

Why the Passive Church Must Be Awakened to Enact Governmental Change

Christopher Ruddy, owner of Newsmax TV, challenged fellow believers stunned by the recent election and confused about what to do going forward: Get involved in your own sphere of influence, and start taking the country back from the grassroots level.

“President Trump has a monumental record, a legacy that has done so much good. I believe much will continue, including his consequential policies on China, peace in the Middle East and North Korea, and in particular, his important work on promoting religious freedom, not only worldwide, but also here at home,” Ruddy said.

Ruddy, who has a long history in media and is also a longtime friend of former President Donald Trump, has a unique view on Trump’s efforts going forward. He said, “I believe one of the most important things the president did was being an advocate against religious persecution both in America and worldwide. This could very well be the most important thing he could do going forward as he charts his future contributions.”

Ruddy is particularly concerned about the threat to freedom of the press and religion currently facing Americans. “From Twitter to Facebook to all the other platforms, you cannot discuss fraud in the election in any way,” he said.

As a strong believer, Ruddy said his faith is intrinsically linked to his work in news and knows his purpose is to promote the kingdom of God on earth. “Faith in Jesus Christ is the most important thing in my life,” Ruddy said. “I view life as a temporary time on this earth that God is going to judge us all for, and we are called to be active for Christ.”

Bestselling author of *God, Trump and the 2020 Election*, Stephen Strang, agrees. “A passive church is part of the reason the country is in the mess it’s in,” he said, reflecting on the words of Romans 12:2a: “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.”

To protect free speech and rally against religious persecution, Ruddy has a practical and timely word for Christians: “Believers need to get involved on the very local level.”

Not only that, but believers must realize “while it is important to have a leader like Donald Trump, the big concern is that America is changing and becoming dramatically more liberal and Democrat.” The best way to combat this, Ruddy said, is to “get involved with your local church, your school board, town or local government.”

By getting involved, you reveal the true power in local government and can be a force for change. {eoa}

Amir George directs *The World Helpline* at the .

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CN Morning Rundown: Sophia Bush May Be Taking Her Concern About Children a Bit

Too Far

Here's a quick summary of the top stories on :

No, Sophia Bush, Kids Do Not Tell Their Parents Who They Are

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I truly believe that actress and activist Sophia Bush is genuinely concerned about children. I truly believe that, in her heart, she is convinced that the best thing to do for a child who identifies as transgender is to affirm that child's perceived identity.

But is she right? Do kids know what is best for them?

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Black Writer Rails Against National Association of Black Journalists and 'USA Today'

Once again, the National Association of Black Journalists NABJ proves their irrelevance. Their name should be changed to "The National Association of Liberal Black Journalists."

This is a more accurate description of who they are as an organization.

The organization claims on their website that it, "Advocates on behalf of Black journalists and media professionals in the U.S. and worldwide ... and is committed to: strengthening ties among Black journalists, student journalists, journalism educators and media professionals; and sensitizing all media to the importance of fairness in the workplace for Black

journalists.”

Has Congress Imposed Unconstitutional Limits on Red States' Power to Cut Taxes?

Left-wing politicians, believing that the only constitutional limit on their power is their own desire to not allow a crisis to go to waste, have now deployed COVID-19 relief as a hostile weapon to deprive red states (conservative, low-tax states) of their sovereign right to lower their tax rates.

Not content with assisting blue state governors to evade the Constitution and to respond to the pandemic with a parade of authoritarianism that includes banning church services, banning singing in church, closing schools and driving businesses into bankruptcy, the left has launched a sneak attack on conservative states.

As the *Wall Street Journal* notes, “Democrats in Congress aren't satisfied with spending \$1.9 trillion to help blue states and union friends.” {eoa}

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WATCH: Why Business Owners Are Concerned About Biden's Newest Legislation

President Joe Biden officially proposed his multitrillion-dollar “American Jobs Plan” this afternoon in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, marking infrastructure as his next big ticket in legislation.

The top items receiving the bulk of financial support, which the president claims will be completed in eight years and paid off in 15 years, focus on investing in “America in a way we have not invested since we built the interstate highways and won the Space Race,” the White House fact sheet states.

But the money has to come from somewhere, causing worry to rise among Republicans and business owners. Read the full story here and watch this update from Charisma Media content director Jeff Struss for more details. {eoa}

New COGIC Presiding Bishop Calls for Time of Prayer, Fasting and Rededication

Newly elected Presiding Bishop J. Drew Sheard of the Church of God in Christ has issued a call for 10 weeks of prayer, fasting and rededication on Tuesdays and Fridays. The special season began March 30 and will continue through June 4, 2021.

