

I, even I, am He

By Chris Johnson



The author of Judges used a phrase to sum up the era at the end of the book: *“And everyone did what was right in their own eyes.”* Does that sound relevant to our own place in time?

Eerily so, doesn't it? Our frontrunners for the presidential election are a corrupt former official with blood on her hands and a strip club owner.

The average age our kids lose their virginity is 17 and the average marriage is 8 years long. It's estimated that one third of American kids grow up without their dad. Twenty percent of pregnancies, one out of five, will end in abortion in America. For a black baby in New York City, that rate goes up to fifty-five percent.

In order to receive federal funding, public schools are being forced to allow male students to use the girl's locker rooms, if they assert that they have a “female identity.” Meanwhile the Girl Scouts have teamed up with Planned Parenthood to make sure the nation's best cookie salesgirls know it's normal to use sex toys. Homosexual marriage is legal and polygamy is tracing its steps.

Television slanders traditional masculine rolls, and uses women's bodies to sell hamburgers. Meanwhile, our military enlists our daughters to defend our radically sexual way of life.

Either everyone is doing what is right in their own eyes, or they don't even bother with justifying it to themselves.

But here, I turn your attention to the last chapters of the book just preceding Judges: Joshua. God, through Moses, had led Israel all the way to the Promised Land, over many generations. Moses was ably followed in leadership by Joshua. Now, knowing that his days are numbered, Joshua gathered all his leaders, elders, and judges together to impart final words of counsel and exhortation:

“And now I am about to go the way of all the earth, and you know in your hearts and souls, all of you, that not one word has failed of all the good things that the Lord your God promised concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one of them has failed. But just as all the good things that the Lord your God promised concerning you have been fulfilled for you, so the Lord will bring upon you all the evil things, until he has destroyed you from off this good land that the Lord your God has given you, if you transgress the covenant of the Lord your God, which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods and bow down to them. Then the anger of the Lord will be kindled against you, and you shall perish quickly from off the good land that he has given to you.” [Joshua 23:14-16]

God had blessed His people, Israel for hundreds of years, yet they, just like us, were sinners prone to wander.

But God used Joshua to warn them! He told them explicitly, “if you abandon Me, if you follow other gods, if you can't obey My law and worship Me rightly, it will be the end of you.”

In fact, that warning is repeated over and over again in the Old Testament.

And it's been read over and over again in American pulpits.

We can easily sneer at the spiritual weakness of Israel, but in 2016, self-proclaimed Evangelicals are one of the biggest blocks voting for the strip club owner!

Does the Church represent the things of God through our families, in our culture, and in the voting booth?

Joshua's final words were an echo of those of his mentor, Moses, who prophesied his people's betrayal of their God as well as God's response in Deuteronomy 32:

“Vengeance is Mine, and recompense, for the time when their foot shall slip; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and their doom comes swiftly. For the Lord will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants, when he sees that their power is gone and there is none remaining, bond or free. Then he will say, ‘Where are their gods, the rock in which they took refuge, who ate the fat of their sacrifices and drank the wine of their drink offering? Let them rise up and help you; let them be your protection! ‘See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no God beside me...’”

America, and particularly the American Church, has grown too comfortable in her own power. May we remember who God really is, lest He see the need to remind us.



From the desk of Bill Johnson

“Discerning the difference”

We as Americans have been blessed for generations with freedom. Almost predictably, being humans, we have lost our understanding of the rarity of it, of its preciousness.

Former President Ronald Reagan stated it this way: *Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where men were free.*

On the big stage, as we see news clips either on network or cable news or on social media, it is often ugly, divisive, and very depressing. The picture is bleak both for the “here and now” and the near and distant future.

As we see in the books of Joshua and Judges, leadership is vital to a people.

When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn. Proverbs 29:2

We are in a state of MOURNING!

