

Pastors, They're Coming After You!

OK, I get it.

The title of this article sounds conspiratorial and inflammatory.

In fact, it sounds like a "shock" headline designed to get your attention.

Who, after all, is this ambiguous "they" I'm referring to, and why are "they" coming after "you," referring obviously to Christian leaders? And what, pray tell, are "they" coming to do to "you"?

So I'll admit it. I *did* come up with the title of this article for shock value, but the fact is, you need to be shocked.

In other words, the title may be sensational, but it is only sensational because it is true.

Consider this Oct. 26 headline on Fox News: "State of Georgia demands pastor turn over sermons."

Yes, "a lay minister who is suing the Georgia Department of Public Health for religious discrimination has been ordered by the state's attorney general to relinquish his sermons to the government, according to federal court documents."

In the words of Attorney General Samuel Olens, "Please produce a copy of your sermon notes and/or transcripts."

And why is the state of Georgia demanding his sermon notes and/or transcripts?

As Todd Starnes reports, "Walsh, a Seventh-day Adventist lay minister had been hired in May 2014 by as a district health

director with the Georgia Department of Public Health. A week later, a government official asked him to submit copies of his sermons for review. He complied and two days later he was fired.”

In other words, he was not fired because of any lack of qualification. To the contrary, he was highly qualified for the job.

As noted by attorney David French, Walsh’s résumé included “working for former President Bush and President Obama to combat AIDS, serving as a board member of the Latino Health Collaborative, and starting California’s first city-run dental clinic for low-income families dealing with HIV/AIDS,” but that “wasn’t sufficient to overcome the horror at Walsh’s Christian views.”

Yes, Walsh was fired for the unpardonable sin of preaching against homosexual practice, based on Scripture—and note that he was preaching this to his fellow congregants, not giving a lecture to his staff.

As Walsh’s lead attorney, Jeremy Dys, said, “He was fired for something he said in a sermon. If the government is allowed to fire someone over what he said in his sermons, they can come after any of us for our beliefs on anything.”

Yes, continued Dys, “It’s an incredible intrusion on the sanctity of the pulpit. This is probably the most invasive reach into the pulpit by the state that I’ve ever seen.”

But this should not surprise us at all.

I pointed out in 2013 that, “Already in April, 2009, an article in the *Washington Post* documented how, ‘Faith organizations and individuals who view homosexuality as sinful and refuse to provide services to gay people are losing a growing number of legal battles that they say are costing them their religious freedom.’

"This was confirmed by Georgetown Law Professor Chai Feldblum, appointed by President Obama to serve on the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and herself an out and proud lesbian, when she remarked that when religious liberty and sexual liberty conflict, 'I'm having a hard time coming up with any case in which religious liberty should win.'"

That's why Atlanta Fire Chief Kelvin Cochran, was fired for his personally held beliefs about sexuality and marriage.

That's why Dr. Angela McCaskill, associate provost of diversity and inclusion at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. (and herself a deaf), was suspended from her job for signing a petition at her local church that called for a public vote on same-sex "marriage" (rather than for a legislative decision).

That's why Crystal Dixon, was fired from her position as associate vice president of human resources at the University of Toledo for writing an editorial in her local newspaper, taking issue with the idea that gay is the new black.

And the list goes on and on, growing on a regular basis, as I and others have documented now for years. (Just check out the chapter "Big Brother Is Watching, and He Really Is Gay" in *A Queer Thing Happened to America* for some sobering examples.)

And I used these three examples here because in each case, gay sensitivities not only trumped religious rights, they also demonstrated that, when it comes to "gay rights," even black Americans can be perceived as victimizers rather than victims (Cochran, McCaskill and Dixon were all black).

As we have now learned with Dr. Walsh (did I mention he's black as well?), not even the pulpits are safe.

But this too should not surprise us.

After all, it was just last year that Annise Parker, the

lesbian mayor of Houston, along with the city attorney, David Feldman, demanded that five local pastors turn over their sermons, speeches, presentations and even emails to congregants which addressed the issues of homosexuality and gender identity, among other subjects.

And it was only when Parker and Feldman came under intense national pressure that they backed down, with Parker still denying that “the request[s] were in any way illegal or intended to intrude on religious liberties.” (I document this in detail in the chapter “The Day the Line Was Crossed” in *Outlasting the Gay Revolution*.)

With all respect to the mayor’s position, her explanation was absolute rubbish, and there is no question that she did intruded on religious liberties.

And as I warned last week, if Hillary Clinton is elected, this will only get worse.

Even if Donald Trump is elected, abuses like this will continue on a local level for years to come.

There’s only thing that can stop it, and that is simply the church of Jesus, led by its pastors and elders, standing up to speak what is right and do what is right, regardless of cost or consequence. If we do, the tide will turn.

Now, I’m quite aware that I sound like a broken record, having written on this theme three times in two weeks, including this article (see [here](#) and [here](#)).

But I will keep sounding the alarm until God’s people wake up—beginning with the leaders—and with yet another example staring us in the face, we sleep on to our own peril, not to mention our lasting shame.

In recent days, I’ve been reading a terrific book by Dean G. Stroud titled *Preaching in Hitler’s Shadow: Sermons of*

Resistance in the Third Reich. And while I am absolutely *not* comparing our current government to Nazi Germany and while I do *not* believe we will go the way Nazi Germany went, I can't help but see the striking parallels between our two countries, beginning with these incremental attacks on religious freedom, back then and today.

And so, while I am *not* saying that America will one day look like Nazi Germany, I *am* saying that very soon, America will hardly be recognizable, the antithesis of the "land of the free and the home of the brave."

After all, who would have believed that in the last two years, government officials would be demanding that pastors and Christian teachers turn over their sermons, sermons notes and private emails dealing with sexual morality and that, in the last 10 years, Christians would be fired from their jobs or kicked out of their schools because of their privately held, biblical beliefs?

And so, I will say it again. It's time to wake up!