

Limits of Submission to Government 10

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Resistance to Tyrants

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I'm going to do some reading here. I have it listed up on top. You can find this online. It's from Imprimis, however you want to pronounce that Latin phrase. It's free. It's a free magazine from Hillsdale College. I recommend it. Of course, I don't recommend everything I read but it's very good in general. It certainly will keep you up abreast of current political and social issues. This one is "Religion and Public Life in America" by R. R. Reno. Imprimis, April 2013. This is a condensed work of his speech at the college in February of 2013.

"Religious Liberty is being redefined in America, or at least many would like it to be. Our secular establishment wants to reduce the autonomy of religious institutions and limit the influence of faith in the public square. The reason is not hard to grasp. In America, 'religion' largely means Christianity, and today our secular culture views orthodox Christian churches as troublesome, retrograde, and reactionary forces. They're seen as anti-science, anti-gay, and anti-women—which is to say anti-progress as the Left defines progress. Not surprisingly, then, the Left believes society will be best served if Christians are limited in their influence on public life. And in the short run this view is likely to succeed. There will be many arguments urging Christians to keep their religion strictly religious rather than 'political.' And there won't just be arguments; there will be laws as well. We're in the midst of climate change—one that's getting colder and colder toward religion.

In 2005, a former teacher at Hosanna-Tabor Evangelical Lutheran Church and School in Redford, Michigan, filed an employment lawsuit claiming discrimination based on disability."

Though she filed a lawsuit against the very school she was a part of, a Christian versus a Christian. Anybody? Anybody? Yeah.

"The school fired her for violating St. Paul's teaching that Christians should not bring their disputes before secular judges [no brainer, except].

The subsequent lawsuit revolved around the question of whether a religious school could invoke a religious principle to justify firing an employee. The school said it could, drawing on a legal doctrine known as the ministerial exception, which allows religious institutions wide latitude in hiring and firing their religious leaders. It's in the nature of legal arguments to be complex and multi-layered, but in this case the Obama administration's lawyers made a shockingly blunt argument: Their brief claimed that there should be no ministerial exception."

Was that made news? Anybody hear about that on Fox, the great conservative news source, right? No. That's shocking. That should have been major news.

"The Supreme Court rejected this argument in a unanimous 9-0 vote."

That, too, is shocking. Yeah, they are. They said, "No way. That's asinine."

["That shows you where they want to go."]

Yes, that's exactly right. Who voted the Obama administration in? At least half the Americans.

"But it's telling nonetheless that lawyers in the Justice Department wanted to eliminate this exception. Their argument was straightforward: Government needs to have broad powers to address the problem of discrimination—in this case disability—as well as other injustices. Conceding too much to religious institutions limits those powers. Why should the theological doctrines of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, or of any other church, trump the legal doctrines of the United States when the important principle of non-discrimination is at stake?"

Concerns about the autonomy of religious institutions are also at work in the Obama administration's tussle with the Catholic Church and her religious allies over the mandate [the Obamacare mandate] to provide free contraceptives, sterilization, and abortion-inducing drugs [which we're in the midst of right now]. After the initial public outcry, the administration announced a supposed compromise, which has been recently revised and re-proposed. The Obama administration allows that churches and organizations directly under the control of those churches are religious employers and can opt out of the morally controversial coverage."

But what does that leave you with? Exactly.

"But religious colleges and charities are not and cannot..."

Let alone, for profit businesses run by a Christian. He's going to offer them some kind of a combination. I haven't heard anything more about this but even then, it's not the full as a church or religious organization, that they narrowly define religious organization.

"The Catholic Church and her allies want a broad definition that includes Catholic health care, Catholic universities, and Catholic charities. The Church knows that it cannot count on accommodations—after all, when various states such as Illinois passed laws allowing gay adoptions, they did not 'accommodate' Catholic charities, but instead demanded compliance with principles of non-discrimination, forcing the Church to shut down her adoption agencies in those jurisdictions."

But it happened again New England, was it Massachusetts or Connecticut or something like that? So you're slowly undercutting the charitable and the good works of the church through these laws.

"Cardinal Dolan's statement went still further. For-profit companies are not religious in the way that Notre Dame University is religious. Nonetheless, the religious beliefs of those who own and run businesses in America should be accorded some protection. This idea the Obama administration flatly rejects. By their progressive way of thinking, economic life should be under the full and unlimited control of the federal government."