Former Federal Prosecutor Andrew C. McCarthy who prosecuted the Blind Sheik (Omar Abdel-Rahman) for planning to blow up the World Trade Center in 1993 recently wrote: *“The people who oppose what the Left is doing to the country want an opposition party. The Republican establishment has shunned that role, preferring to be Washington than to fight Washington. The people (people like you and me) are looking elsewhere.”*

That's what we want! We want a godly leader who will oppose big government policies that are destroying our country from within - policies that are undermining America, that are attacking our freedom, moving us into chaos. This is happening against the wishes of untold numbers of law abiding, kindly people.

Who will oppose Planned Parenthood? Who will lead the fight against transgender bathrooms where your daughters and granddaughters may be forced to share bathrooms and lockers with deviant men, exposing them to perversion and increased risk of sexual assault – brought about by spineless, valueless bureaucrats who caved to the LGBTQ agenda? Indeed, who will fight for securing our borders, for getting big government and its Common Core out of our local schools? Who will rebuild our military so that we can have a government that resumes one of its chief (and really few) responsibilities: protecting its citizens?

Where is such a leader? Where can such an honorable and righteous leader be found? Does one exist?

Former President John Adams said these words in his oft quoted statement: ***Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.***

In this vein, these words repeated from above are haunting: *When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.* Proverbs 29:2

Wicked? Righteous? Which of the candidates running for president are righteous? Which are wicked? There are candidates who are marked by wickedness. Is there a remaining candidate who is righteous?

And here's a very important question: Do we as Americans have the ability to discern the difference between a righteous leader and one who is not?

Jesus frequently refers to His people as sheep. We are sheep-like (John 10:3, Isaiah 40:11, John 10:9).

Tim Challies (pastor and author) states this about sheep:

... This is a real news story that aptly tells us the first reason sheep need a shepherd: because sheep are dumb.

One sheep (in Turkey) wandered off a cliff and 1,499 others just followed along. Can you picture it? 1,500 sheep, each walking off a cliff, one after the other. Soon they were piled so deep that the ones at the bottom were crushed to death and the ones on top were lying on a big downy-soft pillow. It is completely absurd and tells us one important fact about sheep and the first reason sheep absolutely need a shepherd: they are not the smartest animals in the world. In fact, they may well be just about the dumbest animals in the world. ...

Sheep are dumb and directionless and defenseless. So I guess when God says that we are sheep who need a shepherd, he doesn't mean it as a compliment to us. It is just a very realistic assessment of who we are and what we need. We are sheep who are completely dependent upon a shepherd.

To say that God is our shepherd and we are sheep, is to humble ourselves, admitting what is true about us, and to elevate God, declaring what is true of him. When you say, “The Lord is my shepherd,” you are saying something that ought to move your heart in praise and gratitude. To declare that God is your shepherd is to praise and glorify him because God the shepherd stoops down to care for poor, lost, not-so-smart sheep like you and me. <http://www.challies.com/christian-living/dumb-directionless-defenseless>

This is a time for discernment. May there be those throughout our nation who will humbly seek His face, vote rightly, and, by God's grace, may we have a leader who will lead this country honorably, decently, and with dignity for all.

Are we capable of discerning the difference between righteous and wicked? I wonder. Father God: Please help us!

The Pursuit of Holiness

June 3 - 5, 2016



With limited rooms available, we are extending what we anticipate will be a very short-lived invitation to attend what promises to be a powerful weekend of timely information, fellowship, and spiritual challenge at a beautiful conference center based near American Decency Association's headquarters in Fremont, Michigan.

By the time you receive this newsletter the openings may be filling up, so don't delay. Call today to make your reservation.

Here are the logistics:

A WEEKEND CONFERENCE - "The Pursuit of Holiness"

**When: June 3-5
(Friday, Saturday, Sunday)**

Where: The Shack Country Inn
2263 W. 14th Street,
White Cloud, MI 49349
ph: 231-924-6683
shackcountryinn.com

Featured Speakers:

Randall Murphree, Editor-in-Chief of the American Family Journal.

Buddy Smith, Executive Vice-President of American Family Association, former Pastor and gifted singer.

