

faith & freedom

Reforming the Church's Social and Political Witness

Spring 2019



New Global Orthodox Identity for United Methodists Surprises Many

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Delegate Edwin Exiomo of the Philippines prays during a day set aside for prayer at the 2019 United Methodist General Conference in St. Louis. Photo by Mike DuBose, UMNS.

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THE INSTITUTE ON
RELIGION & DEMOCRACY
1023 15th Street NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: 202.682.4131
Fax: 202.682.4136
Web: www.TheIRD.org
E-mail: info@TheIRD.org

PRESIDENT
Mark D. Tooley

EDITORIAL
Jeffrey Walton
Executive Editor,
Communications Manager

STAFF
Faith J. H. McDonnell
Director of Religious Liberty Programs

John Lomperis
UMAction Director

Rick J. Plasterer
Staff Writer

Chelsen Vicari
Evangelical Action Director

Marc LiVecche
Scholar on Christian Ethics,
War and Peace

Dan Moran
Research Assistant

Ryan Brown, Katy Vanderkwaak
IRD Interns

Cover: Delegates from the
Philippines and Southeast Asia
sing during a day of prayer at the
2019 United Methodist General
Conference in St. Louis. Photo by
Mike DuBose, UMNS.

Notre Dame and Christendom

One of Christendom's greatest and oldest sanctuaries has suffered great damage but largely survived. According to whom you read, its devastation is a metaphor for European Christianity's collapse or for its rebirth through fire.

The mass horror over Notre Dame's fire, and the immediate resolve for the cathedral's full restoration, signify that France's connection to Catholicism is not so remote as often imagined. True, it was a national political and cultural symbol. But it was chiefly an active church where the Eucharist is celebrated daily and whose architecture honors saints, Apostles, and prophets. Neither France nor Europe nor the West can be understood politically or culturally apart from those saints, Apostles, and prophets.

For over two centuries France has avowed a strict separation between religion and state. Yet Notre Dame, named for mother of Jesus, still loomed over Paris, its bells commemorating the nation's central events, such as the 1944 liberation and the 1918 armistice. In 2016 the cathedral hosted a funeral mass for Father **Jacques Hamel**, an elderly priest murdered by an Islamist, which four French presidents attended, and to whom the Archbishop of Paris preached.

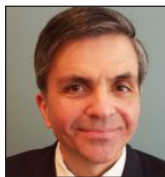
Nearly every notable French person with countless other Europeans of the last millennium has been a witness to Notre Dame. **Thomas Aquinas** saw its construction. **Joan of Arc** spied it from afar as she besieged Paris. **John Calvin** presumably worshipped there. So did **Louis 14th**, **Cardinal Richelieu**, **Moliere**, **Descartes**, **Victor Hugo**, and **Charles de Gaulle**. **Voltaire**, **Robespierre**, and **Sartre** scoffed at its faith but could not ignore its power. **Napoleon** crowned himself there. **Ben Franklin** and **Thomas Jefferson** beheld it. So too did even **Hitler**, who thought he had conquered it but was instead defeated by it.

A leftist Native American speaker popular in some U.S. Evangelical circles harrumphed that Notre Dame was an icon of European colonialism and intrinsically corrupt Christendom. All civilizations are corrupt in some way but he's right to identify the cathedral as symbol of Christian civilization. Notre Dame is not just a church nor just an historical tourist destination nor just a symbol of French culture. It embodies the biblical aspiration to construct a comprehensive society aspiring to give glory to its Creator.

French revolutionaries and secularists have long touted the rights of man. But such rights and claims descend directly from the biblical story that Notre Dame emblemizes. The cathedral's soaring architecture represents the sacred cosmology of creation, fall, redemption, and eschatological completion. Humans are sacred only because of their central role in this divine narrative.

Many French and Europeans may no longer consciously identify with the faith of Notre Dame, but they are indelibly creatures of it and cannot escape it. Maybe the great fire marks their continued denial of this spiritual and historical reality. Or maybe the stunned reaction to it will generate a recovery of memory, gratitude, and faith. ✝

Mark Tooley



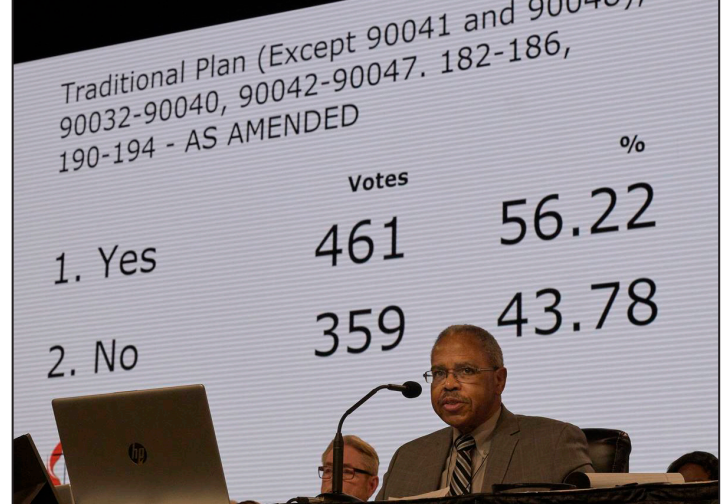
Mark D. Tooley is the President of the Institute on Religion and Democracy

Methodist Court Affirms Traditional Plan

Rebuffing appeals by the Council of Bishops and church dissidents, the United Methodist Church (UMC) Judicial Council on April 25 reaffirmed that most of the Traditional Plan approved at the February 2019 Special General Conference is constitutional. It also reversed an earlier ruling, and declared that congregations who disagree with the church's teaching on sexuality may leave the denomination with a two-thirds congregational vote. This reversal could facilitate creation of new liberal Methodist denominations by congregations that cannot abide the Traditional Plan's stricter

enforcement of the church's affirmation of sex only between husband and wife.

The Traditional Plan adds mandatory penalties for pastors who violate church teachings on sexuality, including the ban on same-sex rites. These new policies will go into effect in 2020. Permission for local churches to quit the denomination begins immediately. United Methodist properties are owned by the denomination through their local



As the Rev. **Joe Harris** presides over the legislative committee, the results of a vote approving the Traditional Plan are displayed during the special session of the 2019 General Conference of The United Methodist Church in St. Louis (Photo: Paul Jeffrey/UMNS)

conferences. Under this new policy, congregations could leave with their property, with approval from their local conference (Methodist version of diocese or presbytery).