That's what people don't understand. They say, "Well, it's not under the control. You can do all kinds of things." Well, it's because you're not religious, you're not thinking in terms of religion. You're undercutting religion but more and more Americans are indifferent or even not religious.

"In 2010, Federal District Court Judge Vaughn Walker overturned Proposition 8—the ballot measure that reversed the California Supreme Court's 2006 decision that homosexuals have a right to marry—citing the lack of a rational basis for thinking that only men and women can marry."

Did you catch that? They're saying, what? Religious arguments aren't rational arguments, which is begging the question to use a philosophical term or a logical fallacy.

"The evidence shows conclusively,' he wrote, 'that Proposition 8 enacts, without reason, a private moral view that same-sex couples are inferior to opposite-sex couples.' He continues by observing that many supporters of Proposition 8 were motivated by their religious convictions, which—following Rawls—he presumes should not be allowed to govern public law."

That's right. He does presume. There's a lot of presumption. The way democracies are designed, you really can't sit down and have a conversation to find out who's got the

better argument, can you? How do you do that with millions of people? You do that in the Congress. That's the closest. If you've seen their arguments, well, unfortunately many of them aren't really arguments.

"Here we come to the unifying feature of contemporary challenges to religious freedom—the desire to limit the influence of religion over public life. In the world envisioned by Obama administration lawyers, churches will have freedom as 'houses of worship,' but unless they accept the secular consensus they can't inspire their adherents to form institutions to educate and serve society in accordance with the principles of their faith [they can't make a business]. Under a legal regime influenced by the concept of public reason [that is, liberal reason], religious people are free to speak—but when their voices contradict the secular consensus, they're not allowed into our legislative chambers or courtrooms."

It continues on here,

"It's not good when the most numerous and powerful constituency in the Democratic Party has no time for religion."

Which the statisticians call the nons, which makes up 24% of the Democratic Party. Non-religious, even anti-religious.

"This is all the more true when its ideology has the effect of encouraging the rest of the party to view religion—especially Christianity—as the enemy; and when law professors provide reasons why the Constitution doesn't protect religious people."

And he goes in to explain some of this. The First Amendment, for instance, he talks about a history here so listen carefully.

"The First Amendment offered no protection to Bob Jones University..."

Anybody aware of this? Which was it? That's right, mixed marriage. It went to the Supreme Court.

"...which lost its tax-exempt status because of a policy that prohibited inter-racial dating."

That's precedent now, brothers and sisters. Back in 1983, the Supreme Court wrote in that case,

"Government has a fundamental, overriding interest in eradicating racial discrimination in education . . . which substantially outweighs whatever

burden denial of tax benefits places on [the University's] exercise of their religious beliefs."

So what do you do in good thinking process if you want to extrapolate to the future? You take out the main words there, get rid of "eradicating racial discrimination" and put in "eradicating sexual discrimination." Again, Americans aren't very creative when it comes to the future, existing laws. It's there. The ammo is there for them legally.

"Martha Nussbaum, who teaches at the University of Chicago Law School..."

Where did Obama teach? I don't remember. Was it Harvard? Okay. It doesn't matter, really, I mean, they're all flaming liberals.

"...has opined that the colleges and universities run by Catholic religious orders [that, of course, have their restrictions she doesn't like] ... should lose their tax exempt status, because they discriminate against women. [And of course the First Amendment doesn't stop her because] All Nussbaum is doing is applying the logic of the Bob Jones case to the feminist project of eradicating discrimination based on sex."

They forget women, add LGBTI or whatever else, pedophilia.

"Former Georgetown law professor Chai Feldblum—who is also a current Obama appointee to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission [I've not verified if she passed or not]—has written about the coming conflicts between gay rights and religious liberty. With an admirable frankness she admits, 'I'm having a hard time coming up with any case in which religious liberty should win.'

In the Bob Jones case, the justices were very careful to stipulate that 'churches or other purely religious institutions' remain protected by the First Amendment's principle of free exercise."

And as I will add here, that all begs the question: what does that mean? What is a religious institution? What does it mean to have freedom of exercise? That's the debate we're going to have.

"By 'accommodating' rather than counting Notre Dame and other educational and charitable organizations as religious employers, secular liberalism can target them in the future, as they have done to Catholic adoption agencies that won't place children with homosexual couples."