Rev. Ken Smith, Director of Biblical Counseling Center, Jenison, Michigan. Former pastor in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Back by popular demand as speaker at last year's conference.

Dr. Ron Workman, Long time Bible Church pastor having served in Illinois, Florida and Michigan. Ron is the founder of Interim Ministries Incorporated. He has helped many churches through times of pastoral transition.

Bill Johnson, Founder and president of American Decency Association.

Don Wildmon has been removed from the speaking schedule due to a setback in health. Please keep him in your prayers.

Further registration information and limitations:

- The conference room only holds 150 people.
- There are only 55 rooms available.

This is why it is imperative that you call early to register for either a room or to reserve a place to attend the conference even if you won't be an overnight guest.

\$240.00 (for two nights) Back view rooms
\$260.00 (for two nights) Lake view rooms
\$300.00 (for two nights) Hot tub rooms

These costs include all meals and a banana split served nightly. Meals may also be purchased ala carte for those who attend the conference only, and do not spend the night.

To register for a room call The Shack at 231-924-6683 and ask for the ADA conference weekend and rate.

In addition, call ADA at 231-924-4050 so that we can add you to our registration list.

Weekend Schedule

Friday night

3:00 PM - Overnight guests may begin to register (due to the limited space, registration will only be received for those registering for both nights)

6:00 PM - Buffet dinner served

6:50 PM - Buddy Smith & Bob Azkoul: Music Ministry

7:00 PM - Welcome and opening: Bill Johnson, President of American Decency

7:15 PM - Ron Workman: "Holiness is for You"

8:05 PM - Ken Smith: "Holiness is Not an Option"

9:00 PM - Banana split and fellowship

10:30 PM - The Shack has quiet time set for all guests

Saturday morning

8:00-9:00 AM - Breakfast buffet

8:50 AM - Buddy Smith & Bob Azkoul: Music Ministry

9:00 AM - Randall Murphree: "Assault on Holiness"

9:45 AM - To be announced

10:45 AM - Break

11:00 AM - Buddy Smith: "Things I Have Learned Along the Way"

12:00 PM - Lunch served

12:30 PM - Free time

3:15 PM - Rev. Ken Smith: "Implications of Pursuing or Not Pursuing Holiness"

4:30-5:15 PM - Panel Discussion

5:30 PM - Buffet Dinner served

7:15 PM - A time of worship and prayer: Buddy Smith and Bob Azkoul

8:30 PM - Banana split and fellowships

Sunday morning

8:00 - 9:00 AM - Buffet breakfast

9:30 AM - Worship service at the beautiful outdoor chapel next to Robinson Lake.

Call the Shack at 231-924-6683 to reserve your room and call ADA at 231-924-4050 to register with us.

Everything it Means to be a Woman?

by Chris Johnson



Kim Kardashian. Essay. These are words we don't often see sharing the same sentence. She's a queen of pop culture, the quintessential socialite, a fashionista, and business mogul, but the reality TV star has reportedly decided to add a bit to the thousand words a widely publicized picture from last month may or may not have been worth.

On Wednesday, March 9 the day after International Women's Day, Mrs. Kardashian-West shared a naked picture of herself with her Instagram followers. Black bars covered the parts that would have made the social site close down her account, but little is left to the imagination.

Of course, as one of the most visible celebrities of our time, chaos ensued. Criticism was justly given and encouragement was enthusiastically shared and then Kim waxed academic on her website, which you have to pay to have access to, so I'll just be quoting snippets from reports.

In her piece, Kardashian-West refers to her original claim to fame, which preceded the infamous, "Keeping Up With the Kardashians" TV show: a leaked sex tape with someone called Ray J.

"I lived through the embarrassment and fear, and decided to say who cares, do better, move on. I shouldn't have to constantly be on the defense, listing off my accomplishments just to prove that I am more than something that happened 13 years ago. Let's move on, already. I have..."