Reaffirmation of most of the Traditional Plan was not a surprise, as the Judicial Council reviewed it in October 2018 and during General Conference in February. But bishops and church dissidents hoped for one more chance to kill the Traditional Plan, supported by traditionalists in America and overseas, whose passage ignited shock and outrage by many church liberals in the U.S. Many liberals since General Conference have publicly discussed possibly leaving United Methodism in favor of creating new denominations with more permissive sexual standards.

IRD's UMAction Director **John Lomperis**, a General Conference delegate, submitted briefs to the Judicial Council that were cited in the rulings. ✚

Controversial Former Pentecostal Minister Embraces Transgender Identity

A former Assemblies of God minister has announced his transition to a female identity.

Paul Alexander previously served as president of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, an academic group that studies Pentecostal and Charismatic expressions of the Christian faith. Alexander controversially guided SPS in a more progressive

direction. In 2013 he urged that the Pentecostal tradition should be open to the promotion of homosexual, transgender, and intersex "realities" as faithful representations of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity. Alexander stated that Jesus was "healed" from wrong views during his earthly ministry.

Later in 2013, Alexander was dismissed from the clergy rolls of the Assemblies of God, the denominational equivalent of defrocking. He continued as co-president of Evangelicals for Social Action and on staff at Eastern Seminary until 2016, when he departed both organizations. Alexander and the mother of his three children divorced.

In 2018 Alexander began a staff role at Middle Collegiate Church in New York City as Executive Strategist for Movement Building and Partnerships. Alexander departed the church's staff at the end of 2018.

Both the MCC web site and Alexander's LinkedIn profile now list Alexander's name as April, and Alexander announced the gender identity transition on his Facebook page.

Alexander described his upbringing in a devout Assemblies of God family in



Left: Paul Alexander addresses a joint adult and youth worship service in 2007 (Photo: Paul Schrag/Mennonite World Review) Right: The former Paul (now April) Alexander in a 2018 photoshoot accompanying an article about Middle Collegiate Church in the Washington Post magazine (photo: Beatrice De Gea)

Kansas, and stated in 2007 in *Mennonite World Review* that he lost his faith for a time, but rediscovered it by returning to some of the sources of early Pentecostalism and by taking a class from neo-Anabaptist theologian **John Howard Yoder**. He also started reading Anabaptist theology and taking note of early Pentecostals persecuted for their pacifist beliefs.

Alexander founded the group Pentecostals and Charismatics for Peace and Justice in 2001, and in August 2016 Love for All, a research, education, and media company "dedicated to expanding wisdom, compassion, and justice." ✚

Episcopal Presiding Bishop Restricts Albany Bishop in Gay Marriage Dispute

Episcopal Church Presiding Bishop **Michael Curry** placed a restriction this winter on the ministry of a leading traditionalist bishop and has begun a disciplinary process after the bishop declined to permit same-sex marriages in his diocese.

Bishop **William (Bill) Love** of the Episcopal Diocese of Albany, New York, issued an eight-page letter read aloud to local parishes following services on Sunday, November 11. Love directed clergy resident, licensed, or canonically resident in the diocese (serving elsewhere) not to use trial rites solemnizing marriages between persons of the same sex.

Access to those rites was originally at the discretion of diocesan bishops, but the 2018 General Convention held in Austin, Texas, passed a resolution (B012) mandating that it be available for use across all dioceses where civil law permits same-sex marriage.

Curry's restriction upon Bishop Love, announced in a January 11 post and

made available by the Episcopal Church Office of Public Affairs, forbids Love from disciplining Albany clergy who participate in same-sex weddings or "involves the issue of same-sex marriage." But it also begins a process under the denomination's disciplinary Canon IV that may result in further action against the leader of the Albany diocese.

After meeting with the Standing Committee and Chancellor of the Diocese of Albany, Curry wrote:

While I am persuaded of the sincerity and good will of Bishop Love in these difficult circumstances, I am convinced that Resolution B012 was intended by the Convention to be mandatory and binding upon all our Dioceses, particularly in the light of its provision that a diocesan bishop 'hold[ing] a theological position that does not embrace marriage for [such]



Left: Presiding Bishop Michael Curry visits Grace Church in Syracuse (Photo: Diocese of Central New York). Right: Bishop Bill Love of the Episcopal Diocese of Albany addresses the 2018 clergy conference in the Church of Ireland's Diocese of Down and Dromore (Photo: Diocese of Albany)

couples' and confronted with a same-sex couple wishing to marry in that bishop's diocese, 'shall invite, as necessary, another bishop of this Church to provide pastoral support to the couple, the Member of the Clergy involved and the congregation or worshipping

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Former Methodists Host Anti-Israel Islamic Drag Queen

A radical San Francisco congregation that severed ties with the United Methodist Church this spring hosted a panel of drag performers, including one who checks several progressive boxes.

"Drag & Spirituality: Claiming Our Sanctuary" opened with a strip tease by host "BoNNi33 VioL3T" also known as **Duane Quintana**, a "queer chaplain." It was every bit an over-the-top intersectional jamboree, featuring "local drag queens from Islamic, Native American & Christian spiritual traditions."

The March 24 talk show-style conversation at Glide Memorial Church explored "the intersections of drag, gender, sexuality and spirituality" amongst the three drag queens including Quintana, Native American "**Landa Lakes**" and "**Faluda Islam**," who has Lebanese and Pakistani ancestry.

While the "Two Spirit" concept (male and female spirits coexisting within a single body) has been ascribed to Native American spirituality, it is unclear what part of the Islamic tradition embraces drag—at least as Faluda Islam embraces it.

The event's linked Facebook pages indicate that Faluda Islam is also engaged in—you guessed it—anti-Israel Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) advocacy. An anti-Israeli Islamic drag queen panel is the sort of cosmic event that only Glide could facilitate. ✚



"Faluda Islam" (right) speaks March 24 at Glide Memorial Church in San Francisco (Photo: Glide Memorial Church/Facebook)

Sri Lanka Bombings Target Churches

Coordinated bombings that targeted multiple churches and hotels on Easter Sunday in Sri Lanka are drawing attention to the perilous situation of Christians in South Asia and the continued international reach of ISIS,

despite the group's loss of territory in Iraq and Syria.

The *New York Times* reports that at least 290 people were killed and 500 others injured by the terrorist attacks, many a part of Sri Lanka's minority Christian

community. Three coordinated suicide bombings took place during Easter services at St. Sebastian's Church in Negombo, evangelical Zion Church in Batticaloa, and St. Anthony's Shrine in Colombo, Sri Lanka's largest city. The Sri Lankan government identified the National Thowheed Jamaath, a local Islamist militant group believed to have ISIS ties, as responsible for the attacks.

