in 24 other countries. Countries scheduled to have parades include: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Puerto Rico, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, and the United States.

CONCLUSION

In the face of the kinds of things discussed in this paper, it is easy to feel that we are insignificant and we cannot do anything to improve the situation. Edward Everett Hale gave a good perspective. He said, "I cannot do everything, but I can do something.... What I can do, I should do. And what I should do, by the grace of God, I will do."