What's interesting is that Kardashian-West doesn't seem to realize how far she has slipped from even a few years ago.

Assuming that Kim's embarrassment and, dare I say, shame at her launch pad to celebrity status is authentic, and I, personally, give her the benefit of that doubt - her first purposeful foray into exposing herself came in the form of a magazine photo shoot in 2011. She was nude in the shots, but even at this point, when the magazine came out, she claimed surprise at how revealing they were on her television show.

"[The magazine] promised me I would be covered in artwork on top of me. It was so uncomfortable. I'm really honestly freaking out."

She later explained to the viewers (remember the context is a reality show):

"I obviously knew what I was getting into, I was posing nude. I just don't want people to be like, 'All she's good for is — you know — being naked.'"

And that brings us back to 2016. It can be tempting for those of us on the opposite side of the screen from her - her audience, willing or not - to laugh at the self-inflicted shame of Kim's choices, even when she is so foolish as to not realize that she should be ashamed.

Keep in mind that quote above, her rejection of being reduced to the value of her naked body, and then read her justification for sharing her nakedness with the world, and passing that "confidence" on to her daughter:

"...I want her to be comfortable in her body. I don't want her to grow up in a world where she is made to feel less-than for embracing everything it means to be a woman."

In 5 years, Kim has gone from "I just don't want people to be like, 'All she's good for is — you know — being naked," to her physical appearance being, "everything it means to be a woman."

Honestly, that's hard for me to read. Whether Kim Kardashian-West is more victim or master-media-manipulator, it

remains true that every big moment in her life has been on account of her body. How could that not affect your self-worth?

What's even more tragic is that Kardashian-West is representative of girls and young women across the country. I don't just mean that she's their role model, I mean that her life runs parallel to theirs, only they have cheaper clothes.

Every day, images of women, teens, even preteens, are passed around from computer to computer, or cell phone to cell phone. Sometimes they are shared with their consent, sometimes without. Sometimes they're used to blackmail girls into sexual slavery, sometimes they're just used to humiliate them. Sometimes they're shared out of pride, but they always tell the same lie, the one that 2011 Kim feared: "All she's good for is being naked."

Sometimes, women come to believe that lie themselves.

***Charm is deceitful, and
beauty is vain,
but a woman who fears the
Lord is to be praised.
Proverbs 31:30***

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American Decency Association

Bill Johnson, President and Founder
bjohnson@americandecency.org

Lisa Van Houten, Executive Assistant
Kimberly Cargill, Administrative Asst.
Chris Johnson, Technical and Web
Development

P.O. Box 202

Fremont MI 49412-0202

Phone: 231-924-4050

Fax: 231-924-1966

www.americandecency.org



Marching to Madness

by Lisa Van Houten



As I write this we are in the midst of March Madness. That bracket-busting, basketball-filled time of year where it seems most everyone becomes a basketball fan to some degree or another. Whether you analyze the stats of each team before making your pick or, knowing nothing about basketball, select teams based on their name or the cuteness of their mascot - filling out brackets is a national pastime.

For most, the thrill of victory will turn into the agony of defeat. Here in Michigan, we practically declared a period of mourning as our #2 seed Michigan State lost to a #15 seed team in the very first round. The loss was considered by many to be the biggest upset ever in the history of the NCAA tournament. While fans from the Mitten state were still wiping our tears, University of Michigan lost later that same day.

While we console ourselves, saying it's just a game, we live in a culture that takes sports and entertainment more seriously than just about anything else. When it comes to colleges and universities - forget about academic honors, they want their team in the NCAA tournament. You want to boost enrollment or increase alumni donations? Build an elite sports program that will make it to the Final Four. College presidents know what will butter their bread.

As a result, the NCAA is far more than just a league of college sports teams. Their clout is massive. This was exemplified last year when the state of Indiana sought to pass a religious liberty bill that would offer some protection to Christian business owners from being forced to compromise their beliefs and participate in gay marriage ceremonies. Indiana also happens to be the state where the NCAA Final Four tournament is held each year. Threatening to pull the tournament out of Indiana,

the NCAA, along with support from corporate America, brought heavy pressure upon Indiana Governor Mike Pence in opposition to the religious liberty bill. The arm-twisting worked and the legislation was gutted.

