

Atlanta Mayor's Moves Reminds Michael Youssef of Dictatorship

If our Founding Fathers came back today, they wouldn't recognize the liberty-loving country for which they once sacrificed their lives and fortunes. Instead, they would find a country that is rapidly giving way to the control of the thought police.

Had the freedoms of speech and religion not been enshrined in our Constitution, we might excuse government officials for imitating third-world dictators with demands that subordinates self-censor their "unapproved" personal beliefs.

I lived under a dictatorship, and I witnessed how everyone—from press to churches to government employees—had to be obey the whims of the dictator, or else. I escaped and came to the land of the free and home of the brave. Or at least I thought I had. But I'm not so sure now.

Not long ago, the mayor of Houston subpoenaed the sermons of local preachers who had spoken biblical truths that conflicted with the mayor's morality. She eventually retracted her subpoenas, but now we have the mayor of Atlanta, Kasim Reed, firing his fire chief for similar thought "offenses." Chief Cochran made the fatal offense of writing a book and speaking about biblical morality.

Like Chief Cochran, other Bible-believing Christians such as myself hold no hatred toward homosexuals, or toward all people who choose to live their lives their way. And yet, if you believe in biblical truth, the thought police will brandish you as a "hater."

For the sake of America's future, please do not try to

marginalize or destroy those whose only crime is following the clear commands of God. By all means, you should be free to disagree, even vehemently. In fact, I will defend your right to disagree with God's Word.

But to terminate someone's employment and deprive them of their livelihood? That is something worthy of ISIS. Members of ISIS may chop off the heads of Christians, but to chop off someone's voice or identity originates from the same desire for control through cruelty.

Far from calling Mayor Reed names, countless people like myself are praying for him. We pray that he will no longer get swept up in the wave of prejudice dictated by those who hate God's word. And we pray that he will return Chief Cochran to his job with an apology.

Mayor Reed claims that he didn't fire Cochran for his faith, but for his judgment. But what was the evil intent of his judgment? That he would not reject his faith under the threat of job loss? That should make us all admire him, not destroy him.

Mayor Reed, and all elected officials, must remember that every one of us will one day stand at the judgment seat of Christ. I plead with Mr. Reed to stand like me, a repentant sinner—a sinner saved by grace. And I plead with him to repent of seeking to please the ideological whims of the few who reject God's moral laws.