



# faith & freedom

*Reforming the Church's Social and Political Witness*

Summer 2019



## Impromptu Trump Visit to Suburban Washington Megachurch Prompts Explanation

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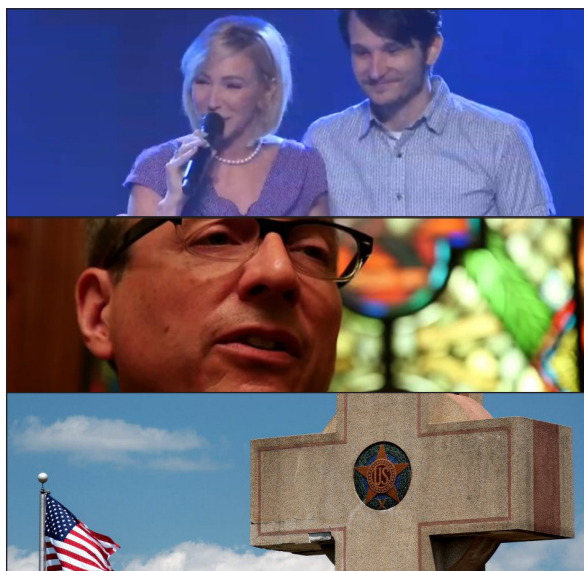
*Ibitsam, an Egyptian Christian woman, and her son appear in the documentary Christians in the Mirror. The film was co-sponsored by IRD and reports the faith and courage of Christians from Egypt, India, Iraq, Syria, and Sudan. See page 9. (Photo: In Altum Productions)*

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Cover: President **Donald Trump** visits  
McLean Bible Church in Vienna,  
Virginia, to pray for the victims and  
for the community of Virginia Beach.  
(Image credit: White House Pool)

# Kirsten Powers, Abortion, and Church Teaching

Commentator **Kirsten Powers** wrote a *USA Today* column lamenting recent state initiatives to limit abortion, describing herself as both “pro-choice and pro-life.” She recalled her own conversion to Evangelicalism a decade ago and more recent induction into Roman Catholicism. She wrote:

*Throughout this period, I was surrounded by people who believe that one could not be a “real Christian” if they weren’t “pro-life.” I wanted to be a real Christian. Though I didn’t see much in what I read in the Bible to justify this litmus test, I was new to the faith and trusted those who seemed more theologically knowledgeable.*

Of course the Roman Catholic Church, which Powers has joined, has an emphatic teaching about the humanity of unborn human life and its merits for protection by civil society. Many social and political issues are matters of Christian prudential judgment. But for Roman Catholics, their church’s teaching on abortion is binding.

As a Protestant, I’ve always been perplexed by committed Catholics, especially adult converts, who presumably have carefully pondered their church’s truth claims, and then reject or minimize them. Why join or remain with an institution and faith tradition whose core premises are deeply faulty?

Powers is a journalist and thought leader who presumably was catechized in Catholic teaching during her induction into the church. She knows this church has a very long, deep and rich ethical tradition about human life that cannot be encapsulated by a few Bible verses. Yet in her column she does not engage her church’s teaching at all. Instead she treats the issue as merely another hot button in American culture wars.

Some ardent Catholics might dismiss Powers as a de facto Protestant, asserting sweeping truth claims against Roman Catholic teaching based on individual preference alone. But this caricature, although found among many individual Protestants, is not true of classic Protestantism.

Every major stream of historic Christianity, including Protestants, Catholics and Orthodox, believe in a corporate Body of Christ alive across millennia and all cultures, sustained by the Holy Spirit. No individual Christian in any church is left isolated to craft his or her own corpus of ethical teachings. Instead, wonderfully, every Christian has access to an incredible moral tradition shaped and sustained by saints, martyrs, and scholars from every land and era.

Christians, on the great theological and moral imperatives, are not called to be lonely individualists. Instead they are invited

to think and reason with the whole Body of Christ, which is a mighty cloud of witnesses whose collective experience and wisdom are immeasurable. Why would any Christian decline this magnificent invitation?

Tragically, many Christians aren’t even really aware of this great moral tradition of which they are heirs. Many American church people argue against historic Christian teaching about marriage, thinking it’s contingent on merely a few Bible verses that can be contextualized or overridden. They almost never address the universal church’s multifaceted teaching about male and female rooted in creation, emblemized in the redemption

story, fulfilled in eschatology, and integrated into liturgy, sacrament, hymnody, and ecclesiology.

Likewise, many American churchgoers justify their politics based on isolated Bible verses without reference to historic church teaching about God’s purpose for the state and civil order. All Christian teaching rests ultimately on Scripture. But the church collectively offers reflection, wisdom, and insights that autonomous individuals, perusing their Bible alone, will likely not easily discover. Both liberals and conservatives in U.S. Christianity commonly err in their hyper individualism and mutual disregard for or ignorance of wider ecclesial counsel.

Powers’ *USA Today* column sadly reflects this common penchant for U.S. Christian moral reflection in isolation from the treasures of historic church teaching. This path is well trod but it is also lonely. We may not always like what those treasures offer.

But thoughtful Christians should not make serious theological and ethical claims without any reference to those treasures. Why not at least acknowledge what the Communion of Saints, across time and place, has to say? Whether agreeing or disagreeing with the tradition, the encounter will be enriching. ✚

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in any church is left  
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Mark Tooley



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



# Gay Maine Bishop Unilaterally Transitions Holy Spirit to 'She'

**E**piscopalians in Maine took part in the consecration of their new bishop June 22, the first openly partnered gay man to be installed as a diocesan bishop in the U.S.-based Episcopal Church since **Gene Robinson** in 2003.

The Rt. Rev. **Thomas James Brown** was consecrated Saturday as the 10th bishop of the Diocese of Maine at the Cathedral Church of St. Luke in Portland. The service was led by the Most Rev. **Michael Curry**, presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church.

A video posted on the diocese's YouTube channel showed participants, including Brown, calling the Holy Spirit a "she" during the recitation of the Nicene Creed. It is unclear if Curry said "she."

An order of service provided by the diocese lists an unaltered version of the creed, but video of the service, in which only Brown and Curry are shown with microphones, captures the creed being recited as, "We believe in the Holy Spirit,

The original language for the Holy Spirit was adopted by the First Council of Constantinople in the year 381.