“I’m asking that you would join us on a prayer call,” Sheard says in a video announcing the season of spiritual focus. “I don’t want to do it by Zoom, Screen, [Vid]yard or Facebook. I don’t want it to be a production. I want to do it so we can hear those individuals who will be chosen to lead in prayer. ... You won’t have to fix up to be on camera. I just want you to lie before the Lord.

“I just want this to be a sincere cry to God to restore our church, heal our land and restore us to a recommitted life in Christ Jesus,” Sheard says. The schedule for the season will involve various components of the church leading in one-hour

prayer calls.

COGIC Schedule for Prayer Calls

Tuesday, March 30 and Friday, April 2: The General Board

Tuesday, April 6 and Friday, April 9: The Board of Bishops

Tuesday, April 13 and Friday, April 16: International Department of Women

Tuesday, April 20 and Friday, April 23: The General Assembly

Tuesday, April 27 and Friday, April 30: The General Council of Pastors and Elders

Tuesday, May 4 and Friday, May 7: International Sunday School Department

Tuesday, May 11 and Friday, May 14: World Missions and International Department of Evangelism

Tuesday, May 25 and Friday, May 28: The Prayer Ministry

Tuesday, June 1 and Friday, June 4: The General Board

To Join the Prayer Call

Zoom Link

COGIC Facebook Page

Or dial in using one of the following numbers; 312-626-6799, 929-205-6099, 301-715-8592, 346-248-7799, 669-900-6833 or 253-215-8782, all with ID **827 9762 2400**.

“My brothers and sisters, we don’t have time to waste,” Sheard says. “There will never be a perfect time to start praying. So let’s interrupt some things and make prayer our priority!”

Watch the entire video announcement here and check the schedule for further information. {eoa}

Former Addict, Lindell Recovery Network Introduce Others to Bondage-Breaking Spirit of God

Melissa Huray and her team are leading the charge in fighting addiction in all its forms, armed with the power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“I am a recovered addict myself, and one day saw a cutout of fellow Minnesotan Mike Lindell and learned about his battle with addiction, contacted him and he hired me to run the Lindell Recovery Network. It’s a miracle!” says Huray.

Born and raised in a home with an alcoholic father, Huray grew up in northern Minnesota and came to Christ at 9 years old through the love and concern of a neighbor. However, she began abusing alcohol and was drinking to the point of blacking out by 15. She was, essentially, living two lives—a theme that would unfortunately carry on into later stages in her life.

Bestselling author of *God, Trump, and the 2020 Election*, Stephen Strang highlights the spiritual warfare at work in America: the country with the second highest drug related death rate in the world. “I believe there are spiritual forces at work,” Strang says, calling for believers to take hold of and employ the promise in 2 Timothy 1:7: “For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and love, and self-control.”

“The day I turned 18, I left home and moved in with my boyfriend—that didn’t last. I jumped into a marriage with

someone else at 21 and was divorced at 23. It was a nightmare, all because I refused to wait on God's timing," Huray says of her past.

At 26, Huray was arrested, which caused a brief pause in her addiction, but it was not until her father's death by alcohol overdose that she finally asked God to heal her.

"I came to God after a 12-hour blackout at the Minnesota State Fair and asked Him to free me from the bondage of addiction, and He did," she remembers.

After years as a bartender, Huray pursued a career in broadcast journalism. She had lived two lives: news reporter by day, blackout drunkard by night. Through God's grace, Huray was able to manage her addiction when she was finally forced to meet Him in the midst of her struggle.

Today, the reformed addict is the mother of three daughters, married and leading the Lindell Recovery Network: a high tech platform that provides an approachable solution to the nightmare of addiction and a threefold plan forward for those desperately seeking freedom.

"Anyone can go to and get a code, where they'll find thousands of powerful video testimonials from people just like them. They can choose one of three options which include churches with recovery programming, Christian treatment programs we have vetted or our powerful online program: Operation Restoration," Huray encourages. "The Holy Spirit works strongly through this technology, leading each person to the right option for them. Mike Lindell and I have a shared goal of leading struggling addicts to freedom through the Lord Jesus Christ."

Huray covets your prayers for the ministry, and in particular, for more churches to partner with the LRN. She asks leaders to go to to register their church, so people searching the platform can find healing and the love of Jesus through their

local church. Partner churches will also be armed with training tools to help assist their efforts to help people with addictions.

“The Lord Jesus Christ healed me, restored my life, gave me back my family and in His grace and mercy has allowed me to follow in the footsteps of Mike Lindell, a recovered addict who has dedicated his life to the kingdom cause of leading others to Jesus,” says Huray. {eo}

Amir George directs *The World Helpline* at .

