

St Stephen's News

ST STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH · TIMONIUM, MARYLAND

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A parish in the classical Anglican tradition

23 June 2015

FROM THE RECTOR

Orwell's thought police aim to make us all 'PC'

A couple of weeks ago I found myself engaged in what diplomats would probably describe as 'full and frank discussions' with a fellow who objected to my clerical collar. He contended that the 'separation church and state' made it unconstitutional to display Christian symbols in public.

'That's positively Orwellian,' I told him, 'The First Amendment guarantees me both freedom of religion and freedom of speech – and that's the end of it.'

'Don't talk to me about Orwell,' he countered, 'Nothing he prophesied in *Nineteen Eighty Four* has come to pass.'

'Oh but it has,' I replied, 'What else do you call political correctness?'

Needless to say, it was a point he did not wish to concede, but, though I say it myself, I was right on the money. Grab Orwell's terrifying novel from the bookshelf and a glance at it will show that political correctness plays a major role in it.

Winston, the central character in *Nineteen Eighty Four*, works in a civil service department called the Ministry of Truth. The bureaucrats, like Winston, who work there have the job of constantly rewriting history to conform with ever-changing political ideology.

In order to do so, they must restructure the English language so that it would be impossible to formulate – let alone, discuss – politically incorrect ideas.

It is a process chillingly reminiscent of the one under way in schools, universities, legislatures, and courtrooms through out the country. The implications are not reassuring.

The Federal Appeals Court decision not so long ago declaring the Pledge of Allegiance to be unconstitutional would have been be farcical if it weren't so insidious.

The contention that the phrase 'one nation under God' violates a 'constitutional separation of church and state' involves a rewriting of history of precisely the sort Orwell warned us about.

America's Founding Fathers, in fact, did not erect 'a wall of separation between Church and state'. You will not find these words or any thing like them anywhere in the Constitution or the Bill of Rights.

The phrase is taken – entirely out of context – from a private letter written by Thomas Jefferson to a Baptist inquirer. In it, he points out that the Founding Fathers deemed it inappropriate to establish a single Christian denomination as a federal state church.

Their purpose was to protect the Church from the federal government; not, as now seems to be asserted, to protect the government from the church. Even so, the anti-Christian lobby appears to have succeeded in persuading a sizeable minority of folks that the Founding Father opposed all public expression of Christianity.

And they believe this because history has been deliberately falsified: An instance of this is the promulgation of the notion that George Washington and many other Founding Fathers were 'deists' – a religious concept that denied the validity of the Christian revelation.

The truth is that with the exception of Jefferson and possibly Franklin (neither of whom favoured the exclusion of Christian thought and, still less, or principles from national public life), the vast majority of the nation's founders were not 'deists'. They were, in fact, fervent Christians.

George Washington, a church warden and active Episcopal layman, asserted: 'True religion offers to Government its surest support.' (By 'true religion', he was referring to Christianity, not just to any religion.)

John Quincy Adams declared: 'The highest glory of the American Revolution was this: It connected in one indissoluble bond the principles of civil government with the principles of Christianity.'

Patrick Henry, a devout Presbyterian, stated in his will that the Christian faith was the most valuable legacy that he could bestow on his children: 'If they had that and I had not given them one shilling,

they would have been rich; and if they had not that and I had given them the world, they would have been poor,' he wrote.

Far from erecting a 'wall of separation' between the Church and the nation's public life, it seems clear the Founding Fathers expected – indeed, demanded – that the new nation be governed according to Christian principles. **GPH**

The 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. To add a name to the prayer list, or to the visiting list, or to join the Prayer Chain, ring the parish office on 410 560 6776.

FOR REPOSE OF THE SOUL: Ben, Ann

FOR RECOVERY: Hilarie, Jack, Donald, Evelyn, Cal, Finton, Edie, Cary, Judy, Julie, Phyllis, Steve, Wendy, Matthew, Adele, Starr, Helen, Emily, Kathleen, Marty, Don, Linda, Elizabeth, Cathy, William, Dan, Lindsey, Shelby, Rob, Dick, Melissa, Ned, Paula, Sandra, Diane, Hobie, Nathan, Francine

FOR LIGHT, STRENGTH & GUIDANCE: Stephen, Melba, Susan, Scott, Charles, Vinnie, Doug, Rusty, Ian, Lydia, Lisa, Fritz

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

FROM THE RECTOR

The most frightening passage in the Bible

Somebody recently asked me why my sermons so often end with a reflection on our Christian obligation to love our fellow men. I replied that it is the subject of the most frightening passage in the whole of the Bible: The 13th Chapter of the First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians.

Some might find it somewhat peculiar to contend that this passage – the Epistle appointed for Quinquagesima Sunday and found upon Page 122 of the BCP – should strike terror into our hearts.

