"The Future of Christianity in the West" – 2

This is the second of nine articles in a series entitled "The Future of Christianity in the West."

Rod Dreher in *The Benedict Option* proposes that Christians focus their energies in strengthening their institutions of the family, church, and school in preparation for dark times ahead. He envisions a time when the secular order collapses and is hopeful that Christian institutions will survive. Christian families, schools and churches, he hopes, will be there to pick up the pieces for multitudes of ordinary people whose lives are in ruins as a result of the false promises of secular paganism.

War against reality

Dreher's prediction is that the "brave new world" of the secular left cannot sustain itself. Why? Because it is at war with reality, and in such a conflict *reality always wins*. What does this mean? Let me explain. We may illustrate with gravity. Those who build buildings, build and fly airplanes, and throw footballs all must accommodate gravity. Fail to do so and the building collapses, the airplane crashes, and the football falls incomplete. Recently (June 3, 2017) Alex Honnold climbed the 3000-foot El Capitan wall at Yosemite National Park without ropes or safety equipment. He had to accommodate gravitational reality every inch of those 3000 feet or be crushed by reality. Similarly the properties of flesh must accommodate the properties of concrete. One may run through a heavy rain or a foggy mist, but one may not run through concrete. Those who attempt to do so will be battered by reality. Those who plant gardens must deal with the distinctive properties of plants, sunlight, water, and soil. Those who live in cold climates must understand that water expands when it freezes and will break anything that fails to accommodate its expansion. Things are what they are and reality is what it is. It is vital that we sustain the Christian alternative for the home, the school, and the social order. Why? Because the new order of the secular left will collapse. Why? Because it fails to deal with reality. It tries to create its own reality, a thing that cannot be done. The Christian social order alone conforms to the true nature of things, to the world as it is, the world as God made it.

Christians have long been accused of being anti-science, going all the way back to Galileo. It is doubtful that the charge has ever been true. It certainly is not true regarding gender and sexuality issues, rather the reverse. When does human life begin? This is not a serious question. Everyone knows that at conception a unique, distinctive, independent life has been formed. It is not the life of the mother. It is not the life of the father. It is not a part of the mother's body, and hence will be expelled in nine months. Yet the secular left persists in denying the humanity of the unborn, as if the product of human conception might be a giraffe, or a plant, or a rock.

Science or even simple observation tells us that the *physiological* design of the human species intends men and women to be joined in a procreative union. That is the meaning, the purpose, the design of their respective reproductive organs – the male to enter, the female to receive. Likewise, the *biblical* purpose and design of the respective male and female sexual organs is procreation. The male to male and female to female sexual activity that the secular paganism wishes to champion do not fit the design or make sense of it.

Science tells us that biology determines our sexual and gender identity. The average human has ten trillion cells. Every one of those cells is either male or female, the male having an xy chromosome, the female an xx.[1] Which is male and which is female? Those who have a male body are male and those who have a female body are female.[2] All of human history until five minutes ago would be astounded that such a statement has to be made. What if a boy thinks he's a girl or a girl thinks she's a boy? One should treat their perceptions as one would a person with anorexia. The anorexic girl thinks she is fat even when she is emaciated to the point of starvation. She misperceives her body. She should be counseled in order to get her mind to conform to her body, not the other way around. If she insists on conforming her body to her mind and society supports her in her aspiration, she will die. She must be helped to deal with the real world.

Likewise, those who are confused about their sexual identity suffer from what is called "gender dysphoria." They must be counseled so as to get their minds to agree with their bodies. It is tragic beyond words to attempt the opposite, to advise sex-change operations and hormone therapy for children and youth and young adults. The prospect of teenage girls receiving double mastectomies and testosterone injections is horrifying. Yet this is being advocated, even mandated through force of law by our secular elites.