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Larry Tomczak: The Horrific Things That Can Happen if the Equality Act Passes

The word “horrific” is a very strong word. It signifies more than “Yikes!” A good synonym is disastrous, and that describes accurately the consequences for all of us if the radical, leftist Equality Act now before the Senate passes and becomes the law of the land. Isaiah spoke of this: “they declare their sin as Sodom; they hide it not” (Isa. 3:9b).

Allow me to share in a manner that might best be labeled PG-13. The following factual reports and information are real and reveal what will really happen to you, your children, grandchildren, friends, churches, ministries, counselors, businesses, schools, colleges, medical practices, adoption agencies, crisis pregnancy centers, sports ... literally, our

entire way of life. As *Roe v. Wade* blindsided us, and we've had 61 million unborn babies murdered in the womb, do not underestimate the devastation that will follow this legislation unless multitudes act to stop it.

Each of us has a part to play uniting the body of Christ in prayer and prophetic social action. A Spirit-led initiative is underway, and you're invited to join with millions in the campaign.

In the film *Valkyrie* starring Tom Cruise, the courageous hero worked with a team to try to terminate the maniacal Adolf Hitler. He stated, "It's time now for something to be done. He who has the courage to act must know that he will probably go down in German history as a traitor. But if he fails to act, he will be a traitor before his own conscience."

Making Eye Contact

If I was having a conversation with you, I would ask you to give me eye contact and pay close attention to something that radical, "progressive," secular elites are trying to foist upon us. They're pretending it's simply an extension of "civil rights," you know, simply tacking on "sexual orientation and gender identification" to look out for everyone like we did in 1964 with people's race, creed and color.

What could be wrong with that? After all, we certainly don't want to be labeled "racists," "intolerant," opposed to "diversity and inclusivity," right?

The propaganda, manipulation and intimidation is seductive but as phony as cardboard figures in the stands and canned crowd noise during COVID sporting events. Only this is an insidious scheme that would destroy the values and principles upon which America was founded and prospered for over 400 years.

Learning Leading to Madness

A governor in Rome, Festus, once yelled at the apostle Paul: "You are mad. Much learning is turning you to madness!" (Acts 26:24). The irony was that Paul was the enlightened one while this man, like other influential "elites," was sinking deeper in Rome's downward spiral of degeneracy and decline. "Claiming to be wise, they became fools" (Rom. 1:22).

In the classic, "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," the observation was made that "bizarreness masqueraded as creativity." Imagine Roman culture replete with homosexual and transgender behavior where even Emperor Nero "married" another man dressed as a woman and demanded his "wife" be addressed with the "preferred pronouns" of "Lady" or "Empress." Sound familiar?

In America there's a rapper endorsing a custom line of sneakers called "Satan Shoes." They're offering exactly 666 pairs, each having an embedded drop of blood and a \$1,018 price tag. The Scripture Luke 10:18, "I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven," is included as a graphic along with a pentagram.

There's more bizarreness in our culture today, but this article relates specifically to what the Equality Act attempts to ignore or legitimize. Pay close attention because the following unsettling occurrences will become pervasive if the radicalized Democrat party gets its way.

Chilling Examples Becoming Commonplace

– A children's court judge and former CEO of the foundation sponsoring the celebrated "Drag Queen Story Hour" for preschool children was just arrested for uploading images and videos of child pornography on 27 separate occasions with violent images of children as young as 2. He has a gay "husband" and two adopted children. This foundation worked to "harness the pride, passion and commitment of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and their allies to advance

their human rights ...”

– Marvel has introduced a homosexual/gay Captain America figure and a Mutant Drag Queen Superhero along with their first transgender movie superhero. X-Men/Fantastic 4 is toxic to our children as even the real life star of *Juno*, Ellen Page, now proudly proclaims herself transgender with even a new name, “Elliot.”

– In a swim center, three teenage girls who play water polo were traumatized encountering an unclothed man showering in their locker room. Reporting this to the police they were told they could do nothing because the person “identifies as a woman.” Elsewhere a different girls’ swim team walked into their showering facility where a biological man sat sprawled out naked on the bench. When the coach was notified, she was the one reprimanded because the individual identifies as “transgender,” believing himself now to be female.

– “Celebrating womanhood and diversity,” a young biological male just won the female beauty pageant in Nevada on the path to Miss USA and eventually the Miss Universe pageant.

– A Christian father remains in jail for weeks for the crime of referring to his 14-year-old daughter as his “daughter” instead of her new preferred identification as a male. The dad also objected to the girl’s school changing her name and helping her in the direction of hormone therapy and sex-change surgery. This is in Canada where I spoke a few years ago and was counseled not to share anything against homosexuality and lesbianism because it is deemed a “hate crime” and I could be jailed. For the record, I shared God’s Word winsomely and without compromise.

