

A Word from Woody. . .
Election Aftermath for the Church

As we look back on 2020 we recall many disturbing things in our nation. Over 250,000 deaths from COVID-19, tragic unjust deaths of minorities by police, tragic unjust deaths of police by criminals, and many protests developing into riots that not only destroyed Federal and private properties and businesses but also temporarily hijacked six blocks of Seattle. And perhaps most disturbing of all was the November 3rd election and its troubling aftermath. Because our government will be in the hands of those with a Leftist worldview for at least the next two years, we can expect much harm to be attempted against issues that biblical Christians hold precious.

The first issue is abortion. One of the encouraging events of 2020 was the confirmation of Amy Coney Barrett to the U.S. Supreme Court (SCOTUS). Her pro-life stance is believed to tip the Court's balance toward overturning the landmark case establishing the nation-wide right to abortion, *Roe v. Wade*. We can expect, though, efforts to be made to add to the number of justices on SCOTUS to negate any effect Barrett may have on abortion. In a recent interview with *Time* magazine (January 18, 2021, p. 104), we see how the Left is now emboldened. Alexis McGill Johnson, the president of Planned Parenthood, stated the following when asked, "What are your top priorities for the Biden Administration?" "On day one, an Executive Order that will demonstrate the Administration's commitment to sexual- and reproductive-health care. That order to eliminate the global gag rule, keep medication abortion easier to access during the pandemic and begin the process of rolling back harmful policies. . . We're also working [toward] a budget that will eliminate the Hyde Amendment [which prohibits the use of federal funds to pay for most abortions]." Plans are therefore underway to use, for the first time officially in our nation, your and my tax dollars to eliminate human life at its earliest stages.

We can also expect the next administration to pick up where the Obama Administration left off on gender issues. One recalls that in 2016, during the last months of that administration, there was a federal lawsuit encouraged by the U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch to punish public schools in North Carolina by an implied threat to withdraw federal funds for not opening girls' bathrooms and locker rooms to boys who identified as girls. Now that SCOTUS has redefined "sex" in the Civil Rights Act to include transgendered individuals, we can expect many more such lawsuits and pressure from the federal government. We should not be fooled to think that the Church will not also be targeted. In October, 2019 presidential hopeful Beto O'Rourke was asked by CNN's Don Lemon if he would be in favor of removing the tax-exempt status of religious organizations such as churches, charities, and colleges which do not affirm same-sex

marriage, and he answered quickly, “Yes”. We can expect the radical Left to pursue such a policy.

Finally, we can expect great efforts to see a significant curtailment, perhaps even elimination, of free speech, where Leftists judge what is acceptable. One can see this happening when we juxtapose the media’s and many Leftist politicians’ reactions to this past summer’s mob marches over the perceived injustice of racial inequality and the recent mob march into the Capital Building over the perceived injustice of a stolen election. Both types of mob marches were worthy of condemnation. Nevertheless, the former was often seen as acceptable, even necessary, while the latter was unquestionably and unequivocally condemned with vehemence. We have already seen the erosion of free speech before the election results were finalized where Twitter was placing remarks like “this is disputed” under several messages questioning the legitimacy of the presidential election. Now Twitter has permanently banned President Trump from its platform. And we have just recently watched Apple, Google, and Amazon remove from their app selection what is seen as the conservative competitor to Twitter, Parler. The result is that those who wish to express their views on Parler are now silenced. Parler is actually non-partisan, but is different from Twitter in that it does not ban or make comments on any message sent out. Such curbing of free speech, regardless of one’s political party, is of great concern. Analogous censorship of those with conservative views has been growing in Hollywood, academia, and the media for decades. What do these troubling events portend for the Church? Plenty, especially when we think of our call to share the gospel. It is instructive to watch what has happened in Canada. A street preacher, David Lynn, was preaching the gospel in a loving, non-condemning way in a homosexual district in Toronto in June, 2019 and was arrested for disturbing the peace. There have been similar legal troubles in Canada and western Europe for faithful ministers preaching about God’s view of marriage. We should not be surprised if in the incoming administration we see legislation introduced in Congress to label the preaching of the biblical view of marriage as hate speech and thus seek to limit or eliminate it.

Beloved, the truth is that, given our unfortunate recent past, the above is a realistic scenario of our near future. Of course I hope such a future never happens, but we need to be prepared. So let us keep our nations’ leaders in our prayers, as well as the Church. And may we keep our eyes on Jesus, the only hope of the ages.

Love in Christ,

Woody