Now the NCAA is being urged to further the LGBTQ agenda and bring their pressure to bear upon Christian colleges and universities. More than 80 lesbian, gay, and transgender groups have sent a letter to the NCAA pressuring them to "divest from all religious-based institutions" that they claim discriminate against transgender students.

For a little background, in 1972 Title IX became law - which prevents federal education funding, including federal student aid, to institutions that discriminate on a number of bases including gender.

However, in 2014 President Obama used his pen to apply Title IX to LGBTQ issues, including adding "transgender" to that protected class. This is why we see schools bending over backwards to allow "transgender" students to use the bathroom of their choice - they are afraid of losing federal funding.

Yet part of the 1972 law has always included the right for religious colleges and universities to request exemptions from Title IX provisions which compromise their religious beliefs. Since President Obama expanded Title IX to include the sexual alphabet, numbers of Christian colleges and universities have requested and received such waivers from the Title IX LGBTQ provisions. Under the law, Christian institutions whose convictions would be compromised have every right to seek such waivers.

Yet the LGBTQ groups pressuring the NCAA want those Christian institutions expelled from the NCAA, stating: "*we call upon the NCAA to act on its stated values as an LGBTQ - inclusive organization and divest from these schools who are willfully and intentionally creating an unsafe environment for LGBTQ students.*"

As Al Mohler explains: *The kind of pressure we're looking at here is not at all subtle. It's an overt attempt to try to marginalize Christian institutions that will not join the moral revolution and to marginalize them, in this case, where it might hurt a very great deal.*

The threatened penalty here is exclusion from participation in the NCAA. That is absolutely massive when it comes to American higher education and to the larger context of American culture. We're looking here at an overt attempt to try to state that these Christian schools are outside the cultural mainstream and simply don't belong. The moral revolutionaries are now arguing that these colleges and universities based in Christian conviction do not belong on the list of federally approved institutions for federal student aid. They are also now arguing directly to the NCAA that that organization legally defined as a voluntary association is obligated by its own claim to LGBTQ-inclusive policies to divest in terms of relationships from all religious-based institutions ...

The moral revolutionaries understand what will be the result of the NCAA divesting from these Christian institutions: it will mean their continued and advanced cultural marginalization. That's exactly what they're looking for. As a matter of fact, that's overtly what they are demanding. ... The question is, quite honestly, whether that's sooner or later. In all likelihood, it's going to be sooner.

The squeeze is on and the pressure will only increase both upon Christian institutions and individuals. However, what remains to be seen is how we react when the grip tightens. Will these Christian colleges remain faithful to biblical principles - no matter the cost? What will be the answer when the NCAA demands that they either compromise their convictions on sexuality and marriage or be booted from the NCAA and all its benefits? Will they cave or stand? Will we? It's a question every Christian may soon have to answer.

A time for Discernment. What is evil? What is of God?



A time for Discernment. What is evil? What is of God?

A look through this newsletter reveals that ongoing theme. Little wonder, for since the fall of man there is a battle between God and Satan - spiritual warfare - a battle between the forces of good and the forces of evil.

Though created in the image of God - each and every man and woman are fallen creatures in need of Christ - both before being saved and every day thereafter!

To recognize our need for God, to long for Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, is a wonderful recognition of the reality that I am His and He is Mine!

It is with this understanding in mind that we ask God to lead us in the calling that God has given us as we minister in Christ's name through American Decency Association. We seek to continually encourage, exhort, and strengthen God's people in understanding the Bible, the times, God's plan(s) for our lives and so much more.

All of this is to say that we at ADA are truly excited at what we believe is a God-directed gathering on Friday, July 22 in Wyoming, Michigan (just minutes south of Grand Rapids) at Harvest Orthodox Presbyterian Church for our annual summer conference.

