

A defining moment in history by Dr. John L. Yeats

Who would have thought that the American culture war would have escalated to such a level? The ObamaCare “ruling” and the subsequent “fix” announced by Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary of the U. S. Department of HHS, throws people, who actually practice their faith, under the secular religionist’s steamroller.

The edict by the Administration requires that ministries owned and operated by our churches include abortifacients in their insurance coverage for employees and students or face fines or imprisonment.

The Obama administration has declared war on religion and freedom of conscience. This callous requirement by the Obama administration is an overt violation of our nation’s commitment to liberty of conscience and a flagrant violation of our constitutional protection.

Our nation’s Founding Fathers such as John Leland and Roger Williams helped craft, at great personal expense, a government model that was much different than what they had experienced in England. There the British monarch, who is the supreme head of the Church of England, had “full power and authority from time to time to visit, repress, redress, record, order, correct, restrain, and amend all such errors, heresies, abuses, offenses, contempts, and enormities, whatsoever they be.”

Doesn’t that sound like the attempt of the current Administration? Whatever religious ministries believe about the matter of “women’s health,” their processes and procedures are now subordinate to the one-and-only supreme head of state determined to repress, redress, restrain, and amend their perceived heresies? In other words, the continued existence of a “faith-based institution” depends on submission to the doctrinal supremacy of the state. The government now determines the acceptable practices of any ministry that churches have established to help and educate people.

In England, those who dissented from the state church came to be known as Nonconformists. The English Parliament passed various “Acts of Uniformity.” Why? They needed to control the nonconformists to strengthen the state/church’s position of authority.

Let it be known there's still a few of us "Nonconformists" out there, Some people in the government think we have to be forced into ideological compliance. And we say, "No! We have the weight of the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment of the Constitution on our side."

The apparent desire of the secularist government is that your faith is best expressed inside the church building for an hour on Sunday morning or at a funeral service. The secularist government sanctions your church practices for that sacred hour but they believe you must live like the rest of them for the remainder of the week.

That doesn't work. According to the Word of God, we believe our identity is totally wrapped up in our personal faith in Jesus Christ alone. He is "the Way, the Truth and the Life and no one comes to the Father but through Him." His life permeates the believer's life.

Consequently, there is no way an authentic follower of Christ can compartmentalize his faith. After all, He is the One who compels us not to be religionists but instead to be Samaritans, who see the wounded and the weak on the side of the road and offer them aid. He is the One who motivates us to volunteer at a crisis pregnancy center to help women grapple with the challenges of caring for the new person developing in her womb. He is the One who leads us to establish institutions of learning that encourage open inquiry toward science and teach students to respect and value one another on the basis of love and accountability learned from the principles of Scripture.

There is no way that a genuinely Christian organization can comply with providing an insurance policy that funds a method of terminating the life of a child no matter how difficult the circumstances are. GuideStone, the Southern Baptist private insurance ministry, serves worldwide more than 200,000 participants in 36,000 churches, missions organizations, schools, hospitals and other ministries. O. S. Hawkins, president of the GuideStone, offered this statement:

"The healthcare reform law (often referred to as Obamacare) presents the greatest challenge ever confronted by denominational church health plans throughout the nation.

GuideStone is in the forefront of those calling for a full repeal of Obamacare specifically due to its adverse effect on church plans.

GuideStone continues to be active in addressing issues involving sanctity of life, and also is adamant about other issues of vital interest to the evangelical community that could conceivably impact health plans in future years. For example, GuideStone could never concede to extend coverage to same sex spouses or cover questionable stem cell treatments.

We will remain vigilant and diligent in these efforts with our long held Biblical convictions and our participants' needs uppermost in our mind."

Missouri Baptists affirm GuideStone's leadership and we pray that people of conviction will prevail over the secularist ideologues propagating their views on our nation.

Biblical history tells us that people of faith have been here before. The Book of Daniel is ripe with examples. The Jewish teens could have compromised but instead stood against a despot's rulings. Ultimately, the Lord honored the convictions of the faithful and revealed His glory to the government that devalued life and liberty.

Compliance with this "ruling" means that we either must close our institutions or capitulate our faith. It is a shame for the state to demand this of its faith communities. After all, aren't we the government that has attempted to teach the world about the principle of religious liberty for all?

Gratuitously, Kathleen Sebelius, Obama's health care high priestess, has offered to maintain religious liberty for those institutions engaged in explicit religious instruction to a largely believing clientele.

So how does that work when our "work" is with the population at large? The mission of a volunteer is not to determine whether a person is worthy of receiving a hot meal from one of our disaster relief units. The ministry of the chaplain is to hold the hand and pray with the person whose body is racked with pain from cancer, not to

make sure they have a membership at some local church. The mission of the professor at our universities is to equip students to be the best and the brightest, not slaves of state rulings. Didn't we just fight a war in Iraq over government oppression of people?

Obamacare, which governmentalizes one-sixth of the U.S. economy and micro-regulates both body and conscience, is the ultimate Act of Uniformity. Is there anyone who needs contraception who can't get it? Even now, taxpayers are on the hook annually for half a billion dollars to Planned Parenthood, who dispense IUDs like aspirin and manage more abortions than any other single organization.

Those who bow to the god of secularism believe in the preeminence of their faith. So, the goal is to marginalize the people who are devoted to a different faith, especially Christianity. If the one-size-fits-all civil society can crowd the public square with their bully rulings, then non-compliant faith-based institutions will soon become relics. Then the nonconforming individuals will be the next ones silenced from the public square. That's so the favored cronies can more easily manage the masses with their public policies and rulings.

The religion of the secularist is a doomed methodology of government. History records that we are the most blessed people in the world. One of the main reasons is because our governing documents express religious liberty for all and we the people have demanded religious liberty as our sacred right. And up until a few weeks ago, our government leaders governed under the auspices of the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment.

This is a defining moment. If we are not careful, we can lose this right that too many men and women have shed their blood to preserve. If we lose it, on the morning after—it will take more than a pill to fix it.