Light Brings Salt

Iron Range Bible Church
Dedicated to the Systematic Exposition of the Word of God

Secularists Often Behave As They Claim Christians Do
By David Limbaugh

Newsweek's Anna Quindlen recently wrote that a presidential victory for Rudy Giuliani "wouldn't be a good thing for this country, but his candidacy may wind up being a good thing for his party," which Quindlen obviously believes has been hijacked by the Christian right.

Giuliani's strong poll numbers, said Quindlen, perhaps "indicate that the end is nigh for the stranglehold the Leviticus Lobby has had on the GOP."

It's no longer surprising that those screaming most loudly against Christianity and its influence on public policy in America often employ the same tactics and represent the same dangers they falsely attribute to Christians. Christians have far more to fear from the secular thought police than the other way around.

Whether it's writer Christopher Hitchens or CNN's Christiane Amanpour sloppily conflating Christian "fundamentalists" or observant Jews with Islamic jihadists; secular leftists calling the Christian right the American Taliban; or militant secularists like HBO's Bill Maher salivating over reports that Mother Teresa had a crisis of faith, the theme is the same. Christian activists are a societal nuisance.

The secularists' criticism goes beyond decrying the Christian right's alleged hostility to church-state separation. They claim strong religious belief leads to oppression, tyranny and violence.

They even suggest the mere defense of absolute truth is dangerous. Alan Hurwitz of North Star Writers Group, wrote, "One thing I do know -- the pursuit of 'truth,' as in mine over yours, creates conflict and isolation among individuals, groups and societies. I am secular enough to think those are bad things. Religious zealots, 'knowers of truth often have a scary gleam in their eyes. The challenge of dealing with rigid manifestations of religious 'truth' is one of management leadership -- how to create societies that allow diverse groups to believe and act on *their* truth, without hurting each other." Note this is not some Christian talking about creating societies and exerting control.

The secularists demanding the removal of specks from Christians' eyes are oblivious to the planks in their own. Their paranoid predispositions about Christians lead them to the very type of oppressive behavior they wrongly ascribe to Christians. If anyone is guilty of wanting to foreclose debate and impose their values on others, it is these hyperventilating secularists.

They are the ones who have decreed there's a consensus on global warming and attempted to stigmatize dissenters as paid mouthpieces for "evil" energy companies. With their absence of self-reflection it must never occur to them that in their professed monopoly on "science," they squarely violate the fundamentals of the scientific method by forbidding debate and insulating their theories from scientific scrutiny.

They malign intelligent design proponents for daring to subject their dogma -- and distortions -- to the rigorous re-examination scientific methodology requires.

They seek to remove God from the Pledge of Allegiance, though one poll reveals that only 14 percent of Americans agree with them.

They brand as bigots opponents of the societal sanctioning of homosexual marriage. Some even pronounce certain scriptural passages on homosexuality "hate speech" that leads to violence, as if to disapprove of any behavior is to hate it or its practitioners and leads to violence against them.

Likewise, many pro-abortionists speciously argue that pro-life advocacy leads to violence against women -- never mind the violence against the unborn.

The secular left condemns traditionalists for "legislating morality" and invading our bedrooms. Their quasi-religious fervor apparently blinds them to their efforts to wield governmental power to impose their own values, whether on homosexual marriage, abortion, wealth redistribution or socialized medicine.

Alas, none of this should surprise Christians, who surely understand we are reaping the ravaging effects of a secularist, atheistic worldview that has finally become dominant in our postmodern culture and has claimed absolute truth as its casualty.

As Christian apologist Ravi Zacharias has explained, we have now reached a degree of secularization in our society whereby "religious ideas, institutions and interpretations have lost their social significance." This secularization "is revealed in a very inversion of language. It used to be that the Christian worldview was so present in Western culture that even when you were expressing secular ideas you had to borrow religious terminology with which to do it. Now there is an inversion; our world has become so secular that even when you are communicating religious ideas you have to borrow secular terminology with which to do it. Secularization has become so powerful in our social fabric, that the moment you introduce (into a discussion) a moral idea, if it has any connection to a religious worldview it is ipso facto disregarded as (being invalid)."

Secularists have every right to advocate the adoption of their values by our society. But they are hypocritical to deny they do so and for castigating Christians for doing the same.

Trading Truth for Solidarity
Berit Kjos

We all belong to the same family. **Hindus, Muslims and all peoples** are our brothers and sisters. They too are the children of God." Mother Teresa, *Words to Love By*

"We are supposed to preach without **preaching not by words, but by our example**, by our actions." Mother Teresa

"The first Reformation... was about **creeds**; this one's going to be about our **deeds**. The first one divided the church; this time it will unify the church." Rick Warren

"What do I labor for? If there be no God — there can be no soul — if there is no Soul then Jesus — You also are not true." *One of Teresa's many agonizing prayers.*

It seems so good! Who could question such sacrificial love? From the world's perspective, few have deserved the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize more than Mother Teresa. Ministering to the "poorest of the poor," she and her "sisters" -- the devoted Missionaries of Charity -- renounced all Western comforts to give themselves fully to the poor, sick and dying.

Yet Mother Teresa's amazing ministry brings a sobering warning, for it illustrates the Church's growing tolerance -- even appreciation -- for interfaith compromise. Her compassionate pluralism fits both the "emerging church" movement and the UN

vision for spiritual oneness. In fact, her work provides a perfect model for UNESCO's 1994 Declaration on the Role of Religion. Compare its standards with today's drive for *deeds rather than creeds*:

- "We must… cultivate a spirituality which manifests itself in action..."

- "Religions must be a source of helpful energy."

- "We will favor peace by countering the tendencies of individuals and communities to assume or even to teach that they are inherently superior to others."

- "We will promote dialogue and harmony between and within religions....

- "...listen to the cries of the victims….

- We call upon the different religious and cultural traditions to join hands… and to cooperate with us."

The true Gospel clashes with this world system. That's why Chinese and Burmese Christians are persecuted for their faith. That's why Pakistani and Indian converts may reap torture or death -- never a Nobel Peace Price -- for their loving service to the poor! We are fast approaching a time when caring Christian missions will be equated with "intolerance" and "hate."

A new ecumenical project to create a "common code for religious conversions" would speed this transformation. The World Evangelical Alliance, the Vatican, and the World Council of Churches have joined together to establish a code of conduct that would "ease tensions with Muslims, Hindus and other religious groups that fear losing adherents...." Some participating leaders call for "dialogical evangelism." They want "preachers... to be told that no religion has a monopoly on the truth... there are many ways to find salvation." What's more, it should "establish what all the partners agree **needs to be banned when it comes to Christian mission**."

Would obedience to such a code pacify Hindu and Muslim radicals? Would it end the persecution of faithful Christians? Not unless these collaborating church leaders could muzzle missionaries, modify the gospel, and follow Mother Teresa's guidelines:

"We never try to convert those who receive [our aid] to Christianity but in our work we bear witness to the love of God's presence and if Catholics, Protestants, Buddhists, or agnostics become for this better men -- simply better -- we will be satisfied."

D. James Kennedy, on his Own Death

"Now, I know that someday I am going to come to what some people will say is the end of this life. They will probably put me in a box and roll me right down here in front of the church, and some people will gather around, and a few people will cry. But I have told them not to do that because I don't want them to cry. I want them to begin the service with the Doxology and end with the Hallelujah chorus, because I am not going to be there, and I am not going to be dead. I will be more alive than I have ever been in my life, and I will be looking down upon you poor people who are still in the land of dying and have not yet joined me in the land of the living. And I will be alive forevermore, in greater health and vitality and joy than ever, ever, I or anyone has known before."