Just because they let you get a pass. For instance, they allowed a religious exemption with the recent, was it ENDA law in the Senate? Which is the discrimination law that also included sexual orientation now. They added a religious exemption. That's called accommodation, isn't it? There is nothing built-in that says they should last. It's better

than nothing, I'll grant you that, but we shouldn't be blind as many Americans are whether left or right or middle, that if you have a change in census, you add more and more people who are of a different religion or hostile to it, they're going to vote differently. That's one of the dangers of, what? Democracy or a Republic. But we're still in a Republic, you can change the laws in a Republic. No guarantee a Republic stays the same, it all comes down to, what? The heart. The heart which is deceitfully wicked above all else. So it comes down to us relying upon God.

"A recent book by University of Chicago professor of philosophy and law..."

I will stop there. He just goes and gives another example of someone who basically argues, "Why should religion even have exemptions at all? Why should they be any different than utilitarian materialists? They should all be on an equal plane." They're right given their philosophical undergirdings, their approach to the world, what they think is important which is materialism and utilitarianism, although they can't properly define either one of them and they debate amongst themselves and they're going to fight if they ever rule the world, as it were. But it's there and unfortunately we have a naive populace both Christian and non-Christian, who thinks, who believes in moral neutrality. That's why I think at least epistemologically and legally, that one of the biggest problems that came in. It's just said, "Well, we've just got to be neutral to the question of Christianity in society and keep it all a neutral public square." You can't. This is what happens. We're seeing it right before... In my own generation, I was born in 1972, one year before abortion when we legalized the murdering of innocent people. The whole thing has just fallen apart overtly. Obviously there is always an undergirding before that.

So today and tomorrow, I want to go over issues of today and potential future issues of tomorrow with respect to the limits of submission to authority, and I have questions from you all. I want to read one more short snippet here to show it's not just the conservatives saying this is the battle now, religious freedom is now going to become a battle in society. This from the "Prospect" magazine, which is a progressive magazine. The article is called "Religious Liberty: The next big front in the culture wars." He writes, and this is a writer who focuses on gay writing.

"When it comes to this issue, conservatives are resigned to defeat. The response from major religious organizations and thinkers? Shifting focus from stopping the tide of social change to exempting themselves from it.

'Religious liberty' is the next big fronts in the culture wars.

The real debate, Eskridge and Garnett say, is whether and to what degree religiously affiliated institutions like schools or churches and non-religiously affiliated, for-profit companies should be exempt from non-discrimination legislation."

A big mouthful, isn't it? You all know what they're saying, right? Should there be exemptions for Christians or religious people in general, not only for non-profit but also for-profit with respect to discrimination laws?

"That is the goal of some gay-rights supporters who think objections to homosexuality and same-sex unions are ultimately based on irrational hatred for gays and lesbians. Wayne Besen, a gay-rights advocate and founder of 'Truth Wins Out' says exemptions for religious institutions are 'an attempt to rationalize discrimination.' 'They're saying they want freedom of religion but what they're saying freedom of religion means freedom from those who aren't religious,' he says. 'They're arguing for a parallel set of laws.' Besen says he fears the religious-liberty protections create room for the very sort of discrimination laws like ENDA are trying to prohibit. 'You can invoke religion anytime and that's a big mistake,' he says. 'This exception creates another form of discrimination.'"

Now they're seeing it. I mean, you have some liberals and progressives and LGBTQITXYZ, who are, "Just let them alone. The Christians will die out. We're going to expand." They have, in 20 years it's incredible. You know, ENDA was originally promoted in '94, I think, '93, and missed by one vote. I mean, it was already the consensus was already there, we just didn't see it.

So this is where we are, brothers and sisters, and I would like to take this as a current day example: what do you do with this big question of Christianity in particular, of course religion in general, and protecting their views on women, on same-sex marriages, on sexual orientation or whatever else the future laws or even present laws are being changed to however they want to define discrimination, because that's just such a wax-nosed definition.

Yes, Luanne? Um, yes. You're wondering, what I'm asking is not a counter-argument per se, but what can we do as Christians to fight this legal harassment and narrowing of our options. I mean, Hobby Lobby's in a world of hurt and they're going to probably close if they can't win in the courts. What do we do?