We have in store for you and me two Christian men called in vastly different ways, but called of God for His service and impact not only in West Michigan, but throughout the nation and world.

Dr. Joel Beeke is a pastor, noted author, and a seminary president and professor at Puritan Theological Reformed Seminary in Grand Rapids. Dr. Beeke,

a prolific writer of 80 books and thousands of articles, is highly regarded for his insight into Biblical truth and is a sought-after speaker around the world.

Curtis Bowers is the director, producer, and visionary behind the nationally awarded movie "Agenda: Grinding America Down" and more recently "Agenda 2: Masters of Deceit." Curtis is in demand throughout the United States, traveling thousands of miles with his beautiful family, as he speaks of the concerning issues confronting our world and nation and God's great hope for man. Once you have seen and/or heard his caring message in person you are helped and encouraged not to grow weary in well-doing, but to seek the Lord and keep on.

Mark your calendar and plan with all your heart to be with us on Friday, July 22 from 7:00 - 9:30 pm at the Harvest OPC church in Wyoming, Michigan to hear powerful messages from these two men of God at our annual summer conference.

For further information, give us a call at 231-924-4050.

Many SI Swimsuit advertisers drop. More to go!

By: Lisa Van Houten



As research and common sense indicate, those who view (or read) pornography are soon not satisfied with the material they consume and so escalate to more explicit and extreme forms of pornography.

Not only do we know this, but so do the publishers of the Sports Illustrated Swimsuit magazine. This so-called swimsuit magazine has been and still is a "gateway drug" to harder and harder forms

(SI Swimsuit, cont.)

of pornography - especially for young boys. And so to keep this money-making issue flying off the magazine racks, Sports Illustrated ratchets up the shock value every year.

And don't let the name fool you - Sports Illustrated Swimsuit is pornography. Each year the magazine pushes the erotic imagery even further. In 1982 the cover model wore a one-piece bathing suit - in recent years (including this year) SI Swimsuit features topless women on the cover. And the magazine content is more of the same - dozens of erotic photos of topless or completely nude women. For a so-called "sports" magazine, the only female athletes featured are posing naked covered only in body paint.

We at American Decency have been one of the very few voices over the years warning of this concerning magazine, urging stores not to carry it and corporations not to advertise in it.

And the advertisers also get in on the act. In some cases there is no difference between the erotic advertisements and the Sports Illustrated photo displays as corporations use sexual imagery to sell their products. The worst offenders this year were Lexus, Wagner brake pads, and Lane Bryant.

However, we have noted in recent years that there are fewer and fewer mainline corporations advertising in Sports Illustrated swimsuit. We believe that, as you have stood with us, we have had an impact as we've held the advertisers accountable each year.

In fact, only 33 advertisers chose to run ads in the 2016 SI Swimsuit magazine. This was down from 37 advertisers in 2015, 43 advertisers in 2014, and 46 advertisers five years ago in 2011. (In addition, the number of sexualized ads is also down from previous years.)

Of the 37 SI Swimsuit advertisers in 2015 - 22 did not return to advertise in 2016 after hearing from many of you, our readers!

The NFL's Bullying of Believers

by Katrina Trinko - The Daily Signal



Do you think a pastor who's against same-sex marriage should be forced to perform same-sex weddings? Do you believe that a religious college should be allowed to hire only people who agree with the religious beliefs of the college? Do you think no one should be forced to attend a wedding he doesn't agree with?

If so, cheers: The National Football League basically thinks you're a bigot.

A CBS News/Associated Press story Sunday, headlined "NFL warns state of Georgia over 'religious freedom' bill," reported that "the NFL acknowledged that the religious exemptions bill ... could have an impact on the selection process for the championship game in 2019 and 2020." Atlanta is one of four cities up for the next two Super Bowls.

Yes, because who wants the Super Bowl in a state where some random clergy member may not be forced to perform a gay wedding? That would totally wreck the ambiance of... a sports game.