Brown's consecration came ahead of next year's global gathering of Anglican bishops—known as the Lambeth Conference—that is being overshadowed by the participation of gay and lesbian bishops and their spouses from the Episcopal Church and Anglican Church of Canada. It also occurred as the Diocese of Albany awaits news of a formal charge against their bishop for his refusal to permit clergy to perform same-sex marriage rites, which conflict with Albany's diocesan canon law.

Membership in the Diocese of Maine declined 15.1 percent between 2007 and 2017, while attendance for the same period declined 25.8 percent.

Brown has served at multiple churches in the Northeast, including St. Michael's Church in Brattleboro, Vermont. There he met the Rev. **Thomas Mousin**, a then-United Methodist pastor. The couple received a blessing of their same-sex union in 2003 from the Episcopal bishop of Vermont.

Brown previously worked as director of education for Planned Parenthood of South Central Michigan, a local affiliate of the largest provider of abortions in the United States. He has held prominent roles in the national church.

Same-sex marriage continues to be a source of controversy within the Episcopal Church and worldwide Anglican Communion with which it is affiliated. Episcopal Church officials object that Archbishop of Canterbury **Justin Welby** has declined to invite same-sex spouses to the Lambeth Conference.

On the other hand, Welby has also been criticized by Anglican traditionalists, including bishops affiliated with the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON), for inviting those bishops in same-sex marriages or civil unions (sans partners) in contravention of the

precedent established at the last Lambeth Conference by then-Archbishop of Canterbury **Rowan Williams**.

Bishops at the 1998 Lambeth Conference rejected "homosexual practice as incompatible with Scripture" and voted that they "cannot advise the legitimizing or blessing of same sex unions nor ordaining those involved in same gender unions." ✚



## Rachel Held Evans (1981-2019)

**P**rogressive Christian author **Rachel Held Evans** died early the morning of May 4 from severe swelling of her brain following weeks in a medically induced coma.

The Tennessee-based author was widely known within progressive Christian circles, where she regularly appeared as a conference speaker. The *Washington Post* once called Evans "the most polarizing woman in evangelicalism." Evans later wrote of her 2014 departure from Evangelicalism and move to the Episcopal Church.

"Rachel and I disagreed on significant Christian teachings. But as she and I once acknowledged, there were likely many other areas in life that we had in common," writes IRD Evangelical Program Director **Chelsen Vicari**. "For instance, we were both wives and mothers of small children, which is why my heart, prayers, and support go out especially to Rachel's toddler son, baby daughter, and husband Dan. May God comfort their aching souls as they mourn the loss of Rachel—who no doubt loved her family dearly." ✚



The Rt. Rev. Thomas James Brown was consecrated as the 10th Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Maine at the Cathedral Church of St. Luke in Portland, ME June 22, 2019 (Photo: YouTube screen capture/Diocese of Maine).

the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. Who with the Father and the Son, She is worshiped and glorified. She has spoken through the Prophets."

## Former National Association of Evangelicals Head Urges California Lawmakers: Direct Pastors to Affirm LGBTQ

**A** former top official with the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) has testified in favor of legislation that blames stigma from religious groups for a high rate of suicide among persons who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, or Queer/Questioning (LGBTQ).

Dr. **Kevin Mannoia** testified before a California State Assembly judiciary committee on Concurrent Resolution 99 (ACR 99), which seeks to curtail “Practices or therapies that attempt to create a change in a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity.”

“On behalf of some Christian pastors and church leaders, I write to express various levels of support for the Resolution ACR 99 dealing with Conversion Therapy and LGBTQ persons,” Mannoia wrote in a letter of support.

Social conservative organizations, including the California Family Council and Liberty Counsel, oppose the legislation as a violation of religious freedom for pastors and counselors.

Mannoia, who currently serves as Azusa Pacific University chaplain, was vague in his letter to Assemblyman **Evan**

**Low** (D-San Jose), writing of “deep desire to collaborate with others in the common good and on behalf of the dignity of every person.”

“Frankly, one of the underlying interests that I have is to change the tone of the conversation,” Mannoia testified. “I come from a tradition that is a conservative tradition in the church, and I appreciate [Assemblyman Low’s] willingness to remain in dialogue.”

The language of the legislation is more direct, asserting that “The stigma associated with being LGBTQ often created by groups in society, including therapists and religious groups, has caused disproportionately high rates of suicide, attempted suicide, depression, rejection, and isolation amongst LGBTQ and questioning individuals.”

The California Family Council noted that after the hearing, “Low wasted no time touting Mannoia’s testimony as a gesture of full support for ACR 99 on social media.” Low tweeted a photo of himself and Mannoia together on a state Capitol balcony.

It is unclear what, if any, concessions Mannoia may have gained from Low by offering testimony that favored the



*Azusa Pacific University chaplain and former National Association of Evangelicals President Kevin Mannoia testifies in favor of ACR 99. (Photo: California Legislature)*

resolution’s passage and optics that signaled evangelical endorsement. Mannoia was NAE President from 1999 to 2001, and also served as a bishop in the Free Methodist Church.

The bill passed committee 6-2 with one member not voting and was subsequently passed by the Assembly on June 24. It awaits legislative action by the California State Senate. ✚

## Michigan Bishop-Elect ‘Very Interested’ to Be ‘Connected with the Power Structures’

**I**n a June interview with *The Detroit Free Press*, Bishop-elect **Bonnie Perry** of the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan relayed her intention to increase church involvement with secular foundations and government officials to help make the region more equitable.

“I really do believe that the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan needs to be a partner with all of the development that’s going on in the Detroit metro area so that it’s equitable and really have close connections with our elected officials so that we’re able to enact our values of

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*Rev. Bonnie Perry, 57, Bishop-elect of the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan. She was elected on June 1, 2019 and is to become head of the Michigan diocese in February 2020. She is currently the rector of All Saints Episcopal Church in Chicago. (Photo: St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Chicago, IL)*



## Activist Disciples of Christ Pastor Assails Capitalism

**P**rominent Religious Left figure The Rev. Dr. **William Barber** has assailed capitalism as inherently unjust. Instead, the activist minister and co-chair of the Poor People's Campaign



Pastor William Barber testifies Jun 19, 2019 before the House Budget Committee hearing on poverty in America. (Photo: House Budget Committee livestream).

proposes government-directed wealth redistribution.

Barber attended a June 19 congressional hearing on poverty in America. In testimony before the House of Representatives Budget Committee, Barber lamented a growing gap between rich and poor “as a direct result of policy decisions, not the immorality and lack of personal work of poor people.”