Yes, George? Well, that all fits in here. I mean, one Libertarian who is actually making a Libertarian argument out of Chicago... Yup, non-cooperation and first and foremost as you said, educating each other and Christians and even unbelievers. They need to see that we are not hateful towards them, although there are enough of us with loud mouths. Go to a place called Right Wing Watch and they grab all the nutjobs on the right side and they just say the most ridiculous things. They just feel compelled because they have a microphone and a tv and they've got a big name, perhaps, they want to make a big name, to say something as opposed to let's sit down and I'm let me give you... Maybe they should read better letters. I don't know because there are better ways than just yelling in a mic and saying how angry they are because we're losing, as it were, and one thing, we're going to lose, we're not in heaven. That's where our hope is, in heaven. But yes, education and passive resistance.

Yes? Well, part of my question is the reality of where we are now. I don't think, I'm not a legal scholar in legalese or anything, but I would guess given just my experience, it's like most of you would agree with me, you're not going to make any argument that's going to win in any court, let alone Supreme Court, that let people discriminate because it's called freedom of association. I'm inclined towards that. Freedom of association. Do you want to make a school and you want to make restrictions who can enter your school? That's your choice. It's your money, it's your curriculum. People don't have to go to your place. They can go somewhere else. It's called freedom of association. That was severely undercut in the 60s with these Civil Rights laws. As much good as came out of it, one of the bad things that came out of it was that. So that very reasoning went there and attacked them, it can attack us, as it were.

So I'm talking about where we are legally. You could perhaps say, "I want to make that argument and I think we should get better lawyers to make that argument." You can try. I suspect it's going to go nowhere but one of the things I would suggest is this and some people might not like it because they're very into, I don't know what else to call it, kind of a literal legalism in the word of God. If I can't find it in the word of God, some explicit text somewhere, then I can't do it. There's been a debate on should schools or seminaries be part of a denomination.

Pardon? I'm just telling you there's been a debate. There is a debate and a number of these people I mentioned, for instance, no, schools should not have anything. There are schools by families, are run by families, etc. You've got this kind of a law coming up, coming after you, how do you think you're going to protect your school? Just say it's part of the church. That's easy. I know it has its own complications how you're going to run it and things like that, but one thing to fight some of this, as it were, kind of what George says, there's only so much you can do but one thing you can do is, okay, then I'll work around the law.

This question was asked, for instance, what happens if they outlaw homeschooling? I think someone here asked one of our pastors from Oklahoma. I forgot his name now. He was up here giving a little talk for a little bit and he asked him, "What do you do if they outlaw homeschooling?" He says, "Well, then just make a little school." I mean, you could sit there and say, "Oh, we've got to defend homeschooling. We've got to defend homeschooling. We're going to go to prison." You're going to, what? You're going to go to prison, you're going to lose your job, your families are going to be hungry, they're going to be a bigger burden on the church. If you have multiple people doing that, that's your option. If you're conscience-bound to go that way, go for it. But I tell you, I believe there are other options and one of those is, in this case, you can kind of make a school that's not quite a school. There are ways around the legal system, use them. In other words, don't make it more complicated on yourself than you have to.

So you can keep thinking about those questions and we'll cover them next week as well, because I know I caught you off-guard. Let me give you some of your questions right now.

"Did Augustine have a definition of just war? If so, what was it?" Yes, that was slightly covered a little bit in the history section, the pre-Reformation. He doesn't have a systemized approach to it. He didn't write a systematic theology the way we have it today where it's organized by topic and sub-topic and how things are interrelated. He touched upon it in some of his writings.

One of the things Aquinas quotes of him is that you've got to have the right intention. "The passion for inflicting harm, the cruel thirst for vengeance and unpacific and relentless spirits, the fervor of revolt, the lust of power and such like things, all these are rightly condemned in war." He believed you could go to war and do it for the right causes in your heart and not do it for evil, for vengeance, for lust of power, getting of land and going to have military might, but because you believe there has been an injustice. So that's part of what Aquinas said there.

He also mentions here, "We do not seek," this is Augustine quoted by Aquinas again, "We do not seek peace in order to be at war but we go to war that we may have peace. Be peaceful, therefore, in warring so that you may vanquish those whom you war against and bring them to the prosperity of peace." In other words, you don't go to war for total war. You go there, get it done, get it done as minimally as possible, [unintelligible] just because it's the easy way out. You're just trying to suppress them, get it done quickly without as much destruction and hatred and result to quickly maintain peace. It sounds kind of weird but that's where we are, we're not in heaven.