– Biden just celebrated Rachel Levine as his Assistant Secretary of Health. This biological male now identifies as a transgender female. Divorced, he formerly was married to a woman and was the father of two children. The “transitioning”

doctor believes children should be able to choose their gender identity and allegedly have surgical gender reassignment surgery at government expense.

– In Virginia, where I formerly lived, a man was discovered dressing as a woman to gain entrance to women's restrooms where he filmed women undressed. Elsewhere, a cross-dresser was caught raping a 10-year-old girl in a bathroom.

As a public policy advisor with Liberty Counsel legal defense ministry, I assure you these examples are taking place today and as stated earlier, will become commonplace if the Equality Act passes in the Senate to become the law of the land. Our founder, Mat Staver, warns of the escalation of such incidents saying: "The Equality Act is the most dangerous legislation in America's history."

Say "No!" to HR-5 and Any Compromise

The Equality Act would amend the 1964 Civil Rights Act to ban any and all "discrimination" based on sexual orientation and gender identity. LGBTQ activities would have protected status under penalty of fines, imprisonment and removal of tax exemption. Over 550 sexual perversions would be promised protection!

An alternative bill, called "Fairness for All" attempts to find some middle ground by compromising and giving broad "protections" that the LGBTQ activists demand. They're willing to begrudgingly yield some exemptions for religious institutions (but watch how fast these go next!). While Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus and others are in the confines of their facilities, they have some immunity but once outside in "the real world," all bets are off! And if you think the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (almost unanimously passed in 1993) guarantees protection, forget it, as this legislation overrides it.

Join with scores of "silent-no-more" traditional, freedom-

loving Americans upholding decency in an easy and effective way to fight HR-5—the deceptive Equality Act. Start with “fervent effectual prayer” then engage because “faith without works is dead.” Click on to be informed and probably shocked at the ways this law would horribly impact your family’s lives! Engage now to pull the plug on this pernicious piece of legislation.

Unite with multitudes across America to send millions of postcards to all U.S. Senators communicating a clear message: We say no! Do it today.

One click sends a postcard to all 100 U.S. Senators, the White House and all 9 Supreme Court Justices personalized with your name, city and state and mailed through the U.S. Postal Service for less than the price of postage if you were to send them all yourself.

All the details are on the site. No one is making any money or collecting any email addresses. This is your individual investment in protecting and preserving our faith, freedoms, families and future in America. Do it now, and together we will see a mighty victory for the glory of God.

“Who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” (Esth. 4:14b, ESV). {eoa}

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Why It’s Time for You to

Bring Your Lukewarm Faith to the Next Level

Is your love for God at a boil? I can find this a challenge. I'd love to state that I am always on fire for God, that I'm always hot, that my love and passion for Him are at a boil. However, I find that often, I am not. I am cooler than I should be. How about you?

Paul understood this battle. In Romans 7:15 (NLT), he states, "I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate." Even for this amazing man of God, there were moments when something he did caused him to step back and evaluate his stance.

Each person whose story God chose to share in the Bible is a person just like you and me. Not one of them was perfect. They all had struggles, just as we do. It can be easy to read the story and declare them saints while forgetting that even saints have flaws. We are all works in progress, and they were no different.

The challenge is to recognize when we are lukewarm and make adjustments. Are you ready to boil for the King of kings and Lord of lords? Is it time to turn up the heat? Do you believe God has more for you than you could ever ask or imagine?

While there are multiple keys to turning up that heat, one key I love is worship. There is something about worship that acts as a dial on the stove. It begins to turn, and the heat starts to rise. As the praises exit my heart and my mouth, they enter the courts of heaven. As they enter the courts of heaven, my spirit begins to explode within me. As a result, I start to boil for Jesus.

Ready to glean additional keys? Let's turn up the heat! Listen in this episode of *Real Truth with Ruth* on the Charisma

Podcast Network as I share about keeping your love for God at a boil! {eoa}

Ruth Hendrickson is an ordained pastor, itinerant speaker, ministry trainer and board-certified biblical counselor who has extensive experience in the development, training and oversight of emotional healing ministry teams, recovery ministries, prophetic ministry, prayer ministries and women's ministry. In addition, she is a course facilitator for Patricia King Institute and Charisma courses. She writes for Elijah List and Charisma and has a podcast titled Real Truth with Ruth. Through biblically based teachings and practical applications infused with love and laughter, her goal is to introduce people not only to the living God who saves but also to the God who desires an intimate relationship with each one of us. Her latest book, Everyday Prophetic, will help you find the prophetic voice that God has given you. Visit her at her website, , find her on Facebook and listen to her podcast, Real Truth with Ruth.

