

COMMENTARY

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## The Marxist coup we hardly noticed

**Exclusive: Scott Lively explains how the church was politically neutered**

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Published March 9, 2020 at 6:59pm

On Dec. 2, I launched a YouTube channel to teach and share the biblical worldview, and recently I posted my 61st video commentary there under the title "Scott Lively on Defeated C3 Churches."

Today's WND column is on the same theme – addressing the extremely serious problem of Christians abandoning their civic duty in regards to American culture, law and politics. I trace the source of the crisis to the late 1800s and early 1900s when Marxist political strategists first began competing for influence and control in this nation.

During the first century and a half of our constitutional republic, the church was the most powerful political and cultural force in America, when the term "secular" didn't mean "non-religious" but rather "non-sectarian but theistic." Historically literate Americans know that the Bible was a well-used textbook in our public schools then, and for a very long time elections for public office were frequently preceded by election sermons in the churches, attended by both the candidates and the voters. Indisputable facts like these have been actively suppressed in media and public education for decades now, and average Americans today believe that the "separation of church and state" has always meant that "Christianity must not actively influence government."

In the early years of the transition of power, the emergence of the "social gospel" provided its Marxist inventors a way to separate the social benefits of Christian benevolence from Christ Himself to argue that people can be

"Good Without A God" (the motto of today's American Humanist Association). Concurrently, the Marxists pressed the church to distance itself from the hard teachings of the Old Testament as a means of showcasing their social gospel to the public as a superior moral system. In response, much of the church began retreating from the defense of biblical inerrancy and started "ghettoizing" by forming their own Christian schools and media rather than meeting the challenges head-on. Thus, the long, slow retreat from the battlefield of "secular" society gave the Marxists the opportunity to reshape our laws and culture in their own image.

To be sure, this did not happen overnight. By sheer cultural inertia (reinforced to a diminishing degree by the continuing presence of some Christians in the secular arena), the society and culture retained its Judeo-Christian presuppositions for decades. But the influence of Marxism worked like a cultural windlass in which social change always ratcheted leftward toward full-fledged atheism.

In the years immediately following World War II, after four-term Marxist-leaning President Franklin Delano Roosevelt had conformed the U.S. Supreme Court to his liking, the Marxists staged the legal coup against our constitution that dethroned God as the ultimate power over the nation and stripped the Christian church of political and cultural dominance.

I've written extensively about the pair of cases that accomplished this existential transformation – *Everson v. Board of Education* (1947) and *Torcaso v. Watkins* (1961) – and will simply summarize here that in these cases the court set itself above God as the final arbiter of all religious claims in America (reminiscent of 2 Thessalonians 2:4), declaring for the first time that Thomas Jefferson's metaphor "the separation of church and state" necessitated the complete exclusion of Christian influence over government, and that all religions – regardless of their beliefs – must be treated equally. *Torcaso* officially declared atheism to be a religion, empowering militant atheists to invoke the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment to demand the removal of all existing Christian infrastructure in government.

This was an outright coup that the American public never even realized had occurred.

One need only read the Supreme Court ruling in *Church of the Holy Trinity v. United States* (1892) – containing a 27-paragraph summary of the historic and then still active Christian political stewardship of America – to understand just how dishonest and blatantly unconstitutional the Marxist reorganization of American law and culture really was.

The Marxists not only used the law to usurp and outmaneuver the Christian church, but relegated her to the status of political outsider.

In 1954, this status was formalized when the reprobate senator and soon-to-be President Lyndon Baines Johnson, introduced the infamous Johnson Amendment to the Internal Revenue Service code, purporting to forbid churches from endorsing political candidates or actively engaging in political activities. This effectively neutralized the church as a political force. Today the majority of congregations totally avoid political and cultural involvement in fear of running afoul of the IRS.

Then, in 1969, the IRS adopted the presumed (but actually unenforceable) requirement that all churches must register with the government as 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporations. This had the practical effect of forcing churches into adopting the completely unbiblical corporate organizational form and, more harmfully, acquiescing to the notion that churches are subject to government regulation. One alarming result of this is the now common false belief that tax exemption for churches is a legal privilege granted by government, rather than an unalienable right.

In reality, both legally and historically, the church is sovereign under God, not subject to government taxation or control. While interaction with government is necessary and beneficial for society, the church is not subservient to government but operates on equal footing with it under the Biblical/Legal doctrine of Coadjvancy (the cooperation of separate sovereigns).

However, like any right left unexercised in the face of government bullying, the principle of "use it or lose it" applies.

On May 4, 2017, President Trump issued an executive order directing the IRS not to take "adverse action" against churches and other tax-exempt religious organizations engaging in any political activity.

It did not repeal the Johnson Amendment's ban on endorsing candidates (which would require congressional action) but highlighted the fact that churches have always had the right to operate in the political arena. With that explicit promise of protection by the Top Boss over the IRS, there is no longer any excuse for churches to shirk their civic duties, and the rest of us should be strongly exhorting them to reassert their (our) right and responsibility to be salt and light in that darkest of domestic mission fields.