He had another comment here. He quotes Augustine about the Centurion, that the evidence that the Centurion is evidence that war is acceptable because Christ didn't say, "Put down your sword and leave," being a soldier. He just said, "Don't bully people as a soldier and do your job."

So those are the major sections that I found. He didn't write a lot, per se. But the intention and the form of it shouldn't be overly aggressive, should be proportional and the like. Come from and see from Augustine and others. So that's one question answered.

Another one asked, "Should Christians submit to," well this is a future question. I'll cover this next week. I want to cover more of what's going on today, for instance.

Street preaching. There was in Scotland an incident of a street preacher at an outdoor mall, we would call it today, and he got arrested. Any thoughts? What he was saying and how he was saying it? Okay. If he didn't have the right or does he have the right? You mean if he didn't have the legal right, would he have the moral right? Is that your question? That is a question. Yes, he was saying you had to be considerate as well.

One way I look at it, and again it's up to this person's conscience, but you have to suffer the consequences if you're going to follow your conscience and if you think you have to go out there and preach loudly. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. I don't personally like going to the mall and hearing people yell at me. I'm not there to

listen. I'm not in the frame of mind to listen. Take the proper means, causes and occasions. You might grab their attention in another way. People are used to flyers, for instance, they'll either ignore you or if they grab it, they're obviously interested enough or they're just being friendly and smile and walk away. But that's one method. You have to know the people where you're around and maybe that's comfortable in Scotland, they're used to yelling. I don't know.

His argument was there was loud blaring music down the way from another store, okay? So it's not necessarily noise. That could be the case, that's true, but it could be an annoyance and when we preach, we shouldn't preach as if people who are annoyers. The annoyance that the prophets of old gave in the Old Testament, this is important, lots of people like to quote the prophets from the Old Testament. Who were they preaching to primarily? Bingo! The church in a "churchly" culture where every member who was a member of Israel's political body was also a member of the church, the ecclesiastical body. That fits, doesn't it? That fits that model. What do you expect? I mean, that's his duty. He's one of the, as it were, official officers directed from God and he's going to do that. We don't have a society like that. Again, I'm not saying you shouldn't do it, you've just got to be careful and don't just think it's, "Hey, I get to preach. I have a commission to preach so I can preach anyway I want." Really? You can preach by being annoying? So we have to be careful and not blow these things out of proportion sometimes and that can be blown out of proportion, I believe.

The 2013 Boston massacre. This is a current event, right? This is something of today. What are your thoughts about that? Remember what happened? Pardon? The Boston Marathon Race, yes, that's the massacre. There you go, that's what I was looking for, martial law. Did they declare martial law, I don't recall? Not formerly but was some martial law activity kind of like going on? That was my impression. I didn't study it very deeply. So that's a modern-day issue of the rights and the limits of submission to authority. What do you do if you're in Boston and it comes to your front door? On, I personally think smart thing is, you don't generally open the door unless you know who's in front of it, if you can. Don't open it, yeah.

Yes, sir? So would you say it was morally wrong what they did, both morally and legally, the police officers? Yes. You're saying right or wrong, the best answer for the Christian in most of those cases is to turn the other cheek, let them walk all over your house and then walk out the back door. Yeah, I don't have a problem with that biblically. It's clearly there in the Bible and you have to weigh it. Is it worth going to prison, having nervous cops? I mean, think about the mindset of the cop. One way to help deal with scenarios is to use your imagination. Imagine if you were the SWAT team and you were, you know, ordered to find this guy because someone else could die. They don't know, another bomb could be out there and they're just going through the roof, they're just nervous, they're scared. You don't want to scare a scared man already with a gun, okay? That's another way of looking at it. Don't be stupid. This is not the movies. We're not John Wayne.

Yes? Katrina? Oh wow, okay. That's an important point, is a number of times local government on up have to react to the nature of the people collectively. If there's enough

idiots in the population, the government is going to have to work with it somehow, and if you've got more and more foolish people, as Americans are becoming, wicked people, people who are indulgent upon themselves, upon each other, excusing each other for the stupidest things, the laws are going to start reflecting that and become a little harder and take away more of your freedoms because you're not adult enough to handle your guns, to handle your cars, to handle your drinks, Big Gulps in New York City. I'm serious. This is how the government is going to react. That is collectively. I don't think anybody here is doing it but we bring it upon ourselves and that's what's going to happen. If it gets bad enough, you will have martial law because the general principle is, and I agree with this, you want some order, not pure chaos. Pure chaos is terrible.