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Why This Spirit-Filled Pastor Believed God Allowed Trump to Lose the Election

While many sincere believers were confident that Trump would be inaugurated, others were prophetically sounding the alarm. As I said in my article, *Donald Trump Could Lose in 2020*, "Our

gun safes are full, but our prayer closets are empty. The 2020 election is ours to lose.”

I witnessed plenty of Christians jockeying for positions but very few calling for prayer and fasting. I saw an abundance of pride but not much humility. Had Donald Trump been elected, the “pride-o-meter” in many of our hearts would have been off the charts (mine included). God definitely humbled me!

Notice, I didn’t say, “had he won,” because I believe he did win the vote, but I also believe that God allowed fraud in order to wake us up. Throughout the Old Testament—from the conspiracy against King Joash to Athaliah’s destruction of all the kingly heirs—God often allowed kings to gain power through deceit and deception to humble His people (see 2 Kings 11:1, 12:20).

How can our nation murder the innocent, mock marriage, elevate porn and deny the existence of something as basic and irrefutable as gender and not expect judgment? It seems clear that we are actually more depraved as a nation than Israel ever was, and possibly approaching the level of sinfulness we read about in the days of Noah, when “the wickedness of man was great on the earth” (Gen. 6:5).

Upcoming elections will not fix our problems. We will be gravely mistaken, disenchanted and disillusioned (just like many are now) if we believe that. Granted, I desire godly legislation and God-honoring policies—we must contend for them—but we are too far gone to legislate change. Our national crisis can only be fixed by returning to God. A spiritual awakening is our only hope (more *here and here.*)

The Loss Forced Us to Look in the Mirror

Many are under the delusion that if they post enough comments on social media belittling the government that somehow change will occur. But God doesn’t say, “That’s a good Tweet or post; I need to do something!” He looks at our willingness to seek

Him and forsake sin.

Throughout his life, Abraham recognized his mistakes. David didn't make excuses for his sin; he owned it and accepted the consequences (2 Sam. 12:13). The prodigal son didn't blame everyone else for his problems. Instead, he "came to himself" (Luke 15:17) and repented.

Granted, it's much easier to post negative things about the current administration than it is to pray for them. It's easier to mock ungodly legislation than it is to weep and fast for the next generation. That's where the rubber meets the road. We change our nation by looking in the mirror. We see throughout the Bible there is only one remedy to reverse the judgment of God: repentance that produces a spiritual awakening.

The Loss Separated the Wheat From the Tare

This season is definitely bringing out the best and worst in us. Many who call themselves Christians are embracing heretical theology and ungodly movements. It's quite clear they don't want to be convicted by the truth. Jeremiah 5:30-31 is a powerful and heart-wrenching reminder of this very thing: "An appalling and horrible thing has been committed in the land: The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule by their own authority; and My people love to have it so. Yet what will you do in the end?" These turbulent times are separating the wheat from the tares.

To strengthen the church, pastors must become preachers again. A. W. Tozer hit the nail on the head when he wrote: "If Christianity is to receive a rejuvenation, it must be by other means than any now being used. If the Church in the second half of this century is to recover from the injuries she suffered in the first half, there must appear a new type of preacher."

Leaders should ask, "Does the world love the way we 'do

church'? Does the world appreciate that our church never challenges anyone or anything? Am I proud that I never make members feel uncomfortable or offended?" If so, you may want to consider Jesus' words that true disciples will be hated by the world because they speak the truth, not because they avoid it.

We must recapture our prophetic zeal and say like Richard Baxter, "I preach as a dying man to dying men"—as a dying man to a dying nation. The church, and our nation, desperately needs to be awakened, convicted and restored.

The Stage Must Be an Altar Again

Church services often lack spiritual power; prayer is glanced over; worship is designed to entertain; and the Word is neatly sandwiched between a funny anecdote and a softly spoken message, if it's preached at all. If we truly want America to experience a spiritual awakening, church stages must become altars again. Services can't be orchestrated down to the minute. We need extended times of prayer and worship where God is truly sought. It is time to put away the clocks and the timers and wait on the Lord—even if that means missing the big game or a special event.

Prayer can no longer be a footnote at the end of a sermon or a trite recital before a meal—prayer must be the priority across the land. We must return to prayer—real, fervent, expectant prayer that shakes heaven.

