

Cultural Assault on Religious Beliefs Continues

Legal and Other Means Being Used

- InterVarsity and other Christian student groups have been thrown off campuses because they refused to sign university “non-discriminatory” clauses in support of same-sex marriage
- Catholic and other Christian adoption and social-service agencies are under legal siege because of their support for **traditional Judeo-Christian marriage**
- Military chaplains and personnel have been punished for wearing pro-life buttons
- The Health & Human Services Office for Civil Rights ruled in June that previously existing California health plans that exclude abortion are a form of discrimination. Now **churches in California must pay for abortions.**
- A Washington state pharmacy’s decision not to stock Plan B, a drug that can cause an early abortion, and refer customers to one of 30 nearby pharmacies that sell the drug, was ruled discriminatory. The pharmacy now has to offer the drug or go out of business.
- A 19-year Air Force **combat vet** was relieved of duty and threatened with court-martial because he would not agree with his commander on her beliefs concerning same-sex marriage. The First Liberty Institute defended the veteran.
- Washington state professors threatened to fail and remove from class students who use “oppressive and hateful language” including the terms “male” and “female.” CampusReform.org fought for the students and the administration struck down the professors’ policy.
- University of New Hampshire Bias-Free Language Guide condemns terms including “American,” “mothering” and “fathering.” CampusReform.org called and administrators removed the guide.
- Houston’s city council issued subpoenas **ordering pastors** to turn over sermons mentioning gender identity
- A national survey sponsored by the William F. Buckley Jr. Program at Yale University found that almost 50% of survey participants said they often feel “intimidated” by professors when sharing differing beliefs, and 60% said that **political correctness is a problem** on college campuses.

Regarding the Washington state pharmacy, Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito said: “If this is a sign of how religious liberty claims will be treated in the years ahead, those who value religious freedom have cause for great concern.”

Baltimore Archbishop William E. Lori, chairman of the

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Mary Eberstadt’s Explanation

The author’s new book *It’s Dangerous to Believe: Religious Freedom and Its Enemies* (Harper) analyzes the assault on Christians here and abroad.

For thousands of years, religious toleration was not the norm. The concept came slowly to the West and to America. The greatest advance toward religious liberty came with the drafting of the U.S. Constitution and its **Bill of Rights**. The current assault on religious freedom represents a return to the distant past in which people were persecuted for their beliefs. However, today’s persecution of Christian values takes place in the courts, administrative bureaucracies and the forum of public opinion.

Why are those acting in the name of “diversity” and “tolerance” so intent on **uniformity of thought and culture**. Eberstadt says the “quasi-religious” belief of these reactionaries is invested in the sexual revolution.

In his review of Eberstadt’s book, Professor Donald Critchlow, Arizona State Univ. (*National Review*, 7/11/16), wrote about the new enforcers of religious oppression: “In their own eyes, they hold a revealed knowledge that sexual identity and the family are social constructions created by a patriarchal, oppressive society.

Eberstadt understands that the foundation of the secular/progressive worldview is the doctrine that ‘the Pill and its backup plan, **abortion on demand**, have liberated humanity – first, by freeing women from the chains of their fertility, and second, by breaking down the door to the fortress of traditional morality, after which one sexual minority after another has been liberated.’

Eberstadt concludes: “Courage is required for people to stand not only against the cultural tide, but against the inner worms of human nature.” May we pray and work towards developing courage as Christians.

Macy’s Violates Its Own Diversity Policy

“Macy’s believes that different perspectives are important to our company, and we benefit greatly from the individual strengths of each associate.”

Yet Javier Chavez, Senior Store Detective at a Macy’s in Queens, NY was fired for voicing his belief, grounded in his Catholicism, that men should use the men’s bathrooms. He said he would abide by Macy’s policy allowing a man who claims to be a woman to use the women’s restroom, but that wasn’t sufficient. For merely having convictions that Macy’s finds objectionable, he was terminated. [Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, 7/26/2016]

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Assault on Beliefs (continued)

Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty for the U.S. bishops, wrote: “Do we want a society where those who provide health care are expected to sacrifice their most cherished beliefs in order to serve the community? What about the pharmacist who refuses to stock a drug because testing it involves cruelty to animals? Or because it could be used to inflict the death penalty? There are many ways that conscience, faith and morals might inform how pharmacists and other business owners carry out their work.”

