

President Trump Just Proved That He Gets It

President Trump gets it.

During his state of the Union address—as Nancy Pelosi and her crew smirked and shook their heads in opposition to statements that otherwise responsible leaders should have been celebrating—President Donald J. Trump decried New York’s recent law that attempts to legitimize murder of infants up to moments before birth. Trump also soundly denounced the governor of Virginia’s position defending so-called “post-birth” abortion. The president spoke of ending childhood cancer, valuing motherhood and “restoring our culture” to “guard and cherish human life.”

As Republicans stood, clapped and cheered, Pelosi, Chuck Schumer and virtually all other Democrats in the chambers copiously remained seated. The most vivid divide of the audience—and the postures that showed the status of all listener’s souls—with *unmistakable* clarity—occurred when the president uttered perhaps the most courageous words spoken in a SOTU in our lifetime: “All human beings are ‘made in the holy image of God.’”

I submit to you that these are perhaps the most courageous words spoken by a president in a State of the Union address during our lifetime. How could it be courageous to speak what is, to any sentient human, an obvious moral reality? It is because we live in a cultural that has become a moral vacuum. Because in this day it is popular—nay, *expected*—that morality and God be rejected, for a president to, with gusto, affirm what is moral, upright and godly ... well, folks, in 2019, this takes *guts*.

And Trump is right. A reiteration of moral conviction is

exactly what our nation needs to survive. Given that secular education, pop media and the Democrat party have all fought God, life and truth for so many decades, it will take a visitation from God to restore our moral awareness. But our survival depends on it.

Our Culture Today: Unique in a Way Not Often Talked About

The 21st century is different from all other generations, in this regard: We are living in the first era of an international attempt to suppress *moral knowledge*. I refer to the widespread cultural abandonment of belief in “natural law.” How do we know this is happening? The list is lengthy: the SCOTUS decision to redefine marriage; unisex changing rooms at public gyms; public schools forbidding children to say boy, girl, Mr. or Miss; social media giants censoring accounts that post messages affirming traditional values; and forms or applications offering numerous gender choices beyond “M” or “F”—these are but a few of the examples of a culture-wide abandonment of basic moral boundaries.

In the classroom, through the media, in our entertainment and via rigidly enforced corporate policies, accommodation of clear moral truth is being squelched with unrelenting pressure. America’s founders (and thought leaders throughout history) often referred to our knowledge of right and wrong as “natural law.” Phrases like “self-evident truth,” “higher law” or “the laws of nature and nature’s God”—these were terms used to describe the awareness of right or wrong known to all people. Knowledge of natural law speaks to both human life and human behavior. In all civilized cultures, males and females were seen as equal yet distinct—equal in personhood, worth, dignity and equal before the law. Yet females and males were obviously different in terms of anatomy and physical function. In cultures based on the Judeo-Christian worldview, men and women were rightly seen as equal before God.

The Ubiquity and Source of Moral Knowledge

Natural law doesn't mean that people always *do* what is right. But deep down, in our conscience, people really do *know* what's right. This has been amply documented by many scholars, including C.S. Lewis, Will Durant, Mortimer J. Adler and the late Charles Colson, to name a few.

More recently, academics such as J. Budziszewski and Yale psychologist Dale Bloom have persuasively argued that humans are a species uniquely hardwired with the ability to know right from wrong. In his 1943 classic, *The Abolition of Man*, Lewis documents precepts of the moral codes held by major cultures throughout history, all of which strongly echo the Ten Commandments of Exodus 20. Face it, we are moral creatures. And no scientific theory can account for *why* humans are born knowing right from wrong.

In addition to the record of history, the Bible points out the moral awareness universally embedded within the human psyche. Romans 2:14-15 states, "When Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, not having the law, are a law unto themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, while their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them." Romans 3 and 1 Peter 4 speak of the "oracles of God," which were entrusted to the Jewish people. But because knowledge of right and wrong *is* known to all people, as the passage above says, we are accountable to our Creator. We should do right, because in the core of our soul, we actually *know* what is right.