Barber went on to criticize approaches to poverty alleviation that emphasize personal responsibility and minimize government intervention. He advocated for collective responsibility to address inequality that he asserted was chiefly the result of an unjust system.

Barber claimed in his testimony that 140 million people—43.5 percent of the U.S. population—live in poverty. Official U.S. government statistics from 2017 list 39.7

million Americans below the poverty line, about 12.3 percent of the total population.

The ordained Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) pastor went on to make biblical arguments to justify wealth redistribution. In response to Representative **Bill Johnson's** (R-OH) statement that Jesus does not command Caesar to feed the poor or materially provide for widows, Barber countered that Johnson had not read the 2,000 Scripture verses addressing how nations should treat the poor and immigrants.

Barber claimed that God's first speech was relaying the good news to the *Ptotos* (the destitute) whom Barber identified as “those who have been made poor by the economic system.” *Ptotos* is traditionally interpreted as the totally destitute, regardless of the economic system that they operate under. ✚

## Amy Butler Exits Riverside Church amid Dueling Harassment Claims, Sex Toy Shopping

**M**anhattan's famed Riverside Church has, not for the first time, been engulfed in controversy surrounding a leadership change.

The storied progressive congregation re-entered the news cycle in July when Senior Pastor **Amy Butler** and Riverside lay leaders released a statement that her five-year contract would not be renewed.

In the following days, a steady drip of reports brought to light dueling sexual harassment allegations culminating in a staff shopping trip to a Minneapolis sex toy store, the Smitten Kitten, during the annual Festival of Homiletics preaching festival.

Butler's patronage of the Smitten Kitten was newsworthy enough to merit coverage by the secular press. The *London Daily Mail* headlined Butler's purchase of a “\$200 bunny-shaped sex toy during a religious conference” while the *New York Post* splashed “Oh God! Oh God!” across a cover photo of Butler in clerical dress with a teaser about sex toy gifts to colleagues.

Financed by **John D. Rockefeller, Jr.**, Riverside long served as a center of Religious Left activism, although its congregation is no longer as numerous as under famed minister **Harry Emerson Fosdick**.

While Riverside may not be particularly large, it is influential: Butler was featured prominently at the recent United Church of Christ General Synod and has been visible in a host of politically liberal causes at the national level, including environmental activism. The UCC tweeted a message of support after the alleged sex toy controversy was publicly aired.

Riverside has a history of conflict between clergy and lay leaders. Butler's predecessor, **Brad R. Braxton**, was forced out in only one year after a controversial



Pastor Amy Butler of Riverside Church in New York City appears on the cover of the July 11, 2019, edition of the *New York Post*

pay package and changes to the church's worship style. The *Wall Street Journal* reported from the start, “dissidents complained about [Braxton's] evangelical style, which they said put a greater emphasis on personal salvation than on doing social justice.” ✚

# Nigerian Pastor Warns of Church's 'Difficult Task' Amidst Persecution

**A**n Anglican priest from Nigeria, where violent persecution of Christians still occurs, recently gave a sermon at Asbury Seminary Chapel addressing how Christians in the West ought to react to persecution.

Pastor **Samuel Odubena** spoke June 19 at the theologically conservative school that prepares graduates for ministry in the Wesleyan tradition.

In northern Nigeria, where the population is predominantly Muslim and the terrorist group Boko Haram is still active, violence and discrimination against Christians is an ongoing danger. Religious conflict in Nigeria is often split along ethnic lines with the Islamic Hausa and Fulani tribes in the north sometimes sheltering Boko Haram and perpetuating discrimination against Christians who are often from tribes in southern Nigeria.

Odubena's sermon came in two parts. The first focused on persecution, social shifts, and inaction on the part of Christians in the west. The second focused on proper responses. In a modern age of soft persecution in the West, Odubena points out that the church has a difficult task in the world.

"It is not news to God that the Church exists in the midst of complexities,"

Odubena preached, "complexities of individualism, relativism, technology, secularism, and pluralism." Christian heritage is under a cultural assault in the West, Odubena asserts, with rampant forces of materialism and consumerism.

"It is no news to God that one and one-half million unborn American babies are being aborted each year," Odubena preached (official statistics indicate the number is closer to 700,000, while Pro-Life groups believe approximately 1,000,000 are aborted in the United States each year). Odubena spoke of Christians pining for the "good old days" when Christianity was dominant in society. "It's

like we want a different mission field, but we are not going to get it."

Odubena offered an alternative to passivity and identified fear of reprisal as the primary force keeping Christians silent. He called fear "a major spiritual weapon the devil uses against the Christians." In Nigeria, reprisals are not limited to social media attacks or job loss as in the West. Odubena urged Christians to be strong, even in the face of imprisonment or death. In addition to overcoming fear, Odubena urged Christians to make a difference in the world. "No matter who you are, wherever you find yourself, wherever God sends you, please be determined to make a difference." ✝



*Pastor Samuel Odubena preaches June 19, 2019 during a chapel service at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky (Photo: Vimeo screen capture)*

## Global Law Firm Urged: Consider the Persecuted

**A**s a precursor to the U.S. State Department Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom, religious rights supporters gathered in 15 cities in July for simultaneous rallies designed to draw attention to governments that persecute religious minorities and the U.S. companies that do business with them.

"This crisis, which is nearing genocidal proportions, is being widely ignored and has been allowed to continue unchecked," read a statement by organizers Save the Persecuted Christians.

"We say NO MORE! It's time to call out the persecutors—and their enablers—hold them accountable and secure significant penalties on state and non-state offenders."

Standing in front of the law offices of Squire Patton Boggs, LLP, in Washington, D.C., rally participants representing Christian, Muslim, and other religious freedom organizations held signs that read: "Stop the Persecution of Believers." The international law firm has been criticized by human rights groups for

representing governments such as China, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar that are accused of oppressing religious minorities.

"The work to advance religious freedom is being thwarted [by companies that] are serving the interests of Communist China, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Cameroon, and the Palestinian Authority," said Save the Persecuted Christians President and CEO **Frank Gaffney**. "We urge you to become knowledgeable about this problem, and to do what you can to help ...

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## Global Law Firm Urged: Consider the Persecuted

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to get the attention of the world through the miracle of social media virtual rallies about what's happening here, who is responsible, who is enabling it, and what must now no longer be tolerated."

