

Christians Must Stand With Courage and Conviction

Lutheran Pastor Wolfgang Schuch was one of the giants of the 16th century. According to Charles Spurgeon's *The Treasury of David*, Schuch was imprisoned for denying "the Church and the sacrifice of the mass" and was sentenced to be burnt at the stake. Upon hearing his sentence, he began singing the 122nd Psalm, "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord.'"

In fact, it was in the 19th-century Baptist preacher Charles Spurgeon's aforementioned commentary on the Psalms that I read about Schuch. But Spurgeon read about Schuch from within the pages of *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*. When Christians stand with courage and conviction—even in the face of death—their testimony inspires others for generations to come.

Kentucky Clerk Kim Davis faced her own trial and dilemma in 2015. She would either knuckle under to secular judicial elites and compromise her beliefs as a Christ follower, or she would go to jail. Confrontation with evil is nothing new; John N. Oswalt says believers throughout history have been "flayed alive, impaled, mutilated and killed" (*Isaiah Commentary*). Theology can make for splendid Bible study discussion in the safety and comfort of a yet-free society, but the real question is this: Will you bet your life on it?

Secularism is a pagan ideology, a religion. According to Harold J. Berman's *Law and Revolution*, secularism divorced itself from Christianity, and yet still retained "from traditional Christianity both its sense of the sacred and some of its major values." But a rival now challenges secularists in the form of revolutionary totalitarianism.

For instance, homosexual militants once lobbied for a

libertarian acceptance of its lifestyle with this mantra: "Allow us to live our lives in the privacy of our homes." But then, the homosexual movement shifted to a totalitarian posture: "Bakers, photographers and Christian retreat centers will take part in our weddings or be bankrupted." Finally, the situation Kim Davis faced introduced us to the next chapter: Fascism, with its declaration, "You will ceremonialize and pay homage to our weddings, or you'll spend time in jail."

Pro-life evangelical and Catholic Christians have favored an esoteric, academic approach over the last two to three generations. But in the battle with secularists for ideological supremacy in the public square, the cancer of secularism has now run its course. The decay to this once-great Christian nation is nauseating.

In plain English, Peter J. Leithart spelled out his diagnosis and corrective to the gathering storm when he wrote in *Between Babel and Beast*:

"Until American churches actually function as outposts of Jesus' heavenly empire rather than as cheerleaders for America—until the churches produce martyrs rather than patriots—the political witness of Christians will continue to be diluted and co-opted."

Edmund Burke observed that those who refuse to look backward to their ancestry would not look forward to their posterity. Jewish talk show host Michael Medved observes, "The Founders weren't atheists, agnostics or secularists; they were, almost without exception, deeply serious Christians."

I predict that a future American leader will conclude that America's greatest need is a spiritual awakening. Once inaugurated, repentance will be the first order of business; first confessing his own sins, and then admitting his and the nation's folly for replacing Jehovah and traditional Christianity with a "religion of secularism." (This is U.S.

Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart's prophetic language in his lone dissent in the 1963 SCOTUS ruling to remove the Bible from public schools in America: "It led not to true neutrality with respect to religion, but to the establishment of a religion of secularism.")

According to Eric Metaxes, this historic figure, "something like what a Moses was to Israel" will have set in motion a movement to oust the false religion of secularism from the political, legal, economic, religious and cultural institutions of America. And analogous to Martin Luther's Protestant Reformation in the 16th century, a "cataclysmic" explosion of faith will rock the world for generations.

But this movement likely won't come into view until the church returns to the priority of prayer, establishing righteousness above sacrifice and the priority of ethics over ritual. God's name has been brought into contempt, but like the prideful Philistines in 1 Samuel 5, secularists have misinterpreted their victory:

"The only reason that they had defeated Israel was because Yahweh was using the Philistines to discipline His people. How much better it would have been for His glory to be revealed on the battlefield, but He couldn't give victory to a disobedient people. The living God cannot be used, manipulated or managed. God allows Himself to be humiliated and exalted. But through it all, He will not compromise His holiness or integrity. In the church God often appears to be losing because Christians refuse to submit to His lordship. The Lord longs to show up in a powerful way, but He is waiting for us to be holy as he is holy (1 Pet 1:16). So instead of blaming the church for being anemic, lethargic and irrelevant, perhaps we should blame ourselves" (Dr. Keith Krell, *1 Samuel*).

Once we return to God, He will then attend to the honor of His name. Public education and universities will again focus on the principal component of education: incorporating the

character of the Father into our children, thus creating an exceptional and virtuous people. Test scores in education will soar for, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Prov. 1:7).

Once gospel righteousness is restored to the public square, virtue will suddenly come to the forefront at City Hall. America will again bring forth outstanding men and women of character, produced by a Christian culture, Christian thought and biblical wisdom. As Charles Spurgeon said, "He who is taught of God has a practical wisdom such as malice cannot supply to the crafty; while harmless as a dove he also exhibits more than a serpent's wisdom."

We simply need a Gideon or Rahab to stand.