An example of the culture's trend away from recognition of "natural law" is seen in the reaction that followed certain statements by renowned psychiatrist, Paul R. McHugh, M.D. As department chair for psychiatry at Johns Hopkins, McHugh stopped the practice of gender reassignment surgeries years ago. As transgenderism became mainstream news in recent years, McHugh's critiques of pro-LGBTQ arguments have been met with swift condemnation in the media. But Dr. McHugh's positions on

human gender are perspectives that people of any other generation would have called common sense.

Many pro-LGBTQ websites speak of “the autonomy of self,” which they believe is threatened by “cisgenders” (those who accept the gender of their birth or who deny that one’s chromosomal makeup can be changed). Activists for the LGBTQ cause steadfastly deny belief in natural law/objective morality. It isn’t hard to see why. Two realities, if acknowledged, soundly defeat the narrative of pro-homosexual and pro-transgender movements: 1) the undeniable facts about human anatomy; and 2) recognition of moral truths on which human history (social and legal) are based.

Activists are currently pressuring professional societies, academics and legal professionals to deem disagreement with the LGBTQ message an act of violence on par with physical assault. Their lobbying of major corporations to make policies more accepting LGBTQ demands has been very successful.

It is empirically verifiable that no one has the ability to change their physiology by mental “identification.” But the narrative of those who support transgenderism would maintain that teachings about ethics and anatomy—unquestioned as true throughout human history—amount to malice and hate. Certainly, psychiatrist McHugh was not showing “hate” when, speaking as a mental health professional in 2015, said that people with gender confusion need therapy, not surgery.

Firsthand Exposure to the Torture of Gender Confusion

Attending graduate school in the early 1990s, one of the jobs I worked was as assistant manager of a Christian bookstore. Running the bookstore provided many opportunities to share the gospel. On a fairly regular basis, we had the special joy of seeing people accept Jesus in a store full of Christian resources.

Ministry opportunities seemed to walk through the store’s door

daily, and one unforgettable person we met was named Russ. He would come to the bookstore many times per week, and he struggled with many things. My wife and I prayed with Russ dozens of times and showed him many Scripture verses regarding his issues. Physical abuse that went back to childhood had taken a severe toll on this young man. For Russ, the peace of Christ and a stable spiritual walk seemed very elusive. Russ one day informed us that he was from then on to be called "Courtney."

The real answer to his problems, Russ was convinced, was to become a woman. Shortly after, Russ told us that he was now living with people who truly loved him—but only as "Courtney." He let us know that his new community had a different understanding of Scripture than we had been sharing. His visits to our store became far less common.

There is desire in every heart for love and acceptance that only Jesus can fill. It was clear that Russ/Courtney was seeking fulfillment in some very unhealthy places. All who knew this young man agonized for him as we watched him vacillate back and forth from "Courtney" to "Russ." Christians in the neighborhood recalled how "Courtney" expressed desire to permanently return to being "Russ." But the pressure to conform to the standards of the "alternative community" were intense. The last time we ever saw Russ, my wife and I begged him to seek counseling.

The newspaper headline reported that Russ' death was an unsolved case. The tragic circumstances surrounding Russ' death will not be repeated here; whether or not he was murdered, committed suicide or died accidentally was never known.

But in the gender-fluid climate of the 21st century, this is certain: We pastors, professional counselors and other Christians who tried to help Russ would today be accused of hate crimes for refusing to encourage the dark, destructive

identity of “Courtney.” For trying to help this young man trust God’s design for his life, we would be guilty of “misgendering.” We had taken Russ/Courtney into our homes, our lives and our hearts. But progressives today would say that the Christian context we offered amounted to “acts of violence.”

Morality: Unobscured by Cultural ‘Spin’

Because there is this universal witness of God written on every heart, Romans 1:20c contains some very sobering words: “[People] are without excuse.” Before the Almighty, we are accountable. Perhaps this accountability to God—and not just ourselves—is why many in our culture wish that there were no “natural moral law.” This is certainly what John 3:19b indicates—that “men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”

All people need a Savior because we have betrayed our conscience and done things we know we shouldn’t. This is called sin. By breaking the known moral law, we are guilty before the *lawgiver*.

How sad it would be if the story ended there. Thankfully though, John’s Gospel contains the indictment over man’s love for sin. In this same chapter, verse 16, John records God’s intervention to save us from our guilt: “For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

The most morally correct, and wisest, thing anyone may ever do is to respond, in faith and obedience.

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