Yes, Luanne? Oh, I didn't know that. It makes sense. He didn't want to go down with the ship. Yeah, if things happen in God's providence, bad things happen in God's providence like Katrina and it has bad results, maybe they shouldn't have called martial law, you know, how do we really know? I wasn't there. They have to make a judgment call, right? It's easy in America because we have such fast access to "news," which is usually half-baked evidence and facts on the ground at the time. We all know that by now and yet we still watch it. Americans, I'm picking on you guys. Then we've develop our opinions already. More and more I'm just like, "I don't know. I wasn't there. I saw what I saw on the news," and even them I'm suspect about what I saw on the news. I don't know.

So we have to be careful and when you're stuck in it, I know it can be easy to be frustrated and say, "That's not fair! I'm gonna stand up and get my gun and they can't prevent me!" And blah, blah, blah. Back off a little bit and say what are the consequences of my actions? What's going to happen to my family? Why shoot, I can get shot at. Am I willing to die and leave my family fatherless? That's what you have to be careful of. Control yourself. Christians, of all people, are taught self-control by the power of the Holy Spirit.

George? What did Christ tell Peter when he said, "Do we not pay taxes?" The question was legally he was saying, as he understands it, in Massachusetts all they said was stay in your house, and so he's saying legally when you're in your house, you don't have to open the door. I think that's the general principle anyways. So I exercise that, am I wrong? Is that your question? I would say no, not technically, but you might be wrong if, you know, they're going to bash down the door and they're going to be angry at you in which case you say I'm going to turn the other cheek. I'm not going to just turn the other cheek, as it were, I'm going to go out there and ask for it. I'm going to open the door and let them in, lest we offend them as Christ told Peter. "Pay the temple tax lest we offend them," and we'll be put on the blacklist or whatever the case is. You have to weigh the particular circumstances of what the situation is.

This is important because I get a number of particular scenarios people ask me and I tell you, the scenarios you ask me sometimes aren't particular enough. Think about it, when you talk to somebody and you're in a debate with somebody, who are they, how long have you know them, where are you when you're talking to them, what state of mind are you in when you're talking to them? Now is not the time to get in an argument with them.

I haven't eaten yet. I'm tired. I didn't get any sleep last night. I mean, all these little details add up and they all add up to these scenarios. That's why I can't just give you a simple answer in every case. I can give you the principles but you have to apply the word of God and your conscience before God. So in his case, maybe 9 times out of 10 you just don't open the door. That's probably a pretty smart thing. No one's home. They knock on it and they go to the next house. Or they knock on it and say, "We're gonna bash it in if no one's in here." You go, "Okay, I guess I'll open the door." Or of course, you always have to throw in an option of saying I still won't open the door, and then you'd better accept the consequences.

Yes, Luanne? Well, yeah overkill. The government, yeah. You know, again, in principle that's not necessarily wrong if they think the drugs you're dealing with or a bunch of bad people with bigger guns, but you know, for a lot of us it comes down to do we trust the local government, and that's what it really comes down to, a lot of these things, is that how many guns do you need? Well, I trust them to know what they need to know, or at least I trust them enough because you can't be involved in every conceivable question at the local, let alone national level.

Yes? Yeah, no the circumstances have changed in so far as things are more readily available to bring destruction to us. At the same time, we also have the other psychological problem of fear. When you have a nation such as ours that's more and more rejecting God and his ways, however imperfectly it was administered in America in the past, they're going to lean towards fear, in my opinion, and I think that's personally why we have a "war on terror." How does one have a war on a concept? You can't. It's a war on fear. You can't have war on fear, have war on famine. You can't. Christ said it would always be like this. The poor will be with us. The hungry will be with us. You do what you can but you don't call it a war so that all of a sudden you're calling up massive amounts of debt to accomplish something because you believe you can make heaven on earth.