Squire Patton Boggs touts itself as "one of the 30 largest law firms in the

"We write to you as advocates for religious freedom out of a shared concern that foreign governments represented by your firm are among the world's most aggressive persecutors of people of faith," reads the letter. "It is deeply troubling to us that your prestigious firm and the

During a May 1 kick-off news conference at the National Press Club, letter co-signers and other civil society leaders said the systematic persecution and oppression of religious minorities is currently greater than at any other time in history. This is supported by the U.S. State Department's Office of International Religious Freedom's 2018 report, which states that 80 percent of the world's population currently lives in places where religious freedom is "highly restricted" and where religious minorities face oppression that is directly tied to their religious faith and practices.

"No law firm should represent a country that is taking Uyghur Muslim children and women and putting them in internment camps modeled after what Mao and Stalin did," former Congressman **Frank Wolf** (R-Va.) said at the press conference. Wolf, who is also the author of the International Religious Freedom Act, added that during the Carter and Reagan administrations "no law firm or public relations group in this city would have ever represented the Soviet Union. There's been a shift."

A media spokesperson for Squire Patton Boggs did not return calls for comment.

The rallies preceded the State Department's second Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom where religious leaders, civil society organizations, and high-ranking officials met to discuss combating growing discrimination, intolerance, abuse, and genocide that is targeting minority groups.

"I want to thank everyone here who has committed a part of their life to helping those who are persecuted and to defending the unalienable right to practice one's religion and follow their conscience and to take care of their soul," Secretary of State **Mike Pompeo** said at the ministerial opening event. "Despite our many differences, everyone here agrees on the need for religious pluralism. And we all agree that fighting so that each person is free to believe, free to assemble, and to teach the tenets of his or her own faith is not optional—indeed, it is a moral imperative that this be permitted." ✚



*Demonstrators stand before the law offices of Squire Patton Boggs, LLP, in Washington, DC, the week of July 10, 2019. (Photo: Faith McDonnell/IRD)*

world by total headcount and gross revenue, twelfth largest firm in the UK by revenue, and one of the top 10 by number of countries occupied." It is additionally "one of the largest US-headquartered law firms in Asia."

In a letter addressed to Squire Patton Boggs Chairman and Global CEO **Mark Ruehlmann** that was delivered to the firm's Washington office, Gaffney and 44 civil society leaders representing Christians, Muslims, Falun Gong practitioners, Buddhists, and other persecuted religious minorities urged Ruehlmann to consider the egregious human rights violations committed by the governments his firm represents.

many good people it employs are currently associated with and providing legal counsel, representation and other services to such nations."

The rallies are part of a larger campaign by letter signatories to compel national legislators to convince Squire Patton Boggs and other global companies to end their representation of oppressive governments. Save the Persecuted Christians is also circulating a petition addressed to the Trump administration and members of Congress asking members of the executive and legislative branches "to decline to meet or do business with those who engage in such lobbying on behalf of persecutors."



## IRD Co-Sponsors *Christians in the Mirror* Screenings in Nation's Capital

**C***hristians in the Mirror*, a documentary film that tells the story of faith and courage of Christians from Egypt, India, Iraq, Syria, and Sudan, premiered June 10 in Washington, D.C., with the Institute on Religion and Democracy and Save the Persecuted Christians as co-sponsors.

IRD hosted a second screening of the film in connection with the U.S. State Department Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom in July.

"*Christians in the Mirror* filmmaker **Jordan Allott** was already in production when he reached out to me in the spring of 2018 for help connecting with Sudanese Christians. I introduced him to IRD's long-time ministry partner, the Reverend **John Chol Daau**," recalls IRD Religious Liberty Program Director **Faith J.H. McDonnell**. "In the film, John tells of becoming a Lost Boy because of the Sudanese regime's genocidal attack on Christians in what is now the nation of South Sudan. He also shares testimony of God's faithfulness, and how today he is the founder and director of Good Shepherd Academy, a Juba Christian primary school with over 350 students from eight tribal groups."

Film producers hope that stories of Christians living out their faith, sharing the Gospel, seeing their loved ones martyred for believing in Jesus, and experiencing deprivation and poverty, will convict Western Christians to become stronger advocates for their persecuted brothers and sisters.

"No American Christian will view this film and remain the same," McDonnell insists. "It is no coincidence that the film is titled *Christians in the Mirror*. In his Epistle, the Apostle James says that if anyone is a 'hearer' of the word, but not a 'doer,' he is like a man who looks at himself in the mirror and goes away and immediately forgets. It is our brothers and sisters in the Body

of Christ whose faces we are seeing in the mirror."

Learn more at: *ChristiansintheMirror.com*, where you can see a trailer



Ibtsam, an Egyptian Christian woman, poses for a photo with her son: "We used to hear stories about martyrs and how they didn't abandon their beliefs... now, we get to live that same story. I am proud of my husband." (Photo: In Altum Productions)

for the film and request a future screening of this film for your group. ✝

## Michigan Bishop-Elect 'Very Interested' to Be 'Connected with the Power Structures'

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welcoming, fairness, equity," Perry said. "In order to make that happen, you have to be connected with the power structures. That's something I'm very interested in doing."

Perry was elected in early June on the fifth ballot from a slate of four female candidates. This was her third nomination for the episcopacy since 2006. Perry will have the distinction of being not only the first female bishop for the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan, but also the first partnered lesbian to lead a diocese (**Mary Glasspool** was elected in 2009 as a bishop suffragan).

Perry's sexuality has drawn attention: she joins The Rev. **Thomas James Brown**, elected in February as bishop in the Episcopal Diocese of Maine, who is also in a same-sex marriage.

Perry will have her work cut out for her. According to data provided by the Executive Office of the General Convention, the Michigan diocese from 2002 through 2017 lost 42 percent of members, shuttered 20 parishes, and lost 37 percent of attendees. Declines in baptisms and marriages were even steeper, down 64 and 51 percent, respectively. ✝

## Churches against Bladensburg Peace Cross

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reject the wide meaning the cross has assumed universally, which is a compliment to Christianity and doesn't detract from the cross's core theological purpose.

