

Are We Preserving the Liberty to Win People to Christ?

Born in 1941 in China to medical missionaries during World War II, Ian Oswald Guinness is an English author and social critic. His parents witnessed the Maoist Cultural Revolution in 1949 and were expelled in 1951.

On returning to England their son completed his secondary degree, his undergraduate degree at the University of London, and his . in the social sciences from Oriel College, Oxford.

In the late 1960s, Dr. Os Guinness studied at L'Abri under the great American theologian Francis Schaeffer (1912-1984) and later worked as a freelance reporter for the BBC. He wrote or edited more than 35 books, and argues in his work "A Free People's Suicide" that it is not enough to win freedom, but that it also has to be sustained.

He was interviewed recently on Full Proof Theology, a podcast by Pastor J. Chase Davis. Chase is Lead Pastor of Ministry at The Well Church in Boulder, Colorado, and author of "Trinitarian Formation: A Theology of Discipleship in Light of the Father, Son, and Spirit" (2021).

What struck us as special in the interview was Dr. Guinness' discussion of the rights and duties of citizenship:

"I meet Christians all the way across this country who say 'Things are in bad shape; I'm just keeping my head down and I'm trying to be faithful like the early Christians were under Rome.' This is dead wrong, the early church was faithful, yes, but they were under an imperial dictatorship. They had zero room to move, but they were faithful to the limits they had.

"Here in the American republic—which remember is partly coming from the Hebrew republic—[the] covenant in Exodus became

Constitution in 1787, and so on ... You're in a Republic where every citizen's responsibility is for the health and vitality of the republic. So for Christians just to keep their heads down, is not only a failure of discipleship, [and Christian] calling, they're not being 'salt' and 'light.' it's a failure of citizenship and absolutely disastrous.

"So the scandal of the American church, if you look at Britain, France, Germany and many of the countries in Western Europe, the church is a tiny minority now, openly rejected. Here [in America], for all the rise of the so-called religious nuns, the Christian community, the church, is still the largest community in America.

"So take our friends, the Jews. They are 2% of America, but if you think about it, they punch well above their weight: intellectually, financially ... and we [Christians] are a huge majority—and our Lord calls us to be 'salty' and 'light bearing'—[yet] we are non-influential. Is there any question? It is time to stand up."

Let us make spiritual application to contemporary American Christendom and, specifically, to those who have been "bought with a price" (1 Cor. 6:20).

The serpent's final defeat under Messiah's heel from Genesis 3:15, writes Dr. Bruce K. Waltke in his 2002 Christian Book of the Year, "Genesis: A Commentary," is delayed to affect God's program of redemption through the promised offspring. "In the interim, God leaves Satan to test the fidelity of each succeeding generation of the covenant people (Judges 2:22) and teach them to fight against untruth([Judges 3:2))."

Our battle in America is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, the powers, the world's rulers of the darkness of this age, and against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places (Eph. 6:12).

A.W. Pink understood that although Canaan was God's free gift

unto Israel, they had still to fight for every inch of it. Combining this with Dr. Waltke's insight from Genesis helps us comprehend why over the last 100 years or so American Christendom regressed. The church kept quiet, hiding behind the four walls of the church building and keeping its light hidden under a bushel (Matt. 5:15).

The church may have generated a Christian subculture, brimming with celebrity preachers, massive building projects, bulky budgets, radio and TV presence, God-wants-you-to-be-happy and assorted feel-good messages, it still amounts to just a dolefully microscopic footprint in the culture.

Still and all, Gideon's and Rahab's are beginning to enter the public square by running for local offices, in order to counterbalance the existential threat to free speech from the unholy alliance of Big Tech, Big Media, Big Government and Deep State.

There is more good news. Christian conservatives are beginning to realize that mustering and marshaling parishioners to register and vote for their biblical values is a good thing to do.

If winning people to Christ is the main thing, it makes perfect sense that preserving the liberty to win people to Christ is the second most important thing.

Shepherds must begin to disciple and launch spiritual leaders, also known as the men and women of Issachar, into America's public square. "How is the culture of my community doing?" must become the new standard.

Every church in every hamlet, town, and city across America should require a pastor, elder, deacon or congregant to run for local public office in 2024, 2026, 2028 and thereafter if we are to make it through.

Secularists manning the nation's spiritual, intellectual,

educational, economic and vocational levers of power and influence presently represent Apostle Paul's "principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this age, and spiritual forces of wickedness."

Here is a short overall picture that shows that there is a lenient set of rules for well-connected liberals, and a different array of rules for Christian and political conservatives:

Nancy Pelosi getting her hair done during the COVID lockdown; Governor Newsom running up a \$12K wine tab at The French Laundry violating his edict to stay home; CA Democrat Congressman Eric Swalwell's intimacy with a Chinese spy while serving on the U.S. House Intelligence Committee; former Democrat Virginia Governor Northam's black face; Bill Clinton's rendezvous with Obama's Attorney General Loretta Lynch on the tarmac in Phoenix; Joe and Hunter Biden's shakedown of foreign governments; the Obama Administration spying in 2016 on the Trump campaign; false Russian collusion claims; two impeachment attempts out of spite; and so on.

 Although a real tragedy, the spiritual collapse of America might not be all bad. Few souls thrive in times of prosperity as well as they do in seasons of adversity. A.W. Pink deemed that winter's frosts may necessitate warmer clothing, but will also kill the flies and garden pests.

"As there are certain vegetables, fruits and flowers that cannot be grown in lands that are unvisited by nipping winds and biting frosts, so there are some fruits of the Spirit that are only produced in the soil of severe trials, troubles and tribulations."

A season of great peril awaits America, but praise the Lord that Gideon's and Rahab's are beginning to stand. {eo}

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