You're always going to live with some fear, as it were, humanly speaking. Yeah, you could die tomorrow. You could get shot tomorrow, a bomb could go off tomorrow, right? We could go to war. Most of us grew up under the Cold War. I did. There's always threat of nuclear war, at least that's what you were told, and this is possibly true, somebody could get a little angry or whatever and thinks he can get away with it. We live in a world of risk and more and more Americans are so comfortable with what they have and we have a lot, we don't want to lose it. We don't want to lose our health. We don't want to lose our job. We don't want to live in risk. What they're doing is trying to get rid of risk. Part of risk is, what? Fear, that is humanly speaking. We shouldn't be in fear obviously but we're still sinners and we're going to have some fear and fear and risk go together and they want to get rid of both of those. They go together, don't they?

So that's I think one of the biggest problems we have. I don't live in fear of terrorists attacking America. I know 9/11 happened but you look at the numbers, more people die in all these other things. If you spread it out statistically, car accidents, airplane, I mean all this stuff, it's there. We know the numbers, it's just there's more fear. So if we had, as

it were, people with more common sense running the governments, plural, in America, I'm not going to say necessarily Christian, although I think Christian would be better, more common sense, we could trust them a little better and say, "I don't want to live in fear. This is out of proportion to what's really the statistical odds of us being attacked by terrorists." But that's my opinion.

Yes, Joanne? Yeah, make the speed limit 5 miles an hour and we'd have no accidents. Exactly. We accept some level of risk, don't we? We say 55 is enough. You get some deaths, but that's okay. I mean, that sounds really callous, doesn't it? That's how liberals paint it, right? They have their position, they don't accept that much risk and want less risk, they paint everyone else, "Oh, they just say it's okay." You still have risk. You're not in heaven. You're always going to have risk until you get to heaven. So that's not really the way to frame the debate, is it?

So I have a few more. I'll answer this question for Sunday school. I would add another general question. Under the presupposition that our forefathers entered into an irrevocable covenant under God for the purpose of perpetually protecting the liberties of their descendants, what liberties must we be willing to give up and what liberties must we be willing to fight for? When I say "fight," I mean take up arms. If that becomes necessary, then at what point would it be appropriate? That's a mouthful. 1. I would question the presupposition of an irrevocable covenant under God for the purpose of perpetually protecting the liberties of the descendants if that means we always have to fight every liberty. Is that clear? Some people take that to mean, "I'm gonna fight every liberty." We already heard one gentleman, I told you some pastor saying, "Leave those churches that aren't going to defend your Amendment rights of guns." Everything. You can't have any kind of restriction, apparently. No? I think there are bigger reasons to leave a church. No Gospel being preached. That's kind of important.

So I take the question seriously, what liberties must you be willing to give up and what liberties must you be willing to fight for? It just depends. I think most of you saw that answer coming, didn't you? It just depends. It depends on what the attack is upon those liberties. What amount of liberties you already have. Can you get around the attacks, like I said, side-stepping the law and make your own little school, right? They did that in Nebraska, was it, or something? That's what they did. Homeschooling wasn't allowed so they had a school at their house, the parents and the teachers. In their case, they were blessed because their parents were educated enough to pass the exam, the bar, as it were. They had the college degree. You might have to have other Christians instruct your children, which is anathema to some homeschools apparently. Yeah, at least draw up lesson plans for you. There you go.

So it just depends. I mean, that question is so broad. It's so broad. What liberties? It just depends on how they are being attacked, to what extent, what freedoms you already have, how short-term it is. Some laws, it's so ridiculous and you know it's not going to last very long. Of course, in our state of confusion in America, I don't know if you can make that assumption anymore. You've got some radical nutjobs that look so rational because they've been gone. More and more Americans go through the wringer called public

school, called the media, and called whatever churches they happen to go to, if you want to call them churches anymore. I don't know. Church is not loved in society as it used to be and I think that's mostly because most of the church gave up the Gospel.

That's enough for now. We covered some questions. I gave you, again, a contemporary background from the left and the right, that the debate today is religious liberty, the legal harassment of Christians and the narrowing down of our freedoms and closing down of places like Hobby Lobby. What are you going to do? One of the easiest solutions, I think at least for schools and important things like that, just put them on the auspices of a church and call it religious and that's solid even within the Obamacare camp, that hey, as long as it's...but that could change too, of course, couldn't it?

Let's pray.