It's sad that some elites of declining Mainline Protestantism, having often withheld the cross's core theological purpose from their own constituency, now want its broader message literally expunged from public space. Thankfully the U.S. Supreme Court was wiser than they. ✝

# Paula White and Concerns Over Ministry Nepotism

by Chelsen Vicari

**P**resident **Donald J. Trump's** spiritual advisor and non-denominational televangelist **Paula White** officially stepped down as senior pastor of the Apopka, Florida, megachurch—New Destiny Christian Center (NDCC)—



Pastor Paula White of New Destiny Christian Center in Apopka, Florida, announced a leadership transition to her son Brad and daughter-in-law Rachel Sunday, May 5, 2019. (Photo: Facebook)

she has pastored since 2012. She made the unexpected announcement to her 10,000-member church in May, saying:

*All along I knew that God had said, meaning this, you're a transitional pastor. Not meaning that I would ever leave Apopka or New Destiny as it was. Not that. But I knew that I wasn't taking us into the promised land.*

And:

*The Lord spoke to me very clearly and said if you miss this moment you'll delay things. Do not miss this moment. So today I am officially installing Pastor Brad and Pastor Rachel as the senior pastors over city of destiny. Everybody stand up on your feet because this is God's plan.*

White then immediately installed her only child **Bradley Knight** and

daughter-in-law **Rachel** as the new senior pastors over her multi-cultural, majority-black megachurch.

"Welcome to your new beginning," White declared to standing applause.

Interestingly, White does not plan to entrust New Destiny to her son and daughter-in-law's hands entirely. Her new role is now "oversight pastor," which will allow her to expand New Destiny Christian Center under the new banner "City of Destiny." She aims to plant 3,000 churches, be a "pastor to pastors," launch a university, and continue Paula White ministries.

White is a controversial Christian figure. She has been called a prosperity preacher and criticized for her unquestioning public support of President Trump, which cost her church between 200 and 300 in members and \$10,000 in weekly giving, as reported by *The Christian Post*. Critics have also questioned her personal life, including the purchase of a private jet, a condominium in Trump Tower, and three marriages.

Here, it is White's decision to elevate her son and daughter-in-law as her successors that has me rolling my eyes.

Perhaps NDCC's staff website is outdated, but the staff page lists **Doug Shackelford** as the executive pastor and **Edward Boateng** as associate pastor. Just this last month, Shackelford preached during at least two services (available on NDCC's Facebook page), which indicates that he likely remains on staff. More interesting, White's daughter-in-law Rachel Knight is listed as "Donor Relations Coordinator." There is no mention of White's son Bradley, although a 2017 *Christian Post* article identifies him as an associate pastor.

It's not uncommon for Evangelical leaders to establish their children as

successors to their massive ministries. **Pat Robertson**, **Jerry Falwell**, **John Hagee** to a degree, and others have handed the torch over to their sons.

Personally, I'm skeptical of this seemingly nepotistic trend. But at times it is difficult to critique a person's decision without knowing all of the facts. Does it seem like favoritism to elevate an associate pastor and donor relations coordinator as senior pastors when, seemingly, there are more qualified church members on staff? To me, yes. But I can also understand that it is probably challenging to build a church or parachurch ministry and not want to choose your child, who you trust, as successor. But even for those who built churches and ministries from the ground up, the church is not theirs but belongs to God and is entrusted to the congregation.

It's good that children of famous Christian leaders want to do good works for the Lord. Great! And let's be honest, who doesn't want to bless their child and give them a hand up in life? That's a parent's natural instinct. So as a mother, I can honestly say that I would be tempted to do the same if I were in the same position. Who doesn't want to see their child succeed? But as fallen sinners, we all want to do things in our own timing and according to our own fleshly desires.

Perhaps it is not for me to say or know if pastors choosing their children as their successors is a precarious trend. The flesh in me wants to call it nepotism. May God convict me if I am wrong. But may we all be convicted of our own egos and the temptation to determine God's plans for ourselves when our purpose is to further his kingdom, not our own. ✝



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# Impromptu Trump Visit to Suburban Washington Megachurch Prompts Explanation

by Dan Moran

U.S. President **Donald Trump** made a surprise visit on June 2 to McLean Bible Church (MBC), an evangelical megachurch in the metropolitan Washington, D.C., area. Trump arrived near the end of the afternoon service at MBC's flagship campus to ask for prayer after a few hours of golf at his privately owned course in nearby Sterling, Virginia.

Pastor **David Platt**, who has served as teaching pastor for two years, brought Trump on stage and gave an impromptu prayer only minutes after learning that Trump was on his way.

Platt began by citing 1 Timothy chapter 2, in which the Apostle Paul calls on Christians to specifically pray for "kings and all who are in high positions," and emphasized that it is the Gospel of Jesus Christ that unites the church, not politics or parties.

"We count it an honor to pray for any leader in any position, any leader from any party, including our current president. So I want to invite us to do what 1 Timothy chapter 2 calls us to do," Platt said as he and Trump walked onstage.

"And we pray for your grace, and your mercy, and your wisdom upon him. God we pray that he would know how much you love him, so much that you sent Jesus to die for his sins, our sins. So we pray that he would look to you, that he would trust in you, that he would lean on you, that he would govern and make decisions in ways that are good for justice,

and good for righteousness, and good for equity, every good path."

Platt also prayed for strength, clarity, and wisdom for Trump's family, adding that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." He also prayed for leaders in Congress, in courts, and in national and state levels of government.

The prayer concluded by asking God for help for everyone to "live in ways that reflect your love, and your grace, your righteousness, and your justice. We pray for your blessings on our president toward that end. Amen."

McLean Bible Church was non-denominational from its founding in 1961 until 2016, when it began financially partnering with the Southern Baptist Convention. MBC became a cooperating church of the SBC of Virginia that year to "more effectively engage in church planting across Metro DC."

The Vienna, Virginia-based church, which has multiple sites across Washington's southern and western suburbs, is among the largest and highest profile congregations in the region, drawing about 12,000 people each Sunday.

Before taking the role of "pastor-teacher" full-time last year, succeeding long-time teaching pastor **Lon Solomon**, Platt was president of the International Mission Board, a missionary society affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.

Platt, associated with the SBC's Calvinist faction, is politically reserved

and avoids public embrace of candidates, in contrast to enthusiastic pro-Trump figures such as Pastor **Robert Jeffress** of First Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas. Platt's words of introduction before Trump came onstage and subsequent prayer were neutral and non-partisan, followed by a public letter to the church, knowing that many within it would be, in his words, "hurt" by his decision to accept Trump's request for prayer.