While Christians have faced violence in Pakistan and India for some time, Sri Lanka has had few large attacks since the conclusion of its civil war in 2009. Most of those earlier attacks were political in nature and did not specifically target Christians, who make up only about 8 percent of the island nation's population.

Cardinal Archbishop **Malcolm Ranjith** of Colombo condemned the attacks, calling it "a very, very sad day for all of us" and extended his "deepest sorrow and sympathy to all those innocent families that have lost someone, and also to those who have been injured and rendered destitute."

During his Easter address, **Pope Francis** called the attacks "horrendous" and expressed his "heartfelt closeness to the Christian community, attacked while gathered in prayer, and to all the victims of such a cruel act of violence." ✝



Inside St. Sebastian's Church in Negombo, Sri Lanka after a coordinated bombing during Easter service on April 21, 2019. (Photo: CNS photo/Reuters)

Bashir Toppled in Sudan, Fate of Islamist Regime Unclear

A popular uprising has forced Sudanese President **Omar al-Bashir** from power following months of protests against the Islamist regime. The *Wall Street Journal* reports that an overwhelmingly young population is venting frustration with a lack of political freedoms.

At the time of publication, protesters remained in the streets of the capital Khartoum, vowing to oppose military plans for a transitional council convened by Defense Minister **Ibn Auf**, and instead calling for fundamental political change and a civilian-led transition. Bashir, in power for 30 years, was among the longest-standing leaders in the region.

The regime has for decades been a key player in global jihad, as well as waging war against black African people groups. Under Bashir, the government was responsible for at least two separate genocides, one against Christians and animists in the former south of the country (now independent South Sudan) and later against an indigenous Black Muslim population in the western Darfur region.

IRD's Church Alliance for a New Sudan has co-sponsored demonstrations to call attention to the Government of Sudan's ongoing atrocities against indigenous peoples. ✝



Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir and Defense Minister Ibn Auf appear in a television broadcast together before the Sudanese leader was deposed (Photo: screen capture)



Activists rally April 5 at The White House protesting Chinese Government oppression in Western China (Photo credit: Jason Jones)

Chinese Forced Abortion Prompting Unexpected Allies

Muslim Uyghur and Pro-Life groups are finding common cause as the Chinese government seeks to impose forced abortion on minorities in the Xinjiang region of far western China.

Uyghurs, a historically Muslim Turkish people group, have advocated for independence from China, in a region they call East Turkistan.

In 2009 Radio Free Asia revealed that population control policies in East Turkistan alone had prevented the births of more than 3.7 million children in the previous 30 years.

"If any nation would forcibly kill large groups of defenseless people in the womb it will also, sooner or later, go on to kill them outside the womb," warned Pro-Life advocate **Jason Jones** at an April 5 rally in front of the White House convened by the East Turkistan National Awakening Movement (ETNAM) and anti-abortion groups including Students for Life and New Wave Feminists.

The rally occurred while trade talks took place with a visiting delegation from China. It was also the 29th anniversary of an attack by the Chinese military on the East Turkistan village of Baren, a massacre against men and women resisting forced abortion imposed by the Communist government.

"China's draconian population control through its One Child Policy (now officially a two child policy), forced abortions, and forced sterilizations are so brutally enforced that no resistance is tolerated," notes IRD Religious Liberty Director

Faith McDonnell. "China is still using brutal methods to reduce the population."

Chinese authorities are alleged to have imprisoned more than one million Uyghur in "counter-extremism centers" and another two million or more in "re-education" internment camps. The list of

groups whose human rights have been violated by the Chinese government includes Christians, Muslims, Tibetans, Falun Gong, democracy activists, and North Korean escapees, in addition to mothers facing forced abortion of their unborn children. ✚

Episcopal Presiding Bishop Restricts Albany Bishop in Gay Marriage Dispute

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community in order to fulfill the intention of this resolution that all couples have convenient and reasonable local congregational access to these rites.' I am therefore persuaded that as Presiding Bishop I am called upon to take steps to ensure that same-sex marriage in The Episcopal Church is available to all persons to the same extent and under the same conditions in all Dioceses of the Church where same-sex marriage is civilly legal.

The top Episcopal Church official goes on to explain the discipline process:

I am aware that Bishop Love's conduct in this regard may constitute a canonical offense under Canon IV.4(1) (c) ("abide by the promises and vows made when ordained") and Canon IV.4(1)(h)(9) ("any Conduct Unbecoming a Member of the Clergy"), and that conduct has been referred to the Rt. Rev. Todd Ousley, Bishop for Pastoral Development and Intake Officer for disciplinary matters involving bishops.

Bishop Love insists that he cannot in good conscience implement a policy that will lead people astray.

"With the passage of B012, the 79th General Convention of The Episcopal Church in effect is attempting to order me as a Bishop in God's holy Church, to compromise 'the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints' (Jude 3 ESV), and to turn my back on the vows I have made to God and His People, in order to accommodate The Episcopal Church's 'new' understanding of Christian marriage as no longer being 'a solemn and public covenant between a man and a woman in the presence of God' as proclaimed in the rubrics of the *Book of Common Prayer* (BCP 422), but now allowing for the marriage of same-sex couples," Love wrote in his November pastoral letter.

Bishop Love wrote his diocese early in the new year about the restriction on his authority and his plans to challenge "the authority and legality of Resolution B012." ✚

New Global, Orthodox Identity for United Methodists Surprises Many

by Mark Tooley

Following a Feb. 26 vote to strengthen church policies about homosexuality, contested bishop **Karen Oliveto** speaks to delegates who in protest formed a large circle in the center of the plenary floor. The action came on the last day of General Conference in St. Louis. Delegates voted to approve the Traditional Plan, which strengthens penalties for LGBTQ clergy and prohibits officiating at or hosting same-sex weddings. Photo by Paul Jeffrey, UMNS.

The late **Richard Neuhaus** once recalled that in the 1970s it was widely expected among religious cognoscenti that United Methodism would be the first of America's historically liberal mainline Protestant denominations to abandon traditional Christian sexual ethics. After all, it was the largest and most Americanized of mainline churches, and it wasn't protected by strong traditions of liturgy or ecclesiology. Its experiential theology often seemed muddled.

