

Another Gideon Stands Up Against Tyranny in California

Pastor Ché Ahn of Harvest Rock Church in Pasadena, California, is the latest to stand against California Gov. Gavin Newsom's injurious and ominously prophetic ordinance of March 19, 2020, which declared liquor stores, marijuana distribution centers and abortion clinics to be "essential," allowing them to remain open.

Churches, on the other hand, were deemed "nonessential" and had to close their doors.

Last week, Pastor Ahn received a forbidding letter from Pasadena assistant city prosecutor Michael P. Dowd threatening "criminal charges" if he continues to have church.

Dowd wrote, "This letter is to remind you that violations of Orders are criminal in nature. Each day in violation is a separate violation and carries with it a potential punishment of up to one year in jail and a fine for each violation ... Your compliance with these orders is not discretionary, it is mandatory." He also threatened to arrest the entire congregation, including those who by chance might have stumbled into the Sunday service.

This seems as good a place as any to say to those across America who are sitting on the sidelines or in the stands that the battle for religious liberty and freedom has begun.

In his outspoken opposition to the Nazi regime during the late 1930s, German theologian and Protestant pastor Martin Niemöller [1892-1984] is probably best remembered for his post-war words that sound eerily prophetic in light of what's happening in today's America, with California setting the jarring tone.

“First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a socialist.

“Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew.

“Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.”

Pastor Niemöller spent the last seven years of Nazi rule in concentration camps. Now under close state and city surveillance, Pastor Ché Ahn and his flock awaits a similar fate “of up to one year in jail for each violation.”

America has reached its *kairos*, its propitious moment for action. Slumbering through most of the 20th century, the church abandoned Jesus’ public square *ekklesia* assignment directed in Matthew 16:18. The church may have generated a Christian subculture, brimming with celebrity preachers with makeup compacts, massive building projects, bulky budgets, radio and TV presence, publishing houses, God-wants-you-to-be-happy and assorted feel-good messages; it still amounts to just a dolefully microscopic footprint in the culture.

Consequently, grim challenges lie ahead as spiteful, irreverent blue-state governors, mayors and rabid prosecutors move from discrimination to persecution, pronouncing when, if and how churches can worship. American Christendom finds itself at the start of a fight for freedom that will decide over control of the public square over the first half of the 21st century.

It’s difficult to predict where all this is going, with the politicization of medicine (hydroxychloroquine), Big Pharma’s acting in bad faith by playing on panic for profit (which would make even the Gibeonites blush in Joshua Chapter 9) and Fortune 500 companies bankrolling and stoking anarchy in America’s streets. And all that being “covered” by a once

pivotal but now piddling press whose sole power lies in peddling polished propaganda. It has been calibrated to closely match the Soviet Union's "news and trustworthy" communist news organs Pravda and Izvestia.

For example, the palming off by ABC News of the burning, looting and carnage inflicted upon Los Angeles by Marxist Black Lives Matter and Antifa freebooters as a "peaceful demonstration" bespeaks that something is terribly amiss in mass media's bubble.

However, let it be very clear that America is done for if evangelical and pro-life Catholic Christians do not bring their values to the public square, enacting Jesus' kingdom assignment to build His *ekklesia*. They can do that by going out to register and vote on election day, Nov. 3 this year. This will greatly help reverse the ill-boding situation that 50% of the estimated 65-80 million evangelicals in America still are not registered to vote (that is, they've never voted) and that 50% of the other half won't vote.

The countermeasure for large-scale, systemic lawlessness is readily available. It calls for 1,000 spiritual Gideons and Rahabs to enter the public square by running for local office in 2022, 2024, 2026 and every two years thereafter. The result will be a national movement and grand-scale social change.

Despite Christianity and secularism both being encompassing and evangelistic worldviews, they are beyond the bounds of reconciliation. One will lead to the exclusion of the other.

In striving for the Third Great Awakening, we can do no better than quoting A.W. Tozer's *Of God and Men* (1960):

"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. The proper, ruler-of-the-synagogue type will

never do. Neither will the priestly type of man who carries out his duties, takes his pay and asks no questions, nor the smooth-talking pastoral type who knows how to make the Christian religion acceptable to everyone. All these have been tried and found wanting.

“Another kind of religious leader must arise among us. He must be of the old prophet type, a man who has seen visions of God and has heard a voice from the throne. When he comes (and I pray God there will be not one but many), he will stand in flat contradiction to everything our smirking, smooth civilization holds dear. He will contradict, denounce and protest in the name of God and will earn the hatred and opposition of a large segment of Christendom. Such a man is likely to be lean, rugged, blunt-spoken and a little bit angry with the world. He will love Christ and the souls of men to the point of willingness to die for the glory of the one and the salvation of the other. But he will fear nothing that breathes with mortal breath.”

Praise be to God that rugged, blunt-spoken Gideons and Rahabs are beginning to stand.

UPDATE: California Pastor Rob McCoy of Godspeak Calvary Chapel in Thousand Oaks appeared before Judge Vincent O'Neill in Superior Court of Ventura County on Friday, Aug. 21. McCoy was held in contempt of court, and Godspeak was fined \$500 per three services, per two Sundays, or a total of \$3,000. Godspeak has signaled its intent to meet each week. {eoa}

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