

St. Stephen's News

St Stephen's Anglican Church
Timonium, Maryland

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Edited by Don Ruthig

June 4th, 2013

FROM THE RECTOR

The fight for Christianity is a fight for the Constitution

The average Christian is doubtless aware that the faith is by no means as well respected in America as it was, say, three or four decades ago. How could it be otherwise when NFL Quarterback Tim Tebow garners more obloquy in the media for his brief on-field prayers than if he had given the Hitler salute.

Even so, most folks would probably write off the notion that Christianity is under a sustained and implacable attack – at local, state and federal levels – from the nation's secular establishment as sheer paranoia. This, after all, is America, a representative republic with freedom of religion firmly enshrined in its Constitution and Bill of Rights.

Before changing the subject, however, it is worth considering two proverbs that deal with paranoia: The Israelis say: "Just because you're paranoid doesn't mean somebody is not trying to kill you." The Russians, by contrast, assert that a paranoiac is "somebody who really knows what's going on."

And in the case of Christianity in America, the Israelis and Russians would appear to have it dead to rights. According to R.R. Reno, the editor of *First Things*, a journal of religion and public life, Christianity is indeed, under attack in America – from Hollywood, the media, the courts and our legislatures.

"Our secular establishment wants to reduce the autonomy of religious institutions and limit the influence of faith in the public square," Mr. Reno told a recent Hillsdale College National Leadership Seminar.

"The reason is not hard to grasp. In America, 'religion' largely means Christianity, and today our secular culture views orthodox Christian churches as troublesome, retrograde, and reactionary forces.

"They are seen as anti-science, anti-gay, and anti-women – which is to say anti-progress as the Left defines progress. Not surprisingly, then, the Left believes society will best be served if Christians are limited in their influence on public life. And in the short run this view is likely to succeed.

"There will be many arguments urging Christians to keep their religion strictly religious rather than 'political.' And there won't be just arguments; there will be laws as well. We are in the midst of a climate change – one that's getting colder and colder toward religion."

What we are witnessing, according to Mr. Reno, is an intensifying struggle between America's churches and a secular establishment that believes the teachings of the various branches of orthodox Christianity are unwarrantably limiting its power to govern.

The establishment's efforts to muzzle Christianity is reflected in the efforts to remove plaques inscribed with the Ten Commandments from court houses and bans of public and private prayer in schools.

It can be seen in proposals to court martial Christians serving in the Armed forces who speak of their faith to others, as well as on-going legislative measures and court actions aimed at banning religious invocations at non-religious gatherings, including legislative sessions.

But, truth to tell, the assault on Christianity goes far further than that. The U.S. Justice Department is working to abolish the "Ministerial Exception" – the legal doctrine that allows religious institutions wide latitude in hiring and firing their religious leaders – and subject churches to the nation's labor laws. If the effort succeeds the revocation of the tax-exempt status of religious institutions will not be far behind.

This effort is also reflected in the U.S. Administration's battle with the Roman Church over the Health Department's insistence that employees of Roman universities, health care institutions and charities be provided free contraceptives, sterilization and abortion inducing drugs.

Even more worrisome is the effort to categorize all opposition to "progress" as the establishment defines it as largely inspired by Christian teachings.

In striking down Texas sodomy laws, for example, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy declared that the moral censure of homosexuality has "been shaped by religious beliefs."

Calendar of Events

Weekly Activities at St Stephens

Tuesdays, 7.00 AM: Bible Study at the Nautilus Diner

Wednesdays, 5.00 PM: Bible Study in the vestibule

Thursdays, 10.00 AM: Knitting Circle meets in the Parish Hall

Thursdays, 7.00 PM: Bridge Group meets in the Parish Hall

Fridays, 10.30 AM: Bible Study in the vestibule

Special Events

Sunday, June 9th: Service for the Ordering of Deacons at 4.30 PM. Reception to follow.

Tuesday, June 11th: Parish Life Committee meets at 7.00 PM in the Parish Hall

Thursday, June 20th: First "Silly Summer Supper" of the season at 5.30 pm in the Parish Hall

Wednesday, June 26th: Vestry meets at 7.00 PM in the vestibule

Sunday, September 8th: Parish Picnic at the home of Ellen Reather

U.S. District Court Judge Vaughn Walker employed the same argument when voiding the ballot that overturned the California Supreme Court decision allowing gays the right to marry.