Bishop Lori continued: “Zeal for the sexual revolution seems to threaten restrictions on conscience with implications far beyond abortion or contraception, moving us from a pluralistic society to one where **government may coerce people** into doing what they believe to be wrong.” [Sources: *Our Sunday Visitor*; First Liberty Institute; *National Review*; *The Beacon* of the Diocese of Paterson, NJ; The Fund for American Studies; CampusReform.org]

New Movies and Books

- Marriage experts Ryan and Mary-Rose Verret present a practical guide to marriage preparation in their book, *Witness to Love* (Benedict Press). Commentary is both candid and practical, dealing with such issues as divorce, cohabitation, and the importance of mentoring young couples to create not just couples ready to marry, but who say “I do” every day of their marriage.
- A splendid documentary, *Liberating a Continent: John Paul II and the Fall of Communism*, has 93 minutes of a gripping story. It shows how the liberation of captive nations came about, by calling things “good” and “evil,” as the Solidarity martyr Blessed Jerzy Popieluszko used to say.
- A PBS special, “The 9 Months that Made Me,” should be shown regularly. The documentary clearly shows a **heartbeat just four weeks after conception**.
- Human geneticist Gerard Verschuuren’s latest book, *Life’s Journey: A Guide to Growing Up, Growing Old and Natural Death* (Angelico Press), reflects the author’s dual strengths in biology and philosophy. In each section, the author first describes what is going on scientifically, and then reflects on the implications of what is going on. The last section on old age and death addresses death and the **meaning of personhood**. Materialists maintain it is the end of our existence. Non-materialists believe we live on as disembodied spirits. For Catholics, the ultimate resurrection of the dead prepares us to be reunited with our bodies. [Sources: *The Catholic Answer*; *National Review*; *National Catholic Register*; *The Beacon* of the Paterson Diocese.]

Undercover Videos Deemed Legal

July 26: District Judge Brock Thomas dismissed felony criminal charges against David Daleiden this morning at the request of the Harris County, Texas, District Attorney’s office. In January, David had been indicted by a grand jury on a misdemeanor charge of trafficking in fetal tissue as well as a felony charge of tampering with a governmental document. The misdemeanor charge was vacated last month and today the felony charge, which carried a maximum sentence of twenty years in state prison, was dismissed. Charges were also dismissed against Sandra Merritt who worked on the undercover investigations of Planned Parenthood.

Life Legal assisted in the coordination of David’s criminal defense and was in Harris County earlier this year as David posted bail following the indictments.

“This is a victory, not only for David Daleiden, but also for the **First Amendment**,” said Life Legal Defense Foundation Executive Director Alexandra Snyder. “Undercover journalists should not have to fear criminal penalties for **exposing the truth**. Justice has finally been served in Harris County.” [Source: Life Legal Defense Foundation]

[Editor’s note: Daleiden was responsible for taking undercover videos and then publicizing the views and policies of **Planned Parenthood in its selling or distributing aborted baby** parts to other organizations. The videos captured the cynical views of the group’s leaders towards aborted babies.]

Thomas More Society Defends Life

St. Thomas More was a lawyer who once served as chancellor of England, but gave up his life by refusing to acknowledge King Henry VIII as head of the Church in England. Before his martyrdom, he declared he died “the king’s good servant, but God’s first.”

Inspired by More’s example, attorney Thomas Brejcha founded the Thomas More Society, based in Chicago. The group takes on such cases as the **defense of free-speech rights** of pro-life activists. Brejcha said: “These battles have to be fought; otherwise, we’ll lose by default.” The group was instrumental in defending pro-lifer video-taker David Daleiden.

Kristan Hawkins, president of **Students for Life** of America, said the Society has helped to ensure that students can form pro-life groups on school campuses. “We are extremely fortunate to have their help.”

The Society’s services are offered free of charge, and it depends on donations. [“Saint-Inspired Lawyering: Thomas More Society,” *National Catholic Register*, 6/12/2016]