The bill in question, now on the desk of Gov. Nathan Deal, a Republican, is embarrassingly limited. I'm not exaggerating: The bill's applications to religious liberty are so minor that it likely wouldn't even protect Catholic nuns like the Little Sisters of the Poor, who are currently in a legal fight to not be forced by the federal government to offer health care that includes contraceptives and abortion-inducing drugs.

And according to my Heritage Foundation colleagues Ryan T. Anderson and Roger Severino, the Georgia bill "provides no protection for bakers or florists or other similar wedding professionals who cannot help celebrate a same-sex wedding"

because of their religious beliefs.

In other words, Georgia residents like the Kleins (the Oregon bakers fined \$135,000 for refusing to bake a cake for a lesbian wedding), the Giffords (the New York couple fined \$13,000 for declining to host a gay wedding at their family farm), and Barronelle Stutzman (the Washington state florist in a legal battle over her refusal to provide flowers for a gay wedding) wouldn't be protected by the proposed law at all.

In fact, this bill's protections for believers are so minimal that in theory even top Democrat Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz should be able to support the bill.

Florida's Wasserman Schultz told The Daily Signal last year that the Supreme Court's ruling on gay marriage "doesn't mean that churches and religious institutions have to conduct same-sex marriages and it doesn't mean that religious institutions aren't able to practice their own values."

But the NFL is geared up to lecture anyone who thinks religious liberty matters.

"NFL policies emphasize tolerance and inclusiveness, and prohibit discrimination based on age, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, or any other improper standard," spokesman Brian McCarthy said in a statement, adding that the NFL may evaluate "whether the laws and regulations of a state and local community are consistent with these policies" when looking at Super Bowl contenders.

Yes, because tolerance and inclusiveness require making sure people of faith who don't support same-sex marriage have no freedom to live in accordance with their beliefs.

Nor is the NFL the only big businesses weighing in against believers.

"We urge Gov. Deal to veto the discriminatory legislation headed to his desk and send a clear message that Georgia's

future is one of inclusion, diversity, and continued prosperity," said Apple in a statement. Hundreds of companies are part of Georgia Prospers, a coalition that told The New York Times that the bill "could harm our ability to create and keep jobs that Georgia families depend upon."

What would they even have left to say if Georgia had actually moved to substantially protect the consciences of believers?

This is unbelievable.

There is no doubt that lesbian and gay Americans have not always been treated with the civility and respect they deserve throughout our history. And that is a shame. But the answer is not now to force those who have deeply held moral beliefs about the nature of marriage to act against their consciences.

And in fact, the Georgia bill could also help protect the consciences of LGBT residents, such as by allowing a college founded by those who believe that same-sex marriage is a moral necessity to decline to hire professors who disagreed.

Like the NFL, I believe in tolerance. But unlike the NFL, I think that means recognizing that in our lawsuit-crazy era, that means sometimes giving legal protections to people who want only to be allowed to live in accordance with their consciences.

Ultimately, if the NFL were serious about limiting the Super Bowl to states and local areas that promote "tolerance," that would mean the NFL should look to hold Super Bowls only in states with religious freedoms.

Unfortunately, it looks as if football fans can join Apple users and others in realizing that the businesses they once loved are now working vehemently against them—and their beliefs.

[Used with permission, The Daily Signal www.dailysignal.com]

Monochrome Dialogue

by Steve Huston



If artists, wordsmiths, orators, and the population in general were suddenly limited in their use of color to blue—allowing for different hues of course—what a dull world and limited artistry would be ours. An artist might feel as though his creativity were being chained to one corner of his pallet, an orator might feel as though his tongue were truly tied, writers would feel as though their pens had run out of ink, and every child above the age of three would throw temper tantrums over someone raiding their crayon box and stifling their creativity. Regardless of how talented one is, communication through their medium would become difficult at best, often falling into miscommunication at worse.