Is this too intense or extreme? Just look around! Mass shootings are increasing; the suicide rate is escalating; sexual perversion is skyrocketing; and killing innocent children is applauded. The last 30 years of seeker-sensitive, don't-step-on-toes, "let's do a survey of what people want to hear" Christianity has increased the rate of decay by removing the sharp sting of God's truth. The problem is not that this message is too intense; it is that we have become too soft and

weak to bear the strong medicine of God's truth.

Let me close with some encouragement. Even in the midst of judgment, you've been called for such a time as this. God knowingly and purposely put you here at this exact moment in history. Get up, dust yourself off and go to war on your knees.

Allow sadness and hopelessness to drive you to the cross. God will meet you there and rebuild the ruins. That's a promise that will never fail. {eoa}

Shane Idleman is the founder and lead pastor of Westside Christian Fellowship in Southern California. More can be found at [www.shaneidleman.com](#), and free downloads of his books are available at [www.shaneidleman.com](#). Visit him on Facebook and subscribe to his podcast.

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No, Sophia Bush, Kids Do Not Tell Their Parents Who They Are

Editor's note: If you are in crisis, please call 1-800-273-8255 or visit [www.18002738255.org](#). You are not alone.

I truly believe that actress and activist Sophia Bush is genuinely concerned about children. I truly believe that, in her heart, she is convinced that the best thing to do for a child who identifies as transgender is to affirm that child's perceived identity.

But is she right? Do kids know what is best for them?

Posting to her 3.7 million Instagram followers, Bush wrote, “#transkids are under attack across the country. AR just banned them from accessing healthcare. This is tantamount to murder. Kids will tell us who they are. It’s our job to support them, not demonize or harm them.”

She was responding to news that “Arkansas became the first state to pass a bill prohibiting doctors from providing gender-affirming medical care to transgender youth following a vote in the state Senate on Monday.

“HB 1570, the ‘Save Adolescents From Experimentation (SAFE) Act,’ prohibits trans youth from accessing health care and insurance coverage for gender-affirming care. The bill passed 28-7 in the state Senate. The state House passed the bill earlier this month.”

For Bush and other transgender activists and allies, this bill will give these children only one choice, namely, suicide. Hence, the bill “is tantamount to murder.”

To repeat, “Kids will tell us who they are. It’s our job to support them, not demonize or harm them.”

But do kids really know who they are? Is that the reality of human life?

All good parents want to support their children rather than demonize or harm them. Obviously.

All good parents want to be sensitive to their children, taking their pains or complaints seriously (as in, “Mommy, I don’t feel well”). And good parents will be quick to recognize their children’s unique personalities, giftings and weaknesses. That’s what good parents do.

And certainly, no caring parent would dream of being cruel to a child suffering inner torment and confusion. Perish the

thought. That's why so many parents have anguished over what to do with one of their children who persistently identified as transgender, beginning at a young age.

Over 10 years ago, when I appeared on a Tyra Banks episode that focused on little children who identified as transgender, I heard powerful, gut-wrenching stories from parents and children.

In fact, the show was groundbreaking in that, for the first time, these little children, as young as 7 or 8, came on stage to tell their stories, introduced with their new names and genders. ("This is Joey, who used to be a girl named Jane, and is now a boy.")

I've read the stories and watched the documentaries about the shame these children felt about their sexual organs. I've seen the parents shedding tears of relief when they learned there was such a thing as gender dysphoria, realizing that that was the condition with which their child was suffering. I've heard the testimonies of those who say, "It was either sex-change or suicide."

And that's why I don't question Sophia Bush's sincerity. She and others really do care about the wellbeing of these kids.

Unfortunately, they've got this all wrong.

First, this is now how life works. The children do not inform the parents about what is real and what is not. (And again, I'm not talking about a child experiencing physical pain or sickness.)

That's why, when a 3-year-old girl tells her mother that she is a princess or a horse or a butterfly or a flower, the mother plays along, telling her that she is a very pretty princess (or horse or butterfly or flower). That's why, when a 4-year-old boy believes he is a mighty soldier, he really believes that he is. That's part of childhood, especially

younger childhood.

That's also why the vast majority of children who identify as transgender when they are young no longer do so after puberty. Even Wikipedia, which is hardly known as a bastion of conservative ideas, summarized the evidence by stating, "According to prospective studies, the majority of children diagnosed with gender dysphoria cease to desire to be the other sex by puberty, with most growing up to identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual, with or without therapeutic intervention."

And what might happen if they received positive, therapeutic intervention, meaning, professional counseling to help them affirm their biological sex? Might the outcomes be even more successful?

The reality is that the kids do not, in fact, get to tell us who they are so we can support them. If that were the case, they would be the parents, and we would be under their supervision. They would be the ones driving the cars, and we would be in carseats in the back. They would be the ones teaching, and we would be doing the homework. They would be the doctors, and we would be their patients.