Our heavenly God above, you're a glorious Father who has given us these wonderful legal freedoms that we have in this land. It's from the blessings of your Son working through the leavening power of the Gospel through the church over the centuries in the past that have given us these blessings, especially in America, and we thank you and praise you for that, God. They are given to us not because we deserve them, not because America is special, we are special, but you have given it to us, Lord, we know one reason is that we can use such freedoms to expand your kingdom, to use the opportunities and the prosperity that we have to be even more useful in your kingdom, and as we are dealing with more and more legal harassments and the legal underpinings that are expanding more with the expansion of progressivism in America, may we remember more importantly, Lord, that's more important than all the legal rights that we have and that's the rights we have in Jesus Christ, the spiritual rights of adoption, the spiritual truth of our justification before him. They cannot take our Lord and Savior from us even if they take everything that we have both legally and physically, and for that, precious God, we thank you and praise you. Amen.

I. Arguments from Forefathers

A. A Short Treatise on Political Power, Ponet

1. "By this ordinance [given to Noah] and law He instituted political power and gave authority to men to make more laws."
2. Decisions to die, flee or fight are issues of the conscience.

B. How Superior Powers Ought to be Obeyed, Goodman

1. You ought to obey God rather than man. God commands you to follow His commandments first.
2. We are to help the ox in the ditch, how much more our neighbors being oppressed by tyrants?

C. Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos

1. Two types of covenants: between God, magistrate and people; and between the magistrate and the people. [cp. 2 Sam. 5:3; 2 kg. 11:17; 2 Chr. 23:16]"

D. On the Rights of Magistrates, Beza: "peoples were not created for the sake of rulers, but on the contrary the rulers for the sake of the people"

1. If in lesser contractual law, the one violating the contract can be repulsed to save one's life, how much more against a nation?
2. Just resistance when: overt tyranny "thoroughly obvious"; if no recourse save arms; carefully thought through to avoid making things worse.

E. Lex, Rex, Rutherford: "Every man by nature is a freeborn man..."

1. "What is warranted by the direction of nature's light is warranted by the law of nature, and consequently by a divine law; for who can deny the law of nature to be a divine law?"
2. Not defending oneself can be a form of suicide
3. Prophets complained about the lack of help: "they expressly cry out against the sin of non-resistance [Jer. 22:2, 3; 5:31; Is. 58:6]"

II. Arguments from Bible

A. Romans 13:1-7: Only describes lawful authority (not tyrants)

1. The magistrate is directed to reward good and punish evil only; nothing is stated about resisting magistrates who do *not* punish evil; therefore, “resist” is only forbidden against lawful authority

2. If “resistance” is absolutely forbidden (instead of relatively), then when a magistrate becomes like a devil, he cannot be resisted. But James 4:7 commands resistance to the devil (his works not his person as such); therefore, some resistance is allowed and submission is relative not absolute.

3. If one can “resist” a righteous man (Gal. 2:11), then one can resist a wicked man on certain occasions (like tyranny)

B. 1 Peter 2:11-17: similar reasoning as Romans

1. Submission is the default position; much can be bore (see Matt. 5)

2. v.14 (like Romans 13) gives the definition of the magistrate as an office for punishing evildoers.

C. Luke 22:36: Christ commands disciples to purchase a sword. If an instrument of violence is allowed, then the purpose of the instrument is allowed: violence.

D. Hebrew 11:33, 34: “who through faith subdued kingdoms... became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.” [That act which is from faith is pleasing to God; war was from faith; therefore it is pleasing]

E. Old Testament

1. Defensive: Gen. 14:12 1 Sam. 14:44: Jonathan protected by army from Saul; Neh. 4:8-14: Jews defend wall while trusting God; Est. 9: Jews defend themselves

2. Deut. 20:10-20 (war laws); Prov. 24:6; Ecc. 3:3; Proverbs 24:11-12 “Deliver those who are drawn toward death, And hold back those stumbling to the slaughter. If you say, ‘Surely we did not know this,’ Does not He who weighs the hearts consider it? He who keeps your soul, does He not know it? And will He not render to each man according to his deeds?”

F. Sixth Commandment: Thou shalt not kill; thou shalt preserve life

1. Large Catechism Question 99: How to apply the Law. Especially 99:7, 8.

2. LCQ 99.5: what is forbidden is always forbidden (suicide, even by indirect means); what is commanded is not always done all the time: when to fight and die and flee is circumstantial: the people, their ability, opportunity and potential outcomes.