When Neuhaus shared that recollection in 2005, the Episcopal Church and United Church of Christ had already surrendered. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Presbyterian Church (USA), and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) were on their way. Besides the American Baptist Church (liberal northern counterpart to Southern Baptists), only United Methodism among the "seven sisters" of mainline Protestantism has officially retained Christian teaching that sex is exclusively for husband and wife.

That teaching was stunningly reaffirmed this February at United Methodism's governing General Conference,

which was specially called to adjudicate the church's teachings about sex. Stunning at least to the U.S. bishops and other American church elites who've long assumed that United Methodism would remain attached



UMAction Steering Committee Member **Dixie Brewster** of the Great Plains Conference addresses the 2019 United Methodist General Conference in St. Louis. Photo by Mike DuBose, UMNS.

to the liberal Protestant project that captured mainline denominations early in the last century. It also stunned secular observers, many of whom assumed that all "mainstream" churches (i.e., not evangelical or fundamentalist) had long ago aligned with American secular culture on sex.

History of the Debate

United Methodists have openly debated sex since 1972, when the General Conference, responding to ambiguous language on sexuality proposed by a church agency, added to the church's Social Principles that homosexual practice is "incompatible with Christian teaching." It also stipulated that "sex between a man and a woman is to be clearly affirmed only in the marriage bond."

Over the decades subsequent General Conferences, which typically convene every four years, added that practicing homosexuals—along with other persons sexually active outside natural marriage—could not be ordained. And they banned clergy and churches from celebrating same-sex rites. Funding by church agencies to advocate for homosexual causes was also banned.

United Methodism, after a century as a liberal mainline Protestant denomination, is slowly emerging into a new identity that is global and orthodox.

These policies across years were sustained by evangelical delegates based on

Continued on page 9

theological conviction and by institutional delegates for pragmatic and cultural reasons. Liberal activists—cheered by seminaries, church agencies, and



UMAction Director **John Lomperis** of the Indiana Conference addresses the 2019 United Methodist General Conference in St. Louis. Photo by Mike DuBose, UMNS.

many bishops—reasonably assumed that eventually they would prevail. After all, United Methodism was a progressive denomination, and wasn't sexual liberation the inevitable next step?

Debate Today

And they would've been right, but for the rise of United Methodism in Africa, which exploded over the last 25 years to 5.3 million members, or about 43 percent of global United Methodist membership. U.S. membership has shrunk since the 1960s from 11 million to 6.8 million and loses nearly 100,000 annually. Meanwhile the African churches are gaining more than 100,000 annually. African United Methodists, who are uniformly conservative theologically, will outnumber U.S. church members in a decade or less. Churches in the Philippines and Eastern Europe, though much smaller than Africa, are also mostly conservative.



American delegates were 58 percent of the recent General Conference, and a sizeable chunk of those delegates were Bible-believing, which meant that liberalizing the church's marriage teaching required unobtainable votes from conservative overseas delegates. A "Simple Plan" to remove the church's sexual prohibitions failed by 60 percent to 40 percent. The "One Church Plan" heavily pushed by U.S. bishops, allowing local churches to choose their own policies on sexuality, failed by 55 percent to 45 percent. A "Traditional Plan" backed by U.S. evangelicals and overseas delegates to enhance enforcement of the church's sexual standards passed by 53 percent to 47 percent.

This General Conference debate over sexuality was even more intense than most. A self-identified "centrist" who presented the One Church Plan to delegates likened the Traditional Plan to a "virus" being injected into the church. Others compared it to segregation. Since the main talking point for the One Church Plan was that it would tolerate different viewpoints within the church, traditionalists wondered why liberals and "centrists" who so abhor traditional beliefs would want to share the church with those who uphold biblical values. How long would traditional beliefs be tolerated by United Methodists who view support for historical Christian sexual standards as morally equivalent to white supremacy?

Proponents for the One Church Plan, veering from their ostensible purpose of church unity, in their arguments

Jeffrey "J.J." Warren of the Upper New York Conference speaks in favor of same-sex affirmation during the 2019 United Methodist General Conference. He received an emotional response from delegates and observers. The special conference was called in an attempt to deal with the denomination's longstanding differences over sexuality. Photo by Mike DuBose, UMNS.

doubled down on LGBTQ advocacy, further alarming overseas delegates. Liberian seminary president **Jerry Kulah** electrified a General Conference evangelical breakfast by declaring of his fellow African United Methodists: "We are not children in need of Western enlightenment when it comes to our sexual ethics."

Liberal Response

Liberals inside and outside United Methodism have responded to the General Conference with outrage. A prominent "centrist" large church pastor who backed the One Church Plan is summoning allies in April to plot next steps. In response, one



Bishop **Mande Muyombo** speaks to the February 23, 2019, opening session of the Special Session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church. Muyombo is the resident bishop of the North Katanga Area, which includes North Katanga, Tanganyika and Tanzania conferences in the Congo Central Conference of The United Methodist Church. Photo by Paul Jeffrey for United Methodist News Service.

prominent pro-LGBTQ activist in academia complained about the "arrogance" of this "white cis-hetero man" calling "folks together to his church to talk about how to move forward," when members of the victim groups should now lead.

Some liberals are now speaking openly of quitting United Methodism and creating a new progressive church. The General Conference approved legislation allowing congregations to leave the denomination with their property if they disagree with denominational teaching on sexuality. This legislation may have to be clarified at the 2020 General Conference.

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Nadia Bolz-Weber: Life Begins at Breath

by Chelsen Vicari

As Protestants increased their pro-life witness this winter at the annual March for Life, Nadia Bolz-Weber, an Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) pastor-turned-public theologian, was selectively ignoring the Scriptures to restyle abortion as a morally acceptable choice.



Lutheran Pastor Nadia Bolz-Weber (Photo: YouTube)

“[F]or a very long time, the Judeo-Christian thought held that life began with breath. In Genesis, it says that God breathed into dust to create humanity, that that was the moment that we had a living soul,” Bolz-Weber said during an interview with NPR’s *All Things Considered*.

“So this idea of life and breath being connected is something that people can sort of hold on to, if they still have an attachment to Judeo-Christian thought, and still allow for, hey, women need to be able to have the decision around family planning and whether they’re going to go through with a pregnancy or not,” she added.

Bolz-Weber is currently promoting her new book *Shameless: A Sexual Reformation*, which aims at “calling out harm that’s been done to people as a result of what the church has taught them about sex, body, and gender.”

While much of her interview focused on what she calls “sexual flourishing,” her

comments on abortion were particularly disheartening. Bolz-Weber, who has had an abortion herself, holds that because God created man from dust, “that was the moment we had a living soul.” But citing God’s creation of the first man from dust is a very different creation process from God’s reproductive design. Plus, the Creation story does not end there.

