

This Is the New Christian Paradigm in the Public Square for the 21st Century

Last month, I wrote these words in an email to the 100,000 American Renewal Project pastors:

Evangelical and pro-life Catholic Christians can no longer operate on the model for civic engagement entrusted to us from the last generation, a sort of do-nothing approach.

The currency in the political arena is:

1. How many votes can you bring to the table or
2. How much money can you bring that brings votes to the table? Press conferences, mass distribution of press releases and getting an interview with Megyn Kelly is public relations-useful for boosting one's reputation, improving one's image and promoting one's self.

"Organizing" is the largest denomination in political currency. Speechifying is way down on the list of political currency, worth maybe a half-nickel on a dollar. A Sunday sermon is not a denomination of political currency.

After watching this video filmed by 100 Houston area pastors in response to the Texas "Bathroom Bill" (SB6), I want to throw my hat in the air and shout hallelujah!

Pastors have begun to turn the corner and erect a new paradigm in public square for the 21st Century. And what is the goal? To restore America to her Judeo-Christian heritage and re-establish a biblical-based culture.

Over the past fifty to seventy-five years, evangelicals and pro-life Christians cowered under the false god of secularism.

Consider just two public displays of ignorance and lack of spiritual wisdom.

First, ponder the carnal inclination of Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Elena Kagan and Sonia Sotomayor; they see God in nothing. It's sad in a way, that with all of their learning and God-given intellectual firepower, they have no understanding.

Why? Because wisdom has a moral dimension. As Bruce K. Waltke writes in *Proverbs Commentary*, "A person could memorize the book of Proverbs and still lack wisdom if it did not affect his heart, which informs behavior."

As Solomon explained, "Those who forsake the law praise the wicked; but those who keep the law contend with them. Evil men don't understand justice; but those who seek Yahweh understand it fully." (Prov. 28:4-5)

Second, Pastor Tim Keller, the founder of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Manhattan, was to receive the Kuyper Prize for Excellence in Reformed Theology and Public Witness by Princeton Theological Seminary, as "an innovative theologian and church leader, well-published author and catalyst for urban mission in major cities around the world."

But two weeks ago, the president of Princeton Theological Seminary stated that they were canceling the award because of Keller's "lack of support for both the ordination of women and LGBTQ causes."

Princeton withdrew the award, but Keller will still speak on campus. I suggest we pray for Keller's lectures—for God's grace to be on him and for a breakthrough in the campus in the lives of the students. Historically, Princeton has been a place where God initiated spiritual awakenings. Pray that God would do it again.

When I consider the Princeton debacle, I am reminded that

ignorance is worst when it amounts to ignorance of God. But those steeped in His wisdom possess intellectual clarity and moral discernment:

“Have you ever met an individual who has lost their memory? Maybe they have Alzheimer’s? They cannot remember who you are, or who they are. Someone could easily take things away from them. In a sense, America has had national Alzheimer’s. We have lost our collective memory. Here we are the most prosperous and independent nation in world history, with more individual liberty and opportunity than any previous people, and yet we forgot how we got here.”

Virtue and freedom are inseparable. Freedom cannot be preserved long in the absence of virtue within its people and their representatives.

Question: How did America’s founders encourage virtue?

Government promoted Christianity, knowing that morality is the anchor of sustainable freedom. If you doubt this, then study the words of the Northwest Ordinance (1787):

“Religion, morality and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.”

Until a century ago, Christianity was the key component of America and its civil institutions and laws. For example, Sir William Blackstone’s four-volume *Commentaries on the Laws of England* was, according to The Founder’s Bible, “the second-most cited authority during the Founding Era (1760-1805), and Thomas Jefferson said that American attorneys used Blackstone’s with the same devotion that Muslim’s used the Koran. Significantly, Blackstone’s relied so heavily on the Scriptures that the Rev. Charles Finney (a famous minister in the national revival known as the Second Great Awakening) credited his conversion to Christianity with his study of that textbook in law school. Blackstone’s *Commentaries* remained the

basis of American legal education until the 1920's, when progressivism and evolutionary legal theory replaced originalism and original intent."

Secularism has taken apart America's Christian godly heritage brick-by-brick. The wages that secularists bargain with are life, pleasure and profit; but the wages they pay are death, torment and destruction. As Robert South, quoted in Charles Spurgeon's, *The Treasury of David* noted, "He that would understand the falsehood and deceit of Secularism must compare its promises and its payment together." {eoa}