In the letter he again pointed to 1 Timothy 2, and wrote that in the diverse church, "Christ alone unites us." He wrote that he knows it is pleasing to God to pray for the president, and is thankful for the unique opportunity to do it in person. The letter also mentioned that he and one other pastor directly shared the gospel with Trump backstage before the two of them went on stage. Platt concluded the letter with calls for prayer for the spread of the Gospel, including to Trump: "In the end, would you pray with me for gospel seed that was sown today to bear fruit in the President's heart?" ✝



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# Former Pro-Life Activist Embraces Abortion

by Benjamin Saine

**P**astor **Rob Schenck** has been a fixture of the pro-life movement in the United States for decades. As Chair of the Evangelical Christian Alliance between 2012 and 2016, Schenck was among the most powerful conservative preacher-activists in Washington.

Schenck began his pro-life ministry in 1992 during large-scale anti-abortion rallies in Buffalo, when he was seen cradling a preserved human fetus. In 1994 he moved to Washington, D.C., out of a desire to minister to politicians. Once

op-ed on May 30, 2019, he announced his support for abortion rights.

Schenck's disagreements with conservatives go back further. In 2016, he starred in the documentary *The Armor of Light*, produced by **Abigail Disney**, which details his break with the evangelical movement over gun rights and gun advocacy. While Schenck does not advocate for governmental gun control, he does believe in gun control on a personal level. During a 2015 National Public Radio (NPR) interview, in response to a question of whether he personally owned a gun, Schenck said, "I do not ... on principle; I've made the decision not to own a weapon. There's a lot of reasons for that. One is, I think it does create an ethical crisis for a Christian." He expanded on this by saying that he does not feel that he should be the arbiter of right and wrong when it comes to a human life.

It appears that Schenck had a similar change of heart regarding LGBTQ issues such as gay marriage, though this shift is less documented. A wealth of articles and posts assume Schenck's opposition

to gay marriage due to his position as leader of the Evangelical Church Alliance (ECA) at the time, and many articles directly reference his opposition to gay marriage through quotations. However, there is less documentation about any sort of shift in his views on this issue. He personally cites differing views on LGBTQ issues as the reason for his resignation from the Evangelical Church Alliance. In particular he cites a desire to "model more than tolerance for gays and lesbians."

The staff of the *New York Times* must have been at least a little surprised when an op-ed supporting abortion came from someone who was formerly a strident anti-abortion leader in the evangelical community. The article itself is surprising

as well. Despite its source, it contains few new ideas. Instead, Schenck presents a suite of pro-abortion talking points that have all been made before. He accuses pro-life legislation of being fundamentally racist in the effects it has on people's lives, saying, "If *Roe* is overturned, middle- and upper-class white women will still secure access to abortions by traveling...but members of minorities and poor whites will too often find themselves forced to bear children..." He unfairly alleges pro-life Christians don't care about and aren't helping poor mothers who have no resources to care for their children.

Though he seems to be challenging the church to do better on this front, he ignores the massive amount of good work that Christians already do. Christians and churches are the largest funders of crisis pregnancy centers in the nation, and many other Christian organizations provide support for expectant mothers in crisis situations. Such networks of support cannot simply be overlooked, despite Schenck's admonishments.

I believe that this change of heart and opinion piece is a result of the organizations and ministry that Schenck presided over when he still railed against abortion. He paints a picture of pro-life advocates as hateful and lacking compassion for impoverished mothers who believe they have no choice except abortion. This is because Schenck's own organizations and ministries were lacking in compassion towards these women.

Schenck fails when he generalizes his own role in the pro-life lobby to the entire movement. Many pro-life organizations demonstrate loving concern by offering free or low-cost care to expecting mothers

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*The Rev. Rob Schenck in a still from "The Armor of Light" documentary*

there, he planted what became the Assemblies of God affiliated National Community Church and pastored it until he stepped down in 1996 to focus his ministry on politicians. He also organized the National Memorial for the Preborn in 1995.

Schenck participated in numerous protests, some of which spiraled out of control (Schenck himself has been arrested on several occasions). Most notably, he was arrested in 1992 for his involvement in ambushing then-president Bill Clinton with a dead fetus in a plastic container. He was also seen confronting people with dead fetuses in 1992 during abortion protests in Buffalo.

But in recent years Schenck has shifted leftward on several issues including LGBTQ advocacy. In a *New York Times*



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# Prominent Liberal Caucus Leader Gives Up on UMC

by Dan Moran



**D**r. **Dorothee Benz**, a prominent LGBTQ activist in the United Methodist Church (UMC), is leaving the denomination after many years of leading resistance efforts. Benz publicly announced her decision to resign her membership from the UMC by publishing a letter she handed to Bishop **Thomas Bickerton** of the New York Annual Conference.

In the letter, Benz, who is lesbian, describes her identity as a lifelong United Methodist and her years of both personal and public struggle with a church that does not support the ordination of “self-avowed practicing homosexuals.” She currently works as Chief Communications Officer for Lambda Legal, a national legal organization that advocates and litigates for LGBTQ causes. Benz said she has dedicated the last 15 years of her life “to right the immense wrong that the UMC has done to God’s creation with its theological lies and spiritual violence aimed at LGBTQ people.”

Benz was a founder and served as the first chairperson for Methodists in New Directions (MIND) from 2006 to 2014, a regional organization of United Methodists based out of New York that advocates for full affirmation and inclusion of LGBTQ people in the denomination. Benz also wrote for Reconciling Ministries Network, wrote and gave sermons for MIND, and was a frequent speaker at progressive United Methodist conferences.

In the comments of Benz’s Facebook post, **Chett Pritchett** wrote “Welcome to the club.” Pritchett was until 2016 the national director of the UMC’s oldest unofficial liberal caucus, the Methodist Federation for Social Action (MFSA). But he recently quit the denomination in protest of his group’s failure to overturn the church’s traditional, biblical standards

on marriage and sex. Time will tell how many other hardline liberal activists will follow suit. As of this writing, his comment was the most liked out of 86 comments made on Benz’s post.

Elected as a lay General Conference delegate for 2016, Benz helped coordinate not only workshops and retreats for like-minded liberals, but also planned and led well-publicized disruptive protests at the global gathering. In 2016 she also disrupted a meeting of the Council of Bishops with a bull horn to make demands concerning the Commission on a Way Forward.