Consider Genesis 1:27-28:

So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

It is that key “in the image of God” part that Bolz-Weber conveniently omitted in her interview with public radio. Whatever her motives, it seems deceitful to dismiss Genesis 1:27, since Christianity’s understanding of the sanctity of human life stems from this verse. Every life matters because every life is created in the image of God. No matter how big, or how small. No matter our physical limitations, gender, race, environments, or geographical locations, all human life is created in God’s image and is therefore precious.

Further, David, inspired by the Holy Spirit, testifies that God is the giver of life even before we enter the womb. Psalms 139:13 reads:

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me

were written in your book before one of them came to be.

That God as Creator miraculously knits us together in our mother’s womb and in his image and we are therefore blessed by him is awe-inspiring.

An expectant mother, if honest, can testify that life thrives in her womb long before her infant’s first breath. As I write this, I am 21 weeks pregnant. Right now my unborn son is kicking, nudging, and fluttering about. On my fridge hangs a 3-D sonogram photo of him sweetly sucking his fingers. His eyebrows, lids, nose, and lips are distinct and he can practice swallowing.

But expectant mothers don’t need sonogram images to tell us that unborn lives are precious. There is an innate awareness combined with Scripture’s confirmation that our unborn children are created by God in his image.

Some might dismiss Bolz-Weber as an outlier or maybe even a heretic. But this is an unhelpful response. Her enormous influence is hard to ignore. For that reason, her comments on abortion (among other theological musings) are worrisome. Imagine how those who are not saved are sadly misled when they hear such statements from a Christian “public theologian.”

Thousands of pro-life Christians annually filter into Washington, D.C., for the March for Life, the largest pro-life demonstration in the world. Every year the march gathers young people, their parents, grandparents, adoptive parents, clergy, and post-abortive women who march along the National Mall in commemoration of the millions of lives lost to abortion. Sometime soon I pray that Nadia Bolz-Weber will march alongside them. ✚



Chelsen Vicari directs the Evangelical Action program at the Institute on Religion and Democracy.



Pastor Tim Keller of Redeemer Presbyterian Church (Photo: Niek Stam)

Ideology Matters: Tim Keller and Politics

by Daniel Strand

A *New York Times* autumn op-ed by Pastor **Tim Keller** was a timely reminder that Christians should not be sucked into the black hole of partisan politics. It reflects Keller's own moderate temperament, which I share and admire. Christians need to hear that their faith must not be completely aligned with any political party. Political idolatry is ever-present and we must vigilantly fight against it.

Keller is a famous pastor in New York City who has found a way to navigate the cultural and urban challenges that often keep urbanites away from evangelical churches. His sophisticated and compelling Gospel presentation built a large, orthodox Presbyterian church in Manhattan.

Keller counsels fellow Christians that "while believers can register under a party affiliation and be active in politics, they should not identify the Christian church or faith with a political party as the only Christian one."

His point is a reminder that evangelicals must take seriously. Keller wisely points to the dangers of eliding the distinctions between faith and politics. Largely from a pastoral perspective, Keller is concerned first with evangelization and ministry. His reputation for wisdom and circumspection is well-earned and the piece communicates practical advice. He seems mostly focused upon speaking to evangelicals since most of his positive examples of political engagement are issues championed more often by Democrats, such as combating racism and poverty.

Keller, however, ignores a wider reality. Political parties are not defined merely

by the issues they advocate or about how much government should or should not be involved in our lives, but by the ideologies that define them and guide them. Most of our political differences do not revolve around the specifics of policy positions but the deep and growing divisions around first principles. The dilemma is a divide over visions about the world, sexuality, economics, and the meaning of life. Keller stays away from this more controversial point to make a safer point about political affiliation.

Political visions are not neutral. They communicate fundamental values and commitments, and Christians should be taught to evaluate these visions. Keller is smart, specializing in pre-suppositional apologetics, so no doubt he has thought of this point. When it comes to politics he stays above the fray, which may be an advisable position given his context in Manhattan. Ideology is not everything. Ideology informs behavior but often we hold ideas that are in tension.

The Benedict Option author **Rod Dreher**, senior editor at the *American Conservative*, is dispositionally the opposite of the moderate Keller. Effusive, personal, incisive and insightful in politics and deep cultural divides, Dreher is a cultural commentator and Keller is a pastor, so perhaps the comparison is unfair. Still, Dreher has an honesty and bluntness that Keller, the even-keeled Presbyterian, shies away from.

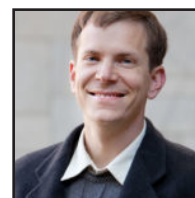
What Dreher does effectively, if at times histrionically, is to explain the underlying logic of political and cultural events. Whether it be transgenderism or other issues, Dreher is clear-eyed about what he is up against.

The downside of Keller's position is that moderation itself has its limits. **Thomas Jefferson's** dictum: "everything in moderation, including moderation" remains true. **Martin Luther King, Jr.** was not a moderate. **Winston Churchill** sounded the alarm on Hitler long before other British politicians did so, and for that he was ridiculed. These great visionary leaders embodied a willingness to make judgments, often unpopular ones.

Evangelicals object to the way that progressive political activists hold to an ideology in almost the same way people hold to a religion. While I have reservations about statements such as "The Statement on Social Justice and the Gospel," they at least try to address ideological undercurrents through a theological lens. However we may disagree about such statements' conclusions or their interpretation, that is the discussion we need to have more forthrightly.

Religious liberty became a hot button issue because progressives see state power as the primary means to enact their vision of society. The idea that the state is limited and does not have authority to encroach on certain areas of life is controversial because it seems an affront to their views of justice. They are told they must respect views that they find repugnant.

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Daniel Strand is a postdoctoral fellow in the Center for Political Thought and Leadership at the Arizona State University.

United Methodist Queer Clergy: 'Gospel Can Affirm Polyamory'

by Jeffrey Walton

Media coverage of the recently concluded United Methodist General Conference in St. Louis might give casual readers the impression that the denominational fight is centered on homosexuality and once everyone gets on-board with the “new thing” everyone can return to the “real” work of the church.