Sadly, when children are allowed to tell their parents who they are, as in, "I'm really a boy, not a girl," and when the parents support these sentiments, this only reinforces the child's gender confusion. As a leading psychologist explained at a lecture I attended, if you start dressing a boy in girl's clothes at a young age, affirming him as female, it will be much harder to free him from those misconceptions when he is older.

So, by trying to help, the parents only make things worse. And shall we ignore the high suicide rates among those who have had sex-change surgery? Do their problems suddenly disappear?

And that's why doctors in the UK are urging a new approach to

trans-identified children, namely, give things time rather than rush into hormone therapy and the like. (See here for some of the worldwide debate.)

Second, as voices from all across the spectrum have been saying—really, shouting—children do not have the ability to make such massive, life-impacting decisions. They are incapable of thinking through the implications of puberty-blocking hormones at the age of 10 (nor can medical science tell us with certainty what the long-term effects of those drugs will be). They are unable to understand the ramifications of a full mastectomy at the age of 18. They cannot comprehend the implications of full sex-change surgery at 19.

That's why Dr. Paul McHugh of John Hopkins' fame emailed me on Nov. 18, 2009, shortly before I appeared on Tyra, stating, "I hold that interfering medically or surgically with the natural development of young people claiming to be 'transgendered' is a form of child abuse."

My suggestion, then, to Sophia Bush and her like-minded colleagues is this: Rather than demonize those who oppose medical intervention for trans-identified children, dig a little deeper. Listen to those who can speak from personal experience. Don't dismiss those who say there is a better way. Instead, stop, listen and learn.

If you really care about these children, which I believe you do, love compels you to learn. There really is a better way.{eoa}

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Liberty Counsel Continues to Fight for First Amendment Rights One Year Later

It has been one year since state governors and local officials began issuing executive orders that created discriminatory restrictions against houses of worship that deemed them to not be “essential.” As a result, many pastors and churches were punished, and the churches were ordered to remain closed, despite their extraordinary safety measures.

On March 30, 2020, in Florida, Dr. Rodney Howard-Browne, pastor of The River at Tampa Bay Church, was the first pastor to be punished as a result of government restrictions on churches during COVID-19. Howard-Browne was arrested by Hillsborough County Sheriff deputies for holding a church service on March 29, allegedly violating the Hillsborough County Executive Order that went into effect the previous Friday at 10:00 p.m. The two charges were second-degree misdemeanors that carried a maximum penalty of two months in jail and \$500 fine.

Liberty Counsel represented Howard-Browne, who was taken into custody despite the fact that the church went above and beyond the requirements for secular businesses to protect the health and well-being of the people who attended. And this arrest was also in spite of the fact that, a few days before the Sunday service, the Hillsborough County Sheriff assured the pastor that he had no intent to interfere with the church service.

On March 20, 2020, Hillsborough County issued an administrative order restricting all “public or private gatherings, including community, civic, public leisure, faith-based events, sporting events, concerts, and any similar events that bring together more than 10 people in a single room, single space, or any venue, at the same time...” The order

exempted, among other things, "shelters." The order does not modify the word "shelters," which is an exceptionally broad word. On March 27, 2020, Hillsborough County issued a "Safer-at-Home" administrative order that contains 42 paragraphs of exceptions, including "religious personnel." Following this long list of exceptions, the same order adds another huge exception: "*Businesses which are not described in paragraph 3, and are able to maintain the required physical distancing (6 feet) may operate*" (emphasis added). Paragraph 3 is the section with 42 paragraphs of exceptions. Paragraph 5, quoted above, stated if a "business" is not mentioned as exempted but is able to comply with the six (6) feet separation may operate.

Following this arrest, Liberty Counsel began preparing a federal lawsuit that was set to be filed on April 2, but on April 1, 2020, Gov. Ron DeSantis issued a statewide executive order declaring that attendance at churches and houses of worship was essential activity. He also preempted every local order to the contrary.

On April 2, 2020, Hillsborough County Council met and voted to reverse its order from law. The charges against Howard-Browne were later dropped.

On April 5, 2020, in Virginia, police served a summons to Pastor Kevin Wilson and Lighthouse Fellowship Church on Chincoteague Island for holding a church service on Palm Sunday for 16 people spaced far apart in a sanctuary that seats 293. The charge was violating Virginia Gov. Northam's COVID Order 55 limiting church attendance to no more than 10 people, and it carried a penalty up to a year in jail and/or a \$2,500 fine. Liberty Counsel filed a federal lawsuit against Northam for targeting churchgoers by violating their religious freedom.