The voters, he argued, lacked a rational basis for thinking that only men and women can marry. Observing that many supporters of the ballot effort were motivated by religious convictions, he added that the vote enacted, without reason, a private moral view that same-sex couples are inferior to couples of opposite sexes.

Both judges have, in effect, declared that legitimate secular arguments against gay marriage do not exist. Arguments against gay marriage are thus to be rejected as illogical because they are all essentially rooted in religious thinking.

No less troubling are rumblings from our nation's more fashionable law schools which could ultimately lead to the classification of belief in religion [*i.e.* Christianity] as a mental disorder.

In a recent book, for example, Chicago University professor of psychology and law Brian Leitner declared religious belief to be a uniquely bad combination of moral fervor and mental blindness, serving no public good and justifying no special protection.

Should any, or worse, all of these doctrines become enshrined in law they would exert an extraordinarily baleful effect on religious freedom in America.

At the very least, they would provide the secular authorities with a cloak of legal respectability for rejecting opposition arguments they find difficult to counter. At worst, they could be used as an excuse for denying fundamental human rights to anyone opposing their policies – even critics speaking from an entirely secular perspective.

Were such doctrines to be enshrined in law they would overthrow not only many of the protections guaranteed to us in the Bill of Rights, but also those rights the Founding Fathers declared to be "inalienably" endowed upon us by our Creator – the rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

There are folks in the establishment who are already ruthlessly exercising such powers without the benefit of legal authority – for instance, the officials at the IRS who illegally singled out conservative and Christian groups for special scrutiny, and the U.S. Justice Department attorney's who clandestinely combed large numbers of journalists phone records and e-mails in a bid to identify "whistleblowers."

In short, the fight to defend the right of Christianity and other religious faiths to a place in the public square is a battle to defend the U.S. Constitution, itself. Should the battle be lost, America will be a

Ladies Who Lunch - Wednesday, June 19th, Tark's Grill

THE SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

June 9th 2013

8.00 AM & 9.15 AM HOLY COMMUNION

The Epistle: I St. John 3:13-24

The Gospel: St. Luke 14:16-24

11.15 AM MORNING PRAYER

The Psalter: Psalm 15, 19

The First Lesson: Job 31:13-28

The Second Lesson: I Corinthians 13:1-13

very different – and a very much more frightening place – as a consequence. **GPH**✠

Service of Ordination - June 9th

SUNDAY, June 9th, will be a special day for our postulants, Michael Belt and John Novicki, as well as for St Stephen's. Bishop John Vaughan will be conducting a special service for The Ordering of Deacons at 4.30 PM in the sanctuary, at which time Michael and John will receive their orders as admitted Deacons.

Please join us to celebrate this important milestone in the spiritual journey of our postulants. Following the service there will be a reception at the home of Colby and Wiley Hawks, 7809 Bellona Avenue, Ruxton. Please RSVP to Colby and Wiley at 410-321-8308 if you plan to attend.

✠ PARISH PRAYER LIST ✠

OUR Prayer Chain offers prayer daily for people on the Prayer List as well as the guests of the Joseph Richey Hospice & Dr. Bob's Place. To add a name to the prayer list, or to the visiting list, or to join the Prayer Chain, call the parish office at 410 560 6776.

RECOVERY: Brice, Reta, Kathleen, David, Ellen, Mimi, Val, Stacy, Dino, Michael, Finton, Morris, Charles, Dawn, Betty Jean, Elliot,