United Methodists in the LGBT-affirming Reconciling Ministries Network and other allied unofficial caucus groups are careful to police their messaging, but occasionally someone speaks candidly about the *next* new thing. And that new thing discards the idea of a

Caucus, Adkinson was recently a member of the Pacific Northwest Conference's General and Jurisdictional Conference delegation and is a member of the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference Board of Ordained Ministry. Even if he holds radical views, he was elected to represent his conference and should not be dismissed as a fringe voice. At the recent General Conference, Adkinson supported the failed One Church Plan. Adkinson also serves on a Westar Institute committee, which readers may recall is behind the Jesus Seminar, a longtime effort to debunk the Gospels' supernatural message about Jesus' divinity and miracles.

Adkinson appeared on the podcast *Multiamory* to discuss “shifting values around sexuality and non-traditional relationships,” specifically polyamory and Christianity. He reveals the current debate around human sexuality is not a slippery slope, but an incremental agenda in a predetermined direction.

“There's nothing in the Bible that's going to say polyamory is good because there's no such phrase for

that, but challenges of who we love and who we're supposed to love and really loving everyone is at the center of things through all of Jesus' teachings,” Adkinson asserted. “That's what I try to focus on. I'm less of a rigid, ‘here are the rules that Christians are supposed to follow,’ and more focused on how do we focus on loving the people around us better and seeking justice and caring for making the world more like God intends it to be.

“We have solid academics behind how none of that [scriptural prohibitions

against homosexual practice] is a real condemnation of a loving, committed same-sex couple in our current context,” Adkinson claimed, referring to such verses as “clobber passages” (Bible verses such as Romans 1:18-32 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 that clearly state God's disapproval of homosexual activity) and “the text of terror” (a term used by feminist theologians for scriptural narratives in which women are victims).

Adkinson was joined in the podcast by gay Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) youth minister **J.D. R. Mechelke**, who offered more support for alternative sexual arrangements. Noting symbolism in the Last Supper and the biblical imagery of the church as the bride of Christ, Mechelke also called attention to an Evangelical praise song:

There's this very intimate, individualistic relationship that people have with God and it's very erotic sometimes. My favorite example is this old song. It's not old, but '90s, 'In the secret and the quiet place, I want to touch you.' You start to think, 'That's kind of erotic and yet it's evangelical.' It's that we're doing that, which is fine. There are queer theologians that are taking that and saying, 'Maybe we have this erotic thing going on with Jesus.' Also thinking about it, 'This is my body.' You're taking somebody's body in your mouth, and so there's some phallic—

“It's either erotic or cannibalism,” interrupted host **Jase Lindgren**.

“Who's to say not both?” Adkinson suggested.

Later in the interview, Mechelke offers: “Some would say that the Last Supper, Jesus is proposing to the twelve friends and so it's very gay and very polyamorous.”

There is plenty more in the interview, including Mechelke's writings on “creating a kinky doctrine of sin” and “putting

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United Methodist Pastor Austin Adkinson (bottom left) appears on the “Multiamory” podcast in June 2018 (photo: Multiamory/screen capture)

“committed, monogamous relationship” for “open relationships,” “non-monogamy,” and “alternative love.”

“In my denomination, the prohibitions that we're fighting against are self-avowed practicing homosexuals, the people who want to be discriminatory don't even know the range of things that they should be trying to prohibit,” disclosed United Methodist Pastor **Austin Adkinson** in a 2018 interview.

A member of the leadership team of the United Methodist Queer Clergy



Jeffrey H. Walton is the Communications Manager and Anglican Program Director at the Institute on Religion & Democracy.

Premarital Sex 'Healthy,' Chastity 'Unreasonable' Say Progressive Pastors

by Chelsen Vicari

Last issue I wrote about a young progressive minister who called polyamorous and open relationships “holy” and “beautiful.” The minister is **Brandon Robertson**, a 26-year-old rising star among the Religious Left. More recently, Robertson had some rather unusual thoughts to share on premarital sex during an interview with *Huffington Post*.

Three clergy members, including Robertson, are interviewed on various topics including the use of dating apps* and dating non-believers. When asked about his stance on premarital sex, Robertson replied that he believes “for most people, sex before marriage is a healthy expression” and “not ‘sinful’ or morally wrong.”

Unbelievable—but sadly not that unbelievable. At least, not for you who follow the work of the Institute on Religion and Democracy regularly.

Robertson grew up in an Evangelical church and attended Moody Bible College.

*A “dating app” is a computer application program that can be accessed on a computer or mobile device such as a Smartphone. Dating app users create “profiles” featuring photos and information about themselves. If another dating app user finds a person desirable, he or she may contact them through the computer interface to arrange a date.

United Methodist Queer Clergy

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the Christian symbolism into different roles, ethics in the BDSM [bondage, discipline/domination, sadism, and masochism] community.”

Regardless of the merits of Adkins’s appraisal of biblical support for polyamory, he makes one assertion that few in the United Methodist Church will dispute: “a lot of pastors are more concerned about job security than about bringing change.” ✚

He is now an openly gay author, speaker, and the senior pastor of Missiongathering Christian Church, a church plant affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in San Diego, California.

Another *Huffington Post* interviewee, **Chalice Overy**, is an associate pastor at Pullen Memorial Baptist Church in Raleigh, North Carolina. Overy answered that she has evolved from her “fundamentalist beginnings” and now finds it “unreasonable to expect people to wait until they are married to have sex if we expect people to make thoughtful decisions about who they marry.”

I can’t think of anything healthy about sexual immorality. Off the top of my head, I can think of the unhealthy effects of premarital sex, from a woman’s perspective: insecurity, a desire for false affirmation through intimacy, attachment, then feelings of rejection, and the cycle repeats. All of these unhealthy outcomes are thwarted by the marriage covenant that should bring security, fidelity, and lifelong commitment.

It is difficult to read about Christian clergy calling premarital sex “healthy” and chastity “unreasonable.” But Robertson and Overy are not alone in their perspectives. Young Evangelicals observe a sort of unspoken green light toward premarital sex. A few years ago my colleague **Barton Gingrich** addressed this trend in a brilliant article, “The Millennial Generation’s Acceptable Sin.” On premarital sex being considered “acceptable,” Gingrich wrote:

Young evangelicals must choose their master. Right now, too many follow their appetites and desires. They are bending God’s own standards to satiate their libido. Perhaps fear and repentance would not be amiss here—numerous portions of sacred Scripture indicate that sexuality expresses God’s character as carried out in his image-bearers. The cost of trespassing providential limits is too high. Beware your acceptable sins—they are the ones that will kill you.



Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Pastor Brandon Robertson (Photo: YouTube)

Hardly anyone talks about young Evangelicals’ passive (if not affirming) approach to premarital sex. During his *Huffington Post* interview, Robertson mentioned the Evangelical church’s “unhealthy ideas about sex and sexuality.” Now I know that it is *en vogue* to bash Evangelical purity culture. I personally never encountered a purity ring growing up in a conservative Evangelical denomination. I recognize that others have, and the concept is admittedly silly. That was not my experience at various Evangelical churches and ministries I attended.

Personally, it would have been helpful if my youth group leaders, campus ministry leaders, and pastors had discussed what Scripture has to say about seeking chastity and also shared God’s mercy, forgiveness, and sanctification for those struggling with sexual purity.

Young Christians need guidance on these serious moral issues. Clergy, this is where your faithful Christian witness is so desperately needed.

May the Church have the courage to confront those “who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter” (Isaiah 5:20). ✚



Chelsen Vicari directs the Evangelical Action program at the Institute on Religion and Democracy.

Southern Baptists versus United Methodists

by Mark Tooley

Conservative Christian demographic decline is a pervasive narrative today. Partly based on reality and partly based on wishful thinking by some, this narrative typically ignores the far more dramatic implosion of liberal white Mainline Protestantism.

The popular conventional narrative asserts that young people are quit-

te with Evangelicalism, which displaced the Mainline decades ago as America's largest religious force.

So it's necessary to repeat what's happened to the Mainline. The Episcopal Church peaked in 1966 with 3.4 million and now has 1.7 million (50% loss). What is now the Presbyterian Church (USA) peaked, in its predecessor bodies that later merged, in 1965 with 4.4 million, and is at 1.35 million (70% loss). The United Church of Christ peaked in 1965 with 2.1 million and now has 850,000 (60% loss). What is now the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), in its predecessor bodies that later merged, peaked in 1968 with 5.9 million and now has 3.5 million (41% loss). The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) peaked in 1964 with over 1.9 million and now has just over 400,000 (80% loss). United Methodism, in its predecessor bodies, peaked in 1965 with over 11 million and now has 6.9 million in the USA (nearly 40% loss). The American Baptist Church peaked in 1963 with over 1.5 million and now has fewer than 1.2 million (25% loss.)

During this Mainline implosion the percentage of Americans belonging to the Seven Sister denominations declined from one of every six Americans to one of every 22. If the Mainline had simply retained its share of population it would stand today at about 55 million instead of about 16 million.

Nearly all the Mainline denominations have liberalized their sexuality standards over the last 15 years, precipitating accelerated membership loss. For example, the Presbyterian Church (USA) overturned its disapproval of homosexual practice in 2011 and declined from 1.9 million to 1.4 million in 2017, losing half a million members, or 25%, in just 6 years. The Episcopal Church elected its first openly homosexual bishop in 2003 and declined from 2.3 million to 1.7 million, or 26%. The two Mainline denominations that have not officially liberalized on

ting evangelical Christianity in droves because it's too socially and politically conservative. Of course, the implication is that if only Evangelicalism would liberalize, especially on sexuality, then it might become more appealing.

But all the available evidence as to what happens to liberalizing churches strongly indicates the opposite. Mainline

The facts of Mainline Protestant decline are easily available. The Mainline, once the dominant religious force in America, has declined so calamitously that for many it's become almost forgotten. Often, when I speak to young people, I must explain what the Mainline is. Many young people, when they think of non-Catholic Christianity, are only familiar

with Evangelicalism, which displaced the Mainline decades ago as America's largest religious force.

So it's necessary to repeat what's happened to the Mainline. The Episcopal Church peaked in 1966 with 3.4 million and now has 1.7 million (50% loss). What is now the Presbyterian Church (USA) peaked, in its predecessor bodies that later merged, in 1965 with 4.4 million, and is at 1.35 million (70% loss). The United Church of Christ peaked in 1965 with 2.1 million and now has 850,000 (60% loss). What is now the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), in its predecessor bodies that later merged, peaked in 1968 with 5.9 million and now has 3.5 million (41% loss). The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) peaked in 1964 with over 1.9 million and now has just over 400,000 (80% loss). United Methodism, in its predecessor bodies, peaked in 1965 with over 11 million and now has 6.9 million in the USA (nearly 40% loss). The American Baptist Church peaked in 1963 with over 1.5 million and now has fewer than 1.2 million (25% loss.)

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"Singing Praise," *Saturday Evening Post* cover, March 7, 1959 by Dick Sargent.

sexuality, United Methodism and American Baptists, have declined the least.

So the proposal from some that conservative stances on sexuality precipitate church decline is not of itself supported, as the fastest declining denominations in America, and throughout the West, have liberalized on sexuality. Some conservative denominations are declining, but all growing denominations in America and the world are conservative theologically and on sexuality.

Recently I have tweeted some of these statistics about Mainline decline, with respondents insisting that Evangelicals are declining too. But by some counts, Evangelicalism is retaining its share of the American population while liberal Protestantism is plunging.

All growing denominations in America are conservative, including the Assemblies of God, which in 1965 had 572,123 and now has 3.2 million (460% increase), the Church of God in Cleveland, which in 1964 had 220,405 and now has 1.2 million (445% increase), the Christian Missionary Alliance, which in 1965 had 64,586 and now has 440,000 (576% increase), and the Church of the Nazarene, which in 1965 had 343,380 and now has 626,811 (82% increase).

Common responses to mention of Mainline decline are “But the Southern Baptists!” And it’s true that America’s largest Protestant body has been declining for 18 years. But its decline from 16.4 million to 15 million represents an 8 percent loss, which is not comparable to the average Mainline loss of nearly 50%. Southern Baptists displaced Methodism as America’s largest Protestant body in 1967 and now outnumber United Methodists by two to one.

Southern Baptists leaders commonly bewail their 18-year membership decline and urge more focus on evangelism. Their aggressive church planting resulted in 270 additional congregations in 2017 and a twenty percent increase in congregations over the last 20 years, with a strong focus on creating new black and Hispanic congregations. The Southern Baptist Convention likely is more racially diverse than Mainline Protestant denominations, which are over 90% white. And Southern Baptist worship attendance, even amid membership decline, increased by 120,000 in 2017.

Mainline Protestantism shows no sign of any institutional desire to reverse its 53-year membership decline, instead doubling down on the theological and political stances that fueled much of this decline. Some of its denominations, like the Presbyterian Church (USA), at current rates of decline, may not exist in 15 years or less.