She represented New York again in 2019 at General Conference and backed the Simple Plan, even giving a speech that led to the highly progressive plan getting a fair amount of attention despite having no chance of passing. After the passage of the Traditional Plan, she and other liberals protested on the stage, again unwilling to accept the body’s vote.

However with the passage of the Traditional Plan, Benz has had enough and is giving up the fight. Her statement notes how “the energy and time and resources of thousands” of liberal United Methodists is now “being poured into electing 2020 General Conference delegates and looking, delusionally, at that gathering for hope.” But for her part, she “can no longer participate in this charade.”

It is rather striking to see a liberal United Methodist leader of her prominence describe current efforts to overturn the Traditional Plan at the next General Conference as a “delusional” waste of time, in what she characterizes as a denomination unable to learn.

She accuses bishops of leading an institutional idolization of unity that harms LGBTQ people such as herself, saying that

they have “perverted the ideal of unity as to make it synonymous for queer Methodists with injustice.” To conclude she wrote, “I can no longer put my time and energy into a church obsessed with its own self-interest while injustice around me rises like flood waters. My call to follow Jesus is no longer compatible with my participation in the United Methodist Church.” ✚

## Former Pro-Life Activist Embraces Abortion

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who would otherwise get an abortion. Yet Schenck emphasizes the importance of compassion in his article as a reason that abortion must remain legal.

Schenck uncharitably ignores the incredible amounts of compassion shown by many who care for the women who otherwise might have no choice. He says he left the pro-life cause because he feels compassion for women with unwanted pregnancies. But he shows no compassion for pro-lifers who labor on their behalf.

Worse still, Schenck in his *New York Times* piece never explains what he as a Christian thinks about the value of an unborn child. He’s a clergyman who rejects church teaching about abortion but offers no theological rationale. Instead he rehashes talking points from the secular left.

Schenck famously installed a tablet with the Ten Commandments outside his Capitol Hill row house office across from the Supreme Court. Today, what does he think about the command not to murder, which he applies toward gun ownership but apparently not toward abortion? ✚

# Ten Years in, Anglicans Celebrate Prayer Book and Discipleship

by Jeffrey Walton

One decade after the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) was inaugurated, Anglicans returned to Plano, Texas, to release a revised *Book of Common Prayer* (BCP) and hear presentations on Christian discipleship.

Much like previous Provincial Assemblies, this one was characterized by the participation of Global South bishops exhorting adherence to orthodoxy amidst cultural headwinds. ACNA also continues to be shaped by constituent groups with significantly differing churchmanship. During the opening Assembly Eucharist, bishops clad in cope and mitre sang contemporary worship songs including Hillsong Music's "Who You Say I Am," a juxtaposition that seemingly only ACNA could facilitate.

Assembly participants also heard from the Rev. **Anthony Thompson**, an Anglican priest and husband to **Myra Thompson**, one of nine killed at Charleston's Emanuel A.M.E. Church in 2016. Thompson's forgiveness of assailant **Dylann Roof** and call for repentance at an initial bond hearing made headlines in the secular press.

## Discipleship 'Caught, not just Taught'

Revisiting a decade of ministry together, ACNA leaders identified the hand of the Lord as present in a project providentially uniting unlikely partners in ministry.

In his opening address, Archbishop **Foley Beach** listed the planting of hundreds of churches, ministry among the poor and marginalized, and the sending of missionaries as key achievements, alongside building campaigns and the new BCP.

"It's really quite amazing. Actually, miraculous," assessed Beach. "To God be all praise and glory."

But Beach charged that the calling of believers is not to plant or grow churches, lead "incredible worship," or publicly

stand for what is right, as good as those things are.

"Our calling from Jesus is to go and make disciples," Beach summarized, comparing new Christians to infants who must be cared for, loved, fed, cleaned, disciplined, and nurtured until such a time that they may walk on their own. "The Kingdom of God is similar: we need to be taught how to walk the walk."

Such instruction includes how to worship, pray, study the Bible, hear the Lord, and love neighbors, as well as what the scriptures say about Jesus, serving, and what is right or wrong.

"How do I walk in the Holy Spirit when the bottom drops out in my life?" Beach offered as an example. "Discipleship cooperates with the Holy Spirit to help us follow Jesus in the midst of our life situation."

Discipleship is caught, not just taught, Beach insisted: it is a lifestyle shared.

The Archbishop and former youth pastor spoke of learning from spiritual mentors about how to seek God for God himself, not just for what God can give, and how to love God, not just love what God does for him. Repentance, he learned, is a lifestyle, "not a one-act play."

Recounting the experience of a friend in prison ministry, Beach recalled that upwards of 95 percent of the violent offenders had sat in church and prayed the sinner's prayer.

"What happened? Why didn't it take?" Beach asked. "Could it be that no one had ever invested in their walk with the Lord, and they never became disciples? They had made a decision for Christ, but they had never become a disciple of Christ."

Similar themes permeated the closing address by Rwandan Archbishop **Laurent Mbanda**, who called for renewed commitment to the Great Commission.

Mbanda recalled that in the 1994 Rwandan genocide, churches were sites of massacres, and most of the killers claimed

a Christian faith, with even pastors implicated in the killings.

"There had been many converts, but they had not been mentored, equipped and disciplined to live like Christ," Mbanda assessed. "A renewed understanding and commitment to our call to the Great Commission was needed."

## Push Back Against False Narratives

The gathering had a strongly ecumenical feel, with speakers including Southern Baptist **Russell Moore**, United Methodist **James Bryan Smith** and apologist **Ravi Zacharias**.

"A lot of people have really toxic narratives about God," reported Smith. "We live at the mercy of ideas. We get an idea about something and it runs our life—or it ruins our life."

Quoting author **A.W. Tozer** that "the most important thing about a person is what they think about God," Smith, who teaches at Friends University, cited a study reporting that 38 percent of respondents viewed God as an angry judge who is poised to punish.

"Jesus destroyed a false destructive narrative about God and replaced it with true stories about God," Smith stated, recalling the account in John chapter 9 of the man born blind to glorify God, not due to his or his parents' sin.

Spiritual disciplines, Smith explained, are opportunities for God's grace to move within us: "We're creating space for God to act. These are things we can do that enable us to do what we can't do."