It begins with the words: 'Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal ...' And it expresses such beautiful thoughts about the centrality of love to the Christian message and the importance of love in the human experience that many people take it as a comfort rather than the contrary.

In fact it is such a favourite that, in modern translation – 'Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love' – it has become a favourite scripture reading at weddings. Probably the best explanation for our failure to recognise the frightening nature of the message encapsulated in I Corinthians 13 is our modern inability to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest what we read.

We skim everything we read – the Bible included – as casually as we skim the back of a cornflakes box at the breakfast table. If ever we bother to pause and ponder, the things that we read can frequently take on quite a different meaning.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in I Corinthians 13. To be sure, St Paul is talking about the importance of Christian love – 'charity' as the King James Bible translates it. But his message is by no means an anodyne First Century version of the Beatles' song 'Love is all you need'. What Paul concentrates on expounding are the consequences of

[continued] not loving one's fellow men in a Christian manner.

Bereft of this quality of charitable love, all of our other Christian virtues are absolutely worthless. It does not matter, for example, how hard we work to spread the Gospel, if we are not acting in a spirit of love for our fellow men, our endeavours are useless. It doesn't matter how great we are as preachers, teachers, singers and church builders. If we do have love towards our fellowmen are talents are valueless.

In other words, if there is one ability we need above all to cultivate, it is the ability to love our fellow men, no matter how unlovely they might appear. This is not an option. It is an obligation. Nothing else we have to offer can make up for its lack. It is a thought that should rightly terrify us when ever we find ourselves griping about other people, even horrible ones. **GPH**

FROM THE PARISH CHEFS

Silly Summer Suppers

The moment you have all been waiting for is here: at 6.30pm, each Wednesday, starting 24 June, the chefs of St Stephen's will be serving the 2015 series of *Silly Summer Suppers*.

It's hard to think of a less appropriate name than 'Silly Summer Suppers' for these remarkable gastronomic events. The food is absolutely scrumptious – and there is plenty of it. Actually, the only thing silly about these suppers is the price – entrée, dessert and salad for just \$10. Soda costs a buck; wine is \$3 per glass or \$5 for two.

By the way, if you are handy in the kitchen (or even if you are not) you are welcome to join our team of volunteer chefs. In fact, if you decide to do so, you'll be welcomed with open arms. When you come to think about it, cooking your way to heaven isn't such a bad idea.

FROM THE TREASURER

Church treasurers find that summertime is far from easy

Summer is not the best-loved time of the year for church treasurers. The trouble is that parishioners frequently forget the church when they go on vacation, and this can place havoc with the cash flow. And a healthy cash flow is essential for keeping the lights lit, the air conditioning cooling, and the doors open.

So please take pity on the poor church treasurer struggling to make ends meet in the summer season, scrabbling under the pews in hopes that small change might have fallen from parishioners' pockets. How much simpler life would be for him if he could anticipate a nice smooth cash flow.

We know you have a lot of calls on your time and your treasure, but if you are a little behind with your pledge we would be most grateful if you'd bring it up to date. It would be so nice if the treasurer didn't have to hide under his desk when the plumber or the electrician comes to call.

St Stephen's Anglican Church

11856 Mays Chapel Road, Timonium, MD 21093
Office: 410 560 6776 · Rectory: 410 665 1278
Pastoral Care: 410 252 8674

www.ststeve.com

The Ven. Canon Guy P. Hawtin, *Rector*
The Ven. Michael Kerouac, *Vicar*

The Rev. Michael Belt, The Rev. John Novicki, *Associate Rectors*
The Rev. Mr M. Wiley Hawks, *Deacon* · Adric, *Magister Chori*
Mrs Happy Riley, *Director of Pastoral Care & Wedding Coordinator*

SUNDAY SERVICES

8 am: Said Eucharist
9.15 am: Choral Eucharist (with Nursery & Church School)
11 am: Choral Mattins (1st Sunday: Sung Eucharist)
6 pm: Choral Evensong (as announced: evensong.ststeve.com)

WEEKDAY SERVICES

Wednesday, 6 pm: Evening Prayer
Friday, 12 noon: Healing Eucharist
Saturday, 5 pm: Family Eucharist

Calendar of Events

WEEKLY

Mondays, 6.30 pm: Bridge Club
Tuesdays, 7 am: Fellowship Breakfast (Nautilus Diner)
Thursdays, 10 am: Knitting Circle
Fridays, 10.30 am: Bible Study

MONTHLY & SPECIAL

Wednesday, 24 June, 6.30 pm:
Silly Summer Suppers begin!
Sunday, 5 July, 6 pm:
Patriotic Hymnfest
Wednesday, 15 July, 12 noon:
The Ladies Who Lunch meet
Thursday, 16 July, 2 pm:
Afternoon Tea

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

St Stephen's Anglican Church
11856 Mays Chapel Road
Timonium, MD 21093

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