

Activist Judges' Embrace of Secularism Is Folly

Like many of you, I've watched hours of 2016 Republican presidential debates. But I have waited in vain for anyone to ask the question, "How do we sustain freedom and liberty in America?"

Os Guinness, a friend of mine and a gift to the church because of his books, wrote:

"If the founders were correct, contemporary America's pursuit of political leadership without character, economic enterprise without ethics and trust, scientific progress without human values, freedom without virtue and negative freedom without positive freedom can only end in disaster. It rings the death knell of sustainable freedom, and as it works itself out socially in countless areas, it makes the decline of America only a matter of time.

"In short, contrary to the founders—and in ways they do not realize themselves—Americans today are heedlessly pursuing a vision of freedom that is short-lived and suicidal. Once again, freedom without virtue, leadership without character, business without trust, law without customs, education without meaning and medicine, science and technology without human considerations can only end in disaster.

"The plain fact is that it is harder to be free than to not be free, for freedom's fire has not only to be lit once but must be kindled and rekindled all over again in each succeeding generation.

"Freedom is therefore rare and cannot be taken for granted. If the hundred-centuries clock of civilization is compressed to a single hour, today's interest in freedom and democracy appears only on the last minute or so before midnight, so to

*take it as norm is folly.”**

Yes, “folly” seems to be a perfect description. Activist justices have blighted America’s Christian heritage with their embrace of secularism, and the carnage has been calamitous:

- Removing prayer and the Bible from public education (1962, 1963)
- Codifying the killing of unborn babies in their mothers’ wombs (1973)
- Foisting same-sex intercourse and marriage on a once Christian nation (2015)

When we believers arrive in heaven, we might be tempted to inform Eusebius and the “great cloud of witnesses” (Heb. 11) just how awful living in 21st-century America was for Christians. Of course, they would be right to chuckle at our dramatics.

“Eusebius, narrating the cruelties inflicted upon the Christians by the Eastern tyrant, Maximinus, says: ‘He prevailed against all sorts of people, the Christians only excepted, who contemned death and despised his tyranny. The men endured burning, beheading, crucifying, ravenous devouring of beasts, drowning in the sea, maiming and broiling of the members, goring and digging out of the eyes, mangling of the whole body; moreover, famine and imprisonment: to be short, they suffered every kind of torment for the service of God rather than they would leave the worship of God, and embrace the adoration of idols. Women also, not inferior to men through the power of the word of God, put on a manly courage, whereof some suffered the torments with men, some attained unto the like masteries of virtue’” (from *The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius Pamphilus*, quoted in Charles H. Spurgeon’s, *The Treasury of David*).

The cornerstone of the Founders’ model was to advance the Christian faith, making the Bible (not human reason) the

source of unchanging moral principles and the basis for all human conduct. They believed that Scripture served as the vital element for structuring society.

Further, the Founders were driven by a “missionary mandate,” a commission to make converts:

“We do hereby Dedicate this Land, and ourselves, to reach the People within these shores with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”**

But even as we celebrate the faithfulness of those who came before us, each generation must stand up and face the challenges of their present moment. Battling for truth becomes a necessary component of God’s program of redemption. Bruce Waltke writes, “God leaves Satan to test the fidelity of each succeeding generation of the covenant people and to teach them to ‘fight’ against untruth (Judges 3:2).”***

Evangelicals have abandoned our forefathers’ mission outlined in the Mayflower Compact in 1620:

“This fundamental charter defined their rights as a Christian colony, the basis of law in their civil society would be Christianity, as revealed by the Word of God. Someone was free to disagree, but he or she did have to agree that Christianity is the root of the law. No other religion provided them these freedoms.”****

The subtle shift toward secularism began to take place in America a century ago, culminating in the 1963 U.S. Supreme Court’s “establishment of a religion of secularism.”***** Instead of adhering to the Christian Founders’ mission and model and to constitutional integrity, secular justices desire to reshape the national character of America in the image of secularism.

Whatever public benefits secularism may promise, departing from God’s fixed boundaries and moral order bring bitter consequences in the end.

What do we do?

1. Return to Scripture, teaching the whole counsel of God.
Watch this "Pastors Only" video: (password: ARP)

2. Schedule a one-hour weekly prayer service, led by the senior pastor, asking God for mercy for what we have allowed to happen to a once-Christian nation.

We need a Gideon or Rahab to stand. {eoa}

* Os Guinness, *A Free People's Suicide*

** Founder Robert Hunt, Jamestown 1607

*** Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis Commentary*

**** The Founders' Bible, *The Origin of the Dream of Freedom*

***** Justice Potter Stewart's language—"It led not to true neutrality with respect to religion, but to the establishment of a religion of secularism."