Lighthouse Fellowship Church does not have internet service, and thus there was no Easter virtual services. The charges against Wilson and the church have since been dropped, but the civil case is still pending.

On Good Friday, April 10, 2020, Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear threatened churches to not hold parking lot services on Easter Sunday. Despite a federal court order blocking the Louisville mayor from stopping parking lot services, Beshear proceeded with his threats. On April 12, 2020, Kentucky state troopers

came to Maryville Baptist Church on Easter, wrote down license plate numbers and placed notices on every car in the church parking lot. The church set up speakers outside for parking lot service. The state troopers did not go inside the church where a small number of people were spread far apart in a 700-seat sanctuary. Following Beshear's threat to target anyone who attended a church service, they placed quarantine notices on each car, including those where people stayed in their cars for the drive-in parking lot service. Anyone who did not drive off were given notices, including two media vehicles.

On behalf of Maryville Baptist Church and Pastor Jack Roberts, Liberty Counsel filed a federal lawsuit against Beshear for violating their religious freedom by targeting churchgoers on Easter Sunday. Liberty Counsel won two emergency injunctions from a unanimous three-judge panel on the U.S. 6th Circuit Court of Appeals, prohibiting the enforcement of Beshear's March 19 and 25 COVID-19 orders against church services at Maryville Baptist Church and Roberts.

On Thanksgiving Eve, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of New York churches and synagogues, striking down Gov. Cuomo's restrictions of 10 and 25 people.

On December 3, 2020, the Supreme Court then granted our petition on behalf of Harvest Rock Church and Harvest International Ministry, in which we represent scores of California churches. The high court set aside the lower court rulings and directed the lower courts to reconsider the case in light of its decision.

Since then, on February 6, 2021, the U.S. Supreme Court again ruled in favor of Liberty Counsel's case involving Harvest Rock Church and Harvest International Ministry striking down California Gov. Gavin Newsom's total ban on indoor worship. This was the second time Liberty Counsel petitioned the high court on behalf of these churches. The court ruling also included South Bay United Pentecostal Church.

In Maine, Liberty Counsel has filed a petition for cert to the U.S. Supreme Court and also filed a reply brief to the U.S. District Court of Maine regarding a renewed preliminary

injunction on behalf of Calvary Chapel of Bangor asking the court to strike down Gov. Janet Mills' unconstitutional restriction imposed against churches and places of worship. Maine has the most severe restrictions in the nation on places of worship with its 50-person numerical cap (or now five people per 1,000 square feet, which is still 50 people for Calvary Chapel of Bangor).

In Illinois, Liberty Counsel petitioned the U.S. Supreme Court twice and will file a motion for summary judgment to the district court on behalf of Elim Romanian Pentecostal Church and Logos Baptist Ministries in their federal lawsuit against Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker for his unconstitutional executive orders discriminating against these churches by restricting in-person worship services to no more than 10 people. Last May, within three hours of having to respond to the Supreme Court, Pritzker removed all restrictions on places of worship.

This year, the Supreme Court denied the churches' cert petition with a note that Justice Amy Barrett took no part in the consideration of the petition. Barrett was on the bench at the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals when it denied the preliminary injunction, and when the churches filed a petition with the 7th Circuit requesting rehearing en banc with the entire panel of judges. The petition for rehearing en banc would have placed this case on her desk and on the desks of all the judges to consider the petition. This is no doubt the reason Justice Barrett took no part in the consideration at the Supreme Court.

Gov. Jared Polis dropped Colorado's COVID unconstitutional limits on religious gatherings and declared that houses of worship are essential and removed attendance caps. Liberty Counsel represents Andrew Wommack Ministries, a Colorado nonprofit charitable corporation and religious ministry that provides Christian and biblically based conferences, seminars, events and other religious gatherings. Polis reversed course and revised the COVID restrictions for churches from the prior

175-person limit to 175 people per room, not counting staff with no limit on the number of staff because of the Supreme Court's decision in Liberty Counsel's case of Harvest Rock Church and Harvest International Ministry in California and the Court's ruling on Thanksgiving Eve in favor of New York churches and synagogues.

In total, Liberty Counsel has gone to the U.S. Supreme Court five times since May 2020 on behalf of churches and consulted with over 2,000 pastors and churches in 44 states.

Liberty Counsel founder and chairman Mat Staver said, "It's been one year since we began the fight for the right of churches to meet for worship. The First Amendment does not evaporate in a time of crisis. We cannot allow one person, whether state or local, to have unchecked discretion to write a church into or out of existence by one word—the word 'essential.' Such authority is extraordinary and runs counter to American history and constitutional law." {eoa}

This article originally appeared at .

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