Sharon, Paul, Andy, Michael, Rosina Donna, Diane, John, David, Richard, Bill, Charlotte, Leo, Riley, Mary-Ann, Linda Lou, Cynthia, Nancy, Judith, Deborah, Dorothy, Thelma, Mary, Linda, Jan, Liz, Bob, Wyatt, Jim, Sara, Tammy Sophie, Paula, Blair, Heather, Laurie, Lynn, Katherine, Hindra, Ravi, Elizabeth, Brian, Tracey, Edithann, Jay, Perry, Amelia, Shirley, Adrian, Kimberly, Dean, Barb, Tanya, Jane, Brook, Joseph, Joshua, Rachel, Carl, Cal, Catherine, Sam, Ruth, Kristi, Paul, Sue, Patty, Antonio, Lauren-Michelle, McKayla, Randy, Jack, Grace, Fran, Carolyn, Ken, Serina, Wyatt, Bobby, Alexander, Erlene, Kathleen, Earle, Judy, William, Betty, Trisha, Peggy, Linda, Millie, Walt, Bruce, Cienna, Tom, Lelillah, Jennifer, Miriam, Karen, George, Eliza, Ray, Mel, John, Randy, James, Sarah, Linda, Suzanne, Steven, Tammy, Ellen, Patricia, Bonnie, Mary Ann, Christine, Dee, Brian, Barbara, Gillian, Eileen, Matthew, Bryan, Jason, Joan, Frances, Pat, Michael, Brandon, May, Scott, Stephen, Danny, Billy, Betty-Ann, Mildred, D'Metrius, Laura, Stacey, Frank, Christine, John, Henry, Naomi, Pam, Ben, Kevin, Gwen, Gloria, Lee, Emily, Bruce, Regina, Lewis, Madolin, Linda, Carol, Bernie, Charlene, Josephine, Margaret, Jody, Sheila, JoAnne, John, Geradine, Thomas, Jeanne, Maxine, Ann, Sharon, Dennis, Mae, Anita, Marilyn, Lawrence, Joanne, Martha, Jackie, Charles, Tony, Edward, Kim, Vivian, Doris, Fran, Carol, Jimmy, Felicia, Susan, Anita, Christina, Dawn and Suzie.

LIGHT, STRENGTH & GUIDANCE: Hope, JoAnn, Larry, Aaron, Hope, Tom, Rosa, June, Anna, Jean, Garrett, Dean, Ned, Stephen, Rachel, Lydia; Richard, Melba, Debbie, Phyllis, Carolyn, Suzanne, Tony, Erik, Bobby, Kay & Emma, Gillian, Beverley, Adrienn, Jhana, Marla, Matthew, Joan, Laurie, Ellen, Lynn, Mildred, Sarah Lee, Susan, Kathy, Owen, Douglas, Amy, Mary, Gregory, Isabel, Bobby, Dorothy, Darren, Scott, Rebecca, William, Charles, Joyce, Asfa, Eleanor, Kathy, Linda, James, Barry, Ann, Evelyn, Jeanette, Elizabeth, Virginia, Mildred, Chris, Carol, Sandra, John, Mary, Michael, Drake, Emily, and David

ON ACTIVE SERVICE: PFC Charles E. Heintz, IV, USA; Lt. Benjamin Schramm, USMC; Lt. Alex Bursi, Capt. Charles Bursi, Lt Nicholas Clouse, USN. Lt. Col. Harry Hughes

✠ St Stephen's Anglican Church ✠

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Web Address: ststeve.com

RECTOR: The Venerable Guy P. Hawtin

PREBENDARY: The Rev. Rhae E. Kelley

VICAR: The Rev. Michael Kerouac

ORGANIST & CHOIRMASTER: Adric

DIRECTOR OF PASTORAL CARE: Happy Riley
(410- 252-8674)

WEDDING CO-ORDINATORS: Happy Riley (410-252-8674)
Martha Miller (410-321-9038)

SUNDAY SERVICES

8.00 am: Said Eucharist

9.15 am: Sung Eucharist (*with Nursery & Church School*)

11.15 am: Choral Mattins (*1st Sunday: Choral Eucharist*)

6.00 pm: Choral Evensong (*1st Sunday only*)

WEEKDAY SERVICES

Wednesday, 6.00 pm: Evening Prayer

Friday Noon: Healing Eucharist

Saturday, 5.00 pm: Family Eucharist.

COLLECTS FOR THE First Sunday after Trinity and Archbishop Thomas Cranmer

O GOD, the strength of all those who put their trust in thee; Mercifully accept our prayers; and because, through the weakness of our mortal nature, we can do no good thing without thee, grant us the help of thy grace, that in keeping thy commandments we may please thee, both in will and deed; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *AMEN*

Book of Common Prayer, Page 188

ALMIGHTY and everliving God, whose servant Thomas Cranmer, with others did restore the language of the people in the prayers of thy Church: Make us always thankful for this heritage; and help us so to pray in the Spirit and with the understanding, that we may worthily magnify thy holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *AMEN*

Return Service Requested

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