Sometimes the demise of Mainline Protestantism is equated with the demise of American Christianity. Media sometimes report dying Mainline congregations without citing different stories at newer evangelical churches. But just as common if not more so is the narrative of ostensible Evangelical decline. White Evangelicalism maybe in decline, but Evangelicalism is increasingly multiethnic. Some evangelical denominations, like the Assemblies of God, which has no racial majority, successfully reach immigrant populations, while Mainline Protestantism fails to do so.

Here’s my suggestion on why there’s lots of focus on supposed Evangelical decline based on its purportedly unappealing moral stances. Evangelicalism surged during the 1970s through 1990s, including growing campus ministries, creating new generations of evangelical young people, some of whom later recoiled from the conservative religious upbringing of their youths. They sometimes blog and pontificate on the failures of evangelical culture, commending an idealized more liberal Christianity, usually unaware of preexisting liberal Christianity’s dramatic collapse.

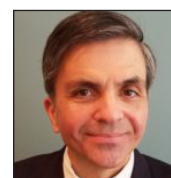
Meanwhile, Mainline Protestantism, when its implosion started in the early to mid-1960s, began losing baby boomers and barely had representation among subsequent generations. In recent decades few young people have been left in the Mainline who could subsequently complain or pontificate about experiences in their liberal denominations.

It’s important to reiterate the details of Mainline Protestantism’s long and ongoing downward spiral as a warning to other churches. Whatever the problems of evangelical Christianity, becoming more like liberal Mainline Protestantism is not a remedy. ✚

New Global, Orthodox Identity for United Methodists Surprises Many

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Creating a new liberal Methodist church would take time. And some church liberals remain in denial about the political and demographic realities that bar their future success within United Methodism. But their defeat at the February 23–26 General Conference was decisive and momentous. United Methodism, after a century as a liberal mainline Protestant denomination, is slowly emerging into a new identity that is global and orthodox. Richard Neuhaus, if he were still with us, likely wouldn’t be surprised. But many others are. ✚



Mark D. Tooley is the President of the Institute on Religion and Democracy.

Ideology Matters: Tim Keller and Politics

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Court cases about cake bakers and nuns who refuse to provide contraception get to the heart of fundamental theological convictions about the limits and scope of politics. Can government coerce people to violate religious convictions? The First Amendment sought to maximize the scope for religious practice and protect religious conscience from state coercion. When that principle is attacked, we should be nervous.

As a basic point about party affiliation, Keller’s op-ed is a good reminder, but that’s only part of the story. We must be attentive to both the issues being discussed but also the ideological projects at work. ✚

IRD Diary:

There and Back Again: Why I Got Banned from Facebook and How I Got Restored

by Faith McDonnell

1. Milad Makeen Zaky
2. Abanub Ayad Atiya
3. Maged Solaiman Shehata
4. Yusuf Shukry Yunan
5. Kirolos Shokry Fawzy

This summary is based on articles for *The Stream*: “Cast Into the Outer Darkness: An Open Letter to Facebook” and “I’m Back! Facebook Restored My Account. A Thank You and Three Suggestions.”

No, this isn’t a journey out of the Shire. In this case “There” is a no-man’s land of bewilderment, confusion, and abandonment: My Facebook account was deactivated by the Powers That Be. To make matters worse, banishment included Messenger and Instagram.

Here’s what happened:

As the world knows, on February 15, 2015, 21 men were slaughtered on a Libyan seashore by ISIS. Twenty Coptic Christians and fellow martyr, Matthew from Ghana, were the subject of the jihadists’ grisly snuff film sent to “People of the Cross.” The image of those soon-to-be-saints in orange jumpsuits kneeling in front of their killers is a powerful testimony of Christ’s victory over death and hell.

On the 4th anniversary of martyrdom, I posted the image as my temporary Facebook profile picture. Bam! My account was *immediately* deactivated. Facebook said my account did not follow “Community Standards.” They listed these as “credible threat to harm others,” “support for violent organizations,” and “exceedingly graphic content.” Writing on *The Stream* in reply I said in addition to posting photos of family, friends, sunrises in Maine, and other wonderful photos:

I share heartbreaking pictures of hungry children in Sudan’s Nuba Mountains, girls held captive by Boko Haram, Christian women prisoners like Asia Bibi, members of Falun Gong beaten by Chinese officials, and Assyrian Christians and Yazidis in unfinished, concrete shelters because they’re in danger even in refugee camps.

I have shared stories and photos refuting accepted narratives in Nigeria and South Sudan and posted photos of the current uprising in Sudan. That’s something lobbyists like Squire Patton Boggs and apologists like the Atlantic Council want to remain in the shadows.

Perhaps Facebook community standards should enable people to find the truth about the world, if they are interested. It is an exceedingly violent world. But it is also a world full of brave heroes and courageous saints who bring hope, faith, love, and truth to the broken and despairing.

My appeal may not have reached Facebook, but it reached many others! My *Stream* article resulted in over 200 new Twitter followers. It also provided me a dozen or more radio interviews, including one with **Eric Metaxas**, a great defender of the persecuted. (Eric challenged *all* his listeners to post the 21 Martyrs photo on their Facebook pages—which resulted in more bannings! But that’s a subject for another article.)

And yet, all that publicity did not get my account back. One of IRD’s great Board members had a contact at

ISIS video screenshot with the names of martyrs added. This is the photo Facebook banned Faith McDonnell over.

Facebook, or as I put it in my second article for *The Stream*:

It’s not for just getting your foot in the door on Broadway . . . that requires knowing a guy who knows a guy! It’s necessary for keeping your Facebook account if it should be targeted . . .

The Facebook contact was helpful and kind. He rescued all of my deactivated accounts with no permanent damage! But my experience gave me insight I tried to share with both Facebook itself and with others who use social media.

First, *Facebook is better with a face!* The appeal process for a disabled account has to be better.

Second, *take care of your data!* If my Facebook account hadn’t been restored I would have lost dozens if not hundreds of Facebook friends. Photos I would lose might be found on my office computer, home laptop, cell phone, one of 8 flash drives or external hard drive, that mysterious thing called “The Cloud,” or in a cardboard box under my desk. Or maybe all those places. But my only neatly organized photos are in Facebook albums.

Finally, *God is in control.* If I had merely written about the 21 Martyrs, or any persecuted Christians, without the photo, it would not have received the attention, shares, and following that having Facebook disable me did.

I’m glad it got the attention, but I wish that American Christians would show the same righteous outrage and exert the same energy for the truly persecuted. Speak of them on Facebook with the pride and sorrow and passion that you would speak of your own friends and family. ✚



Faith J. H. McDonnell is the Director of Religious Liberty Programs at the Institute on Religion & Democracy.



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