C. S. Lewis, in his brilliant treatise on *The Abolition of Man*, observed that in all prior human history the path of wisdom was identified as bringing one's life into conformity with reality, as in our opening examples of builders, pilots, rock climbers, and gardeners.[3] The modern idea is to force reality to conform to the individual's desires, even to create one's own reality. The tragedy is that reality cannot be changed; we can only accommodate and conform to it. When we don't, the results are devastating. Ignore the reality of the humanity of the unborn child and one ends up with a dead baby. Ignore the reality of physiological and biological design and one ends up with gay "marriage," wasted seed, and barren wombs. Ignore the reality of physiology and one ends up with mutilated organs and heartbreak, sadness, and despair. The way of the transgressor is hard (Prov 13:15).

"Someday people will wake up and say, 'Why did we believe such a mass of stupidities, cruelties, and lies? What was the point of it all?'" asks Anthony Esolen, a devout Roman Catholic and professor of English at Providence College in Rhode Island, in his book *Out of the Ashes*.[4] All this aberrant behavior has been normalized in the name of compassion and acceptance. We want people to be happy. So we give them what they want and force everyone else to go along with it. It will not end well. "The mercy of the wicked is cruel," we are warned (Prov 12:10). It is vital that Christians be pro-life, pro-children, pro-marriage, and pro-family. These are the foundational commitments of a Christian social order and human flourishing.

---

[1] Because we live in a fallen world, a tiny number of people are born genetically confused. This does not affect 99.9% who are not afflicted with this condition.

[2] Again, because we live in a fallen world, a tiny number of people are born with male and female organs. This phenomena has long been recognized and does not alter the reality of fixed sexual and gender identity.

[3] Note: See p 109, note 70 in Johnson, *The Identity and Attributes of God* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2019).

[4] Anthony Esolen, *Out of the Ashes: Rebuilding American Culture* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2017), 191.

Trajectory

It is because of our view of these and other issues that today faithful Christians are mocked, scorned, ostracized, and disdained. Given the present trajectory, we can expect things only to get worse. What do we face in the near future? The possibility of losing business and employment opportunities over matters of conscience grows daily as Christian bakers, florists, and photographers have already seen. We must consider the possibility of being denied professional certification. Doctors may face disqualification from the practice of medicine because of their failure to provide abortions or administer euthanasia or perform sex-reassignment surgeries and therapies.[5] Lawyers, judges, and school teachers may be disqualified for refusing to affirm the new sexual norms, even for refusing to call students and clients by their chosen pronouns. Contractors may be denied state and federal contracts for failing to comply with the obligatory ideals of the new secular orthodoxies. Public accommodation laws may force the issue. Christian charitable agencies such as adoption services, drug rehab centers, homeless shelters, and safe houses for women may be subject to lawsuits on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity issues and may be disqualified for referrals from city, state, and federal agencies. Parents may lose custody of their "transgender" children for refusing to permit gender transition therapies or even for refusing to use the child's preferred pronouns. Sensitivity training, diversity and inclusion training, the modern progressive equivalents of Marxist re-education camps, may be required for those who run afoul of the law.[6] This is the "brave new world" that we face, a world that in part already is here.

Terry L. Johnson *is the senior minister of Independent Presbyterian Church in Savannah, GA. He is author of various books including Leading in Worship, Worshipping with Calvin, Serving with Calvin, and The Identity and Attributes of God.*

TAGS: homosexuality; gender dysphoria; abortion; reality; C. S. Lewis; Rod Dreher; *Benedict Option*

[5] Already conscientious objectors are being cautioned not to enter the medical fields of obstetrics and gynecology.

[6] A looming danger is the "Equality Act" proposed by Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi which would elevate both sexual orientation and gender identity to protected classes in federal anti-discrimination law. Already Colorado's Anti-Discrimination Act and its Civil Rights Commission, and nationwide, a number of school boards, and several city and state governments have pushed the logic of "equality" and "civil rights" in these directions. These warnings are not alarmist but a clear and present danger.