Each of the speakers seemed to connect with their audience. Assembly attendees noticeably leaned in, rapt as Zacharias spoke of the consistency of character seen in Joseph's dependence upon God while in Egypt. Smith's books reportedly sold out at the Assembly bookstore. But Southern Baptist Ethics and

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**Archbishop Foley Beach of the Anglican Church in North America blesses the 2019 Book of Common Prayer on June 17, 2019, at Christ Church Cathedral in Plano, Texas. (Photo: ACNA Assembly Livestream Screen Capture)**

Religious Liberty Commission President Russell Moore appeared to elicit the most fervent response.

As secularization comes through North America, Christians are reacting in one of two negative ways, Moore observed. Either they don't take secularization seriously enough, or they respond to secularization with a sense of "frenzied inevitability" that the "arc of history" is heading towards the elimination of religion and certainly Christianity. This latter response is characterized by perpetual outrage about what is transpiring.

Jesus, Moore offered, shows us a way forward in Luke chapter 4 amidst a time when cultural Christianity is falling away. It is no longer the case that one must be at least a nominal Christian in order to be considered a good American, Moore reported, recalling a college friend who was honest but not atypical in saying he wanted to be a member of a Southern Baptist church in order to be elected to political office in his state.

A response, Moore proposed, was to re-focus on the Kingdom of God. Jesus, he said, tied the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven to himself, but not as a means to an end.

"Our response should not be a sense of panic, but sense of opportunity," Moore indicated, as Christians contrast with the ambient culture.

"When Jesus is well-received, he always concludes he is being misunderstood and presses the Gospel until there is shock and alarm," Moore noted. "The Gospel comes as a contradiction to all the ways we prop up our own kingdoms around us. In a time when Christianity is no longer useful, that is when it can be powerful: for what it is, not as something that grows out of a culture, but is in contradiction to culture."

Moore identified tribalism as a danger, quoting columnist and author **David Brooks** who defined tribalism as "fake community for lonely narcissists."

"What is the tribe to whom I belong, who are the people that are going to receive me?" Moore said tribalism asks. "It ends nowhere." Instead, Moore suggested that Christians see and provide alternative structures that point beyond attempts at tribalism to something that is "deep and meaningfully true."

While he did not directly reference contemporary figures, Moore noted that Christians "do not need to advance the Gospel with influence" and should instead create and form a culture that has a distinctiveness about its very difference.

"You and I cannot be the people who are scared, frantic and fearful at the culture around us," the SBC's top policy official advised. "We have been trusted with a message and we do not have a different situation than any Christians who came

before us in the things that really matter."

Refuting the idea that there was ever a time when American culture was on the right path, Moore declared: "You don't remember when the culture fell apart, because it fell apart somewhere between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in Genesis chapter 3."

"Do we have confidence in the Gospel to trust that it has the power to transform those who are aggressively speaking against it right now?" Moore asked, listing former opponents of the Gospel who became great champions of it, such as St. Augustine of Hippo, St. Paul of Tarsus, C.S. Lewis, and Chuck Colson.

"Neither accommodate what any culture at the moment will allow, nor be constant outrage machines," Moore advised. "Love people to whom we speak knowing that the Holy Spirit and the blood of Christ are enough for any of them."

The future of the church, Moore noted, is guaranteed by a promise at Caesarea Philippi: "Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it." ✝



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

IRD Diary:

## Churches Against Bladensburg Peace Cross

by Mark Tooley



**W**hy did some churches support removing the Peace Cross in Bladensburg, Maryland, whose constitutionality the U.S. Supreme Court recently affirmed in a June ruling?

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the United Church of Christ, the Presbyterian Church (USA), and the Baptist Joint Committee all signed a court brief siding with the American Humanist Association in urging removal of the Maryland state-owned 100 year old Peace Cross honoring WWI veterans.

The presence of a large cross on state owned land in a traffic circle supposedly violates the separation of church and state. In a 7-2 decision the Supreme Court ruled the 40 foot tall monument to war veterans had no sectarian purpose.

In their brief, the liberal Mainline Protestant signers claimed the Peace Cross “demean[s] the most sacred symbol of the faith” and “desacralize[s] the most sacred symbol of Christianity.” Interestingly, the liberal Protestants sounded like evangelical revivalists in their warnings:

*On one widespread reading of Christian scriptures, the promise of eternal life is only for Christians. It comes with explicit threats of damnation for non-Christians.*

*These Christian teachings are widely known, most famously from John 3:16. This widespread interpretation makes it impossible for the cross to honor non-Christian soldiers.*

Amusingly, the liberal Protestants, in their focus on the unique Christian theological truth claims about the cross, quoted Bible verses they are not accustomed to citing, with hopes of scaring and repulsing the Supreme Court. And they cited the influence of dreaded Evangelicals:

*Most troubling of all, on one widely known understanding of Christianity, the cross symbolizes the threat that non-Christians are damned. This view is most prominently associated with Protestant Evangelicals, who emphasize the need ‘to trust and receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.’ Evangelicals are the largest group of Christians in the United States, so their understanding of Christianity is widely known.*

So the Peace Cross should be removed because Evangelicals will exploit it as a warning of damnation. The liberal Protestants further warned:

*This understanding of Christianity is reflected in a Bible verse much publicized by Evangelicals: ‘For God so loved the world, that he gave his*

*only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’*

Evidently the liberal Protestants are admitting they themselves, unlike Evangelicals, don’t much focus on John 3:16. To inspire further terror, they further intoned:

*On this version of Christian teaching, some humans get the promise, and other humans get the threat. The cross divides the world between the saved and the damned. That alone makes it impossible for the cross to commemorate non-Christians.*

The liberal Protestants, for the sake of their political argument against the Peace Cross, emphasized the cross in traditional Christian theology, even if they no longer fully subscribe to that tradition. Ironically, Mainline Protestantism for 100 years, since before the erection of the Peace Cross, has deemphasized the cross as the instrument of personal salvation. Instead for them the cross became the symbol of wider human reconciliation and building a more harmonious society. Ironically, the builders of the Peace Cross in the 1920s may have been influenced by that then ascendant Social Gospel understanding.

Defenders of the Peace Cross, in their court arguments, largely accepted by the justices, stressed the Peace Cross had no specifically theological purpose. It only honored the dead and commemorated their sacrifice, while hoping for an end to war. Long before liberal Protestantism, the cross throughout Western Civilization had become a broader icon of sacrifice and service. One example: the Red Cross, which was prominent in WWI.

Even non-Christians can admit Jesus was sacrificial and that His followers have in His example likewise sacrificed in service to humanity. Only a very narrow fundamentalism would

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