That is how I feel when I hear people speak of the “Interfaith Dialogues.” Following after the American traditional “melting pot,” these dialogues desire to remove any of the sharp colors of disagreement, turning a blind eye to the vivid array of exclusivities, allowing people speak only in terms of blue hues. This is usually less of a dialogue, becoming more of a monologue, doing their best to make everyone feel nice and complementary inside, except for those of us who desire to get along with others, while yet still holding to the bright colors of our religious truth.

These “dialogues” strive to remove the uniqueness, the exclusivity of our foundational precepts; yet we must hold fast to them, not from a view of hatred, but rather from love for God, love for our fellow man, and from the necessity of being obedient to the call given by God.

Some say that I make too much of this. To those who are so pacifistic that they’d accept the devil himself in their ranks, let me say, if religion were nothing more than a social club, that would be fine; but, the eternal

destiny of one’s soul is at stake. Those who promote the meshing and melding of every religion into one seem to focus on the temporal, the now, without regard or serious thought to eternity, the state of one’s eternal soul, and the God who created each one of us for His glory and His purpose. **The focus seems to be getting along with our fellow man rather than getting along with God.**

I’m amazed at the number of Christians who are willing to give up the vibrant colors of exclusivity, trading them in for the dull, albeit abundant, hues of blue.

Regardless of the “Interfaith Dialoguers” stated good intentions, how can I allow others to take the bright red of the blood of Jesus off my pallet, leaving His propitiation for our sin as some lifeless, light blue hue that fades into the background of all other religions? It’s also a removal of the black of sin which put our Lord on the cross and is in stark contrast to the white of His purity and holiness.

It’s doing away with the colors of the rainbow as God claims to be the only One, True, Holy God against whom all sin flies; that was the reason HE destroyed the world, promising never to do so again with water... although a burning fire is somewhere on the horizon. No matter how one paints the oranges, yellows, and reds of that flame into hues of blues, it will still burn and destroy, for He alone is God and will dole out judgment as He has promised.

Some will say that I’m overstating the case or that it simply isn’t the case at all. To those who would be so naïve, let me share with you a quote from this year’s winner of the Templeton Prize for Progress in Spiritual Understanding, Rabbi Jonathan Sacks. *“We need to work as hard as we can to enhance mutual respect and friendship between faiths. There is no one formula as to how to do this ... The message of monotheism is not ‘one God, one truth, one way; but rather the miracle that unity in heaven creates diversity on earth.”* (emphasis mine)

What???? This isn’t interfaith dialog; this is a direct attack on the Christian faith, It’s diametrically opposed to Jesus’ words that He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and that no one comes to the Father (One God) except through Him (Jesus—God’s only begotten Son). And in Acts 4:12 we read, “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” (ESV) The rabbi’s statement is a direct assault on the exclusivity and work of Jesus Christ.

As I read interfaith articles, listen to interfaith speeches, and hear appeals of brotherhood and service reaching across the boundaries of religion, there is one thing in common; the exclusivity of Jesus is ignored or done away with. Whether it comes from the pen of one who holds to the Christian faith, it comes from the mouth of a Muslim, or is delivered by a Jew, the Divinity and work of Jesus is compromised, denied, or ignored. We must take great care!

Make no mistake; our love and compassion for others must reach beyond those who share our religious beliefs, but not at the expense of Jesus. Even as Jesus was full of grace and truth, so also, we should be ambassadors of that same grace and truth. As God has shed His grace freely—abroad in our hearts—so should we pass this same grace on to others. But...grace and truth are a package deal; they should never be separated.

We are called to guard the precious, colorful, treasure of the Gospel, of Truth, of Jesus—Messiah and Savior. Stand firm on the Word of God; don’t allow anyone to undermine it, deny its authority, or devalue the work of Christ. Be bold with the truth; of course that means you must be in the Word to know the truth. We mustn’t answer with our own feelings; we are told to **“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.”** (II Timothy 4:2) It’s imperative to know the word of God so that we know the doctrine of God; these are our weapons and our wisdom.