

From Tolerance to Compulsion

By Chris Nitzschke –

Repeat after me: “You can’t *not* legislate morality.” Or to put it positively, legislation is inseparably linked to morality. In our system of government, we elect men and women who represent us and make laws which place impositions on what we can or cannot do. The reasons behind those impositions come from the varying worldviews of the legislators and the people who elected them to that position of authority. The “Why?” of passing a law is from a conviction that stems from a morality. Prominently displayed in our own State Capitol here in Des Moines is a quote from Sir William Blackstone, “Law is the embodiment of the moral sentiment of the people.” The question we face is whose worldview or what morality will prevail? Will it be that on the side of truth or falsehood?

For several decades in America, there has been a significant shift in our epistemology (or how we know what we know). Christian Apologist Francis Schaeffer wrote at length of this in his landmark book, “The God Who is There.” In the early 20th Century, Americans began the shift from an “absolute” understanding of morality to a “subjective” understanding. **The previous, unchanging standard of the Judeo-Christian ethic was replaced with an evolving, statistical morality.** “What *is*” became “what *ought* to be.” Americans increasingly accepted that what is good and normal was determined by a majority of the population, and determining morality became a power struggle and a public relations campaign. Thus, the beginning of high-stakes culture wars on a host of issues. The power to define “when life begins” and “what is marriage” have been two of the foremost of our time.

Although the U.S. Constitution prevents governments from enacting laws that prohibit the free exercise of religion, we are witness to an increasing tension between religious liberty

and sexual liberty. Recent examples are the Obamacare HHS Mandate which forces privately-owned Christian businesses to pay for drugs that abort unborn children, civil penalties charged against a Christian photographer in New Mexico for opting not to photograph a same-sex celebration, and the backlash encountered by Chick-Fil-A Founder Truett Cathy when he affirmed marriage as between a man and a woman. Chai Feldblum, an Obama appointee to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, has said "Sexual liberty should win in most cases. There can be a conflict between religious liberty and sexual liberty, but in almost all cases the sexual liberty should win because that's the only way that the dignity of gay people can be affirmed in any realistic manner." This mindset is the majority among our nation's culture shapers. The Sexual Revolution brought with it a growing acceptance and even celebration of sexual activity outside of marriage. This wave, begun in the 1960s as counter-culture, has now become the entrenched paradigm of 21st Century cultural elites. Religious freedom, which Christians have taken for granted since the inception of our nation, is not valued by this new paradigm of sexual libertinism. I believe the freedom to lovingly disagree with our fellow citizens and faithfully dissent will grow more difficult in upcoming years. Christian citizens must resolve that they will not cease speaking the truth in love, even as a culture shifts from tolerance to affirmation to compulsion of immorality. Our response to an increasingly hostile, post-Christian culture should take its cue from Christ:

"For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he

did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.” (1 Peter 2:19-23 ESV)